

# Comparative Study

Written by Areianna Goehrs

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My comparative study focuses on analyzing two different artists and four different artworks, and from different cultural circumstances, namely Kathe Kollwitz and Henri Matisse. I will also be analyzing emotional expressions and going over the connections to my own artworks. Overall, there is a common pattern of life experiences, so that may be their theme. Throughout my research between books, websites, and analyses, I have compared and contrasted the components of the artists and artworks. Interior At Nice, Bathers By The River, Germany's Children Are Hungry, and Woman With Dead Child all have different formal qualities and contexts. I also compared the works of a local artist from one of my gallery visits, Dan Wagner.

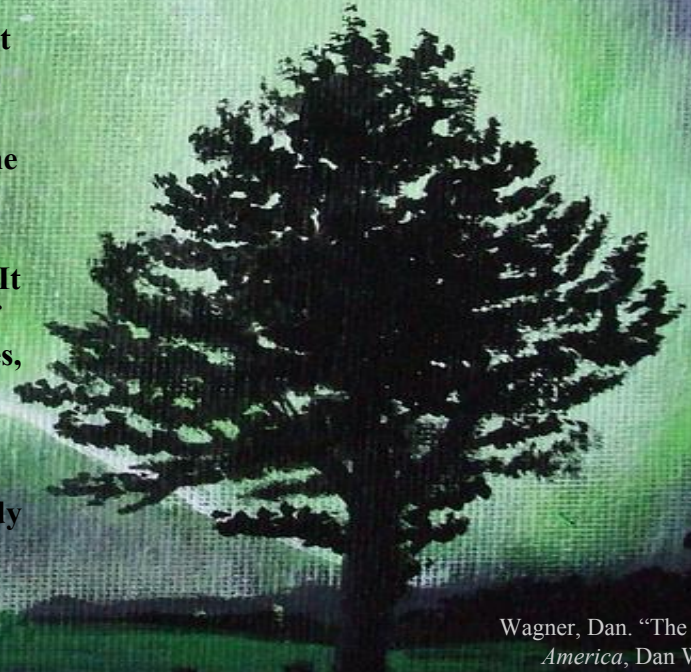
# Formal Response to Dan Wagner's "The Sentinel"

Dan works on his artworks in his house, and he works in special education. He began drawing at a young age, and he refined his skills in an excellent high school program before further refining at UW-Madison.

He was born and raised on a farm, so his works display much of the love he has for the outdoors.

His work, "The Sentinel" is a fine example of that love for nature. It depicts a farmhouse-like setting with a foreground tree, and sky of aurora. The aurora is made up of cool colors, greens, blues, purples, and some whites.

The cool colors are calming for the audience, and the natural setting of the rural landscape at night tend to cause the human body to relax and calm.



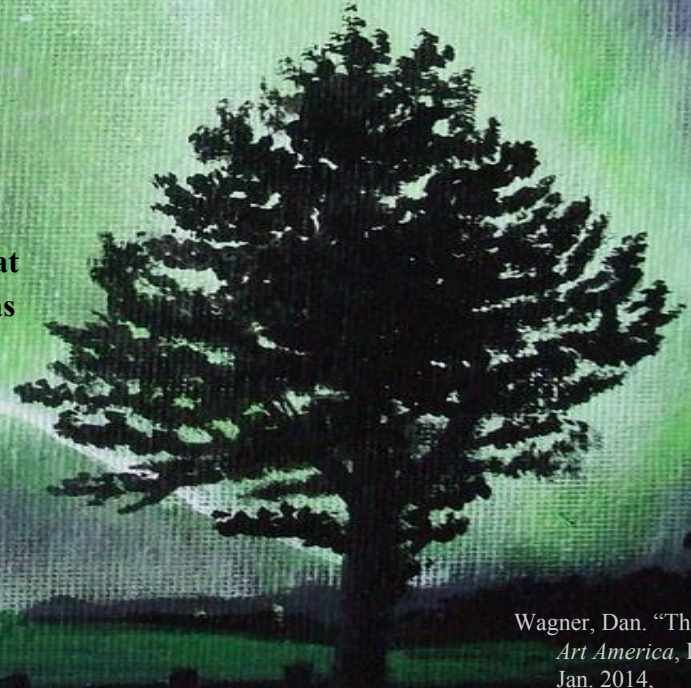
Wagner, Dan. "The Sentinel." *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,

# Cultural Context of “The Sentinel”

His work is based on his childhood on the farmhouse in which he was raised. His work expresses his love for nature.

The farmhouse, the fence, and the tree are likely to be the area he grew up in, or something similar to his childhood home.

And more than likely, he would be in the habit of creating a calm environment for the special education kids that he works with. That would make it possible that he painted works like “The Sentinel” as a calming method for himself as well.

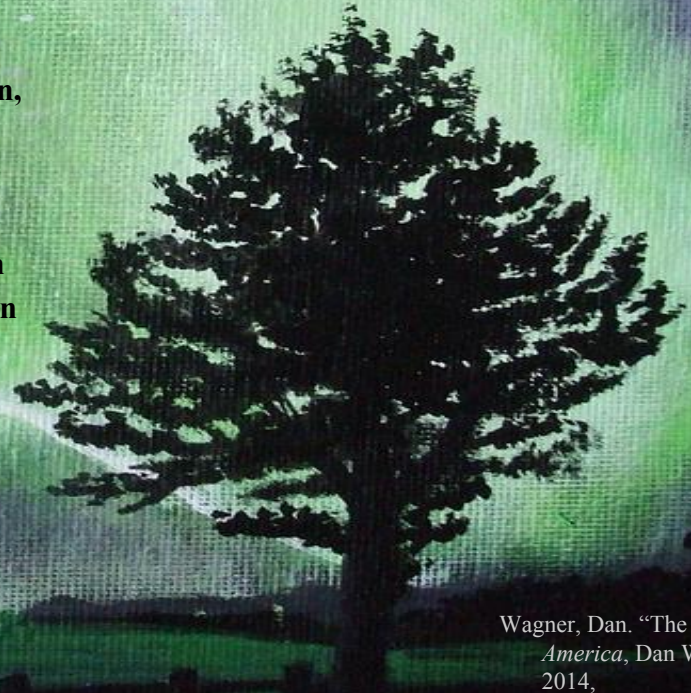


Wagner, Dan. “The Sentinel.” *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,

# Evaluation of Use of Emotion

In a piece like “The Sentinel,” Wagner would use cool colors like those seen in an actual aurora. The bright green might have surprised an audience if there wasn’t his mix of white and purple with the green. The purple has a calming effect on the human brain, and it’s a natural color to find in the night sky, specifically in an aurora.

Altogether, this mix of purples, greens, and whites in a night sky in a rural landscape would have a natural calming effect, especially on those who appreciate nature like he does.

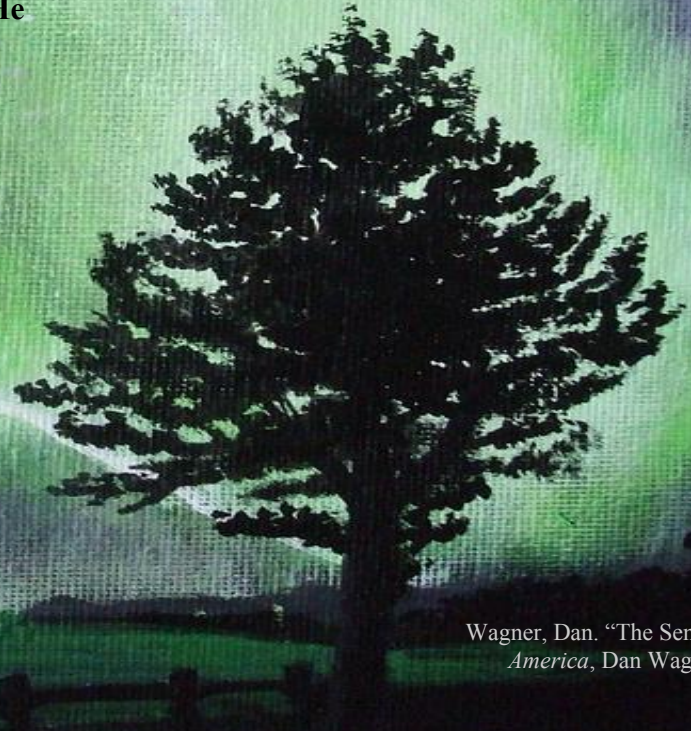


Wagner, Dan. “The Sentinel.” *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,

# Evaluation of Function and Purpose

The function of Wagner's work is likely as personal expression. He works in special ed and many times, those in special ed have a mental disorder that can be aided with calming colors like cool colors, and natural settings like landscapes at night.

With the stress he might feel keeping up with the special ed kids, his son, and his cats, he'd probably paint something like "The Sentinel" as a calming mechanism for himself as well as others.



Wagner, Dan. "The Sentinel." *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,

# Formal Response to “Woman With Dead Child”



“Woman With Dead Child.” *Wordpress*, 20 Feb. 2012,

- **Rough texture in the entire image.**
  - Made with the “smudges” in the black and white tones
- **There is also strong contrast between dark colors and light background**
  - This forces the audience to see just the figures.
- **Contrast and form add to the meaning towards the victims.**
  - The contrast between the figures and the background take the figures away from the bloody scenes, or if it was the case, perhaps the morgue. The isolation of the figures forces the audience to focus on them instead of taking in a whole scene
- **Using colors would take away from the emotion and meaning of the piece.**
  - In the current state of the affected, the world won’t be so gray, either. In many cases, tragic deaths of loved ones cause a desire for revenge, that they are good and that anyone on the enemy side is evil, all because this supposed enemy killed someone the victim loved.
- **“Smudges” add to the mood and texture of the piece.**
  - The smudges make the texture very rough, almost incomplete, which adds to the sad mood. Smooth lines and textures would not have drawn out as much emotion as an almost incomplete image, which is what smudges tend to imply

# Cultural Context of “Woman with Dead Child”

- **There was a war in Germany**
  - Kollwitz lost her husband and son in the war in Germany, and would also have been surrounded by grief and loss of those around her.
- **Death of her son and husband**
  - Causes emotional chaos and panic, especially when those closest to you are the ones who die, as in Kollwitz’s case.
- **Dark time in Germany**
  - Starvation, bloodshed, death, and depression.
- **Victims of war and loss**
  - All victims were losing friends and family throughout the times of war.
- **All of these events connected directly to Kollwitz’s artwork.**
  - She etches out the perspective of a victim
  - She also has a late child.



“Woman With Dead Child.” Wordpress, 20 Feb. 2012.

# Formal Response to “Germany's Children Are Hungry!”

- **Contrast between white background and dark outline force emphasis.**
  - The contrast again forces the audience to focus on the children. More specifically, their darkly outlined facial features
- **Lines creating “smudges” and “shadows” that force emphasis.**
  - The dark lines around the children and the bowls create something of a smudge, or perhaps even a shadow
- **Emphasis on children's' faces**
  - The eyes are what are emphasized the most with the dark and thick lines. This will place emphasis on their cold, dead eyes.
- **Empty spaces in the background, rather than a smudge or shadow surrounding the outlines image**
  - Empty spaces allow no room for the audience's eyes to move about the image, looking at a background
- **Facial expressions of sadness and hunger meant to draw emotions**
  - Their eyes are dark, empty. They're cold and dead.



*Kollwitz, Kathe. “Germany's Children are Hungry.”  
Leicer's German  
Expressionism Collection,*



# Cultural Context of “Germany’s Children Are Hungry!”

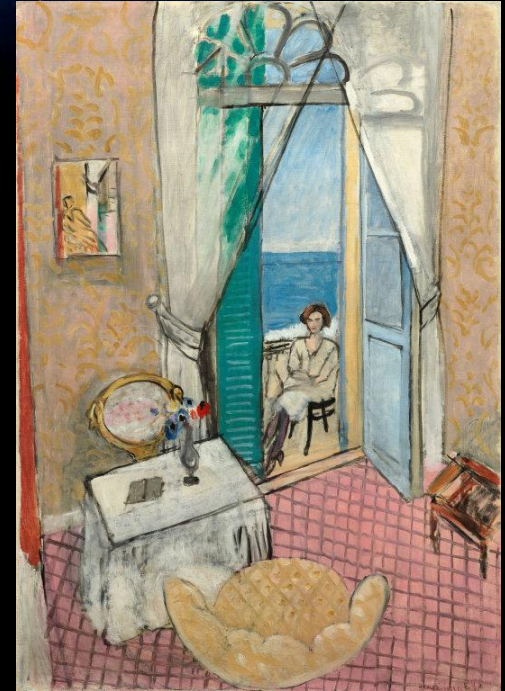
- There was a war currently going on in Germany
  - World War II in Germany, where Kollwitz’s home was destroyed and where she experienced losses.
- Kollwitz is a victim of the war.
  - She lost her siblings at a young age, and in the war lost her husband and son
- Context of the war:
  - Homes were destroyed, food was becoming scarce in the land, children and adults alike were starving.
  - Land was destroyed, causing the scarcity, and loss of homes.
- Depicting tragedy through the space, lines, and emphasis, focusing on the effects of the war surrounding her.
  - By focusing not on the bloodshed itself, but rather the affected people, Kollwitz is able to grab the attention of other affected audiences. She focuses not on the war itself, but its effects instead.
  - This also causes her work to be as grim as the war itself.



Kollwitz, Kathe. “Germany’s Children are Hungry.” Leicer’s German Expressionism Collection,

# Formal Response to “Interior At Nice”

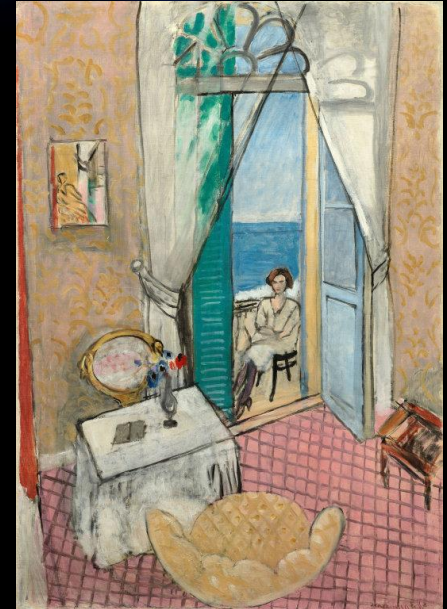
- **Lighter and softer colors create a calm feeling.**
  - Gentle blues in the sky and sea, soft golden on the walls, chair, and balcony. Instead of a strong red on the floor, the red is very soft, which brings a balance of color as well. The white on the table seems transparent, as it is with the curtain as well.
- **He uses a “watercolor” style**
  - The colors are very soft, almost transparent. This has a likeness to watercolors, which require multiple layers to lose transparency, and also are very light and soft.
- **There is a large difference in proportions.**
  - The door to the balcony is extremely tall, not commonly seen in homes. The golden chair is also extremely large compared to the figure on the balcony. The same goes for the table, which also seems excessively tall compared to the figure.
- **Angles seem almost off.**
  - The golden chair at the bottom of the painting is facing straight up at the audience, yet the table in front of it is angled, as is the brown chair on the right. The chair also seems at an opposite angle to the door to the balcony, as if they are tilting in different directions entirely
- **At a place actually called “Nice,” where this work seems to be depicting.**



Matisse, Henri. “Interior at Nice.”  
Henrimatisse,

# Cultural Context of “Interior At Nice”

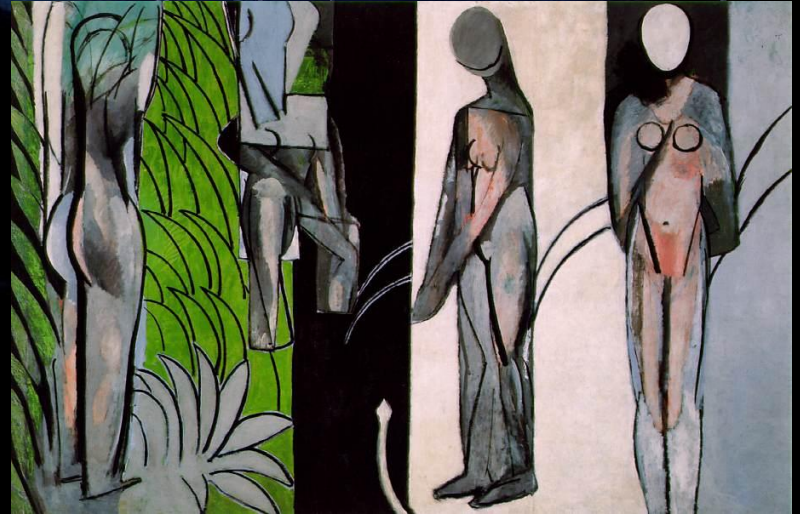
- Similar devices to the times of Degas and Cezanne.
- Western art surrounded him.
- Out of school, and trying to earn a living, and to avoid losing his mind, he went to Etienne, to the Ecole de la ville de Paris, where they were taught painting and sculpture
  - He chose the route of painting.
  - Insanity is something anyone would wish to avoid, and will find an outlet before it's too late. It appears that painting was Matisse's escape and outlet.
- Unable to sell anything
  - Struggling to earn a living as it is, it is also likely his insanity comes from his inability to sell.
- When weary, he walked around Paris
  - Paris is a very beautiful city, known as the city of love. This beauty is likely what Matisse is depicting.



Matisse, Henri. “Interior at Nice.”  
Henrimatisse,

# Formal Response to “Bathers By The River”

- Darker colors are used in this piece.
  - Dark green, black, dark gray
- Smudges are apparent.
  - Appears as if he drips watercolor paints rather than strokes them.
- Background pattern is rough.
  - The background consists of blocks and simple lines, basic outlines of grass.
- Enlarged figures are the main emphasis.
  - The figures are very simple outlines, similar to mere silhouettes. They are filled with simple grays and light reds.
- Farthest left figure is based on Joy of Life.

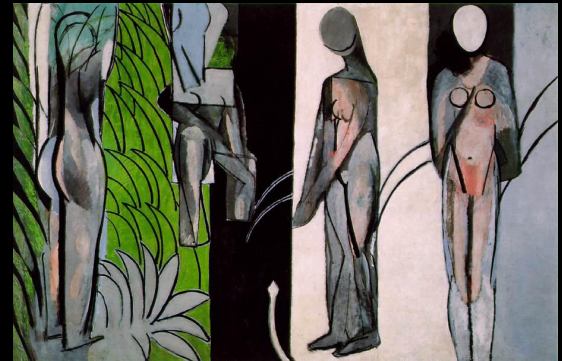


Matisse, Henri. “Bathers by the River.”  
Henrimatisse,

# Cultural Context of “Bathers By The River”

- **Visit to Tangier**
  - Tangier is in Morocco
  - “Became a destination for many European and American diplomats, spies, writers and businessmen.” (Tangier-Wikipedia)
  - “Between the period of being a strategic Berbertown and then a Phoenician trading centre to the independence era around the 1950s, Tangier was a nexus for many cultures” (Tangier-Wikipedia)
- **Sleep problems**
  - He slept badly, having severe insomnia attacks.
  - He can't take sedatives, sedatives send him into a frenzy.
  - He can't sleep stretched out, he has a perfect bed and still can't sleep.
  - He would get up, sit in his armchair, uncomfortable, but doesn't care.
  - He never slept more than 5 hours per night.

Matisse, Henri. “Bathers by the River.”  
Henrimatisse,



## Kathe Kollwitz

- Based on the war in Germany and its victims
- Seems to be sending a message to anyone who will listen
- Shows the emotional effects of the victims throughout the war



Kollwitz, Kathe. "Germany's Children are Hungry." Leicer's German Expressionism Collection,

## Comparing and Contrasting Cultural Context



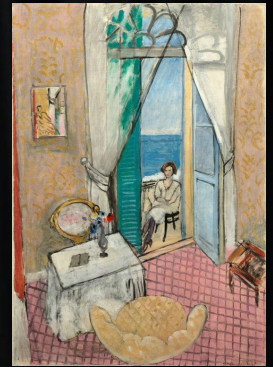
"Woman With Dead Child." Wordpress, 20 Feb. 2012,



Matisse, Henri. "Bathers by the River." Henrimatisse,

## Henri Matisse

- Based on his travels
- Very personal, not based on a culture as a whole, but rather a very small audience, if any audience.
- He was not well known in his time, however he did leave his legacy.



Matisse, Henri. "Interior at Nice." Henrimatisse,

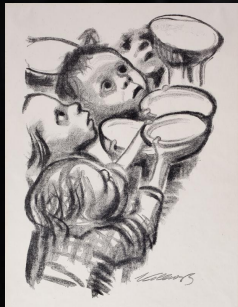
# Comparing and Contrasting Formal Qualities.

“Woman With Dead Child.”  
Wordpress, 20 Feb. 2012,



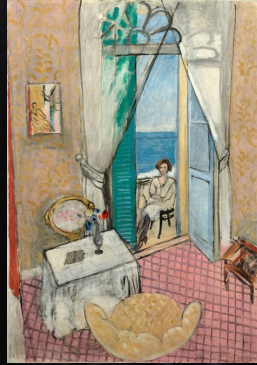
- Black and white
- Details and exact forms
- Extreme emotions of loss and tragedy
- Realistic scenario

Kollwitz, Kathe. “Germany's Children are Hungry.”  
Leicer's German Expressionism Collection,



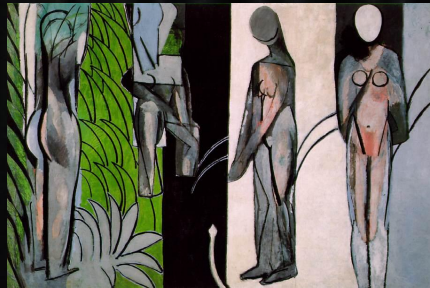
- Emphasis on facial expressions
- Depressing, drawing sympathy
- Slightly elevated angle
- Focused on a single aspect of the war
- Does not fill the entire “canvas”

Matisse, Henri. “Interior at Nice.” Henrimatisse,



- Light-hearted space
- No exact proportions
- Extreme elevations
- Focused on a room rather than an event
- Fills the entire “canvas”

Matisse, Henri. “Bathers by the River.”  
Henrimatisse,



- Uses color in a “watercolor” style
- No faces
- Basic forms
- Exaggerated sizes and proportions
- Unlikely scenario

Wagner, Dan. “The Sentinel.” *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,



- Calm and natural space
- Natural transitions between cool colors that mimic an actual aurora
- Tree and farmhouse are silhouette, making emphasis on the aurora

# Evaluation of Expression of Emotion

## “Interior At Nice”

Matisse, Henri. “Interior at Nice.” Henrimatisse.



- Light and smooth colors and texture implies and laid-back and free-spirited emotion
- Proportions might be connected to the effects of insomnia and sedatives from the injury
- Seems to be based on the room from his “rest” trip at Nice, making a calming mood through light colors and smooth textures

## “Bathers By The River”



Matisse, Henri. “Bathers by the River.” Henrimatisse,

- Cut shapes/figures create an exaggerated scenario that bring almost a surprise to the audience
- Many contrasting sizes and colors could also be from the insomnia and sedatives
- Color, size, shape, and texture seems to be meant to draw the surprise the audience might feel if they saw this scenario in real life

## “Mother With Dead Child”



“Woman With Dead Child.” Wordpress, 20 Feb. 2012,

- Spaces behind forces audience to focus on the figures
- Uses no color to to enhance depressing emotions
- Positions of the figures add additional emotions
- Slightly rough textures draws out the same depression, but in a stronger way

## “Germany’s Children Are Hungry!”

Kollwitz, Kathe. “Germany’s Children are Hungry.” Leicer’s German Expressionism Collection,



- No background “smudges” or “lines” forces audience to focus on the begging children
- Movement in the image forces the audience to see both the faces and the reaching hands
- No color draws the intended emotion of depression
- Shows the sadness and suffering of the starving children



# Comparing and Contrasting use of Emotion



“Woman With Dead Child.” *Wordpress*, 20 Feb. 2012,

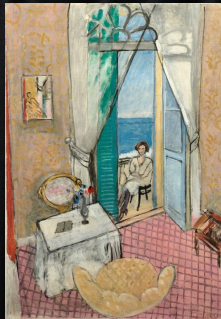


Kollwitz, Kathe. “Germany’s Children are Hungry.” Leicer’s German Expressionism Collection,

- Space behind has “smudges” that create an “aura” of depression
- Exact and realistic figures allow the audience to feel the same emotions through realistic proportions
- No background space forces focus on the children
- Creates a feeling of sympathy
- Sharp contrast of black and white is meant to draw negative emotions from the audience



Matisse, Henri. “Bathers by the River.” *Henrimatisse*,



Matisse, Henri. “Interior at Nice.” *Henrimatisse*,


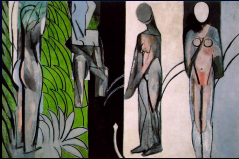


- Bright colors and unrealistic proportions add a sense of ridicule for light-hearted emotions
- Unusual scenario that creates a sense of confusion and surprise, and an almost joy to the audience
- Proportions are off, adding a space for the audience to make a perspective of their own
- Soft and smooth colors and texture adds a sense of relaxation to the audience

Wagner, Dan. “The Sentinel.” *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,

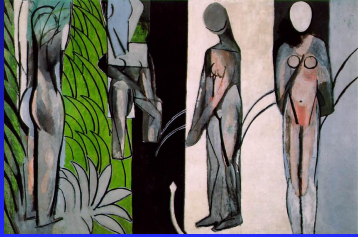


- Cool colors have a calming effect on the human mind
- Natural landscape leave no room for a shock, unlike Kollwitz and Matisse

# Evaluation of Application of Medium

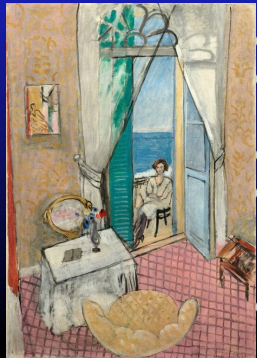
Interior At Nice	Bathers At The River	Woman With Dead Child	Germany's Children Are Hungry!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oil on canvas</li> <li>• Smooth texture and soft colors for a sense of relief</li> <li>• Focus on color and space</li> <li>• Size 52x35in</li> </ul>  <p>Matisse, Henri. "Interior at Nice." Henrimatisse,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oil on canvas</li> <li>• Rough shape and texture with brush</li> <li>• Size 8'7"x12'10"</li> <li>• Focus on color</li> <li>• Mix of "ugly" and very dark colors adds attention to the flow of colors in the natural color.</li> </ul>  <p>Matisse, Henri. "Bathers by the River." Henrimatisse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charcoal and graphite with lithograph</li> <li>• Quick-like lines suggest the sketching of a crying, trembling artist</li> <li>• Focus on (lack of) color</li> </ul>  <p>"Woman With Dead Child." <i>Wordpress</i>, 20 Feb. 2012,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lithograph</li> <li>• 17x27in</li> <li>• Smooth lines suggest a careful model and filtered photo of sorts</li> <li>• Focus on form</li> <li>• Aims more for sympathy than mere advertisement of the problem at hand</li> </ul>  <p>Kollwitz, Kathe. "Germany's Children are Hungry." Leicer's German Expressionism Collection,</p>

# Comparing and Contrasting Application of Medium



Matisse, Henri. "Bathers by the River." Henrimatisse,

- Rough ends add to the texture while the contrasting colors add hue and value
- Strong paint colors challenge perception of natural colors
- Using oil paint allows easy blending and variation
- Natural in color.



Matisse, Henri. "Interior at Nice." Henrimatisse,

- Oil on canvas
- Calming colors, light and soft
- Calm textures
- Using paint allows many shades next to one another
- Smooth shape and transitions



Kollwitz, Kathe. "Germany's Children are Hungry." Leicer's German Expressionism Collection,

- Depressing colors and textures
- Using a lithograph allows exact results
- Uses strongly contrasting shapes and no gradation of shades



"Woman With Dead Child." Wordpress, 20 Feb. 2012,

- Using charcoal and graphite allows shading variation in place of color, while adding a stronger texture to create emotions
- Manipulating shades and shapes
- Natural in shading, shape, and form.

Wagner, Dan. "The Sentinel." *Fine Art America*, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014,



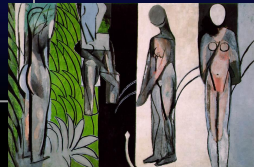
- Use of paint allows mixing and blotting to make the clouded areas of the aurora
- Uses a palette of cool colors to create the realistic aurora and draw the audience to a calm

# Evaluation of Purpose and Function

Interior At Nice	Bathers by the River	Woman With Dead Child	Germany's Children Are Hungry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's possible that based on the colors and style that the purpose was more personal.</li> <li>He painted for sanity, so the colors may be to calm his own mind.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This piece may be representative of his insomnia and the eventual effects it has.</li> <li>As an insomniac, his brain may be trying to sleep during the day, causing tiredness, distortion of the environment, and even hallucinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose is likely to have an outlet for her trauma.</li> <li>The woman could also be her own mother, who lost children as well. If this is the case, the purpose could be to say she can now relate to her mother.</li> <li>Could also be to send a message of the war, its effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose may be to send a message to anyone who will listen.</li> <li>This may also be an outlet, as she is a victim of the war herself.</li> </ul>

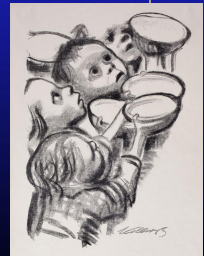
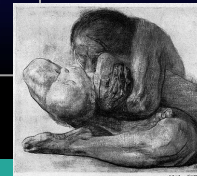


Matisse, Henri.  
"Interior at Nice."  
Henrimatisse,



Matisse, Henri.  
"Bathers by the River."  
Henrimatisse,

"Woman With Dead Child."  
Wordpress, 20 Feb. 2012,



Kollwitz, Kathe.  
"Germany's Children are Hungry."  
Leicer's German Expressionism Collection,

# Formal Introduction to own work

I created the first work, “Discord” using the artist Georges Seurat and the expression levels of Kathe Kollwitz. In this work, I created a series of paintings to represent the past, present, and thoughts of my life. I wanted to express how my destructive past affected what I learned in life and who I am today, but that I will still carve my own path, paint my own life. Kollwitz also draws events she experienced and the effects the event had on others as well as herself.



I created the second piece “Control Yourself” to show what I look like inside my own head. I created the mood using Jackson Pollock’s style of painting, by abandoning the brush entirely for areas of my painting. And like Henri Matisse, I used colors to set the desired mood with acrylic paints.



Kathe Kollwitz based her work on the trauma she experienced in the war in Germany. As a result, her artistic style is very subjective, the war through her eyes. She printed detailed images with accurate shading that creates realistic forms. She also expressed trauma those around her experienced, offering more than one perspective.

Kollwitz also has strong use of emotion. She uses the realism of her forms to force her audience to focus on specific portions of her pieces, such as saddened and hopeless eyes in children, or the mother of a child burying her crying face in her child's body. She wants her audience to feel the same sadness and trauma she experienced.



"Germany's Children Are Hungry!"



"Woman with Dead Child." wordpress.

## Connection to Own Work-Kathe Kollwitz

My artistic style is also based on my past experiences. Like Kollwitz, I use art to express my thoughts and experiences. I try to draw my audience in with form and color, but with my simple style, my work is cartoon-like, very unlike Kollwitz. Also unlike Kollwitz, I only expressed events that I alone experienced. It's completely subjective and only told through my eyes.

My use of emotion is very unlike that of Kollwitz. Few people will understand the "story" behind my work. Thousands of people, if not millions, can relate easily to Kollwitz's work. The emotions my audience may feel heavily depends on how similar their experience is to my own. Unlike Kollwitz, however, I used color to try to draw a reaction from my audience, while Kollwitz used form and shadows. I used dark shades of colors to draw dark emotions from my audience, such as dark blues to draw depression.

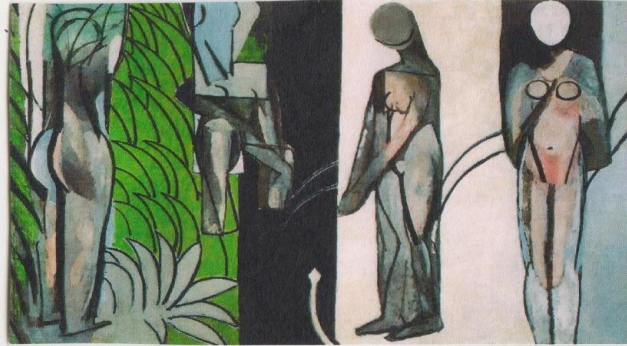


Henri Matisse has a very unique artistic style. He has disproportionate forms in pieces such as "Bathers by the River" while he has high angles with nearly perfect proportions in pieces such as "Interior at Nice." In some of his works, he uses strong colors like greens and browns across the piece, while in other pieces, he uses an almost watercolor style. He doesn't seem to have a set style for form and color, which makes him stand out as an artist. He used very light and soft colors in "Interior at Nice," which can be calming for an audience, unlike "Bathers at the River," which has strong and contrasting colors like green and brown.

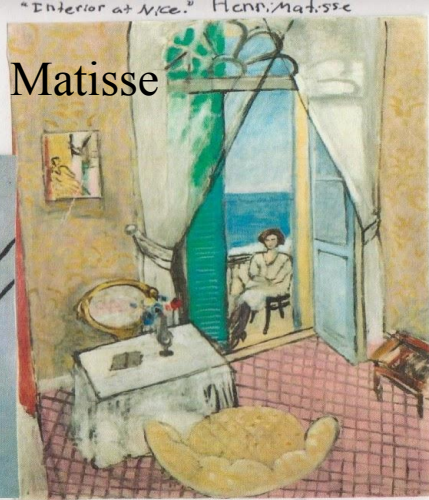
Henri Matisse also varies in his use of emotion. In "Interior at Nice," he used light and soft colors that transition well to one another to create a naturally lit room to calm his audience. This contrasts much with "Bathers by the River," which has flat shapes rather than forms, and sharp cuts between colors rather than transitions, which can surprise the audience.

## Connection to Own Work-Henri Matisse

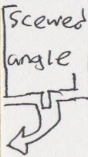
"Bathers by the River" Henri Matisse



No transition of colors for surprise



Disproportionate furniture



Dark blue and black to draw dark emotions from audience such as depression.

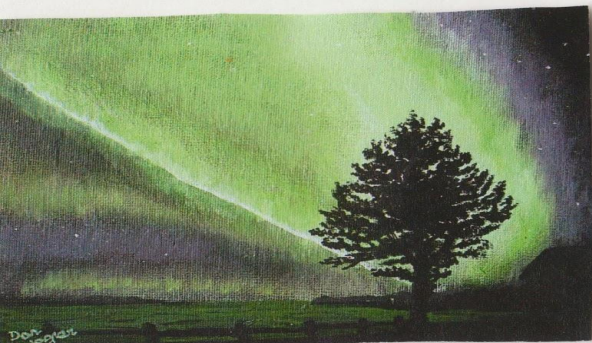


Splatters of yellow to surprise the audience with bright colors.



My own artistic style compares to Matisse's with my use of color. I want my audience to feel a strong emotion, so I used either extremely bright or extremely dark colors. When I wanted the audience to feel surprise, I used bright colors all over the canvas with no transition. We both use colors and shades to create a specific reaction for the audience. Our styles vary with what we want them to feel, but our intentions are the same.

My own use of emotion varies as much as Matisse. We use different colors and shades to force our audience to feel something specific, such as calm or surprise. However, I have a specific audience. I want to speak to those who relate to the experience expressed in the piece. I want my audience to feel a strong emotion through the strong colors used in my pieces.



Wagner, Dan. "The Sentinel" Fine Art America, Dan Wagner, 11 Jan. 2014

Dan Wagner's artistic style is rather unique. His landscape work, example prime being "The Sentinel," shows realism through colors, shapes, and forms. He used the mix of green and purple to reproduce the aurora over the hills. Since he grew up in a farmhouse, a piece like "The Sentinel" is likely based on what he saw in the night as he grew up.

Dan Wagner's use of emotion is rather subtle in this piece. More likely than not, for his landscape pieces, he uses natural colors—greens for the grass, blues for the sky, etc.—because he's used to working with kids who are calmed by that. It's meant to calm an audience.

## Connection to Own Work-Dan Wagner

My own artistic style is rather common. It has little mixing of colors and lacks intricacy. There are few details and has been attempted to be brought to the extremes. This makes the pieces come out messy and unnatural. The skin tones are too dark or too light, items in the pieces are skewed, figure proportions are more than off. This unnatural collection of mistakes are rather consistent, making it my artistic style visually. I also like to paint my experiences growing up, but only wish I was raised in a farmhouse in the middle of nowhere.



My use of emotion is less subtle than Wagner's. I am one of the special ed kids, so I understand how the colors and landscapes he used would calm those he worked with. However, I am the opposite of Wagner when it comes to the intended emotions. I also use color and setting to draw out emotion, however, I want to draw out surprise, anger, or sadness/depression from my audience instead of calm, so I use yellows, reds, and/or blues to get my audience to feel the emotions associated with those colors.





# Connection to Own Work: Influences from the artists

**Kathe Kollwitz is my favorite artist. Her work relates to a majority of people, as they have gone through what she has, and even people who haven't been a victim of the war themselves can see what the life of a victim looks like. I looked up to her blunt expressions. Previously, my work looked light-hearted but was simply a code for an actual experience. She inspired me to give blunt expression a try, and I have been doing ever since.**

**Henri Matisse has such a broad scale of styles throughout his work. He has calm, soft "watercolor" styles, like in "Interior at Nice" and he has choppy, almost abstract styles like in "Bathers By the River." This actually influenced me by convincing me to give that kind of wide-scale style a try.**

**Dan Wagner is someone I met in person at an event called "Art in the Park" back in the spring. His work caught my eye right off the bat. I tried so hard to do landscapes, and couldn't pull it off, and here he had these amazing works of landscapes. I found myself overcome by a strange calm, yet also a sense of wonder.**

**My discovering of all of these artists originated in my IB classes, and the influences of these artists are a descendant of that. Had I not discovered these artists, I might not have grown in my own artwork, nor would I have discovered my favorite artist, Kathe Kollwitz.**