I would like to thank everyone at the school of Art and Design and those who supported my opportunity to visit Iceland this past summer; it was truly a life-changing experience.

During the first two weeks of my experience I volunteered on an organic farm in the East of Iceland, which I found through the website wwoofing.com. I didn’t know what to expect, however did know I wanted to spend some time with the native Icelanders before exploring the rest of the island in addition to getting experience working on a organic farm. I arrived at the airport in Egilsstadir and was picked up by veterinarian that worked on the farm. I soon arrived at the “monster house” (so-called because of the mural on the exterior walls) where I would live with group of international volunteers for the next two weeks.
The house was run by an Icelander named Joey (pictured below). He and I worked on a number of projects during my time on the farm, from plowing the organic barely fields to thinning the massive forest planted by the farm owners a few decades ago.

On the farm we cooked and ate food grown on the farm and had lively discussions after work. I was shown a movie made called “Iceland: A New Hope” which profiled the farm in the context of Iceland’s amazing transition from dependence on imported foods and oil to the goal of being truly independent. This is possible because of their abundant amount of clean geothermal power, which allows them to power new greenhouses to produce food year-round. The thing that struck me in the movie (and in the Icelandic people in general) was their refreshingly hopeful outlook about the state of the environment and our ability to make the changes for a sustainable future. Below are few images of where I would walk after a days work on the farm to shoot video.
After my time on the farm I flew back to the capital, picked up my car rental and started my tour of the Island. From my talks with people on the farm I had places I wanted to visit adventurous detours like the one that led to image above. I fought off the gang of Artic Turns, one of the nastiest birds I will ever meet, along black sand beach to find this old wreck pictured below. Minutes afterwards a windstorm arrived causing me to run with my cameras hidden inside my shirt through the cloud of dust.

One day, when I decided to stop and eat lunch, I ended up staying to camp, and by chance made a good friend. This man, named Zahariz, is travelling around the world on his bicycle.
Zahariz is documenting his journey for a Malaysian television show. We both were happy to talk to someone after camping alone for weeks. We found it interesting that both of us originally wanted to engage the local population and document the culture but found most Icelandic people to be a bit hesitant to discuss such matters. Instead our projects become more introspective reflections and meditations on the landscape.

While in Reykjavik, I stayed with a woman named Edda. She ran a quirky guesthouse in the city complete with two bunnies, chickens, cats and a dog. Edda was one of the people I was able to spend enough time with to build a rapport with and she spoke candidly about many of her personal beliefs. She also spoke of few places to go, one of these was the Snaefellsnes Peninsula just north of Reykjavik. It is home to the Snaefellsjokull glacier, which, beyond its fame as the setting of Jules Verne’s film “Journey to the Center of the Earth”, is believed to have mystical powers.

When I finally arrived at the glacier after a beautiful yet hectic drive through wind and rain over the mountainous curves, the “magic glacier” was true to form and had a rainbow shooting out of it. The lack of people nearby was something that attracted me to the island and this evening I believe I only encountered one other person. On a trip down a gravel road beside Viking ruins I found the body of a grey that had washed ashore. It is an experience like this that deeply takes root in our minds and can I truly say that this particular evening was one I will never forget. To be surrounded with such overwhelming visual beauty and then to be able to share with others later through my artistic mediums is very rewarding to me.
I spent the last two days I had in Iceland at Jokulsarlon, which is a lagoon where 1,000 year old glaciers meet their final demise. I found this place visually arresting and stayed and shot 10+hours video each day. I was seeing the direct consequences of global climate change that affected me emotionally. I'm very excited to start working with this material in my creative work.
This trip was truly enriching in every sense of the word. The visual research I was able to do was amplified by my extreme exposure to the raw elements and my incredibly serendipitous encounters with thought provoking humanity along the way. I once again wish to express my supreme gratitude to those who made this trip possible, and everyone at the University of Michigan that aided in the process of this journey. I am forever grateful for the experience.