

“home on the mississippi”

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“ Home on the Mississippi" Brian Stewart's oil painting, “ Home on the Mississippi", is an exceptional piece of artwork from the culture it unfolds to the characteristic composition of how it was made. “ Home on the Mississippi" is beautifully painted with oil onto canvas, colors exuberating realistic features and setting the mood. The painting portrays the reality of America in the late 1800's. Picking a piece of artwork that I appreciate was easy for me. I turned my attention directly to the old American painting hanging in my Great Grandmothers hallway; “ Home on the Mississippi" because of its realistic features, composition, and the most important part; the story it makes known. When looking at a painting I enjoy the story that unfolds especially when it has to do with our country's history, like this piece of Stewarts'. This asymmetrical painting is set somewhere close to the 1800's turn of the century into the 1900's along the Mississippi River. Set off Latch Island, north of Winona is the once authentic landscape of a rundown boathouse built next to a majestic bridge crossing the river. The homely boathouse that is situated on the edge of the river almost directly under a then futuristic industrial bridge is one of several up and down the waterway that people lived in year round due to hard work for low wages. Although countless American people were suffering through a weak economy, the country itself was blossoming into what would change our country forever. In addition, I noticed underneath the bridge, boats are traveling up and down the river, probably shipping goods between the North and South. The impulsive representational artwork portrays the trying period individual Americans went through but how they were also advancing in industrializing as a country at the time expanding westward to form the

great United States of America. This was a time in our history that helped shape our country into one of the most successful countries in the world. I respect the artists' strokes of his oil paintbrush are prominent in the painting; the short brushstrokes are repetitive throughout its entirety. I am astonished by this design in how the artist can make such short subtle brushstrokes come together to form a painting with great unity. He keeps his colors mostly neutral with just a few bright pigments for the trees to depict the reality of the natural setting. I enjoy how oil coats the Mississippi River, bridge, sky, and home on the canvas with many shades of gray, white, and blue subtly blended. The atmospheric perspective demonstrates a grand implied light blue sky filled with blurry clouds above numerous green pigmented hillsides. The shadows on the hillsides from the clouds above are one of the realistic features of the artwork. The boats underneath the bridge, also part of the atmospheric perspective, draw me in, letting my imagination run wild with how they may look close up, or what the men working on them are currently doing. Perhaps the steel framed bridge is what draws me into the painting the most. Starting at the front right of the painting, the bridge has a linear perspective falling to the back left; diminishing in size. I believe this brings the painting to life, giving it a three dimensional look. I like paintings that are more naturalistic instead of abstract and because of the linear perspective I feel as though I am standing on the dock next to the boathouse observing the unique structure of the bridge. Overall, Stewarts' exuberating naturalistic painting is one I have immense appreciation for. The composition, culture, and storyline make this artwork suitable as a favorite of mine.