

Ossip 2nd Place: “Emulation and Adoration: A Look at Buster Keaton and Wes Anderson” by Megan Barron (Seminar in Composition: Film, Instructor: Alison Patterson)

I am deeply honored and excited to introduce the 2nd place winner for the Ossip Writing Awards category to “Emulation and Adoration: A Look at Buster Keaton and Wes Anderson” by Megan Barron. This exemplary video essay was completed for the course Seminar in Composition: Film taught by Alison Patterson.

Video scholarship is a daunting medium and genre, one that blends together audiovisual rhetoric and illustrative, but precise language. This video essay offers an overview and perspective on how two notable figures in film and film history relate and shape the future of the art.

Megan’s video essay brings together archival and contemporary film through comparative framing between Buster Keaton—one of the seminal figures in film and film history with his expertise of comedy, framing, and composition— and Wes Anderson, a modern filmmaker and director with his own unique visual style that is instantly recognizable.

This work connects Buster Keaton’s understanding of spectacle and impactful visuals in his work as a comedian and filmmaker to Wes Anderson’s approach to filmmaking and narrative. Megan’s essay investigates why Anderson’s style is the subject of interest and emulation, as Anderson’s works focus on dynamic characters in fantastical, but recognizable, settings. Megan’s video essay brings in the subject of the Internet as a source of discourse around Anderson’s vibrant visuals and storytelling. Megan emphasizes that Anderson’s style goes beyond the visual, and into the intentional feeling of bringing the audience into the film itself by subtly acknowledging that it’s a film and can therefore “play” with color, sound, story, and character.

We found Megan’s video essay just as vibrant and engaging as the films she analyzes, and the medium of the video essay itself has created an immersive experience that demonstrates Megan’s excellent understanding of analysis, multimodal composition, and storytelling. Congratulations!