



Comparative Study

Angie Fuentes

This comparative study will be analyzing Polish, surrealist painter, Jacek Yerka's *Underwater Life* and *Ink Valley*, and Italian, futurist painter, Fortunato Depero's *Skyscrapers and Tunnels*. I will analyze the artists' usage of **color**, and detail into creating the artwork, connecting to themselves or to the time period it was created.

Analysis of Cultural Significance of Fortunato Depero



Fortunato Depero / *Magnesia S. Pellegrino* / 1930 /
Poster Print / 100 x 70 cm /
<https://drehergraphicdesign.wordpress.com/fortunato-depero/>



Fortunato Depero / *Città meccanizzata dalle ombre* / 1920 / oil on canvas /
<https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>

Italian, futurist artist Fortunato Depero is heavily influenced by his surroundings such as in *Grattacieli e tunnel* (*Skyscrapers and tunnels*) that was based on New York City when he was there for two years. *Città meccanizzata dalle ombre* (*City Mechanized by Shadows*) is similar to the previous one because it is based on when he went to Rome.

Both have very bold shapes and **color** similar to *Magnesia S. Pellegrino* that was a poster for an advertisement. Depero worked with different mediums but the ones shown here see a pattern of the way he has a bright **color**, many geometric shapes, and flat style to them. It seems that the one made in 1920 has bright **colors** that pop brilliantly compared to the ones made the next decade. It has a point of view where one could see the shadows and know where the light is coming from, but with the ones from 1930, have a solid black background with slight shadowing but is given a more flat look.

There is a noticeable difference of style within that decade such as the usage of angles is eliminated later on, but how the image to the left used angles and made the things more organic by not having them fully straight lined when presenting the poles and buildings. It gives it a more lively sense, where things have a sense of movement with the shadows and the distance shown here compared to *Grattacieli e tunnel* and *Città meccanizzata dalle ombre*.



Fortunato Depero / *Grattacieli e tunnel* / 1930 / tempera on cardboard /
68 x 102 cm <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>

Interpretation of Function and Purpose of *Skyscrapers and Tunnels*

The many slanted buildings going at many directions and the tunnels at the bottom going straight or down, show a lot of **movement** and **shapes** that Depero was heavily influenced by New York City. It gives more of a way to look at the city in the liveliness of pop **colors** and its more chaotic vibe of the way New York City is to be said is a city that never sleeps.

Given with the black background, the time of day can't be said but it doesn't stop the skyscrapers from giving bright **colors**. Also at the bottom of one of the buildings, it has a sign "Roxy Teatro" as a reference to Roxy Theater in New York.



Fortunato Depero / *Grattacieli e tunnel* / 1930 / tempera on cardboard / 68 x 102 cm <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.

Depero uses very geometric shapes and bold, brilliant **colors** that still give it a somewhat flat look to the art piece. He gives a look into how he saw New York City without giving much **movement**, but showing the directions, of how it can go anywhere metaphorically meaning as the city can give unexpected surprises and it isn't just a simple road to take on. He gives darker, bold **colors** for the tunnels to represent more of the subways, such as going down and waiting at the sides.

Analysis of Formal Qualities of *Skyscrapers and Tunnels*

Background **color** contrasts the cold toned **colors** for the main piece. Is made of just one bold black with no detail. Goes with the bold, thick lines at the bottom.



The skyscraper area of artwork has many angled geometric **shapes** with some some circular **shapes** to the left and right and some small in the middle. It also has lighter **colors** that can represent the way skyscrapers get more sunlight compared to the tunnels

The tunnel section of the artwork is more of a darker tone to show more of the lack of light it gets, having them bolder, darker **colors**. Something else are the usage of semi circles used, making it seem like it has more circular shapes than geometric.

Depero shows an **balance** between the upper and lower areas by having the top area with a black, bold background and brighter **colors** compared to tunnel area. This splits it apart as the skyscrapers staying at the top where there is negative spaces as the background and the bottom having only tunnels with darker tones of **color**.



Analysis of Cultural Significance of Jacek Yerka



Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.yerkaland.com/paintings-galleries/imaginary-landscapes/nggallery/image/52/>



Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-yerka/underwater-life>

Jacek Yerka used as his inspiration, his own surreal visions and childhood souvenirs of places he has been. He already had a background connected to the arts, seeing as his parents were artists themselves.

Instead of connecting these pieces directly to specific things, Yerka would use as an escape from reality, such as he didn't enjoy the outdoors, but proceeded to make several surreal landscapes. Such as using the just the examples provided here on this slide, two of them consist of floating islands of sort.

Albrecht Durer was also one of his artist inspirations that can be connected to some of his work's **color** scheme with heavy usage of shades of yellow. Yet still had its differences from Durer mainly because Yerka does more of landscapes rather than people. Also their angles are very similar because most of their artworks give the centered straightforward point of view of the scene captured.



Jacek Yerka / Ink Valley / 2012 / acrylic painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-yerka/ink-valley-2012>



Jacek Yerka / spring labyrinth / painting / <https://www.yerkaland.com/paintings-galleries/imaginary-landscapes/nggallery/image/56/>

Interpretation of Function and Purpose of *Underwater Life*

Yerka shows the surrealism in this painting from the floating piece of land at the top that seems to have withold another forest underneath it that was darker. From one way of interpreting it, the lifted area was previously surrounded by water but once it was lifted, the water was being sucked up too. It can be shown from the movement in the water as how it is going up making up a barrier wall to enclose the lower forest except for the bottom entrance in the middle.



The main inspiration Yerka is said to use is his imagination, and with that it already gives the surrealism style more reasoning as to why he uses it. From the floating crumbled land, to the already crumbled surrounding area why the water that seems to have dried up from and has some water in the cracks of it.

This can be thought of more as a decorative piece, that gives an inside to Yerka's imagination and one of his artist inspirations, Hieronymus Bosch. The contrasting thing from them is that Yerka does more of landscapes and nature unlike his inspiration painting more people into his art pieces.



Analysis of Formal Qualities of *Underwater Life*



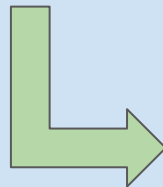
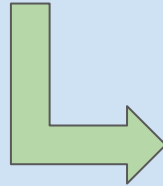
Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/underwater-life>

On the horizontal line, the background has a split as the balance of top being very light, soft and blended with the light blue and yellow, as for the bottom it is more rough. From the texture shown at the bottom with a light brown, it captures the dry land of crumbled rock all surrounding the watered area.

With the title itself, with the buildings being surrounded by the water, the shading that makes the back black shows depth within the forest of the underwater area.

On the vertical line, it shows a symmetrical balance of things cut right down the middle. There are only minor differences such as there's more lifted water on the right compared to the left. Other than that it can be pleasing to the eye because of the symmetry shown.

The color of both the building the top and bottom are inverted views of one another, one being a brighter green, while the other one is darker at the bottom showing the depth of the shadows of the place.



Interpretation of Function and Purpose of *Ink Valley*

Given from the title *Ink Valley*, what can be seen if the desk in the middle surrounded by several piles of book that have fallen from their shelves. There doesn't seem to be a chair but there is instead a stream of water with many paper boats. There shows movement of boats but it can be up to the viewer whether they are headed into the depth of the painting or towards the viewer. Focusing on the pastel colors of the sky, it seems to be a sunrise since the colors are lighter and if it were to be a sunset the color would be more bold than soft. This can be interpreted (in addition with the tea cup) that someone was working/reading until morning, surrounded by chaos that is their work.

The little boats can be thought of boredom or source of entertainment as a break to move their mind from work, into something else. The water can be thought of as something beside work thoughts, overflowing or can be tears too. Having the several piles of books can also go three ways whether it is the amount of work needed to be done, their mind being disorganized but with a massive amount of knowledge, or just the amount that is still left to read after the book on the desk. Going back to the second possibility, the desk seems to be the only organized thing which can be an inside as to how Yerka can be focused on the main object in front of him (on the desk), even if the rest of his mind is all over the place.

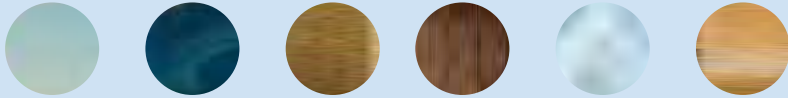


Jacek Yerka / Ink Valley / 2012/ acrylic painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/ink-valley-2012>

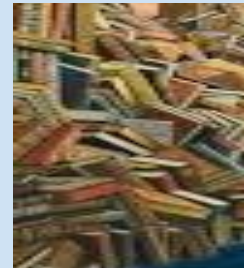


Analysis of Formal Qualities of *Ink Valley*

Background colors have a very light hue to them that shows a soft, pastel sky on the top half. It then also adds some details with the clouds having a little darker shade at the top to show the angle of the artwork. Compared to the bottom half that doesn't show the sky but has stream of water right in the middle of it. Contrasting the yellow wooden shades with the cyan water.



There is some symmetry to this artwork from the given piles of books and the bookshelves making it slightly asymmetrical from the number of shelves on each side and their size.



The shapes used for the details, are mainly geometric such as the shelves and books but the shading and color make them more realistic from the details on the book covers and spine.

Comparison of Formal Qualities: Depero & Yerka



Fortunato Depero / *Grattacieli e tunnel* / 1930 / *tempera on cardboard* / 68 x 102 cm <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.

Both have buildings and structure of some sort. Depero's has like mentioned in the title of it, skyscrapers and tunnels. Yerka's has small buildings that blend into the environment surrounding it.

Both went evenly cut vertically and horizontally through the middle and have symmetrical looks to them when cut evenly through it. Depero has the skyscrapers at the top half and Yerka has the floating piece at the top too. Both still having some structure at the bottom.

When looking at them from the base outlines of things, they have a geometrical shape when cutting the pieces apart. Yerka has triangular forms and Depero has more parallelogram.



Jacek Yerka / *City is landing* / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-yerka/underwater-life>

Depero and Yerka have a more in depth detail where it doesn't look as flat and gives an angle as to seeing further into the distance. Such as making the forest in the bottom darker the farther it gets from the front view.

Comparison of Formal Qualities: Depero & Yerka



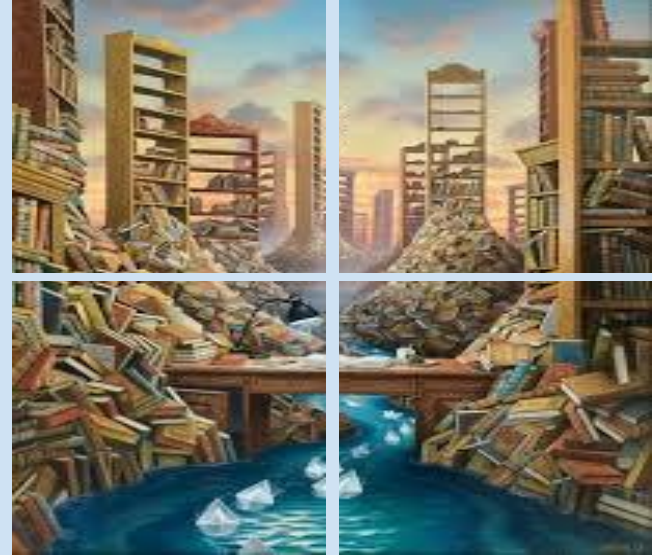
Fortunato Depero / *Grattacieli e tunnel* / 1930 / *tempera on cardboard* / 68 x 102 cm <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.

The **color** scheme of things is fairly similar of using a lot of warm **color** at the top half of the images. Especially with the yellows used in both art pieces. The difference between them is the texture and shades of them one being more flat and the other is shaded with more depth.

Both are symmetrical when cut down the middle vertically, but when cutting it horizontally, both have a bottom section that isn't similar to the top. Depero has tunnels and Yerka has a river with a pile of books and a desk.



The bottom section of both have cool **colors** such as the river and the inside of the tunnels. Giving a balance from their upper areas filled with warmer **colors**.



Jacek Yerka / *Ink Valley* / 2012/ *acrylic painting* / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/ink-valley-2012>

Both sustain some type of structures. They appear to be tall and rectangular, only having it on the upper half of the art piece. Because of this, it gives a firm geometric look at the upper part. The lower part being more organic and flowy.

Comparison of Formal Qualities: Yerka & Yerka



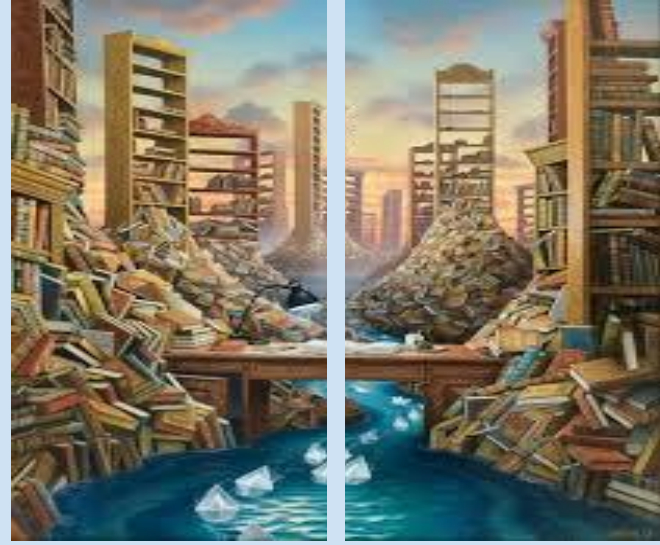
Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/underwater-life>

They contain some type of body of water, one being a river and the other becoming like a reversed waterfall.

Both of Yerka's artworks have some type of structure that are vertical and not slanted in the base of things.

Both are fairly symmetrical when cut down in the middle vertically. Revealing that from these two and from many of the other works Yerka has created, he tends to make them very symmetrical that appeals to the eyes compared to the actual outside nature that is very asymmetrical, and organic.

Both artworks have a **color** palette of soft toned **colors**, such as the sky both containing a blend of blues with yellows. Between them it has fairly similar shades of those **colors**, and the usage of them is similar, where the blue is used for the source of water. The yellow tones are used more as some part of the structure such as *City is landing* uses it as the bottom of the floating base, and *Ink Valley* is more for the shelves scattered around this place.



Jacek Yerka / Ink Valley / 2012/ acrylic painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/ink-valley-2012>

Both show some type of distant view such as the lower half of underwater life gets darker to the back and ink valley becoming lighter.

Contrast of Formal Qualities: Depero & Yerka

Depero's is more of a slanted disorganized but yet organized type of look with the structure of it not being fully vertical but instead it's stuck altogether.

The **color** scheme in this and style has Depero more in a pop **color** mode and Yerka with a more natural tone to the environment it has.

Yerka on the other hand has a more organized look to it such as the symmetry being more noticeable as it looks more mirrored. He makes it appealing to the eye when seeing it as whole it looks the same both sides but in reality it has minor differences.

Yerka's had both on the top and bottom similar things such as the buildings blended into the forest but one is darker and the other one is lighter.



Fortunato Depero / Grattacieli e tunnel / 1930 / tempera on cardboard / 68 x 102 cm
<https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.



Depero's is more city themed as it was influenced by New York, and Yerka had a more natural landscape of sort. Depero has very bold **colors** giving the piece more of a lively energy, but Yerka's has more of a natural peace vibe



Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting /
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-yerka/underwater-life>

Contrast of Formal Qualities: Depero & Yerka

Skyscrapers and Tunnels has the buildings more vertical and clashing with one another and Yerka has been all more distant with each other but still has a pile of books below.

Something that has a main difference is the background, how Depero has a solid black background and Yerka has a blended blue, yellow, pinkish sky with clouds.

Given from the different types of styles art, Depero has a pop art look that makes it more bold and somewhat flat with some shading but Yerka is more a surreal look to it with more detail into it such as the far distance look and detailing to the books. The reason for this is because Yerka is a surrealist artist and Depero is a futurism artist.



Fortunato Depero / *Grattacieli e tunnel* / 1930 / tempera on cardboard / 68 x 102 cm
<https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>

Something else is the movement like in the water of Ink Valley, unlike in Skyscrapers and Tunnels which doesn't have movement and it more still, in place. As much as there is more movement in Yerka's *Ink Valley*, Depero's *Grattacieli e tunnel* still has a feeling more lively, from the way he used the color to show New York and Yerka has more peace within it. From the angles used as well, it made Depero's seem taller, and Yerka's more as a standard size.



Jacek Yerka / *Ink Valley* / 2012 / acrylic painting /
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/ink-valley-2012>

Contrast of Formal Qualities: Yerka & Yerka

The **color** palette in Underwater Life is more in the brown, green, blue, with yellow hues on some areas, unlike Ink Valley that has more of a variety of **colors** used like in the sky, and books in the piles.

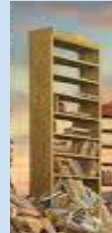
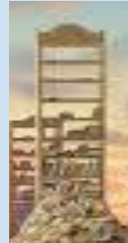
Underwater Life is more of a landscape, surreal artwork that has more of an earthy look to it even if it has a floating piece of forest and water rising from the cracks. Ink Valley is more like a man-made object filled with a more tamed body of water.

Underwater Life has more organic shapes to it such as the more of the trees and the outline of the water rising around the under forest.



Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-yerka/underwater-life>

Ink Valley is more geometric shapes with the books and the bookshelves that tower over them. The most organic part of it the shape of the river flow going under the desk.



Jacek Yerka / Ink Valley / 2012 / acrylic painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-yerka/ink-valley-2012>

Formal Qualities Comparison to Personal Art: Fortunato Depero



Angie Fuentes / City and Circles / 2021 / Wood burning

The geometrical look is still consistent in both of the art pieces, only difference being the frame shape of it where *City and Circles* has a very organic shape frame and *Grattacieli e tunnel* has a rectangular frame.

City and Circles heavily references *Grattacieli e tunnel* (Skyscrapers and tunnels) as shown in images, the smaller differences is the details and sign it has in the middle where I put "MKE" to add my own city and connection to me such as how he did with New York.



Fortunato Depero / Grattacieli e tunnel / 1930 / tempera on cardboard / 68 x 102 cm <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.

The intention with *Grattacieli e tunnel* Depero used colors to show how New York seemed very lively. In *City and Circles*, I was showing more of a minimum look to the piece, only using the lines, and shading to the sides of some of the buildings.

Formal Qualities Comparison to Personal Art: Jacek Yerka



Angie Fuentes / Shelves and Space / 2021 / Embroidery 12 inches



Jacek Yerka / Ink Valley / 2012 / acrylic painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/ink-valley-2012>

The top sections are an example of the similarity but medium giving them different senses. Such as the background as well, where Yerka gives a soft look to it whereas mine is white, in order to focus on the objects instead so they pop out more.

In my piece, *Shelves and Space* it has a more lively look to it because of the texture, making it pop more where one can sense what it would feel like.

The medium used between these give different textures to the art pieces, such as Yerka's gives a surreal feeling to it, very smooth and and peace.

Formal Qualities Comparison to Personal Art: Jacek Yerka



Angie Fuentes / Shelves and Space / 2021 / Embroidery 12 inches

The difference between *Shelves and Space* and *City is landing* is the **color** palette used for each. Yerka uses more of earthy tones, such as greens, blues, browns, and yellows. Whereas I used yellows, but also variety of browns such as dark brown and burnt umber. Others were darker blues, reds, orange, and some pinks at the farther areas.

Shaping of the frame and the symmetry these two have are different from the way the one on the left it circular but is framed with two straight sides and two semi circles. Yerka's is more like a square, and more noticeably symmetrical.



Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/underwater-life>



Both of these pieces have some type of body of water where Yerka uses a lot of this in many of his pieces. Many of his landscapes contain some type of water, where here it is used more differently than other times. Yerka uses it more as a barrier, almost like an upside dome shield for the forest it hold within it.



Cultural Comparison to Personal Art: Fortunato Depero



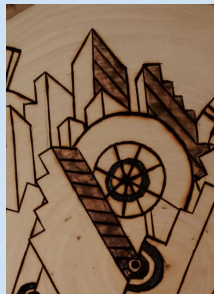
The usage of **color** was different from each other, where *City and Circles* was more about using lines from wood burning, and *Grattacieli e tunnel* used **color** and different medium to express his memory of New York.

I used it as a heavy reference to my own city, and used wood burning as the medium because it is something my family dabs into every once in a while and they have done some work as well with this medium. It is a connection to my identity and as to the culture I grew up in, and that I wanted to learn more about.



Angie Fuentes / *City and Circles* / 2021 / Wood burning

This medium is something I wanted to use to try a different medium out of my comfort zone and used shades to do lighting without going so dark like the outlines.



Fortunato Depero / *Grattacieli e tunnel* / 1930 / tempera on cardboard / 68 x 102 cm <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.

Cultural Comparison to Personal Art: Jacek Yerka



Angie Fuentes / Shelves and Space / 2021 / Embroidery 12 inches

I connected to my culture by doing embroidery, which is something my family from Mexico would do a lot so I decided to make something with it too. Such as using the threads in different directions to create the texture I was aiming for.



Yerka made many of this imaginary landscaped based from just his mind. Both of ours are connected to our minds but in different ways. Such as how Yerka makes these based his imagination, mine was more to represent my state of mind, being all over the place. Giving a sense of disorganization with scattered books yet they don't land on the water.



Jacek Yerka / City is landing / painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/underwater-life>



Jacek Yerka / Ink Valley / 2012 / acrylic painting / <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jacek-verka/ink-valley-2012>

Yerka seemed to use painting as his main medium such as how his parents were artists too, continuing the legacy within the family. It goes from generation to generation, such as how I too continued art like my dad once did.

Bibliography

Center for Italian Modern Art. "Depero and the Metropolis." *Center for Italian Modern Art*, 9 May 2019, <https://www.italianmodernart.org/depero-and-the-metropolis/>.

"Fortunato Depero: Biography." *Fortunato Depero & A.M. Cassandre*, 27 Apr. 2012, <https://drehergraphicdesign.wordpress.com/fortunato-depero/>.

"Imaginary Landscapes." *Yerkaland*, https://www.yerkaland.com/paintings-galleries/imaginary_landscapes/.

"Yerka by Himself." *Yerkaland*, <https://www.yerkaland.com/the-masters-life-yerka-by-himself/>.