Progress

After my conversation with Fiona last week, this week’s work encircled a lot of brainstorming for my project Bedtime Stories in the long run. The course this term and my conversation with Fiona, helps me to consider alternative and broader concepts, especially addressing the question of how to present and share my work. We discussed the possibility of installation based sharing strategies, which I will definitely consider further. Although many of my thoughts this week were directed at the long term I want to wrap up this course with one cohesive piece that stands on itself but grew out of my explorations this term.

I already posted my plans and the three final images I am working with last week. Since I have decided to incorporate my own writing into the physicality of the photo series through Braille, I explored this poetic aspect to the piece further. Questions I dealt with were: What is the purpose of the poetic element? Will the writing reflect the imagery, so that a visually impaired audience will reference the visual content through touch? Or should the Braille add an entirely different element to the piece, in a sense handing the visually impaired audience a unique experience to themselves that the sighted viewer cannot access in the same way?

Scenario 1 – Braille and image correspond

This approach would strive for an equal sense of perception, following the hypothesis that the experience of looking at the visual portrait of Bezazin can be transformed into a similar experience through writing. This way the sighted and visually impaired audience would access the same information through different channels of perception and the piece would stand to accentuate their unity.

Scenario 2 – Braille and image as two separate elements

Instead of using the photo series to portray the similarities of perception, I could do the exact opposite and value the difference in perception. This way the disconnect between the image and the poetry embossed in Braille could serve to highlight the individual qualities that come with touch and sight. This way the experience of the sighted viewer could not access the experience of the feeling hand, we would be limited and perhaps more intrigued to find out what the poetry stands for – an opportunity to ask a visually impaired for help.
I have also decided to print each photograph in A4 format. This way I can emboss the Braille by hand, using the common writing utensils. Further research this week went into the printing process. I visited several print shops in the city to figure out what paper is available and what quality of print. This is a rather complicated issue but I hope I can arrange for a good quality print this week. The paper on the market here is all very thin and shiny, both two visual qualities I would like to avoid. I want thick paper that is tactile in itself and that will let me emboss the Braille properly. Considering the space in which to present the piece here in Addis Abeba, I have moved my thoughts from the room in my home that I showed to you earlier in the semester, to Bezazin’s room. The final piece will be a gift from me to her and we will install it in her room. This will mean that the radius of the audience is confined but clearly constructed out of both sighted and visually impaired Ethiopians.

Furthermore, it is a good opportunity to share some of the outcomes of my work first hand with the participants and their responses can further influence and inspire my project for the long run.

Additionally I have been working on a sound edit of the recording I have made during the past few months. Since I don’t have a sound edit program I have been working in Final Cut Pro X, which is definitely not ideal but it allows for experimentation. I picked up my initial thoughts of juxtaposing the natural, environmental sounds I recorded in Tanzania with the bustling sounds of the city awakening here. I still consider the cut very rough and want to experiment further with the abstraction of sounds. I believe that they are still very recognizable and would like to interweave the piece into a layered aural experience. Finally the soundscape could be played accompanying the embossed photo series. In a sense, if I were to go towards the distinction between Image and Braille, the soundscape would be the unifying element.