Keenan Boscoe

In 2014 I had the privilege of visiting the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Being a junior in high school I had no background knowledge regarding the specific exhibitions being shown at the time, I only knew I had a general interest in art and I wanted to spend some time in a new art museum. When I stumbled upon the National Gallery’s exhibition on Andrew Wyeth I don’t think I saw any other parts of the museum that day. The exhibition, titled *Andrew Wyeth: Looking Out, Looking In*, captivated me, and for the first time I asked my parents if we could take home an exhibition catalogue. In the following year I then used Wyeth’s work as inspiration for my own paintings, and dedicated my senior year of high school to a concentration in response to this exhibition.

When I learned Colby was partnering with the Wyeth’s to have select classes visit Allen island I was immediately captivated. Sophomore year I tried to accompany the chemistry department to no avail, before specifically signing up for *AR347: Art and Maine* so I could travel to the location. Although my expectations were set extremely high (thanks to my own engagement with the mythos surrounding the island) I truly had the experience of a lifetime. Being able to visit the landscape that inspired one of my greatest artistic influences was illuminating, and helped me understand Andrew’s work in a way I could have never achieved without this trip. Not to mention being able to meet Jamie Wyeth, and speaking with him both about his artwork and working in Maine. I applied to Colby without ever thinking such an opportunity could be made available for me, and now I am part of one of the first art-history courses to engage with the island.

Bayley Ray-Smith

On the Colby Campus, Allen Island has become a hot topic of conversation. Each year, more and more students receive the amazing chance to experience the beauty of Maine in an isolated environment. I have heard stories from numerous peers describing the wandering sheep and beautiful scenery. Additionally, many amazing student research projects have been conducted on Allen Island. After listening to a particularly enthusiastic friend describe his adventures, I found my envy growing. However, I feared that such experiences would be reserved for the science departments. To my surprise, my course *Art in Maine* received the amazing opportunity to stay overnight on the Island. From this experience, I now see Allen Island as a location where science, art, and history come to life and a place where students gain valuable field experience.

On the island students from my art history course were able to gain field experience in an influential landscape within the sphere of American Art. The environment served both as a place of learning and reflection; a historically rich site that radiates with classic Maine beauty. Personally, my biggest highlight of the experience came when Jake opened up the sailhouse. Through his tour of the historic building, Jake provided insight on the history of both the Island and the Wyeth family. Above all, I felt honored to take part in such a rich experience. In the years to come, I look forward to seeing the relationship between the Up East Foundation and Colby College grow.

Hannah Springhorn
I felt at ease on the island. The island made me look at my world within a perimeter. This is not something that I typically do as a liberal arts student. I am taught to explore my world without restriction, and when I do encounter a boundary or limitation, I am taught to push through. Allen Island gave me this opportunity. When given a space to explore on my own and at my own will, I was able to think critically about how this landscape contributes to the cultural discourse of Maine. It is easy to get caught up in the beauty of Allen Island, it is in fact one of the most picturesque landscapes I have ever stepped into, but we had to go beyond this beauty. While wandering the island I had to remind myself not to get caught in the trap, not to just analyze my physical surroundings, but think about how this place shaped the work done by members of the Wyeth family. The Colby College Museum of Art allows me to study works done by the Wyeth’s within an academic context, separated from the environment that gave life to the work. On the island, I was able to explore and observe, not just the composition within the frame, but how that composition was chosen. I was able to experience the full expanse of this place, observe the birds that occupy so many of the Jamie’s works, and see how the light reflected off the rocks midmorning. But more importantly, I was able to feel the isolation and the power that make the Wyeth’s works so intriguing. I still don’t know exactly how this fits into the cultural discourse of Maine, but now I am able to dive deeper and think critically, empowered by my own personal experience.

Andrew DeStaebler

Our trip to the island was fantastic. I wish we could have stayed longer than a day and a half because immersing myself in the place provided me with an opportunity to interpret the geography for myself. The trip was obviously important and relevant to our class, and it also informed a lot of my ideas that I consider in my American Studies major. For our class, it allowed me to see in person what the Wyeths painted, and it gave me a unique insight when interpreting their works. I got an idea of what Betsy and Andrew’s view of an “ideal Maine” was, and I saw firsthand how beautiful the island was. In a broader sense, it allowed me to expand on ideas that I have been developing in my other studies on things such as access, power, and ownership. Seeing this island will force me to consider balances and imbalances of power through the lens of nature and land ownership more closely.

Chang Zhang

As a third-time visitor to Allen Island, I did not sense as much surprise and excitement as the first two times when I stepped on the island. Instead, I found this trip a more reflective one. Other than the beautiful sea views and the stunning star night, I focused on the possible resonance between the landscape of Allen Island and Andrew Wyeth’s paintings. Though I did not find any scene resemble Wyeth’s painting or the other way round, I did find a place that remind me of Christina’s World: knee-high withered grass all over the ground, two houses in the distance, with the blue and warm orange of sunset at where the sea stretch to the sky. The dying grass is undoubtedly a symbol of negative feelings such as nostalgia, frustration and sense of desolation, and so is the color of Christina’s World presented to us; however, there is a sign of hope and optimism that we cannot ignore in both the painting and the scene in reality: though Christina was unable to walk anymore, she still kept her head up and wanted to live a life and
sense the world, and on Allen Island, even if the withered grass gave me such sentiments, the expansive view of the ocean and the bright warm shine of the sunset kept reminding me of the existence of those positive emotions, and urge me to move forward. Despite the 30 years between the purchase of Allen Island and the finish of Christina’s World, we can still see the consistency of the idea that Wyeth tried to transmit to people both through his art and the landscape he constructed.

Katie Ryan

Allen Island is a strikingly beautiful place, unlike anywhere I have ever been in Maine. Not only was it beautiful, but also extremely relevant to the course that Professor Sheehan is teaching. In our course, Art and Maine, we are studying the work of the Wyeth family while also working to understand the different ways artist have engaged with Maine over the years. Having the opportunity to visit Allen Island and see the site that inspired so many artworks by N.C., Andrew, and Jamie was very exciting to me. We had some time to roam around the Island, observing and taking notes in our field journals, thinking about the landscape of Allen Island extensively. I really enjoyed this time, walking with my classmates in silence and taking everything in. I have never seen stars as clearly as the night we spent on the Island, I felt so far from Colby yet connected through my coursework.
I found the architecture of Allen Island to be so fitting with the landscape. I felt transported on the island, as if I was in a fairy tale in some idyllic European village. Arriving off the boat to a herd of sheep chewing at the bright green grass behind the house we were to stay in was a welcome surprise. Wandering the island, I felt it was so much bigger than I had expected. As I explored, I began to feel how undeniably Maine the island really is. Speaking to Jamie and Phyllis Wyeth before departing from Port Clyde was so special and provided us with such amazing insight into Jamie’s work and the work of his father and grandfather. My visit to Allen Island was very educational and special, and I’m incredibly grateful for having had the opportunity to visit.

Wendy Li

Allen Island is a prefect combination of sea culture and Wyeth family culture. The island, the ocean, all the animals living on the island, the Wyeth family members, and even the workers on the island are integrated as an entity. I actually came up with this idea on the boat when we were leaving the island, because when I didn’t realize they are inseparable from each other until saw the island far away on the ocean, and of course after really exploring the island.

The Wyeth family owns the island and it is like a magical place “created”, designed, and constructed by the family, even though Andrew Wyeth’s wife, Betsy, should take most of the credit. The grey houses, the scattered ponds, and the roads are well designed not only being super functional but also being really fit into the picturesque landscape. The three great artists from the Wyeth family live there and create extraordinary drawings and paintings on the island, depicting the island and the ocean. Their artworks are like meant to record every single beautiful detail on and around the island – seagulls, lambs, trees, small hills, waves, boats, and etc. The landscape is also so inclusive that the artists can include their dreams and imaginations in the whole context of this island and the sea. Moreover, the workers on the island employed by the Wyeth family are being so dedicated to what they’re doing because they love this place, this “small world” they built together with the Wyeth family.
When sitting by the ocean, I didn’t really feel that isolated and excluded from the rest of the world, maybe because of the islands and boats all around. What I feel is mainly free, lighthearted, and comfortable. Allen Island is an exquisite small world with countless things you can find out interesting and surprising, just like Jamie Wyeth said. The island is like a blessed treasure, sitting there quietly, waiting for the Wyeth family to discover, to build things on, and create artworks. The ocean, the island, and the Wyeth family are a perfect integration.

Sarah Rossien

Allen Island was one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. We arrived at Port Clyde at the beginning of sunset. Watching the golden hour on the boat ride over was an amazing experience. As we pulled up at the island, I was blown away by all of the green space. I felt like I had transported into a different country and was walking around in Ireland or Scotland. After settling into the bunkhouse we went to watch the sunset over the water. We happened to visit Allen Island the night of the meteor shower. After dinner, my entire class went outside and lay on a small hill near the bunkhouse and watched the sky. They were the most beautiful stars I have ever seen. The lack of artificial light on the island made the sky absolutely breathtaking. Before we went to the island, Jamie Wyeth told us that sleeping on an island would be a changing experience. I think the best part was waking up on an island. Walking outside and hearing nature was beautiful. That morning we used the classroom space under the bunkhouse to discuss our readings and then went out into the island to explore. We each had 2 hours to walk around. I stood on the rocks and looked to my left and saw the water and looked to my right and saw the woods. This trip was amazing and I would love the opportunity to go back to Allen Island in the future.