Marie Craig

Artist Statement

This current series, *Juncture,* refers to a turning point, the place where the choice you make profoundly alters the trajectory of what follows, whether you know it at the time or not. I use cyanotype, an early photographic technique, which exploits that concept, since chance is a huge factor in the outcome of each piece.

I started making cyanotypes of plant life a few years back, while traveling in Australia, my second home. I couldn’t take eucalyptus leaves home with me (plant material can’t be brought back into the country), and ordinary photos couldn’t capture the intimacy and emotion the shapes brought to me. But the cyanotypes did.

My process is controlled chaos. I layer leaves and branches over digital ‘negatives’ of evidence of man- street signs, buildings, ruins. Using linen was at first a technical solution to my desire to make larger prints. I saw huge advantages to this, not only in the ability to create much larger works this way, but also the added bonus of the beautiful texture of the linen surface and the fluid nature of the final presentation.

Experience has taught me the parameters and limits of the technique, and how best to manipulate the negative, the plant material, the exposures, etc. But season, sun and wind work their own magic, and play at least as big a part in the process. I love allowing chance and the weather to be a partner in the process.

Beyond the obvious visual excitement I feel when I see the striking blue color and the relationships of the organic shapes intertwined with architecture, I think about the push and pull of human impact on the world with the untamed wildness of nature. In this tug of war, man attempts to subjugate his environment. But nature is powerful, persistent, and resilient. It exerts its presence despite efforts by us to impose order and control. In effect my process lets go of that control, and the work is created in collaboration with nature.