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COMD 1340 OL98 Edward Burtynsky

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For this essay I have decided to write about photographer Edward Burtynsky. He is well known for his comprehensive landscape views that are distorted by piles of scrap, quarries, and tailings of mines. Throughout this essay, I will be going over his biographical background, why I choose to write about him and describing one of his photos.

Edward Burtynsky was born in Ontario, Canada in 1955, after his parents migrated there in 1951. During his childhood he and his father practiced making monochrome photo prints after a widow sold her husband's darkroom and camera equipment to them. He gained a BAA in photography/Media Studies from Ryerson University in 1982. Eventually, Burtynsky found work at a printing press company in 1970; it was also around this time that he joined Niagara College to avail a graphic arts diploma. Also, he gained inspiration for his photographs by viewing work done by artists Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, Carleton Watkins and Eadweard Muybridge at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

I chose Edward Burtynsky because I found his photographs to be fascinating. When I was researching him, I was amazed by his photographs. I have a strong love for landscapes and nature, therefore when I saw his photos, I was instantly captivated. His photos are beautiful and magnificent. The way Burtynsky captures the landscapes is fascinating, they

almost make you think that you are viewing them in real life; or they make you feel like you are flying through the sky and viewing them.



Salinas #3 Cadiz, Spain, 2013. Edward Burtynsky, worldwildlife.org

Regarding his photographs, the one I want to discuss most is his photograph of *Salinas Cadiz, Spain, 2013*. The subject matter of the photo is the river streams of Spain and the content is the way water shapes our landscapes; and how we are causing harm to the environment. The thing that strikes me about the photo is how Burtynsky captures the textures of the land. In the lower part of the photo, the green textures of the algae are breathtaking, and the lighting of the river streams is well done. The photo is also very vibrant in colors. Regarding to what I relate to in the photo I would say that I love nature. The photo has

my favorite color which is green and if you look at it in a different angle, the landscape almost looks like a tree with leaves.

This leads up to what Burtynsky is trying to show. As stated earlier, Burtynsky is trying to show his concerns for the environment; but he is also trying to show the beauty of the world through his photographs. On the website *edwardburtynsky.com*, he mentions “My hope is that these pictures will stimulate a process of thinking about the something essential to our survival; something we often take for granted-until it’s gone.” Then in the article about the book *Water* by Edward Burtynsky, it mentions “Do these pictures represent the achievement of humanity or one of its greatest faults or both?” In other words, Burtynsky is trying to show how beautiful the world is with landscapes such as water, and why we should be more understanding of what we are destroying through our engineering. He wants people to be considerate to the world so that we do not end up destroying it and destroying ourselves.

Finally, Burtynsky adds the meaning of the photo through his use of compositional elements. Burtynsky used birds eye view, lighting and use of line to move the eye through image. The way the photo is taken is using bird’s eye view making us see the landscape as if we are a bird flying through the sky. The lighting he used is natural light given that he took this photograph on a helicopter using a digital camera with high resolution, therefore he had to use natural sunlight. But I can tell that he edited this photo given how vibrant and clean the water looks. Finally, the way he captures the river streams makes them appear as if they are leading you to something. These elements help convey and emphasis the meaning of the photo by showing the beauty within the landscape. They help show the some of the worlds landmarks that people tend to overlook or take for granted, so I believe that these elements help Burtynsky get his message across.

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