
An Examination Of John Steele's Photography Piece Alphen Moon

Gallery Stroll 1

The piece of art that I found most interesting was Alpen Moon by John Steele. It was a photography piece on display at Art Access. I chose this particular piece because it is a landscape image that looks much like the land where I like to hang around in Wyoming. It shows sagebrush covered desert, with large tree covered hills in the background, and a rising moon. It also shows horses near the bottom of the photo. They are presumably wild horses.

One of the things I found most interesting about the piece was that the art extended beyond just the photograph. The frame that John Steele chose was wood that looks old and worn down, much like wood from old corrals or fences one might find in a desert landscape. I thought it added nicely to the piece, and brought the viewer into the scene even more.

The art definitely resonated with me. My favorite state is Wyoming because of the open land where a person can go, and truly be alone. The picture looks exactly like an area in Wyoming that I know of, and spent much of my childhood fishing at a nearby lake. The picture gives me a feeling of tranquility.

One part of the photo that added to the tranquil feeling was the pink hue of the hills. Since the photo shows a rising moon, I can assume the pink hill tops are caused by a sunset. Having experienced numerous desert sunsets, I know that they are peaceful and quiet, and bring one in touch with the surrounding environment.

One theme I noticed in all of the photos that John Steele had on display were horses. Every photo had horses in it, some as the main subjects of the photo, and others where the horses added to the photo. Alpen Moon was a photo where the horses were not the main subject of the photo, since they were near the bottom, and small in comparison to the landscape. Perhaps one criticism of the photograph that I have is that there were horses in the photo. One of the things I like about landscape photography is that the photos show remote places that look untouched by humans. For me, the horses show that people have been in contact with the environment, even if the horses are wild. If I were to take a similar photograph and wanted animals in it, I would choose native animals such as deer or antelope. For me, that would add to the element of remoteness and tranquility the photograph brings. However, I understand that for John Steele, horses may add to feeling of tranquility.

The photograph does inspire me to make more art. I took a photography class in high school, and my favorite unit from the class was when we did landscape photography. It helped me to look at the surrounding area in a different way than I usually do. While I was looking at the piece in the gallery, I was thinking about my previous trip over fall break to Wyoming, and thinking about the different scenes I saw and how I might have been able to photograph them. Even though I prefer to avoid as much technology as I can in Wyoming, I am considering bringing a camera with me on my next trip to capture the landscape.

The photo relates to what we have done in class in several ways. First off, it shows a great use of space. There is something going on in every part of the photo, all the way from the sky, to the bottom where the horses are. It really leads a viewer's eyes through the whole piece. The photo also shows several of the principles of design, but I think it shows harmony the best. From the blue sky, to the pink hillside, to the light brown of the desert below, it combines these parts to create a wonderful piece. Lastly, the photo shows another principle of design, contrast. The tree line separates the desert, from where the higher elevation of the hill begins. And the darker toned hill also shows contrast from the light blue sky.

Overall, the photo was interesting to me, just because it reminds me of where I like to be whenever I can. Although I do have criticisms of it, I like the piece. It gives me a sense of tranquility, and leads my eye through the whole piece, even beyond the photo itself.

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