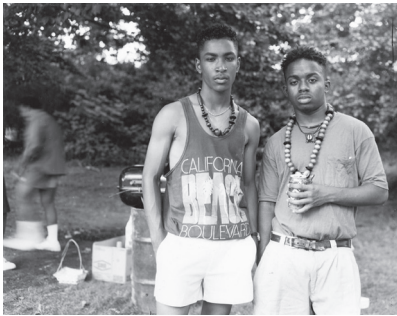


Exploring Images in Black and White

Time: 45 minutes

Difficulty level: Low

Messy level: Low



Dawoud Bey, *Two Girls from a Marching Band*, 1990, gelatin silver print, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of John S. Parsley and Nancy Nolan Parsley in honor of Anne Wilkes Tucker on the occasion of her retirement, 2017.153. © Dawoud Bey

Dawoud Bey, *Two Boys in Prospect Park*, 1990, gelatin silver print, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of John S. Parsley and Nancy Nolan Parsley in honor of Anne Wilkes Tucker on the occasion of her retirement, 2017.160. © Dawoud Bey

To view a hi-res image of these works, visit the [MFAH Collection online database](#).

Inspired by the photographer Dawoud Bey, this activity will guide you in exploring photographs, both from history and today, and will show you how to frame an image through your own lens, allowing your subjects to represent themselves.

Investigate the Work of Art!

1. The two photographs above are examples of portraits of people that represent the community from which the artist belongs. Do you think the people in these photographs were posed by the photographer, or do you think they posed themselves? How do you think that changes a portrait?
2. Looking at the examples, what do you notice about how the subjects fill the frame? Are you able to see their surroundings? What are the subjects holding in their hands? How does this tell you more about the subjects' identity?
3. What purpose do you think photography serves in history and in your own life?

Let's Make Some Art! Gather These Art Materials

- 8 x 10" mat frame with a 5 x 7" opening
- Transparency sheet or plastic wrap pulled tight
- Permanent marker
- Tape
- Smartphone with camera or digital camera

(Suggestion: If using a smartphone, download the "Hypocam" app to shoot in black and white, or use a filter to change your photograph into black and white afterward.)

(Continued on next page)

Exploring Images in Black and White



Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

A viewfinder is the part of a camera that shows a photographer what will be included in their photograph. For this project, you will make your own viewfinder to carefully frame your subject before capturing your image using your own camera.

1. First, you will make a grid for your viewfinder by drawing two equally distanced horizontal lines and two vertical lines on your transparency sheet with a permanent marker. This will help you figure out where you want to position your subjects in the frame in relation to their surroundings.
2. Use a piece of tape or simply hold your grid over the opening in your black mat frame.
3. Walk around your house or go outside, holding up your viewfinder to get a feel for how you can compose pictures without a camera. "Zoom in" by moving closely to a subject and then "zoom out" by stepping back. Notice how this can change the perspective of what you're looking at.
4. Now, think about a group of people in your life you want to photograph. This can be your family at home, relatives, or friends.
5. Once your subject(s) is in front of you, hold your viewfinder and grid up to frame your image. Think about the setting they are in and how much of that you want to include in your photograph.
6. Allow your subjects to pose themselves by letting them decide on their own facial expressions and body language. (Tip: see what happens when you don't say cheese or smile!)
7. Remove the transparency from the viewfinder and point your phone or digital camera through your black frame. Take the photograph of your subjects, keeping the black border of the mat frame in your image to "see" your composition.

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