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A door can be symbol of a passage or transition from one area, over a threshold, into another space. Doorways exist in every culture in the world. We often take doors for granted, giving them no conscious thought. However, there exists a psychological power that permeates one at a subconscious level. The transition through a door can illustrate one's own personal passage of identity. How does a physical door, in all its properties, signify the transition over a threshold? How does the door prepare one to move into a space that is beyond?

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Spain

Italy

DOORWAYS AS SYMBOLS OF PASSAGEWAY

By studying the symbolism of a door, I was in fact studying the transition of the human psyche. It was vital that I, as a contemporary individual in current history, cross the thresholds into an older time when the doors were originally created in order to further research these questions.

I began my research into the profound symbolism of three types of doorways as essential elements of organizing space: religious doors, doors of personal residences, and doors of burial sites. These themes of religion, family, and death have and will exist all throughout time and these categories formed a logical way of categorizing my research in order to draw conclusions and connections. At the start of June, I embarked on a two-month journey through Spain and Italy, eager to analyze the artistic nature of the doors and to educate myself about the diverse histories of the doors. I chose Spain because I



have spent many years studying the Spanish language and culture, and I chose Italy for being an artistic center of the world.

Starting off in Spain, I researched the doorways of the Alcázar of Segovia, El Escorial in Madrid, the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, the Door of Conception of the Seville Cathedral, the entrance to the Valley of the Fallen outside of Madrid, and the entrance to the Royal Chapel of Granada. Later in July, I traveled to Italy and explored the Doors of Paradise as part of the Florence Baptistery, the doors of the Palazzo Medici in Florence, the entrance



to the Temple of Romulus in the Roman Forum in Rome, the entrance to the Villa Capra in Vicenza, and the cemetery gates on Isola San Michele in Venice. In this second half of my trip, I was able to delve a little deeper into my actual research. I like to refer to Spain as my test run of my methods and ideas for gathering research into these specific doorways, and really implementing my process in Italy.

Now that I have returned home, I like to think back on all that I learned in two different groups of knowledge. One group is the formal information I gathered strictly relating to my research proposal about the symbolism of the door as a threshold between two places. I can conclude that each door I visited still creates distinct messages to those that passed through them. However, I found that in many cases there exists some level of distortion of these original intentions. Some distortions arose simply because of renovations that had occurred over the years to the doors themselves, or to the building, or the cities. Other distortions of the doorways were inevitably created in the frantic behaviors and consequences of modern tourism.

The other group of knowledge I acquired were the things I learned from “the art of just being there.” This phrase resonated with me countless times. Sometimes in

life, we all get so caught up in our appointments, reservations, meetings, and scheduled events that we forget to just enjoy the moments of wandering around without a plan and without an end goal in mind. I have learned to roll with the punches when sites are not available, airports lose luggage or delay flights, or when an ugly poster is placed on the panel of a beautifully old doorway you are trying to photograph. This adventure was filled with learning about countless new foods and drinks, listening to new music, practicing my Spanish, picking up on the basics of Italian, learning how to make new friends in a short amount of time, and practicing living solely on my own. I have learned to embrace new cultures, new languages, and new accents, all the while appreciating all that is left for me back at home and at school.

