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En el Ojo del Huracán // In the Eye of the Storm: Conceptualizing Climate Justice through Printmaking

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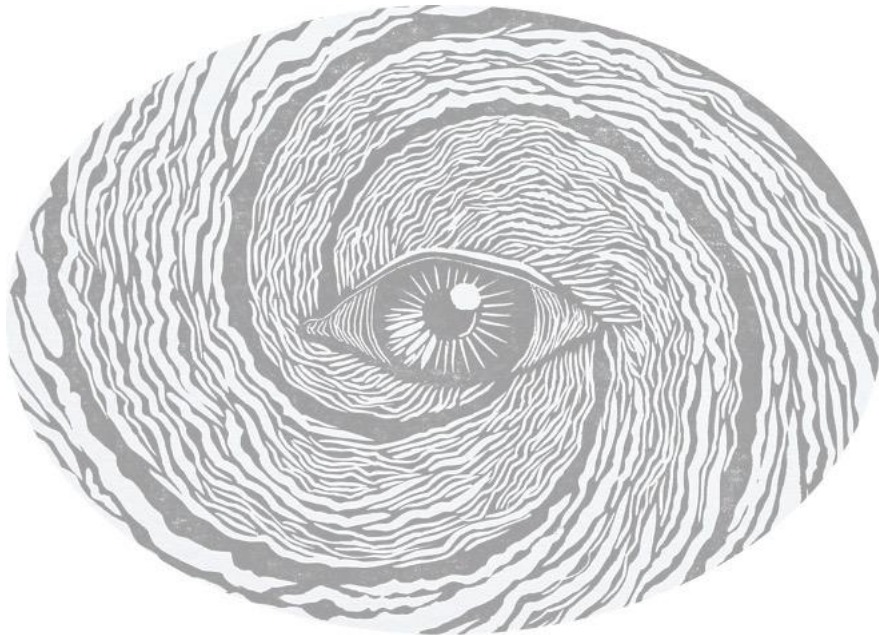
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En el Ojo del Huracán // In the Eye of the Storm: Conceptualizing Climate Justice through Printmaking

Final Capstone Report, December 2020

The accompanying symposium presentation can be viewed [here](#).

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Capstone Advisory Committee

[Dr. Isabel Rivera-Collazo](#) – Assistant Professor on Biological, Ecological and Human Adaptation to Climate Change - Scripps Institution of Oceanography & University of California San Diego (Chair)

Dr. Rivera-Collazo is an environmental archaeologist specializing on geoarchaeology, archaeomalacology, coastal and marine processes, maritime culture and climate change, with regional interests in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean Basin and the Neotropics (Pan Caribbean region); Israel and the eastern Mediterranean. Her research focuses on the effect that human activity has over island ecosystems through time, as well as how have people responded to climatic and environmental change in the past.



Date: Dec 14, 2020

[Samantha Murray, J.D.](#) – Executive Director, Master of Advanced Studies Program in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation - Scripps Institution of Oceanography

Samantha Murray is the Executive Director of the MAS MBC Program where she also teaches graduate courses, including Ocean Law and Policy. In 2019 she was appointed by Governor Newsom to the California Fish and Game Commission. Samantha has nearly two decades of professional experience and has directed ocean and water programs at Ocean Conservancy, the Audubon Society and Oregon Environmental Council, in addition to founding a marine policy consulting business.



Date: Dec 14, 2020

[Dr. Shaista Patel](#) – Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies - University of California San Diego

Trained as an interdisciplinary scholar, Dr. Patel's primary research interests include diverse fields such as Critical Muslim, Transnational, Critical Indigenous, South Asian and Black feminist studies. Her past and future publications traverse discrepant spatialities and temporalities in order to re-examine what we know and have yet to learn about entanglements of bodies, colonialism, race, gender, religion, caste, capitalism, and relations of labor.



Date: Dec 14, 2020

ABSTRACT

While climate change has already impacted almost every ecosystem on the planet and will unequivocally continue to do so, these impacts are not evenly felt across societies. On both global and local scales, environmental degradation disproportionately burdens those who are already faced with the brunt of inequity. Those human stories, in their nuances of both ache and resilience, are important to share as an impetus for creating equity-centered systems of governance that support all communities. For my Capstone Project, I used the tools of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and the historically rich artform of printmaking to conceptualize two case studies of climate and environmental justice: hurricane impacts in Puerto Rico, and the necessity of anti-racism within conservation. My deliverable is a body of linocut prints that transitions the intellectual to the personal in an exploration of Hurricane María and my family history. I hope this work sparks conversation about the multifaceted connections between environment and society, and the unique roles we might each play moving forward.

Keywords: Printmaking, social justice, climate justice, art, hurricane, climate change, anti-racism, Puerto Rico

BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As climate change continues to intensify globally, coastal communities are impacted by a range of effects including more frequent and powerful storm systems, flooding, sea level rise, coastal erosion, changing precipitation patterns, and drought.¹ Despite their far-reaching nature, these impacts are not evenly distributed across societies.² Race, class, nationality, and gender are just a few of the factors that determine how exposed communities are to climate change, how sensitive their social systems are, and what adaptive capacity they are afforded—all components of social vulnerability to a stressor like climate change.³ Additionally, climate change is understood as a threat multiplier,⁴ in that it further intensifies existing injustices, like gender-based violence,⁵ the

¹ Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery. (2018). *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Chapter 20*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018.

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/20/>

² Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery. (2018). *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Chapter 20*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018.

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/#sf-2>

³ Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery. (2018). *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Chapter 20*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018.

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/#sf-2>

⁴ Robin, M., & Andrew, N. (Eds.). (2010). Social dimensions of climate change: Equity and vulnerability in a warming world. *The World Bank: New Frontiers of Social Policy*. doi:10.1596/978-0-8213-7887-8.

⁵ Carney, I. C., Sabater, L., Owren, C., & Boyer, A. (2020). Gender-based violence and environment linkages: The violence of inequality. *International Union for Conservation of Nature*. doi: 10.2305/iucn.ch.2020.03.en

lack of Indigenous land rights,⁶ unequal access to medical care,⁷ and racism.⁸ In short, climate change cannot be disentangled from the various other intersectional components of our lives.

My Capstone Project explored two analogous case studies of climate justice through a lens of inquiry and unlearning: the differential impacts of Hurricane Sandy and María, and the connectivity between anti-racism and ecological sustainability. To facilitate my own growth, I used the tools of phenomenology and discourse analysis to situate my perceptions and positionality. Phenomenology is defined as the study of “how people make meaning of their lived experience.”⁹ Accordingly, to understand the social justice side of climate change, it is key to assess my own lived experience and the resulting conceptualizations of climate change. Discourse analysis is more focused on assessing our outward engagement as an investigation of how we talk about something.¹⁰ By analyzing how we write or speak about climate justice, we can more deeply understand the narratives that are at play, what might be problematic, and where there are holes in communication. Part of this includes unpacking my own positionality as a white woman from a middle-class background, including critiquing and reforming my own discourse. Both of these tools were critical to my Capstone and their use will not end with its submission.

CASE STUDY 1: HURRICANES SANDY AND MARIA

Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast of North America in 2012 as a category 3 storm. I was in Woods Hole, MA during this event and lost power for 48 hours, but had I been near the epicenter in New York City, I would have experienced the storm differently than other local residents. As a beneficiary of white privilege, a liberal arts education, and a middle-class family, the impacts I would have faced were substantially lower than other community members. With the safety net of my family in Boston, I knew I would always have somewhere to go to put a roof over my head. Had the storm impacted my employment putting me in financial crisis, I knew funds for groceries were a phone call away. I did not have a car at the time, but friends did. These variables all influence my social vulnerability to climate change. My adaptive capacity, or my ability to adjust and respond to a situation using my resources, is high. My sensitivity, or how affected I am after experiencing

⁶ Climate Change and Land: Summary for Policymakers. (2020). *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*, 29. https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2020/02/SPM_Updated-Jan20.pdf

⁷ Climate change and health. (2018). *World Health Organization*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>

⁸ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (2020). Environmental & Climate Justice. <https://naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice/>

⁹ Starks, H., & Trinidad, S. B. (2007). Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1372-1380. doi:10.1177/1049732307307031

¹⁰ Starks, H., & Trinidad, S. B. (2007). Choose Your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, and Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1372-1380. doi:10.1177/1049732307307031

exposure, is low.¹¹ However, many community members in New York City that October faced deeper challenges. The National Resource Defense Council noted, “The grim reality is that the storm disproportionately impacted our city’s most vulnerable populations – low-income people, people of color, and the elderly – in communities that are already overburdened with an unfair share of toxic pollution and health problems.”¹²

Already existing inequities were being amplified by Hurricane Sandy. NYC Housing Authority is the largest public housing agency in North America, home to more than 400,000 New Yorkers. If it itself was a city, it would rank 21st in population size in the US. During Sandy, 80,000 of its residents lost power, heat, and hot water. It took New York utilities 13 days to restore power to at least 95% of customers,¹³ but it took 21 days to restore most of these 80,000 Housing Authority residents to their full power, heat, and hot water.¹⁴ This was eight extra days of cold showers in the dark, inability to cook or store perishable food, and no way to charge devices to contact family members.

5 years later in 2017, residents of Puerto Rico went 328 days until full power was restored after Hurricane María.¹⁵ The Caribbean region, including Puerto Rico, is experiencing climate change on multiple different scales and to different degrees. Particularly, storms in the Caribbean region are changing in frequency and intensity, which could indicate a higher exposure to storms like Hurricane María. The Fourth National Climate Assessment states that “climate models project an increase in the frequency of strong hurricanes (Categories 4 and 5) in the Atlantic Basin, including the Caribbean.”¹⁶ These storm events are natural hazards, but have the potential to become natural disasters when we experience them. How we experience them is intertwined with our social systems.

Puerto Rico has a complex history of colonialism that has shaped the current socio-political landscape and has influenced the social vulnerability of communities to climate change. The policies

¹¹ Engle, N. L. (2011). Adaptive capacity and its assessment. *Global Environmental Change*, 21(2), 647-656. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.01.019>

¹² Huang, A. (2012, November 15). *National Resource Defense Council*. Hurricane Sandy's Disproportionate Impact on NYC's Most Vulnerable Communities [Web post]. <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/albert-huang/hurricane-sandys-disproportionate-impact-nycs-most-vulnerable-communities>

¹³ Associated Press. (2012, November 16). Length of outage after Sandy not unusual. <https://www.sfgate.com/nation/article/Length-of-outage-after-Sandy-not-unusual-4045567.php>

¹⁴ NYC Housing Authority. (2012, November 18). *The New York City Housing Authority Has Restored Power, Heat and Hot Water to 100 percent of Its Buildings Affected by Hurricane Sandy* [Press release]. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2012/nycha-has-restored-heat-hot-water-power-to--buildings-affected-by-sandy.page>

¹⁵ Fernández Campbell, A. (2018, August 15). It took 11 months to restore power to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. A similar crisis could happen again. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/15/17692414/puerto-rico-power-electricity-restored-hurricane-maria>

¹⁶ Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery. (2018). *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Chapter 20*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018. <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/20/>

that are implemented nationally in the United States affect Puerto Rico as a US territory.^{17,18} This makes it crucial to not only understand the impacts and needs of this climate-exposed region but to advocate for anticolonial and antiracist legislation. As stronger and more frequent hurricanes occur in the future, it is critical to ensure that the island has enough systemic support so they do not go 328 days without power compared to the 21 days it took New York during Hurricane Sandy.

CASE STUDY 2: THE ANTI-RACISM MOVEMENT AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

According to both the statements made by the NAACP's Environmental and Climate Justice Program and the results from longitudinal analyses using distance-based methods, race is a clear indicator for the placement of toxic facilities in the U.S.^{19,20} During Hurricane Katrina, Black homeowners received on average \$8,000 less in government aid for recovery than white homeowners.²¹ The Flint water crisis impacted mostly Black and Latinx people despite years of complaints to municipalities which did not take any serious action.²² These are only three out of numerous examples of environmental degradation disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). They are not isolated or coincidental, but rather they are systemic, they illustrate recurrent patterns.

While BIPOC communities are most heavily impacted, they also are leading the way towards solutions. BIPOC communities generally and Latinx communities especially are more concerned about climate change than white people within the U.S. according to the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication,²³ and Indigenous communities safeguard as much as 80% of the world's

¹⁷ Salazar, A. (2018, September 20). Reckoning With Colonialism, A Year After Maria Hit Puerto Rico. *WNYC News*. <https://www.wnyc.org/story/puerto-rico-one-year-after-hurricane-maria/>

¹⁸ Herrera, I. (2019, September 19). 'It's Not Full Citizenship': What It Means to Be Puerto Rican Post-María. *New York Times*. <https://nyti.ms/2QjzqVV>

¹⁹ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (2020). Environmental & Climate Justice. <https://naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice/>

²⁰ Mohai, P., Saha, R. (2015). Which came first, people or pollution? Assessing the disparate siting and post-siting demographic change hypotheses of environmental injustice. *Environmental Research Letters*, 10(11), 115008. doi:10.1088/1748-9326/10/11/115008

²¹ Ross, T. (2013, August 27). Post-Katrina, Black Families Still More Vulnerable to Extreme Weather. *Ebony*. <https://www.ebony.com/news/post-katrina-blacks-families-still-more-vulnerable-to-extreme-weather-405/>

²² Kennedy, M. (2016, April 20). Lead-Laced Water In Flint: A Step-By-Step Look At The Makings Of A Crisis. *National Public Radio*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/04/20/465545378/lead-laced-water-in-flint-a-step-by-step-look-at-the-makings-of-a-crisis>

²³ Leiserowitz, A. & Akerlof, K. (2010). Race, Ethnicity and Public Responses to Climate Change. *Yale University and George Mason University*. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change. <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/race-ethnicity-and-public-responses-to-climate-change/>

remaining forest biodiversity which can help maintain a stable climate.^{24,25} As Scripps Oceanography alumna and policy expert Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson wrote in her recent op-ed, “[i]f we want to successfully address climate change, we need people of color. Not just because pursuing diversity is a good thing to do, and not even because diversity leads to better decision-making and more effective strategies, but because...more than 23 million Black Americans already care deeply about the environment and could make a huge contribution to the massive amount of climate work that needs doing.”²⁶ Dismantling the systems that rely on and perpetuate white supremacy must be held with equal urgency and done in tandem with environmental conservation. We cannot decouple sustainable environments from sustainable communities.

While much of it was behind the scenes, a considerable portion of my Capstone Project was focused on not only understanding the entanglements between race and environment but unpacking my own patterns and biases. Race is a component of social vulnerability to climate change that partially dictates sensitivity and adaptive capacity, and herein converges with Case Study 1. As explored through the examples of Hurricane Sandy and María, my privilege, including white privilege, affects how I am able to respond to storm events. For instance, while I do not own property, the likelihood of me receiving government aid could have been higher had I lost property given the \$8,000 disparity in funding between white and BIPOC homeowners after Hurricane Katrina. As storm events become more frequent and severe, it too becomes more urgent to address the racism that further perpetuates harm and hinders systemic support for BIPOC in these scenarios.

METHODS: PRINTMAKING AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE

Phenomenology and discourse analysis are the two social science tools that I used to frame my thinking; printmaking is a visual arts tool that I used to conceptualize and communicate these complex topics. I thoughtfully selected this technique because of the deep context it carries as a tool for social justice. Situating myself within its rich historic and contemporary social framework, I created a series of linocut prints reflecting the theme of hurricane impacts on communities that I’ve been exploring throughout my Capstone Project. This deliverable is an end-product that encapsulates my process of growth and learning, a dynamic method I’ve used to rethink and

²⁴ IUCN Director General’s Statement on International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples 2019. *International Union for Conservation of Nature*. (2019, August 9). <https://www.iucn.org/news/secretariat/201908/iucn-director-generals-statement-international-day-worlds-indigenous-peoples-2019>

²⁵ Climate Change and Biodiversity. (2010, March). *Convention on Biological Diversity*. <https://www.cbd.int/climate/intro.shtml>

²⁶ Johnson, A.E. (2020, June 3). I’m a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/03/im-black-climate-scientist-racism-derails-our-efforts-save-planet/>

express, with the ultimate goal of catalyzing conversation within the communities with whom I share this work beyond the Capstone timeline.

THE HISTORIC CONTEXT OF PRINTMAKING

Printmaking is an age-old artform that has been tied to social justice movements at least since the nineteenth century, partially because of the inexpensive reproducibility of prints.²⁷ Conceivably, the relevance of printmaking for social change may have begun in 15th century Europe when the printing press allowed illustrated broadsheets to be widely circulated displaying the injustices faced by medieval peasants at the hands of feudal lords and the Church.²⁸ While less information exists about very early image-heavy printmaking, the relevance of this artform in social justice movement is more formally documented later in history, especially within the 19th century to today.

Noteworthy examples of this are Spanish artist Francisco Goya's political etchings protesting the Peninsular War in the 1800's,²⁹ German printmaker Käthe Kollwitz representing themes of women and the World Wars in the 1900's,³⁰ and Mexican printmaker Leopoldo Méndez who founded the Taller de Gráfica Popular (The People's Print Workshop) in 1937 which was known for sociopolitical post-revolutionary art.³¹ Current artists that are working within this sphere include printmaker and activist Favianna Rodriguez,³² social and environmental justice printmaker Thea Gahr,³³ and the Xicanisma and Zapatismo collaboration between Jesus Barraza and Melanie Cervantes called Dignidad Rebelde.³⁴ All of these artists are members of the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative whose mission is supported by their belief in the "transformative power of personal expression in concert with collective action."³⁵ These artists have been a constant source of inspiration as I work through the heavy and sometimes controversial themes within this Capstone Project.

STEP BY STEP: THE PRINTMAKING PROCESS

Linocuts, also known as lino prints, are a specific type of printmaking similar to woodcuts. Both of these methods start with a block from which material is carved away to create a negative relief

²⁷ MacPhee, J., Caplow, D., & Triantafillou, E. (2009). *Paper politics: Socially engaged printmaking today*. Oakland, CA: PM Press. pg 12.

²⁸ Naidus, B. (2005). Teaching art as a subversive activity. In M. C. Powell & V. Marcow-Speiser (Eds.), *The arts, education, and social change: Little signs of hope* (pp. 169-184). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

²⁹ Sooke, A. (2014, July 16). Goya's Disasters of War: The truth about war laid bare. *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20140717-the-greatest-war-art-ever>

³⁰ Käthe Kollwitz. (n.d.). *National Museum of Women in the Arts*. <https://nmwa.org/art/artists/kathe-kollwitz/>

³¹ Katzew, I. (2008). Gráfica Popular. *Los Angeles County Museum of Art*. <https://collections.lacma.org/node/580931>

³² Artist, Organizer & Social Justice Activist: Favianna Rodriguez. Retrieved November 30, 2020. <https://favianna.com/>

³³ Thea Gahr. Retrieved November 30, 2020. <https://theagahr.com/>

³⁴ Dignidad Rebelde: Art and Activism. Retrieved November 30, 2020. <https://dignidadrebelde.com/>

³⁵ Justseeds Artists' Cooperative. Retrieved November 30, 2020. <https://justseeds.org/>

design that is then printed as positive image after applying ink to the block and pressing it to paper. “Lino” is a reference to the material the block is composed of – linoleum – which is a floor covering made from linseed oil, pine resin, sawdust, and calcium carbonate.³⁶

My process began before I dug into the linoleum by brainstorming many different concept sketches covering the range of ideas I developed using phenomenology and discourse analysis. By sharing and critiquing these ideas with my committee, I selected the most compelling and meaningful motif to expand upon, the eye of the hurricane. I then created detailed sketches to visually explore how to translate these heavy ideas into a graphic format. My work was inspired by the work of other artists, including aforementioned Thea Gahr for mark-making and use of negative space, the ASARO collective’s Portrait of Zapata for linework and the features of an eye,³⁷ and Puerto Rican artist Poli Marichal for how she worked with similar hurricane motifs.³⁸

From there, I began carving linoleum blocks, testing textures and techniques to effectively convey the visual of a hurricane and its human impacts. The act of carving linoleum blocks requires a certain degree of intentionality, because once a mark is carved, it cannot be undone. While superficially this means the technique is not amenable to mistakes, it does force flexibility and encourage working with unexpected results to achieve a general vision. This being said, each of my final blocks had about 4-5 drafts before it that informed the final carving. This process is indeed a labor of precision and care.

After printing the final blocks in black ink, I experimented with combining all of them into one composite so as to have a single image with all conceptual elements. Initially I used transparent ink and attempted to directly layer them, however this produced a confusing image that was difficult to parse out. After playing with both layering and stenciling, I tried cutting out sections of the hurricane motif in a similarly spiraled pattern and gluing them on top of each other. This created a layered feel, but without losing detail. It is visually chaotic, but with the intention of evoking the emotional urgency and confusion felt in a storm. For the audience to fully comprehend this overlay, it is displayed with the originals for context and reference.

³⁶ Floor Plan: Linoleum May Be Green, but Is There an Ecofriendly Way to Keep It Clean? (2010, March 11). *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/earth-talk-floor-plan/>

³⁷ The Art of Dissent: Woodcuts from the ASARO Collective of Oaxaca, Mexico. *Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts*. https://mcla.digication.com/annscott/The_ASARO_COLLECTIVE

³⁸ Poli Marichal Studio. Retrieved November 30, 2020. <https://polimarichal.com/>

RESULTS: THE PRINTS

ARTIST STATEMENT

92 years ago, my grandma was tossed out of a second-story window to escape San Felipe Segundo, the worst recorded hurricane to hit Puerto Rico until María hit decades later. Communities were torn apart as the only two documented Category 5 hurricanes ripped across the Island, one almost a century ago and the other 3 years ago.³⁹ My family, like countless others, lost everything in that 1928 storm and emigrated to the mainland. These pieces are in remembrance of those lived experiences.

As climate change worsens, storms like these will likely become more common and more severe in the region.⁴⁰ We are the eye of the storm, our human experiences translating each hurricane from hazard to disaster. Often the loss is not just of property and land, but of life. Mirroring a local memorial of María, sets of shoes follow the road to calmer places in recognition of the 4,645 lives lost.⁴¹ Because these experiences are complex and entangled, each piece is overlaid on top of the other to build one final print that reflects this chaos and urgency.

These images can be interpreted literally, as a hurricane and its numerous impacts, or they can be more symbolic: watching ourselves twist in a storm system of inequities that caused Puerto Rico to be without power for 328 days after María,⁴² with impacts still being felt years later, largely due to a lack of US governmental support.⁴³ As the eye of the storm, we witness all.

³⁹ Fritz, A. (2017, September 19). Puerto Rico has a long history with tropical storms. None of them were like Hurricane Maria. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/capital-weather-gang/wp/2017/09/19/puerto-rico-has-a-long-history-with-tropical-storms-none-of-them-were-like-hurricane-maria/>

⁴⁰ Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery. (2018). *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Chapter 20*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. doi: 10.7930/NCA4.2018. <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/20/>

⁴¹ Florido, A. (2018, June 1). An Impromptu Memorial To Demand That Puerto Rico's Hurricane Dead Be Counted. *National Public Radio*. <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/01/616216225/an-impromptu-memorial-to-demand-puerto-ricos-hurricane-dead-be-counted>

⁴² Fernández Campbell, A. (2018, August 15). It took 11 months to restore power to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. A similar crisis could happen again. *Vox*. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/15/17692414/puerto-rico-power-electricity-restored-hurricane-maria>

⁴³ Clement, S., Zezima, K., & Guskin, E. (2018, September 12). Puerto Rico After Maria: Residents see a failure at all levels of government. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/national/wp/2018/09/12/feature/residents-see-a-failure-at-all-levels-of-government/>



Figure 1: Linocut by Simona Clausnitzer, December 2020

This foundational print of the series depicts a hurricane swirling counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere like the storms that reach Puerto Rico. The eye of a hurricane is a moment of pause, windless and calm, when we can see the storm around us more clearly. Our human eyes, our lived experiences, can tell us: which systems of governance make that wind around us even more damaging? Which systems support us when the wind blows and after it is gone?



Figure 2: Linocut by Simona Clausnitzer, December 2020

Following the swirl of the storm, this print brings the human impacts to the forefront. A storm surge threatens buildings, flood waters wash away cars and infrastructure, wind bends trees and destroys power lines, and homes are blown away. Here we are placed within the storm itself, as it happens in a discrete moment in time.

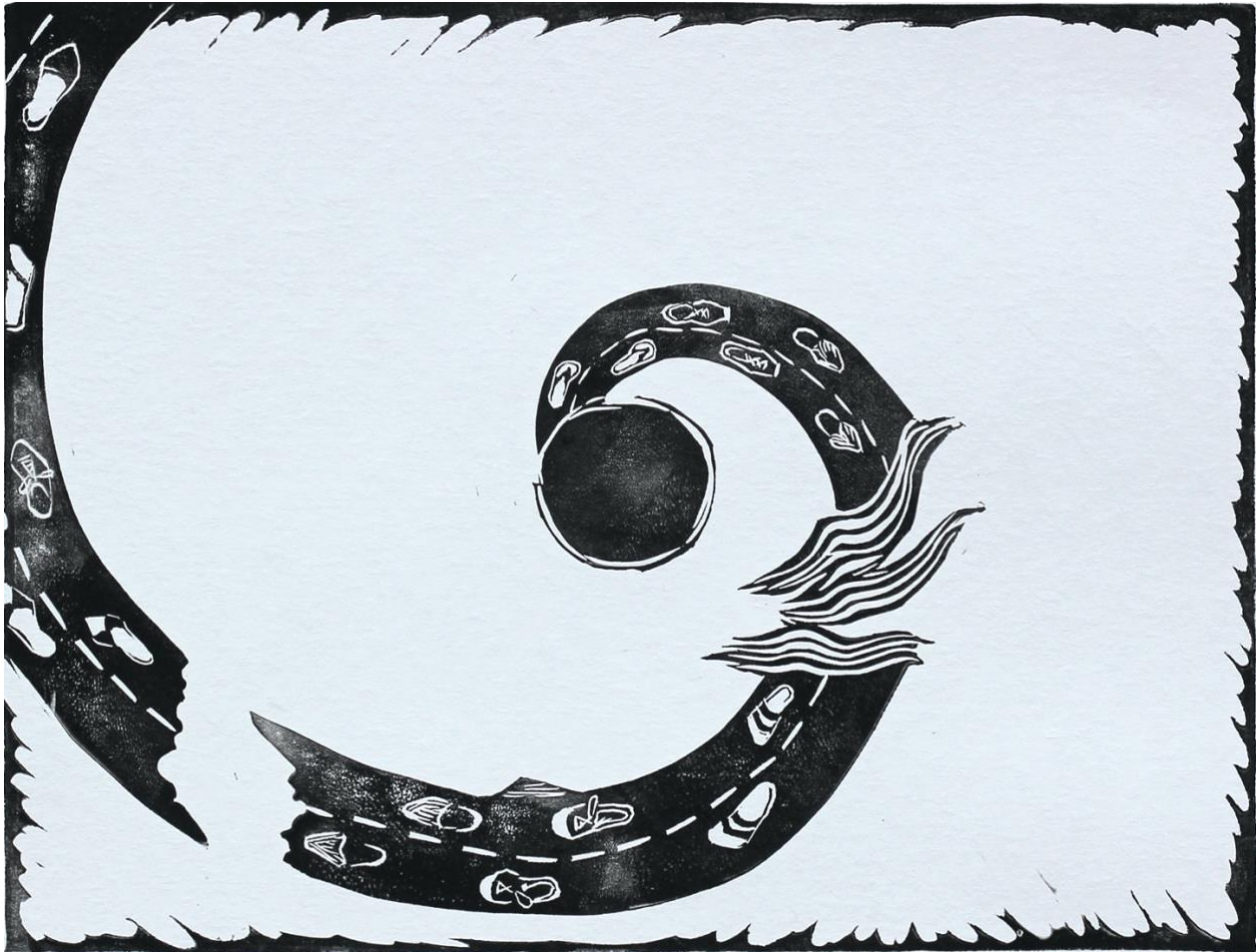


Figure 3: Linocut by Simona Clausnitzer, December 2020

Time is continuous in this panel, depicting the ongoing impacts of losing a loved one or a sense of community. Floodwaters may subside, but grief lingers. The voidness of the print evokes emptiness felt with such deep loss and the deafening silence after the storm. The shoes are a symbol of the 4645 lives lost in María, echoing the memorial in Puerto Rico where thousands of shoes were laid out in tribute to those individuals and in resistance to the government's grossly low death estimates.⁴⁴ These shoes follow the road out of the storm, to calmer places.

⁴⁴ Florido, A. (2018, June 1). An Impromptu Memorial To Demand That Puerto Rico's Hurricane Dead Be Counted. *National Public Radio*. <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/01/616216225/an-impromptu-memorial-to-demand-puerto-ricos-hurricane-dead-be-counted>



Figure 4: Composite linocut overlay by Simona Clausnitzer, December 2020

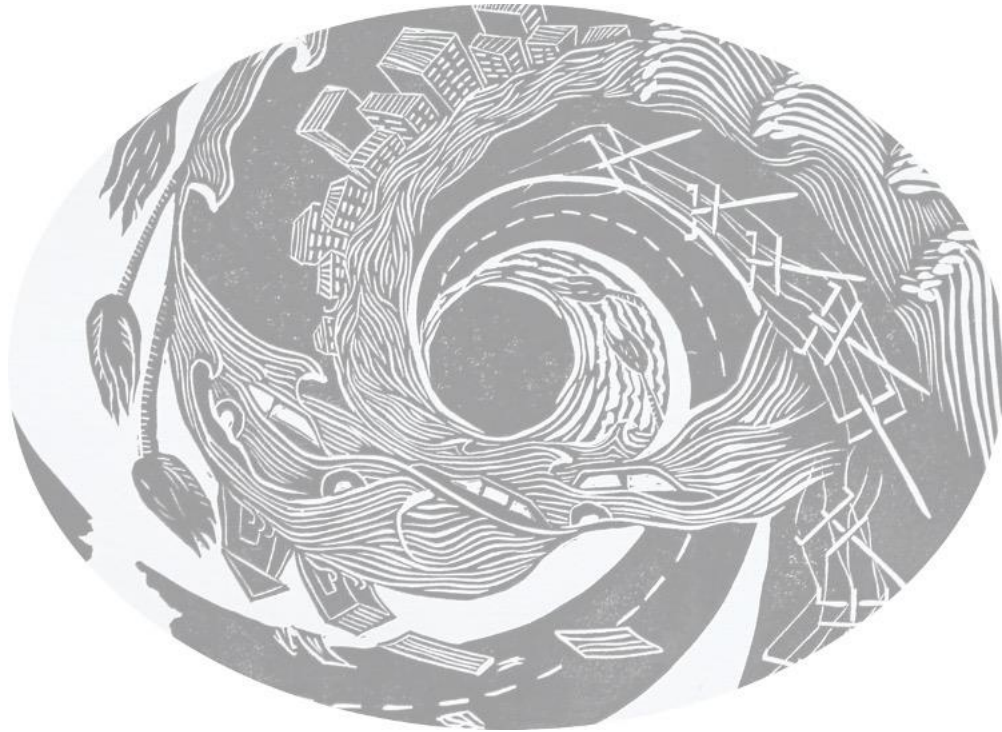
Incorporating all elements of the previous prints, this composite image overlaps the storm itself (*Figure 1*), the infrastructure impacts (*Figure 2*), and the community impacts (*Figure 3*). The human eye is central, reflecting our lived experiences of storms and denoting a shift from natural hazard to natural disaster with the addition of the human elements. Visually, this print is deliberately cluttered to express a sense of chaos and confusion experienced in a hurricane. Each layer plays with time: impacts continue to be felt throughout time in the constant foreground, while the storm itself fades into memory like the translucent ink dulls into the background.

NEXT STEPS

My goal with this work is to contribute to the current climate justice narrative by sparking dialogue as people view these pieces in tandem with tangible support in the form of funding for local Puerto Rican climate organizations. While sharing the prints with a broad audience was not feasible within the timeline of my Capstone Project, I plan to share them within my community and beyond by selling prints with all funds going directly to the grassroots climate organizations I met with while in Puerto Rico last spring with Dr. Isabel Rivera-Collazo. These organizations provided community relief and support during the aftermath of Hurricane María and continue to do instrumental work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Capstone Project could not have been possible without the support of my Capstone Advisory Committee: Dr. Isabel Rivera-Collazo, Dr. Shaista Patel, and Samantha Murray, J.D. And to the matriarch of my family, my grandma, this is in your honor.



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