



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume IV: The Minority Artist in America

Photography: The Art and Science

Curriculum Unit 93.04.01
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I have written this unit to be used in classrooms with students in grades 4-12. I believe that there are activities which can be used to supplement learning in any subject. The lessons I have included are science, art, writing, reading, and math. The bibliography includes beautiful photo essays, photography catalogs, and books about photography in general that should stimulate the interest of young photographers. I would hope that the experience of using a camera, manipulating images, or experimenting with the art of photography would be much more important than sitting in a classroom learning the history of black photographers, but this is important, too.

The text of this unit is a brief history of blacks in photography since photography was introduced in 1839. I began this research as an undergraduate photography major frustrated by the fact that although there were images of blacks in the texts used in my history of photography classes, there were no images by black photographers. I was almost certain that there had been black photographers, I knew for sure of James Van Der Zee, Roy DeCarava, Gordon Parks, Louise Jefferson, and others. My professors were not able to offer assistance in my quest. I was fortunate enough to have been living in New York City at the time, where I could take advantage of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a branch of The New York Public Library.

The Schomburg Center was a wonderful resource not only because most of the information I needed was there, but also because they have a person on their staff who deals solely with photography. Deborah Willis-Ryan was an invaluable resource. I have never had the opportunity to pull it all together until now.

I think the information in this text includes more detail than is needed to teach a unit about the art of photography, but I want black children to know how much of their history is tied to this very important art form. I want black children to be photographers, either amateur or professional. It is important to document the lives and achievements of blacks in the communities in which they live. Photography has played a key role in the shaping of our self image as blacks. We must remain vigilant, we must continue to contribute our thoughts, ideas, and images as black American photographers if we are to be truly integrated into the fabric of and remain contributors to American History.

Shortly before the Frenchman Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre announced the discovery of photography to the world on August 19, 1839, the most famous slave revolt aboard a slave ship took place on the Spanish vessel Amistad. It touched off another revolt: the brig Creole, laden with slaves, sailed from Richmond bound for New

Orleans; there the slave mutinied, took the vessel, and carried her into the British West Indies and freedom. These two events, the mutinies and the discovery of photography of photography, had a profound effect on black and white America's view of itself.

The first Black in photography was a man named Jules Lion. He studied the daguerreotype in Paris and later brought his knowledge and work to New Orleans. Lion was eventually forced to sell his photographic apparatus when his business declined, making it impossible for him to continue his craft. This was not an unusual thing to happen to a black person in America in that period. The 1860's were a most difficult time in black America's history, as poverty, illiteracy, war, and social dismemberment made the success of small black business, which depended on black patrons, virtually impossible. It was not surprising that the first black in photography learned his craft in Europe, because for the majority of black people during slavery, education was unattainable.

African art reveals the artistry of the black people. But skilled African artists, when brought to America under conditions of slavery, were denied the opportunity to practice their traditional tribal arts. Because the majority of black people who lived in America before 1863 were slaves, most Afro-American artists who had any knowledge of the predominant American art forms were self taught free persons from the North. Because black artists faced the insurmountable barrier of prejudice, a number of them left the United States for Europe, for training and for an opportunity to sell their work. For example, Edmonia Lewis, a well known female sculptor who was born in Albany, New York, in the 1840s and who used photographs to sculpt from, left the United States to continue her work in Europe. Henry Tanner, the great painter from Pennsylvania, found life for a black artist in America too difficult and in 1891 left for France, where he spent the remainder of his life. While he received wide acclaim in Europe, he got only meager recognition in America.

America's contribution to art was small until African art came to the attention of European critics; they claimed that this primitive art was as sophisticated and imaginative as the art of many other civilizations. America's desire to create an American art free from European influence finally led to the acceptance of African art and artists.

As popular as the daguerreotype was, it lasted only about twelve years. At the beginning of the 1840s the average price for a daguerreotype, including its case, was two dollars. By the end of the 1840s, the daguerreotypes were two for twentyfive cents. Competition drove prices down, few blacks used the process. The blacks who could afford to purchase a daguerreotype outfit were among the free blacks, and most free blacks were busy trying to defend and free the rest of the enslaved race. Many of the Negroes who were leaders in whatever business was carried on up to about 1884 were the prominent workers in activities for race liberation and manhood privileges, thus subtracting energy and time from business pursuits. Some slaves may have learned the photographic process in exchange for labor from a "liberal" slave owner. This owner would be "liberal" with respect to allowing his slave some access to education and learning. Occasionally, some enterprising black slave would purchase his freedom with the profits made from conducting some type of business enterprise. There were occasional instances of kindhearted white masters who permitted their slaves to peddle, or conduct a small business enterprise in makeshift shops. With the money they earned, slaves were sometimes permitted to buy their own freedom. Some masters realized that it was advantageous to make the slaves more efficient by giving them necessary manual training, since the economic life in the South at the time was mostly nonindustrial and manual skills played an important role in economic activity. In such instances, white businessman taught their slaves not only how to develop skills to produce certain types of goods but also how to read and write and keep records. Later, this training would prove to be a great value to those who went into business on their own after the emancipation.

Many new photographic processes were invented in the 1850's: The collodion or "wet plate" process, the carte de visite, the ambrotype, and the tintype. Around the same time, blacks began organizing to protest oppression and to advocate education so that they could leave menial occupations and aspire to mechanical, agricultural, and professional pursuits. Conventions to advocate opportunities and education for blacks were held in Ohio, New York City, Rochester, and Philadelphia. There was a great need for schools and colleges for blacks. Frederick Douglass asserted that blacks had to learn new trades. More daguerreotype portrait studios began to appear all over the United States. There were more than ninety galleries in New York City alone.

Advertisements in newspapers and periodicals are another major source of information, and they provide a good idea about the professions that black Americans pursued in the nineteenth century. More than twenty newspapers were published by blacks in America between 1832 and 1852. John B. Russworm and Samuel Cornish began the first Afro-American newspaper, "Freedom's Journal," which lasted three years, from 1827 to 1830, in the state of New York. By 1886, there were 146 newspapers published and edited by blacks in America.

Advertisements for photographic services began appearing in black newspapers as early as 1860. Photographers advertised their abilities as lensmen and also as printers who offered quick, quality work. Photographic printers were as valued as photographers themselves because of the difficult techniques involved in the processing in that era. For example, the collodion process, invented in 1851, was the standard process for photographic printing. It was a technique for making negatives on glass. Collodion was a sticking liquid that was spread onto a glass plate and coated with light sensitive chemicals. The plate, exposed while wet, required immediate development because the light sensitive chemical lost its potency as it dried. This is why it was called the "wet Plate" process. The fact that these photographic plates had to be exposed and developed immediately made the photographs a remarkable achievement. The collodion process required that photographers concern themselves not only with the composition of their work but also with the messy process they had to undertake in order to see the results. The collodion process remained standard until the introduction of the "dry plate" process in 1880.

The increase in photographic advertisement in black city newspapers can probably be attributed to the increase in the black population of the cities from 1860-1900. The black population's migration from the rural areas to the large Southern cities increased by over ninety percent during 1860 to 1870 alone. The chief reasons for blacks' moving to urban areas were economic: to get or find work; to secure better wages or more money; or else they had moved from other cities or from rural areas with their former employers.

Commercial centers in urban areas grew because of the increasing wants and needs of the wealthy classes. Certainly there was an increased demand for photographic services. The black owned photographer's clients were largely of his or her own race, but the great demand for photographs in the white community put strains on the white photographers, who were forced to hire black labor to fulfill the demands.

With the introduction of the "dry plate" process in 1880, which marked the advent of the mass appeal of photography, photographers were no longer tied to their darkrooms. Almost all photographers used this process. Amateurs as well as professionals began to experiment with it. Photography became commercialized. Hand held cameras were introduced and the photo-finishing industry was born.

While the popularity of photography seems to have soared, so did the controversy surrounding it. In a "New York Times" article from 1884, it was implied that ever since the announced invention of the "dry plate" process, offering new and "simpler" techniques for making and developing photographs, there had also been an increase in the number of insanity cases in hospital wards, where patients were found raving about

“developers” and “toning baths.” With the development of the “dry plate” process, score of new instruments and apparatus were developed, increasing the public’s confusion as to the correct techniques for making successful pictures. Now that the word “ease” had been introduced into the increasingly popular field of photography, more and more people, even those who had very little knowledge of photography, were drawn into the market. Hence, “The New York Times” article suggested that the insane asylums were filled with these frustrated amateurs.

The inclusion of information and statistics in articles on black photographers can probably be attributed to Booker T. Washington National Negro Business League, organized in August 1900. Although some statistics were found in the last years of the nineteenth century, no particular recognition was given to the number of creative black participants. With the organization of the League, reports on blacks in business finally came into focus.

The work of black artists were exhibited in the Paris Exposition of 1900. The U.S. Commission to the Exposition had designated a space for a Negro Exhibit in an attempt to show the advancement of the black race, and a portion of the exhibit featuring the work of black artists included a photography exhibition.

The Twentieth Century Union League, a black organization in Washington, D.C., published a directory of that area in 1901. Of the number of business persons listed, three were photographers. The league reported that the economic climate for blacks in Washington was healthy for their businesses: there were a large number of black patrons.

In 1902, however, “The Colored American” magazine published an article by W. W. Holland entitled “Photography for Our Young People.” The article, though the title does not state it, encouraged the participation of black women in the photographic field. The author wrote that although he knew photography to be popular in the black community, the blacks involved in the field were so scattered that he had not yet seen or heard of one black woman photographer. The article described photography as being inspiring and of “financial worth to its master.” Because the profession was still in its infancy, black women were being encouraged to grow with it.

Holland also stated that the acquisition of good photographs by blacks was difficult at white galleries because whites did not solicit black patronage. He encouraged black women to get involved in the business to solicit potential black patrons. Holland probably revealed the general feeling of society toward blacks and women in photography, many in these groups raised objection to photography saying it was “too expensive” or “too much trouble.”

Many of the white publications boasted of the new white women photographers entering the profession. One was Frances Benjamin Johnston. Around the same time, Booker T. Washington’s National Negro Business League Convention of 1904 listed Mary E. Flenoy as its first black female photographer member, and the only photographer to attend the meeting held in Indianapolis that year. Mary Flenoy was from Danville, Illinois, and was also listed as a member in attendance in 1905, when the League held its meeting in New York City.

Frances Benjamin Johnston, a white photographer, who was born to wealthy parents in 1864, traveled easily between two worlds. Her greatest work as a photographer was in 1899, when Booker T. Washington invited her to do a series of photographs of Hampton Institute. These pictures were so successful that she was commissioned a second time by Washington in 1902 to do a series of photographs of Tuskegee Institute and its people; and she did another series in 1906. Johnston photographed black students who represented the best hopes that blacks had for any advancement in segregated America. Why would Booker T. Washington

hire a wealthy white woman photographer to photograph black America's most well-known schools at a time when black photographers such as Tuskegees own C. M. Battey, or Arthur P. Bedou, or Mary E. Flenoy were more than capable of completing the same assignment? Certainly it would have been beneficial to a black photographer business, in terms of both money and recognition. In a letter from Frances Benjamin Johnston to Booker T. Washington, Johnston confirmed that she had received \$1,000 and the living expenses for both herself and her assistant for over a period of six weeks. She was offered the same terms for Tuskegee as she received for the Hampton job and again was paid \$1,000 plus expenses. A thousand dollar payment was a phenomenal price in 1899, 1902, and 1906. It was an unheard of sum to pay a black photographer.

Surely Booker T. Washington must have known that there were several capable and talented black photographers who could have handled the assignment. But assuredly he knew that an accepted, well recognized photographer would bring proper recognition to the schools; to have hired a white woman photographer was controversial in itself.

The assignment did not escape without a racial incident. One of Johnston's assignments was to photograph the Ramer, Alabama, school, as an example of the spread of the Tuskegee idea. An attractive thirty six year old woman, Frances Johnston, accompanied by George Washington Carver, was met by a black professor, Nelson Henry, on her arrival at Ramer. They proceeded by wagon toward Henry's house. A number of white townspeople, who had gathered to watch Henry's action with the visitor, apparently decided that he had violated the unwritten law of association with a white woman. One of the young men drew a pistol and fired three shots at Henry, who was forced to flee. George Washington Carver helped Johnston to go to a nearby town. Henry was run out of Ramer, escaping to Montgomery. Mobs roamed the streets of Ramer. Other teachers at the Ramer school also fled, and the school collapsed. The photographer threatened to have her friend President Theodore Roosevelt intervene in the Ramer School incident, and she visited the Governor of Alabama to seek his aid for the beleaguered Henry. When things calmed down, Henry moved to another town and opened another school. This was all much more controversial than Booker T. Washington had had in mind promoting the positive exposure of famous black institutions. But there would have been little or no attention paid to the schools if a black photographer had been hired to do the same job, even though Booker T. Washington was an advocate of black business. Frances Benjamin Johnston's photographs were carefully executed, with a beautiful but formal interpretation of the scenes she saw, and her employer was very pleased with the results. But the unfortunate fact that a black photographer was not given the opportunity for the assignment only reinforces just how difficult a situation black photographers faced as they pursued success and acceptance in photographic history.

Although black men did much better financially in the photography business than women, it was still a battle royal for any black business to survive. Patronage by black people, who had small purchasing power because of their low paid occupations, was limited, and black business faced competition from white firms with larger capital, more extended credit, and greater business experience. Another problem stemmed from the tremendous effect of white purchasing power on black business, because in many lines of business white people would not patronize blacks at all. The idea that white people would not trade with blacks to any considerable extent and that blacks had to depend upon their own people was steeped into black business persons' minds.

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a positive note that indicated the progress to come. The 1910 census showed that the number of Negro photographers had more than doubled in ten years.

In many Northern cities, blacks began to establish their own small businesses in increasing numbers. It was

during this time that Jennie Louise Welcome, under the name Mme. E. Toussaint Welcome, ran an ad in a 1910 issue of "Crisis" magazine that listed her as the proprietor of a studio in Harlem and as the "foremost female artist of the race." She was born Jennie Louise Van Der Zee on January 10, 1885, in Lenox Massachusetts. Her parents, John and Susan Van Der Zee, were maid and butler to General Grant. Jennie was educated at Lenox High School and took private instruction in art and music in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The famed Harlem photographer James Van Der Zee was her brother.

Meanwhile, a group called The Photo-Secession, which had been founded by photographer Alfred Steiglitz in 1902, stated that its goals were "to hold together those Americans devoted to pictorial photography, . . . to exhibit the best that has been accomplished by its members or other photographers, and above all, to dignify that profession until recently looked upon as a trade." Yet, no black photographers were members of this group, nor did they exhibit in this group's shows or galleries. There is little doubt, though, that black photographers showcased work that deeply reflected the life of the people of black America. Black photographers' primary concerns were for income, family support, and business advancement; established white photographers like Stieglitz and Edward Steichen were independently wealthy. Black photographers were also concerned to pose their black subjects in ways that reflected dignity and personal pride. Photographs of blacks by white photographers were generally much less particular about this.

The end of World War I signaled the start of the disintegration of accepted conventions and rules of composition in photography and art. A search for new ways of expression began. White American photographers' thirst for change was due partly to new photographic techniques that were seen throughout Europe, the womb of photography. Yet there remained constant attempts to continue creating an American art separate from European art.

Black women were increasingly becoming a part of the black businessman's career. Historically, the black man and the black women suffered similar misfortunes, and the limitations put on their ambitions were similar. Because of the realization of this equality of conditioning and training, black couples were destined to share more intimately in the management of business enterprises.

In 1929, Negro women showed the highest rate of employment of any racial group. The crash of 1929, however, set them back. The competition for work set all employable people back, and since the blacks were just breaking ground in many industries, they would be the first to go during the economic crisis. Black women, who had always worked to help support their families, lost their jobs, and because of the racial situation in the country, whites were more apt to hire whites if there was a job available. Positions now became very competitive, especially for blacks.

Because the depression led to increased competition for fewer jobs and at the same time created a demand that women become actively involved in the workforce. During the years preceding the Depression, blacks and their families had migrated northward in large numbers to seek economic opportunity. They had left the South for various reasons, one being their economically depressed lifestyles; now they were faced with the same situation in the North.

In a study conducted by Estelle Hill Scott in 1939 entitled "Occupational Changes Among Negroes in Chicago," photography was listed as a "clean" profession and an occupation in which blacks were heavily represented in 1930. The blacks who did "clean" work were almost entirely confined to the black neighborhoods and were thus dependent on low-wage earners for their livelihood.

Isolation from white America forced the black community to grow stronger and more self-reliant. Since the

needs on the black community were the same as any other community, a solid group of black professionals began to flourish. The Harlem Renaissance, which Alain Locke appraised as giving white America “a general acceptance of the Negro today as as contributor to national culture,” drew large numbers of photographers to Harlem to document conditions there in the 1930s. Harlem had been declared the cultural capital of colored America. Government sponsored projects such as the Work Project Administration were directly assisting programs that advanced and aided opportunities for black artists. One Photographer, James Van Der Zee, managed a photography studio in Harlem and documented much of the Harlem business and social life of the 1930s. Also a successful portraitist, he was one of the best known black photographers working in Harlem. During this period there was also growth in the number of national black professional business directories and magazines. This period also saw the birth of the Farm Securities Administration or FSA (1930-1940), a government program in which photography became a powerful weapon for awakening the social consciousness of Americans. There was only one black photographer, Gordon Parks, who worked for the FSA, even though much of the subject matter concerned the state of black America. But there were many capable black photographers who could have filled some of those positions.

In 1936, only three years short of photography’s centennial, New York City boasted that there were 1,500,000 cameras in active use there alone, which meant that there was about one camera per family for a population of 7 million. Compared with the country as a whole, New York City had both more cameras and a higher percentage of film development. The survey showed 16 million cameras among the national population of 122 million. New York accounted for more than its share of photofinishing, one-seventh of all that was done in the country.

Growth in the photo industry was evident in the many periodicals, magazines, and newspapers that were published by the black community. Black photographer’ advertisements showed up more and more, but the most significant increase in ads came after 1939, at the beginning of World War II.

In September 1939, World War II broke out in Europe, one hundred years after the public announcement of the invention of photography. The war significantly affected the growth of photography, which played an important role in the war effort.

Many black men and women were trained in photography at military training facilities all over the United States. This was an especially large program for women because of its non combat nature.

The first black to graduate from the Fort Monmouth, New Jersey school was Austin Hansen, a photographer from New York City and the first black female was Elizabeth Williams, a photographer from Houston, Texas. They both graduated with honors, Hanson in 1940 and Williams in 1942, and became pioneers for blacks in the military.

The National Security Women’s Corp. offered photography courses, and the photo labs at the military war colleges and training centers across the country were filled with women photographers. In fact, women in photography flourished as never before, as both amateurs and professionals.

At the Lowry Field near Denver, Colorado, there was a photography class held just for WACs. Many of the women who graduated from these schools were hired to teach photography to their male counterparts. One of the greatest commercial uses for the Women’s Air Force Service Pilots was a project such as aerial photography.

Hundreds of amateur women photographers participated in specialized USO work in 1943. The idea of taking

servicemen's pictures for their families and hometown newspapers originated in Hempstead, Long Island, when a USO photographic expedition was sent to the servicemen's club. The idea was so popular that it soon became a widespread practice in other parts of the country. American troops listed photographs from home among their favorite gifts.

While the use for and interest in photography grew, civilian photographers were faced with a limited supply of equipment and supplies because of the war. The concerns surrounding the availability of camera supplies were soon realized. Photographers, when making purchases, were confronted with restrictions and were forced to learn to use less equipment, and thus to use more care and skill.

During the first few months of 1942, photographic goods were still somewhat available since many stores had on hand a large stock of merchandise. But soon after, there was a decrease of at least fifty percent in camera production, and the cameras produced were conspicuous for their lack of aluminum, brass, copper, and bronze. Glass, wood, and in some cases plastic, were substituted. The marketing of old and unused cameras was popular among dealers, and a plea went out to people to dig cameras out of the attics and trade them in for defense bonds. After overhauling a camera, dealers would then resell it. The photographic retailers felt at the time that the war was going to make people more conscious of photography than any manufacturer, distributor, or dealer ever dreamed of, and that the camera market was just waiting for development.

The black population in major American cities like Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia was on a steady increase during the years between 1950 and 1960. In fact, over one and a half million blacks migrated from the South to Northern and Western regions between 1950 and 1960. California, Illinois, and New York were the most popular states in which to relocate. Slowly, the government was becoming more sensitive to the unfair and unequal treatment of blacks across the country. The Supreme Court was frequently faced with cases dealing with racial segregation. Black men and women were becoming more a part of the mainstream in American society. Figures show that the income of black families increased during World War II; this was primarily due to the migration and the higher wages paid in the larger urban areas.

The 1950s were years of achievement for blacks. But although Gwendolyn Brooks was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in Chicago and Edith Sampson was appointed an alternate delegate to the United Nations, Rosa Parks was ordered to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Her refusal touched off an organized protest that eventually led to the Supreme Court decision declaring segregation on public transportation unconstitutional.

In 1955, an important photographic exhibition, "The Family of Man," was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Edward Steichen, thought of by many as the dean of American photographers and who was the director of the department of photography at the Museum of Modern Art, was the principal organizer. In the exhibition and in the exhibition's book, Steichen chose not only photographs of family life the world over but also photographs that were metaphors for life and that were the work of both black and white, male and female photographers.

Steichen was cited by the National Urban League "for making mankind proud of its humanity," and the Urban League's executive director, Edward S. Lewis, during a citation ceremony at the museum, described "The Family of Man" as one of "the great poems of our time, taking us on an odyssey through all the myriad of the human experience." The Urban League's citation to Steichen read: "Seeking equality of opportunity for Negroes with all Americans, The Urban League works for the benefit of all peoples, building toward the creation of a true Family of Man. Edward Steichen's exhibition narrates the Urban League's credo with an eloquence seldom before seen or heard." This was a monumental step toward bridging the wide gap between

black and white America, but it was also proof, positive proof, that the art of photography could communicate understanding, compassion, and feelings to mankind during a time of chaotic divisiveness in America. Photography had a quiet yet monumental impact; it reached out during a time of turbulence in the country, at a time when the white photography world was finally willing to allow the power of the medium to make an important statement.

Nineteen fifty-four was an important year for civil rights; the Supreme Court declared in *Brown vs. Board of Education* that “separate but equal” educational facilities were “inherently unequal.” Segregation was declared unconstitutional. Following this decision, about 150 previously segregated schools became integrated.

In 1964, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was formed. One of its projects was to hire a team of photographers, who were assigned to photograph people aided by government programs and the progress that was being made as a result of government programs designed to combat poverty. The basis of the photographic work of the OEO was very similar to that of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) of the 1930s. Even the images were strikingly similar, but so were the rules and requirements for being a staff photographer. As with the FSA, there were no black women photographers hired by the OEO.

The number of blacks migrating from the South to the Northern cities dropped during the 1960s. Blacks were overcrowded in the cities where they had settled. In 1963, President Kennedy declared segregation “morally wrong.” But less than ten percent of black public school students were in integrated classes. It was during that year that Medgar Evers and John F. Kennedy were assassinated and violence swept through the nation. The mid-1960s saw scores of riots and demonstrations across the country.

Violence heightened in 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated. In more than a hundred cities, there was looting, shooting, and burning, and thousands of people were hurt and arrested. Black photographers also became targets of violence in struggles, as seen in a front page story of “The New York Times” from 1965 entitled “Clansman Is Arrested After Attack on Negro Cameraman in Georgia.”

The civil rights movement had begun in the Deep South during the mid-1950s and lasted for about fifteen years. The climax came in 1968, when black and white Americans mourned the assassinations of Dr. King.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the stated theme for black artists and craftsmen was awareness. This was evidenced and echoed in the photographs of black photographers like Roy DeCarava and Gordon Parks. The reportage done by these and other black photographers both male and female brought the world closer to an understanding of what took place during the civil rights struggle.

It was not until the early 1970s that photography gained acceptance as an art form. The efforts of some major museums to provoke interest in photography as an art, such as Steichen’s 1955 “Family of Man” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, influenced museums across the country, and they began collecting, buying, and exhibiting photographs. Collecting became a trend. Auction houses like Sotheby Parke Bernet and Christie’s, both in New York and London, held their first photography auctions. Soon galleries and museums in Europe and the United States sought photographs to provide for the new photography conscious public. For much of the 1970s, photography was not only an accepted art form; it also quickly became an investment, in much the same way that other collectible art forms were considered good barriers against inflation. As a result, these new collectors, young and affluent professionals and business executives, pushed the art of photography into elitism.

Meanwhile the photography experts talking only to each other, had little dialogue with those outside their circles. In a 1971 "New York Times" article, photography critic A. D. Coleman attacked this elitist approach to photography, saying, "photography is so interwoven into the fabric of our culture and the loom of history are absolutely depended upon it for stability." In his article Coleman noted similarities in thinking between the military and the photography experts: each divided the population into two groups. For the military, the division was between soldiers and civilians; in photography, the division was between "serious" photographers as opposed to amateurs and nonphotographers. Coleman felt that the formation of cliques would be a serious disadvantage to the general public, who were all affected in some way by the photographic image. He suggested that the photography experts spread their knowledge throughout the culture stressing photography great advantage as a common communicator. A new generation of people had grown up in front of a television set; they were also accustomed to picture magazines like "Look," "Life," and "National Geographic." Almost everything the 1970s generation encountered from advertisements to family and world events was communicated through photography.

For this reason, Coleman urged that everyone in the larger photographic community be educated in the functions of the photographic image. As a culture, we were receiving as much information from the photographic image as we were from the written word, and possibly fifty percent of our decisions were in some way based on visual input. To exclude the public, which is so affected by the everyday use of photographs, from the knowledge of the photography community, did, indeed, pose a great threat.

What was happening in the 1970s was the newfound awareness of photography ability to allow us to look at ourselves, our relatives, and our friends at different times in our lives through family albums and also to view ourselves and sense our time and place in the world. For black American this vision of the past and present was of extreme importance, and much of the vision was communicated through photography.

Although black photographers were excluded from photographic history, images of blacks were not. Photography critic Jonathan Green, in his 1984 book, "American Photography: A Critical History 1945 to Present," commented on photographs of blacks through the work of white photographer Robert Frank.

Kamoinge Workshop, a black photographers' organization, was formed by black Guggenheim fellowship recipient (1955) Roy DeCarava in the early 1970s out of a need to communicate and share the photographic dialogue flowing throughout the black community, a dialogue that was not being heard by the elitist whites in the profession. Black photographers' needs more than justified Kamoinge. Kamoinge constituted a means for them to share their ideas with one another and to exhibit work that contained sensitive images of black life in America.

A new book, "The Black Photographers Annual," showcased the work of many black photographers both male and female. Its first edition was published in 1973; the second in 1974; the third in 1978; and the fourth in 1980. Because of financial difficulties, the publication ceased after 1980. But many black photographers' work was seen there for the first time.

By the end of the 1970s, a whole new crop of photographers had arrived. For black photographers, much of this coming of age was aided by black publications and the need for companies to comply with equal opportunity laws. Black women benefited from the latter; they fulfilled dual requirements, they were women and they were black. But even when "Life Magazine" made a second go of it at the end of the 1970s, its editors still had not assigned work to one black woman photographer and the work of only a few black men had been published.

By 1980 photography and history of photography courses were on the rise in colleges and universities across the country. Thirty eight U.S. universities offered Master of Fine Arts Degrees in photography. As universities began to recognize photography, so did many art publications, such as “Art News,” “Art in America,” “Art Forum” and “The Village Voice”; all ran pieces about photography. While few early photographers had university degrees, now the university was their tie to the art world.

What black photographers can expect for the future can only depend on how hard they are willing to work. As history has demonstrated, success in the field of photography requires three times the effort of that in any field. But the persistence and perseverance of blacks, proven throughout the last one hundred years, says that it can be done. It is key to remember that photography is only fifty years younger than the United States. And while it has continued to play a key role in the shaping of our self image as blacks. We must remain vigilant, we must continue to contribute our thoughts, ideas, and images as black Americans photographers if we are to be truly integrated into the fabric of and remain contributors to American History.

FIRST PHOTOGRAPHS

Some time ago you were born into life, and by now you have grown used to existing. You were born to seeing too, and if I’m not mistaken, you are by now more or less accustomed to seeing things all day long and thinking little of it. That’s natural, I guess, although there is a problem with getting too used to things; you begin to take them for granted, and what you take for granted you probably don’t get the most from.

You have a birthday every year just to celebrate the fact that you were born. To really celebrate your birthday is to fully understand all the wonder in that unbelievable happening, your coming into the life that you are. There is joy in this awareness that lasts longer than birthday cake.

The same should be true of your seeing. Even though you have been seeing things all your life, you are never too old to really begin to see—to see more consciously. “Perceive” is perhaps a better word to use than “see,” since it better suggests taking hold of something fully and absorbing it into yourself in order to know it. While it is true that you can also perceive things by touching, tasting and hearing, you especially perceive things by seeing.

When you find a rock whose weight and texture make you want to handle it over and over again, you can put it in your pocket and carry it with you. When you have perceived something with your eyes that you want to keep, you can photograph it.

To photograph something means to write it down with light. The word “photograph” comes from the ancient Greek “photos,” which means light, and “grapho,” to write. The word “grapho” originally meant to engrave or scratch into rock, and thousand of years ago that’s what humans did to record something for keeps—they scratched it into rock. Since then, we have discovered how to write using a brush, crayon, pencil, pen, and typewriter. It has been only recently that we have learned how to write with light.

I can remember being at the beach with some of my friends one summer when I was younger. It was the beginning of our vacation, a time for the first shedding of street clothes for the freedom of bathing suits. At the end of the day we happened to notice that, when an adhesive bandaid fell off my friend’s arm, the perfect shape of the band aid remained light against the beginning tan of the rest of his skin.

This gave us a great idea. The next day we returned with rolls of adhesive tape and scissors. It didn't take us long to have taped on our exposed skin not only the letters of our names, but all sorts of designs; flowers, a seagull with outstretched wings, and even a dinosaur.

We spent more time just lying in the sun than playing in the water, but we felt it was worth it. After three days of tanning we pulled off all the tape and revealed a collection of decorated skin. We thought we were terrific. Although we didn't realize it then, we had made our first photographs: we had written with light on our very skin.

You, of course, can make your first photographs just as we did. But if you are already tanned, or if you would rather not make a display on your skin, you can also create your first photographs on any good sized live and growing green leaf. Don't pick it off the plant. Simply tape what you like on the side facing the sun and wait about a week. When you carefully remove the adhesive tape you will find the white image of it remains. When you have an image you like, if you don't think the plant will be hurt by your taking its leaf, snip it off and press it to dry between the pages of a heavy book. If you've done your art work well, you'll have a lasting and unusual creation, written with light.

As you can now see, all you need to make a photograph are four things: light, something sensitive to light; an image you want to capture; and that personal touch which allows you and the rest of the world to know that this was perceived and celebrated by you alone, by you personally. That's what photography is all about; it is a celebration of your seeing.

These sun prints are great fun and can also be accomplished with SunPrint paper, which can be obtained in many art supply stores. This is the modern cyanotype process. Cyanotypes were originally used to make blue prints and other charts. It then became an art form.

It is great for classroom use because it does not require a camera, and it is developed in plain tap water. The finished images are blue and white.

FIND A PERSONAL VISION

A good way to develop your kind of photography, your own visual language, is to work with subjects you are familiar with. Walk down some of the streets of your city. If you are civic minded, what do you see that needs improvement? Streets cluttered with debris? Take some pictures of this and present them to the city council. If your photos provide strong evidence, they may listen and act. Streets jammed due to a lack of parking space? Get your camera into action and prove a point. Submit some of your revealing photographs to the local newspapers, and you'll be on your way to becoming a photojournalist. School newspapers will be eager to publish your photos and will help you in your interest to make things better.

Let your photos show people (and yourself) that your city has good things, things that they might have forgotten or may have not seen in the ways your photos show. Try a photo essay on this.

Other ways to put your camera to work for you might include using it in school work to illustrate information you present in themes or essays; compiling an original family album for a gift (perhaps a record spanning one year); and/or taking photos of stores, factories, or offices for local citizens. Entering contests will also help you gain experience and give you incentive to produce better photographs.

After you have accumulated quite a number of photos, line up a batch of them to see where your interests lie: with people, animals, architecture, or nature. See what caught your eye. Was it special light effects, patterns and details of nature, people and their expressions, or abstract shapes and textures? What kind of viewpoint seems to be surfacing most often? Let that be an area for further picture taking. Be ready always to take a fresh new direction when your interest shifts.

Start a collection of your photos: it could be a scrap book or a portfolio. This will keep your work organized and ready to be shown when you desire.

You are your camera. For it is you who will find and record the shape of a tree, an expression on a face, or bring out the visual sense of a mood whether it be loneliness, sadness, excitement, or joy.

TWO CAMERAS YOU CAN BUILD

The first camera was conceived as a sketching aid sometime in the early 1600s. It consisted quite simply of a dark chamber with a small hole at one end, through which light was projected onto the opposite interior wall. There an inverted image of the outside scene was formed, which an artist, working inside the camera, traced. The inventor of this dark chamber, or camera obscura, is not known but it is certain that Aristotle was familiar with the principle and Leonardo da Vinci made precise drawings of the camera obscura.

Later models were built on sedan chairs or on wheels for mobility. About 1660, a compact model was designed, with a lens instead of a hole and an interior mirror to reflect the image onto the ground glass screen.

Some 60 years later, in 1727, Johann H. Schulze, a German physicist, discovered that silver salts are sensitive to light. A century passed before Joseph Nicephore Niepce, a French scientist, made use of that discovery to take the first photograph.

Louis J. M. Daguerre, a partner of Niepce, went on to develop a more efficient process of photography which he announced to the world in 1839, it was called the Daguerreotype.

The camera obscura today is more important than a clever sketching device. A periscope, for example, is basically a form of the camera obscura, as is the viewing mechanism on a single-lens reflex camera. In its basic form, however, the camera obscura, with a sheet of tracing paper, provides an entertaining way of transforming even the most hesitant sketcher into an artist. And in the form of a pinhole camera, which today uses fast modern films, it furnishes an instructive basic aid for learning the fundamentals of photography.

The Camera Obscura

Materials:

heavy rigid cardboard

magnifying glass

small mirror

pane of frosted glass or plastic

black masking tape

ruler

pencil

craft or exacto knife

The dimensions of the camera obscura are determined by the focal length of its lens; so, in listing the materials needed, I can only approximate their measurements. More on the subject of focal length in a moment.

The magnifying glass should be round and no less than 2 inches in diameter. In general the bigger the glass, the brighter the image. If you already have a large, expensive glass, the ideal kind, you can use it as a detachable lens without damage to it or its frame. More practical, however, and nearly as good would be a smaller, drug store glass.

The mirror could be the nonmagnifying side of a small, round shaving mirror or something similar, 3 to 6 inches in diameter.

Use heavy cardboard to construct a solid, rigid box. Double or triple thickness matteboard is excellent.

A good glazier can supply the ground glass screen. Ask for ground glass or frosted glass, the kind that appears to have been sanded on one side. A fair size pane should cost less than a dollar. An acceptable substitute is a sheet of clear plastic frosted on one side.

Position the magnifying glass between some bright object, such as a lamp, and a sheet of paper. Slowly move the glass toward the paper. When the glass is close enough, it will produce an inverted image on the sheet. As the distance between glass and paper changes, the clarity of the image varies. When the image is at its sharpest, it is said to be in focus. This distance is the focal length of the lens.

In terms of shape, a camera obscura is a cube, each side of which is equal to the focal length of its lens (the magnifying glass, that is). Thus, before building a camera obscura, you must first determine the focal length of your glass. To do so, produce an inverted image as you did before, this time with a ruler placed as in figure A to measure the exact distance between the glass and the paper.

(figure available in print form)

Focus on an object about 12 to 15 feet distant. The focal length depends not only on the size of the magnifying glass, but also on the distance between the object and the sheet of paper. Because the camera obscura will be nonadjustable, it must be built with a compromise focal length as its basic dimension. An object 12 to 15 feet away will yield a workable average focal length.

You will probably determine the focal length of your magnifying glass to be between 6 and 12 inches. Whatever is is, you will use that measurement to determine the length and width of each side of your camera obscura, which, as I have noted, will be a cube. The focal length of my glass, which was 2 1/2 inches in diameter, was 8 inches.

I thus determined the dimensions of my camera obscura: 8 inches by 8 inches by 8 inches. If the focal length of your magnifying glass is different, the of your camera obscura will be different.

Of the six surfaces of the camera obscura, four (the two sides, the back, and the bottom) will be solid cardboard, with no openings. The fifth surface (the front) will also be cardboard, but will have an opening large enough to accommodate the lens. The sixth and last surface (the top) will be the ground glass screen.

Let us consider the four solid cardboard surfaces first. If you prefer working with individual pieces of cardboard, cut four squares, each measuring one focal length by one focal length (8 inches by 8 inches, in my case). If, as I did, you use one large piece of cardboard, cut out a patter of four adjacent squares, clustered in the form of a T. Again, each square should be one focal length by one focal length.

To facilitate fitting separate squares together, bevel edges with an exacto knife. If you cut out a T pattern, score the three edges of the center square that it shares with the three outer squares.

Fold the cardboard so that it assumes the shape of a square with two missing sides. Using black masking tape, first tape corners where edges meet; then tape the three folded edges for reinforcement. If you use four separate squares of cardboard, they are, of course, taped together the same way.

Cut a fifth square of cardboard, and determine its center by drawing its diagonals. If possible, remove the magnifying glass from its frame; place it over the center of the square, and trace its outline with a pencil. If you can't remove its frame, trace the outline of the frame itself. Cut along the outline, and position the lens in the hole, taping it with small pieces of tape on both sides to keep it in place. Bevel the edges of the square, and tape it to the other three.

Measure the diagonal of a square; then cut a cardboard rectangle that length and slightly less in width (to allow for cardboards thickness) than one focal length. Tape the mirror in the center of this rectangle. Fit the rectangle into the box, with the mirror facing toward the lens. Tape it in place.

The ground glass screen, which should be the same size as the other squares, may now be placed on top, frosted side down. Before taping the edges, check the image by pointing the box at a lamp or window. If the image is dim, remove the screen and make sure its surfaces are clean. Painting the cardboard interior of the box flat black will brighten the image. When you obtain a satisfactorily clear image, tape the screen in place, and you are ready to trace the image you see.

Figure A: This sketch illustrates the way to determine the effective focal length of your lens, the magnifying glass. The distance between lamp and lens should be about 15 feet. Distance between lens and paper dictates the dimensions of your camera obscura.

(figure available in print form)

Figure B: This is a cross section of the camera obscura, showing the diagonal mirror. The distance from lens to mirror, plus the distance from mirror to screen, equals the length of one side of the square, one focal length.

(figure available in print form)

The Pinhole Camera

Materials:

black masking tape

1" square of foil

number 10 sewing needle

extra fine sand paper

14" by 26" black matte board

ruler

glue

exacto knife

pencil

candle

A pinhole camera is nothing more than a cardboard box with a pinhole "lens," covered with a flap which acts as a shutter and a frame in the back to accommodate sheet film. Yet if you build one with care and precision, it will be a device enjoyable in itself, instructive in the fundamentals of photography, and capable of taking great pictures.

Cut a strip of cardboard 7 by 26 inches. With the ruler and pencil, divide the strip into four sections, as follows: 7 by 7 inches, 6 by 7 inches, 7 by 7 inches, and 6 by 7 inches. This strip will form the body of your camera (see figure C).

From the remaining strip of cardboard, cut four rectangles, each 6 by 7 inches. Set one rectangle aside for use later at the camera back. In a second rectangle, cut a hole about 1/2 inch square. Be careful to place the hole in the exact center of the rectangle; this is the spot where diagonal lines drawn on the rectangle cross.

In the center of one of the other two rectangles, cut a rectangular hole, 4 by 5 inches; in the center of the other, cut a smaller rectangular hole, 3 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches. You now have two cardboard frames: one inch wide, the other 1 1/4 inches wide (see figure D).

Place the wider of the two frames (the one with a 1 1/4 inch border) on a flat surface. If only one side of the cardboard is black, be sure the black side is face down.

Coat one side (either side will do) of the narrower frame with glue. Then position this frame, glue side down, over the wider frame, so the outside edges of both frames coincide. Press the frames together, and apply pressure for a few minutes until the glue begins to adhere. Wipe off any glue that oozes out and apply pressure until the glue dries.

This double thickness cardboard will be attached later to the camera back and will serve as a holder for the sheet film.

Making the camera body is simply a matter of folding the cardboard strip (the one measuring 7 by 26 inches) into the shape of a box. First, cut V-shape grooves along the three lines dividing the four sections, to make the folding easier, and bevel the two 7 inch ends. Grooves and bevels should be on the black side of the cardboard. Fold the strip, and tape all four corners for reinforcement.

Tape the film holder (the two cardboard frames glued together) to one end of the camera body. The indentation formed by the two glued frames should face outward. Position the camera back (the solid 6 by 7 inch cardboard rectangle) over the film holder, black side facing inward, and tape one of the 6 inch edges to the camera body to form a hinge. A small piece of tape attached to the other 6 inch edge will keep the back closed when the camera is loaded with film.

To the other end of the camera body, tape the camera front (the 6 by 7 inch cardboard rectangle with the 1/2 inch square hole in it). Again, the black side should face the interior.

Place the square of aluminum foil on a soft, flat surface, an old newspaper on a tabletop will do. Pierce the center of the foil with a No.10 sewing needle. Do so carefully and slowly. A piece of tape attached to each side of the foil will help in making a smooth, round hole; later, the tape is discarded. Sandpaper the dimpled side of the pierced foil to remove the tiny burrs. Then work the needle through the hole again, this time about halfway up its shank (see figure E).

Blacken both sides of the foil by passing them over a candle flame. Position the pinhole, the dimpled side facing inside, over the center of the hole in the camera front. Tape the foil in place. Cut a 3 inch square of cardboard; center it over the pinhole, and hinge it along the bottom with a strip of tape. This is the shutter. A small piece of tape at the top will keep it closed when the camera is not in use.

Load the camera with 4 by 5 inch sheet film in an absolutely dark room or closet. When loading the film, be sure the notches in the sheet are at the upper left corner of the camera (Figure F); that way, you will know the emulsion side of the film is on the inside, as it should be.

To take a picture lower the front flap briefly. This exposes the film. In bright sunlight, with fast black and white film such as Tri-X Pan, try an exposure time of one to two seconds; in bright, overcast weather, increase time to two to four seconds. With color negative film, triple the time. If possible bracket an exposure by taking two more shots, one at half and one at double the initial time. At first, you will guess times; later, when you have developed your first photographs, you will have a standard by which to estimate exposure times accurately.

During exposures, keep the camera steady by taping or weighing it down. Still lives and landscapes are excellent subjects; they provide the soft, dreamy quality characteristic of the best pinhole photographs.

Figure C: A strip of cardboard, 7 by 26 inches, will be folded to form the camera body. Two 6 by 7 inch rectangles, one with a small hole in its center, will become the front and back.

(figure available in print form)

Figure D: Two 6 by 7 inch rectangles form the film holder. In one, cut a hole 4 by 5 inches; in the other, cut a hole 3 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches. Glue the two pieces together, making a frame to hold the film.

(figure available in print form)

Figure E: Pierce the foil slightly at first; then sandpaper the burrs off the dimpled side. Next, work the needle about half its length through the foil to produce an even, round pinhole. Careful, precise work is critical because the pinhole acts as the lens for the camera. If the aperture is too large, the image will not be as sharply focused.

(figure available in print form)

Figure F: The notches in sheet film help position it in the dark: they should be at the upper left corner of the camera. In the field, use a large loading bag, available from a photographic supply store, when you load film.

(figure available in print form)

SOME EXPERIMENTS THAT ADD EXCITEMENT

As you become more practiced and more satisfied with your photographs, you may wish to try some print manipulations and experiments. Here are a few to get you started.

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

Deliberately planned, double exposure shooting can produce exciting results. You can achieve all kinds of rare, odd, distorted, funny, and mysterious pictures by incorporating people, animals, and other elements in the most unexpected places and situations.

Double exposure shooting means exposing your unit of film twice or more for one photograph. Many of the current cameras provide for double exposure, but some don't. In either case, consult your camera's manual. If no instructions are given, try this: push the rewind button (usually on the bottom of the camera). Turn the rewind crank, in the direction of the arrow, to rotate a full 360 degrees. Wind the shutter for the second exposure while holding the rewind crank to prevent slipping. You can shoot two or more exposures. A different f-stop or shutter speed may be used for your second (or third) exposure. The additional exposure could be a close up of a detail or, by backing away, a smaller image. Try to visualize what you want the multiple images to look like and how one will fit with another on the same frame.

Another multiple exposure experiment uses an opaque mask to cover half the camera lens (an old lens cap with half cut out works well). The cap or mask is adjusted so that when you look in the viewfinder you see only half the viewing screen. Mark the position of the cap or mask with white pencil or a tiny edge of tape on the lens barrel. Make the first exposure. Now make the second exposure. The whole film frame is now covered by the two separate exposures. This is the way to have the same person appear twice in one picture. Using the camera's self timer and a tripod, that person could be you. To work well, be sure the half mask fits close to the lens, or the joining of the two halves will not mesh. There are filters available that make this easy to do.

MOTION

Experiment with motion by using a slow shutter speed to produce a streak of motion. Another way to show motion is by keeping the moving subject in good focus but streaking the background. This requires a technique called panning. You simply set your shutter speed for 1/30 or slower and while looking through the viewfinder move your camera so the lens follows the action. This effect gives more of a sense of action than just freezing an action.

Remember that action is fastest when viewed at a 90 degree angle and slows as you or subject move forward or backward to create a shallower angle. The slowest apparent speed is action coming directly toward you or going directly away from you.

MOUNTING PHOTOGRAPHS

Mounting boards in a variety of standard sizes come in white, black or gray and can be easily cropped to create a border of any desired size, or no border at all. To get a straight, clean edge on prints or mounts, place them on a hard backing such as a pane of glass and cut them with a craft knife guided by a steel straight edge. Prints can be mounted on exhibition boards in a number of ways. For permanence, use dry mounting tissue, a thin, resin based waxy sheet that adheres when heated, because it resists warping and discoloring even under the most humid conditions. Trim the tissue to the same size as the print, put the print face up on the mounting board with the tissue in between, and cover the print with thin card board. Press down firmly on the cardboard with an electric iron set at the temperature for wool. An iron will not give a good result on a print larger than 8 by 10 inches; dry mounting presses are also available to do the job of the iron more simply and efficiently.

If you are working with resin coated printing papers, you will have to obtain a special mounting tissue and temperature control strips to prevent overheating and blistering the print.

You may want to try rubber cement or spray mount, but keep in mind this will eventually discolor the photograph.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Photographs can be used to document activities that occur in the classroom. When they are displayed they boost self esteem and a sense of pride in the school and the class. The students I have worked with love the art and science of photography.

Have students make pictures to go along with a story they have written, or vice versa ask them to write a story that tells what the pictures are about.

Have students write about themselves, ask particular questions about them, things they enjoy, favorite people etc. Photograph them and mount the photograph to a computer print out about them. Make a collage or a wall display using these images (see attached example).

Make a yearbook with each student having their own page to document their years at the school. Black and white pictures can be added to these pages. Black and white photographs duplicate well on a regular photocopier. A book of all the students together can be given to each student. Autographs from classmates and teachers can be collected on these pages.

Photograph students of the month, perfect attendance, students with great citizenship, etc. Having your picture on the wall is really a great honor.

Ask students to include photographs as part of their projects, provide them with the assistance they need to complete a task using photography integrated with research materials.

Color photocopies can be made from negatives and color slides as well as prints. They are cheaper than having enlargements made and faster too. Many copy stores including Kinkos provide this service.

Take a trip to an art gallery that is having an exhibit of photographs. Look at the differences in the images. Ask the students to make art with their pictures.

Have an exhibit of photographs taken by students and invite city officials, parents and family to come have refreshments and enjoy the work.

I AM SOMEBODY

STUDENTS NAME

FUTURE SCHOOL . . . Any New Haven School

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITIES ARE . . . Writing

MY FAVORITE SUBJECT IS . . . Science

I WANT TO BE A . . . Teacher

MY FAVORITE TEACHER IS . . . Ms. Andrews

MY BEST FRIENDS ARE . . . Monslo and Jean

STUDENTS PHOTOGRAPH

SHOULD BE PLACED HERE.

Any type of questions can go on this sheet. This can also be used as an assessment tool. You could ask questions about their reactions to things and ideas you have presented in the classroom.

I have my students type their answer into the computer and I print them on a laser printer so they actually look professional, I then attach a picture of them to the finished copy.

I also ask them to sign these, they love seeing their work and their pictures on the wall.

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*These books are appropriate for student use.

I have included a list of books I used for research and/or used in my classroom. The books on this list contain pictures and information students usually find of interest. They can sometimes be difficult to find. These books contain images by and about African Americans.

I suggest they look to see styles and ideas they like and would like to learn more about. Photography is best learned through trial and error. Let them try to see what each artists vision was.

I have not included many books that talk solely about the techniques of photography because there are many out there written for children and adults of all ages. Your boal library probably has more than you can carry.

If you really must have students actually researching there are many books written for children about the lives of Gordon Parks and Roy DeCarava, but the goal here is to get students interested in the art of photography not the history.

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