
Comparative Study

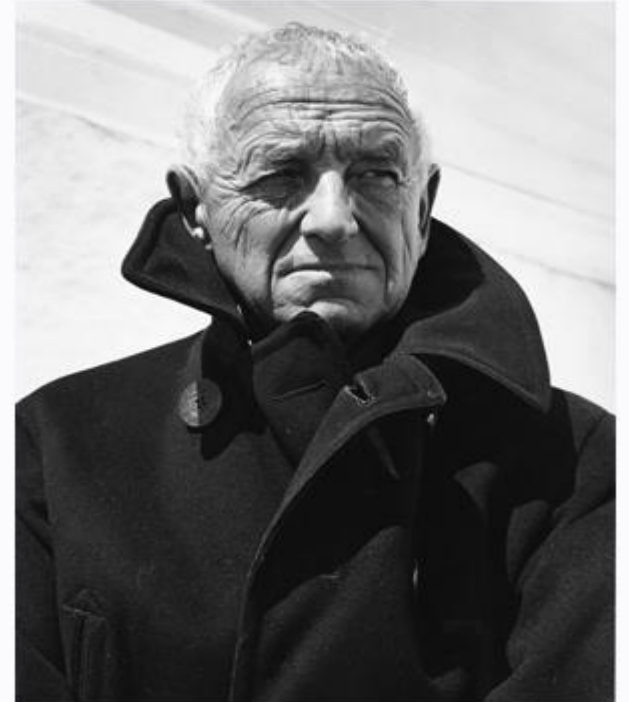
— Cecilia Cabrera —

This comparative study will analyze the works of artists Andrew Wyeth, and Stephanie Barenz. Their works will be analyzed for formal qualities and meanings that each piece provides. These artists have both similar and contrasting thematic qualities and artistic techniques.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Andrew Wyeth

Andrew Wyeth was an American artist during the 20th century, known for the quality of realism in his portraits. Realism in the arts is used to represent things truthfully, without altering them, and without artifice. Wyeth used this in his life, and this can be seen in his painting “Christina's World”, which is what he became most known for. Wyeth's father, painter and illustrator N.C. Wyeth guided him in his life to become an artist.

Wyeth often painted things that occurred in his life, as he never travelled far from home. This included what he would see out of his window, neighbors and relatives, places that he frequented, and impactful moments in his life, like the polio epidemic.



“Andrew Wyeth.” *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 12 July 2016,

www.biography.com/people/andrew-wyeth-9538168.

Arciniegas, Triunfo. “Andrew Wyeth / Five.” DRAGON, 29 July 2014, losarciniegas.blogspot.com/2014/07/andrew-wyeth-five.html.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: Christinas World

- Based on wifes friend who had polio. He painted it for her
- Shows the struggle of getting home unassisted without her wheelchair. She is accomplishing what others would consider hopeless.
- House far away, open field makes struggle seem worse. Nothing and no one there to help her.



“Christinas World” 1948.
81.9 x 121.3 cm

- Realism. Great detail. Individual strands of hair, and blades of grass.
- Movement: The wind blowing through her hair, and the blades of grass show movement. The way her head is pointed, moves your eyes to the house in the corner.
- Emphasis on the girl, she is the main subject of the piece.
- Balance is symmetrical. The house in the top right balances “Christina”.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance: Christinas World

- Deals with the polio epidemic and the physical limits that it had on people who had it.
- In 1948 there was a large polio epidemic. Wyeth's painting addresses this and how people he was close to were affected by this.
 - People were panicking because so many people were getting it. Schools closed for weeks, pools shut down, insurance companies started selling polio insurance for infants. Many people did not have the money to care for a family member who was affected by the disease.
- "Christina's World" was relevant during the time to show the struggle that victims had.
- People didn't like the painting or him. Believed he used to bland of a color palette, as the piece is largely made up of browns, grays, and brown-like greens. He was very sophisticated and talented but overall boring, dead and dry to the public.



Beaubien, Jason. "Wiping Out Polio: How The U.S. Snuffed Out A Killer." NPR, NPR, 15 Oct. 2012, www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2012/10/16/162670836/wiping-out-polio-how-the-u-s-snuffed-out-a-killer.

Kim, Hannah. "MoMA | A Closer Look at Christina's World." InsideOut, 21 Nov. 2012, www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/11/21/a-closer-look-at-christinas-world/.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: Moon Madness

- 1982. Kuerner home. He began to work at the Kuerner home early in his life, and the Kuerner family would become major inspirations for most of his work.
- Near Wyeth's home and studio.
- Paints his life. This was something that Wyeth consistently saw in his life.



"Moon Madness" 1982

- Emphasis on the moon, and icicle over the moon. Night time at the house, a calming and peaceful time. Looking out his window at night.
- Realism: The texture of the icicle can be seen in the moonlight.
- Contrast- night, bright moon. Not a threatening moon. A lot of times, night can be scary, but for this painting it is peaceful and bright.

Analysis of Formal Qualities of Andrew Wyeth

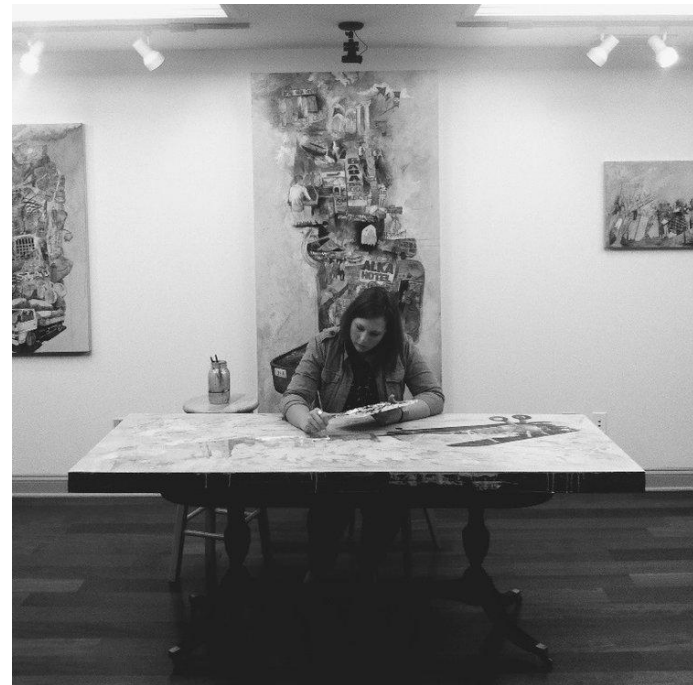


- Wyeth was able to express his emotions through simplicity. A simple corner of a house, and a moon.
- Everything personal to his life. The house in the painting was near his home and studio, it was something very familiar to him. Wyeth never traveled far from home in his life. His parents removed him from public schooling before first grade.
- Balance. The house and moon balance each other.
- Contrast between the bright white moon, and dark sky.
- Realism. Clean art. Specifically for Mood Madness, all lines are clean, and painting is smooth. This provides a sharp contrast in the painting, specifically with the moon and night sky.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Stephanie Barenz

Stephanie Barenz is a mixed media artist who does both paintings and collages. Her work often revolves around place, sojourning, traveling, and storytelling. Her work is inspired by her life and the people that she meets. She believes that sojourning is life's metaphor. Barenz states

“sojourning is a strong theme in my work, I am more interested in how it operates as a metaphor for a life's journey--whether it is transitioning from birth to death, relationship to relationship, or from youth to old age. These changes shape who we are, shift our perspectives, encourage empathy, and unify us in our humanity.”



“Portfolio.” Stephanie Barenz, www.stephaniebarenz.com/portfolio-1/.

Barenz, Stephanie . “Contact.” Stephanie Barenz, www.stephaniebarenz.com/contact-1/.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: Greeting

- Traverse in architecture, is the part of a structure that extends or is fixed across something.
 - Barenz uses this as a metaphor for the connections that can take place between neighbors. People close to you.



“Greeting”
30.48 x 30.48 cm

- Line-traverse. Create a disorienting feeling that one might get from moving around from place to place.
- Balance- asymmetrical. To the bottom of the piece is where most of the subject lies.
- Movement- lines across painting

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: Peace of Wild Things

- Birds: shows displacement. Migrating. Goes back to sojourning, what Barenz believes is life's metaphor.
 - Sojourning meaning to stay somewhere temporarily. Birds migrate, just as people who are displaced will.



- Displacement vs. rootedness.
 - The twisting of the line design.
- Line and movement
 - Traverse once again. Connections between neighbors. These lines are all connected. A whole community.
- Balance- centered around “moon”

“Peace of Wild Things”
20.32 x 20.32 cm

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: Every Line in Every Theorem

- Vanishing Point
 - Inspired by a poem by Billy Collins who describes alleyways as having an omniscient presence
- Alleyways-portals, wander away from the fixed structure. Dark, seemingly forgotten places.
 - Barenz describes them as places to embrace the unexpected.



“Every Line in Every Theorem”
121.91 x 91.44 cm

- Movement. Start center, move out.
- Balance/line- power lines moving throughout create separate sections. Help movement.
- Horizon, vanishing point, goes on into the unknown.

Evaluation of Formal Qualities of the Traverse Gallery

Many of her pieces are influenced by Barenz travels and poetry. The titles of many of the pieces in this gallery reference poems by Wendell Berry or Robert Frost. Berry's words can be seen in Barenz work through part of the following poem "The Peace of Wild Things"

"I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.
Transformative, moving to the unknown
Blurred toward center. Don't know where it's going."

Use of line, helps movement in piece. Guides the "movement into the unknown". In Barenz painting "The Peace of Wild Things", the lines in the center of the piece are blurred. Shows the uncertainty of where one might be going.

contributor, Wendell Berry (@goodblacknews) guest. "The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry." On Being, 6 Oct. 2017, onbeing.org/blog/the-peace-of-wild-things/.
"Traverse." *Stephanie Barenz*, www.stephaniebarenz.com/traversegallery.



Comparing Artistic Styles



Wyeth

- Realism. Precision with every part of each painting. Much more detail in specific things like the houses. Barez are very simple.



Barenz

- You can tell what her work is very clearly, but it is not realistic in the way that Wyeth's work is.



Similarities

- Use of color.
 - Both artists use monochrome color palettes.

“Traverse.” *Stephanie Barenz*,
www.stephaniebarez.com/traversegallery.

Comparing Formal Qualities

Wyeth

- Christina’s World- movement through subject and house.
- Unity. His pieces look/seem complete while Barenz do not.
 - The blurriness in the center of “The Peace of Wild Things”



Kim, Hannah. “MoMA | A Closer Look at Christina's World.” InsideOut, 21 Nov. 2012, www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/11/21/a-closer-look-at-christinas-world/.



Similarities

- Show movement through line
 - Wyeth in “Moon Madness”, and Barenz in all three pieces shown previously.
- Balance in pieces by using moon or moon like object, and homes.

Barenz

- Movement through line in Traverse series.
- Relies on geometric shape, where Wyeth does not.

Comparing Use of Emotion

Wyeth

- People didn't like his work. Not because he wasn't talented, he just used "poop-like" colors according to some critics.
 - People knew that he was talented but criticized him for continuing to do realist work once new art movements were starting.
- Specific meaning for his pieces. ("Christina's World")

Barenz

- Up to interpretation. What is home, uncertain, think about the unknown.
 - No set meaning, home is different to everyone.
 - Sojourning is only Barenz's life metaphor, can't be applied to everyone.

Similarities

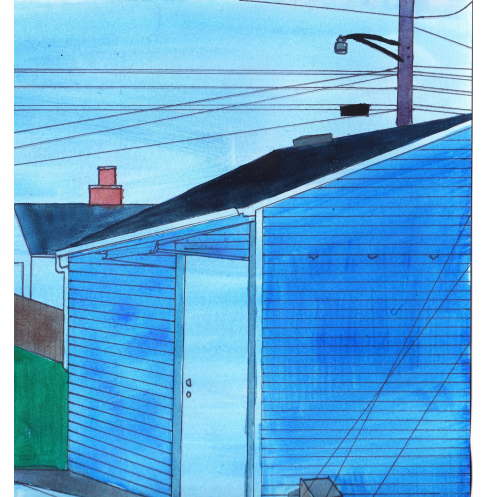
- Can appeal to a large amount of people.
 - Almost everyone has experienced some sort of illness, or know someone that has.
 - Almost everyone has felt displaced or looking for connections with the people surrounding them.

Connection to Personal work



The first work that I created was an acrylic painting based off of artist Stephanie Barenz. The piece is titled *Displacement*, and is representative of home, and the implications of what leaving home or returning home could be. I created this painting because I felt it was significant as the year is coming to a close, and many people will be leaving home for college, and how for some that is a blessing, while for others, it may be a dreadful thought.

The second piece I created was a small watercolor piece based off of both Stephanie Barenz and Andrew Wyeth. The piece is titled *Familiarity*. This piece is representative of a similar theme from the first piece that I created, as well as being similar to Wyeth's subjects in his work being based off of things that were familiar to him, and a large part of his life.



Connection to Personal Work: Stephanie Barenz



Similarities

- Both use a monochrome color palette
- Both have similar subject and meaning
 - Home, displacement.

Barenz

- Brown/orange color scheme
- Barenz uses the lines that traverse the painting connecting to the house as a metaphor for the connections that one could make with a neighbor or those close to you in life.
- Meant to evoke a happier emotion than the other piece.

Cabrera

- Blue color scheme
- The meaning for my piece is to represent the feeling of leaving home
 - Shown with the birds, and the lines moving towards the edges of the painting.
 - Unlike Barenz painting which is bringing people together.



Comparing Formal Qualities: Stephanie Barenz



“Traverse.” *Stephanie Barenz*,
www.stephaniebarenz.com/traversegallery.

Barenz

- Balance is asymmetrical. The piece is mainly focused at the bottom.

Similarities

- Both pieces use line to create movement across the paintings.



Cabrera

- Balance is symmetrical. The house balances the piece with the birds on the other side, and with the lines on either side of the house.
- Birds show and represent movement.

“Here We Are at the Vanishing Point.” *Stephanie Barenz*,
www.stephaniebarenz.com/here-we-are-at-the-vanishing-point.

Connection to Personal Work: Stephanie Barenz

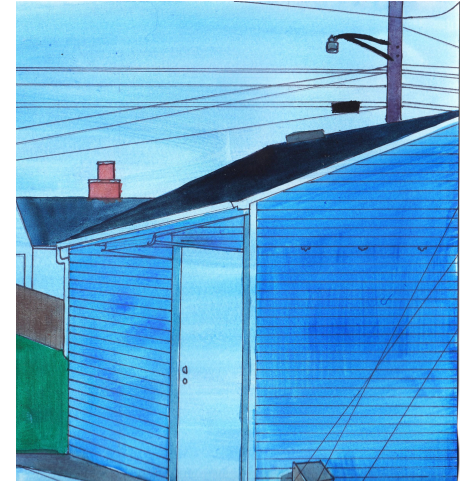
Barenz

- Made based on the idea that alleyways are portals, and undiscovered, and have a surreal quality to them
 - Barenz wants people to embrace the unexpected with this piece



Similarities

- Similar subject matter
- Monochromatic color palette again.
 - Barenz with warm colors
 - My piece with cool colors.
- Both pieces are balanced. Nothing is overwhelming.
- Power lines create movement throughout the piece.



Cabrera

- My piece is not solely an alleyway
- Kept the meaning from Barenz other pieces about familiarity of places, and comfort.
 - This scene is of a place that I see everyday and is personal to me.
 - Don't want things to be unexpected.

Connection to Personal Work: Andrew Wyeth

Wyeth

- Based on the Krueger home, which was something very familiar to him
 - Subject in many of his paintings
- While the house is in the painting, there is more emphasis on the moon
- Sharp contrast from moon and the rest of the painting, unlike my work.

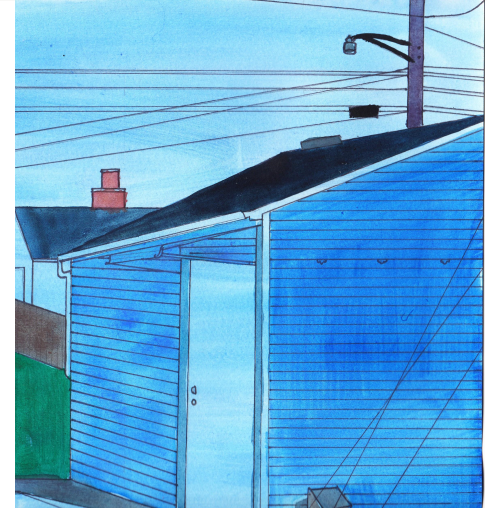


Both

- Both represent familiarity and consistency in life.
 - Krueger home was something he saw almost everyday, and I see the subject of my piece everyday as well.

Cabrera

- More emphasis on the building in my piece, whereas Wyeth's piece creates more of a calm atmosphere with the night sky.



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