

Art Examining the Issues Surrounding African Wildlife Conservation:

Artist Statement

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Artists draw from their own lives and interests to create art that is meaningful and can convey a message important to the creator and the viewer. Having the opportunity to create a body of work for the semester is a challenge for myself as an artist as I investigate what it is that I want to articulate to an audience. My themes for this project are: realism, portraiture, and African wildlife conservation.

First of all, the animal subjects of the portraits will be original images of a giraffe, a golden oriole bird, and a Sykes monkey. These animals represent the diverse wildlife that can be found in Africa. These animals are of inspiration to me and news stories of their demise are deeply troubling. Many issues including climate change, deforestation, resource extraction, poaching, and urban sprawl are causing many species to slide toward extinction. As an animal lover, I feel distressed over the negative human impact has had on habitats. It seems in the world today that there is more and more news of animals becoming endangered or going completely extinct. I fear that very soon in the future, the only place to see many species of African wildlife will be in a natural history textbook, a museum, or a zoo. To explore these themes of wildlife conservation I have used many different sources for research and inspiration. On the wildlife issues: I gained some of the best information from the “African Wildlife Foundation” as well as the Netflix series “Our Planet” that focuses on how climate change is affecting all of earths living creatures.

My artistic interest is in hyper-realism so I know that the size of the canvas is important, and every inch of surface can be worth hours of work. I find realism to be the ultimate challenge and I want to refine my abilities to the point where I can create works that people will question if they are photographs. For this reason, I have studied painters that focus on realism and have found tremendous inspiration from artists such as Lu Cong, Joel Rea, and Robin Eley.