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Carl Warner – Foodscapes

The photographer Carl Warner is widely known in Europe for many of his unique photographs, but none are as popular as his "foodscapes". These composite photographs of edible subjects that are placed together compose a full landscape image. I have selected his photograph "hot air balloons" to represent his foodscapes for analysis.

The first things that will draw the eye of the viewer in this photograph is cart filled with berries. It is bursting with color and appears to be the only non-food item in the photograph, until you look closer and realize that the wheel is the head of a mushroom and the rest of the cart is assembled from granola bars. The next objects likely to catch the eye are the hot air balloons, which will only fool the viewer for a moment, as it is soon realized that they are strawberries, onions, bananas and a variety of other fruits. I believe that Warner pushes believability of the scene with some of the fruits he picked. The strawberry and the apple jump out as being shapes that would never occur for balloons of any type. An artist of his expertise likely knows that, and I feel he does this to draw attention to what he has done, which I feel is very unnecessary in this piece.

The use of the broccoli tree is a genius creation. It provides the type of analogy that is required as a "hint" to what this photograph is to represent. Broccoli mirrors trees in everything they do except for their shape. They grow, they branch and they lose their foliage in exactly the same way. By capturing an angle of the broccoli where the structure can be clearly seen he is showing this analogy quite plainly, which makes things like his wheat field of corn pop out to provoke thought about the relationships between corn and

wheat in the normal size world. The use of herbs as only an accent to the overall work is another very intelligent choice he made. Herbs hide quietly in most meals, as they do in the photograph; just a few leaves of basil for ground-cover and a few stems of parsley as a barely visible branch of an oak tree.

My favorite part of this photograph is the village directly lifted from Van Gogh's "Starry Night". It is perhaps the true subject of the piece, but just like "Starry Night", it goes hidden beneath other features and the splendor of the technique of the artist. In both situations the village is hidden by whatever is going on in the sky. Van Gogh made his village stand out by having the only straight lines in the work, Warner makes his stand out by being the nearly the only thing not from something that grows. There is a distinction between the fields and earth and the cheese houses.

Overall this composition shows Warner's skill as a photographer and as an artist in general. Warner built this photograph from many shots that were carefully arranged to be compatible with each other. Shadows had to be considered, and depth had to be preserved in everything. I feel that the piece has a natural feel to it because of Warner's previous expertise as a photographer, before he attempted to take on a project this complex.

I originally became attached to this piece because it is a wonderful use of texture. All of this textures have been put together to become something entirely new. This piece inspired me to look in new places for texture and pattern for my final project.

In closing, I love this piece and even after a few weeks of searching I have found no piece more inspiring or that makes me smile as quickly.

