

Connecting through Time

Intergenerational & Family Storytelling

Facilitated and produced by
Jessica Bal and Jasmin Chang, Photoville

Written by
Kamal Badhey, Wendy Barrales & Natalia Guerrero

Presented in Partnership with Photowings



A Note from Photoville

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

At the onset of COVID-19, with a desire to create resources to help young people and families make the most of the time we were all spending inside our homes, Photoville invited a working group of artist-educators to collaborate and build resources for intergenerational storytelling. **Kamal Badhey, Natalia Guerrero** and **Wendy Barrales** have each explored intergenerational storytelling with their students and in their own work. Bringing together their unique experiences as individuals, artists and educators, we explored why this work is valuable, ways to do this work, and the connecting & liberating possibilities of intergenerational storytelling.

This resource addresses three core processes in intergenerational storytelling: **connecting, making, and sharing**. Each section begins with guiding questions and offers activities and lessons. Also included are recorded artists talks and an inspiration bank of artists who explore archives and ancestry in a myriad of reflective, innovative ways.

This toolkit is made to be mixed and matched. Several lessons can be combined to build a longer project, or used as singular activities. The lessons are designed for use with groups of students, but can also be used with individuals of all ages in the context of your home and community. This toolkit is presented in partnership with PhotoWings, who are deeply passionate about intergenerational learning through photography.

Guiding students through intergenerational and personal storytelling requires intention setting. Before you begin, we invite you to read a note from the artist educators and to consider the guiding questions for this work.

A Note from the Artist Educators

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

As collaborators in this toolkit we reaffirm our role as educators of color and individuals that seek to continue to honor the long lineage of story-tellers and ancestors who have placed us as memory workers and weavers. “Connecting Through Time” calls you, your family and community to embark on a journey of personal and collective storytelling through photography by reflecting on the past, present and future as we call back the pieces of our life stories and legacies that have been erased, displaced or made invisible. How do we fill in the gaps to preserve the stories that connect us to the wisdom and knowledge that provides us with a deep sense of purpose and belonging? How can this work preserve our heritage seven generations back and honor seven generations forward? As we began writing this toolkit, we connected both our work as educators and artists within our families and communities, as well as our intersecting identities as People of Color utilizing oral story-telling and photography as a tool for liberation.

Working to fill in the gaps of history ensures that erasure does not continue for the next generations. This work ‘preserves the stories of us’, which includes knowledge that we would want many generations ahead of us to know, who we are and what we have lived through. For many people who have been deleted or not included in history books, doing this work is not always looking back and within, but also looking back in order to look forward—connecting ancestry to ideas of futurism and speculation, finding ways to define yourself so you can exist now and in the future. We are thinking of the representation of our grandmothers and mothers, constantly searching for mami, abuelita, amamma, and grandma. The search for our family allows us to see if they are present or absent. If they are present, are they nuanced or are they a monolith?

This work sits in the space of connection as we spend time with our families within everyday life. This can include the late night kitchen table conversations, speaking of migration and remembering childhood, a home, or an ancestor. The intention behind intergenerational work is that it can live for many years, beyond us. It’s record, whether it is in the form of oral storytelling, a photograph, or song, is a legitimate form of knowledge.

Our conceptual frameworks come from our practices as people who have done family work for many years developing our lens and deeply engaging with our own autobiographies and cultures. These are connections and methods, where sometimes the camera or audio recorder is turned off, subverting structures embedded in historical practices in journalism, formal anthropology, oral history, and documentary. Working within your understanding of family allows for both healing and transformation. As stories shift, there are new realizations of who one is as you peel the many layers of your identity. While you engage in this journey, remember to take as much time needed to honor your story.

— Kamal Badhey, Wendy Barrales & Natalia Guerrero

A Note from our partner PhotoWings

Intergenerational learning through photography is a passion of ours.

We feel it's a unique tool to learn more about the world and ourselves through meaningful conversations around our photos. In an era where people sometimes toss old photos or don't always migrate their cellphone images, through this work we hope people will further realize the value of saving their photographic heritage, both for themselves and future generations.

We also feel there are added life and professional skills to be gained through this process such as learning to communicate more deeply and the art of storytelling. Students will become more observant and critical thinkers while learning more about their own history, considering their own legacy, and gain a better understanding of the nuances of context and perspective. Through this process they'll learn to be more empathetic, resilient, and inspired.

We're always honored to partner with the wonderful Photoville team to bring our shared visions out into the world and are thrilled to see this important project come to life.

PhotoWings' mission is to highlight and help facilitate the power of photography to influence the world. We help photography to be better understood, created, utilized, seen, and saved.

www.photowings.org

[Vimeo](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)



EDU



Kamal Badhey (she/her) I am an artist-educator and independent curriculum designer of South Asian ancestry with an MA in Photography and Urban Cultures from Goldsmiths, University of London, and an MS in Museum Education from Bank Street College. I am a member of the Urban Photographers Association and South Asian Women's Creative Collective. My work intersects with diaspora, using photography, oral storytelling, and family history to stitch together stories. My project [Portals and Passageways](#), traces my jeweler ancestor and great great grandfather Annam Rathnaiah from unknown origins to a former colonial bazaar in Secunderabad, India. My reflection on his journey and descendents is the basis of my practice in transforming autobiographical work into curriculum. This methodology was created for my course Family: Re-interpreting the Personal Archive at the Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University and the teen class Re-Constructing the Family Album at the International Center of Photography. Beyond family work, I am passionate about the poetic narration of individuals historically underrepresented through story and photography. This work in accessibility has opened channels for teaching and mentorship with youth, teachers in training and senior citizens through the Bronx Documentary Center, LTP Tanzania, Back to the Lab, and the Parsons Scholars. To contact Kamal: [@portalsandpassageways](#) / [www.kamalbadhey.com](#) / [kbadhey@gmail.com](#)



Wendy Barrales (she/her) I am an Ethnic Studies teacher, scholar-activist, and founder of the WOCArchive. As a first-gen Xicana and daughter of formerly undocumented immigrants, I work to center my family's stories in my research, community organizing, & classroom. I've spent the last 10+ years as a public school educator learning alongside young women of color & gender expansive youth in the Bronx and Brooklyn, with a focus on justice based education and the power of storytelling through art. My multimodal doctoral research explores the intersections of gender and race through visual testimonios within a WOC centered high school Ethnic Studies course. Currently, I work on telling & preserving the stories of our sisters, abuelitas & matriarchs through the Womxn of Color Archive (@wocarchive), an art-based intergenerational storytelling project centering womxn, femmes, and nonbinary folx of color. This project began in 2016 with a single interview of my abuelita Aída's life in rural Veracruz, and has grown into a digital platform that houses multiple projects created by former students & community members of all ages. WOCArchive is a growing project and is currently accepting submissions. To contact Wendy, please visit [@wocarchive](#) | [@wendy.barrales](#) | [www.wocarchive.com](#)



Natalia Guerrero (they/them) I am a queer nonbinary POC community educator, cultural organizer, and photographer based in New York with an M.A in Media Studies from The New School. With roots and indigenous ancestry in Colombia, I have been in service of immigrant, refugee, LGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous, and POC youth for the past 12 years in collaboration with non-profit organizations like the United Nations, The LGBT Center in NY, the Bronx Documentary Center, among others. I focus my practice in designing and facilitating participatory community projects that center social justice and cultural organizing through memory and community work utilizing oral history, photography, and earth medicine. As an educator, I am passionate about facilitating spaces that are inclusive and affirming of everyone's intersectional identities and that foster a sense of community. In 2018, I founded Lion's Tooth Project, a community-led organization serving immigrant, queer, and BIPOC youth. Through photography and earth medicine, LTP inspires youth to have more agency over their own wellness, healing, and personal stories connecting in their legacy and joy. To contact Natalia, [www.lionstoothproject.org](#) / [@lionstoothproject](#)

Connecting

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Guiding Questions

1. How do we fill in the gaps to preserve the stories that connect us to the wisdom and knowledge that provides us with a deep sense of purpose and belonging?
2. How can this work preserve our heritage seven generations back and honor seven generations forward?
3. How does creating space for connection allow you to unearth and honor stories in your family?
4. What does/would intergenerational connection look like in your family? Who do you connect with in your life already?
5. How does your personal identity connect with your community and legacy?

Making

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Guiding Questions

1. How is the process of making informed by ancestral, intergenerational, and familial connections you have?
2. How will you build on, reshape, recreate, or imagine memories and the past?
3. How does your work react to or interact with established narratives about your community?
4. How can archival photographs be used to activate your imagination when thinking about the past, present, and the future?
5. How can the process of re-photographing honor, subvert, or empower the person being photographed as they reflect on their position in relation to their archival photographs?
6. What creative work is inspired by family memories, photographs, objects, and stories?

Sharing

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

☐ Guiding Questions

1. Who needs to know your story?
- ☐ 2. If you want to share your story, how do you envision sharing it?
- ☐ 3. How and where does your community gather to share stories?
4. What creative and meaningful methods of display can best reach them?
5. What do you take away from your project?
- ☐ 6. What do you want other people to do, think about, or reflect on with your project?



Connecting: River of Life

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Students will connect to their personal stories and legacy by mapping their river of life, grounding them in who they are as storytellers and considering the stories they may want to share with the world.

Facilitation Notes:

Remembering and exploring our personal stories can be a very beautiful and yet vulnerable activity, bringing up all types of feelings for all of us. This activity can be used as the beginning of an individual and collective photo journey to create trust and identification within the group. Encourage participants to take time to reflect on what feels comfortable to share and what doesn't. It's a great way to begin reviewing all the nuances of ethics around documentary work and respect for people's personal stories and privacy. Make sure to hold the space by modeling how to honor everyone's experiences. Everyone is welcome to share as little or as much as they want.

Guiding Principles/Framing Questions:

Connecting to our personal stories, our legacy and community is one way we can begin our journey in identifying and connecting to photo projects we might want to pursue. Who are we as storytellers? What are the stories I want to share with the world? How do I begin this journey by starting with myself and my own family's history?

1. Use a piece of paper large or medium, something to draw with and as many or as little colors you feel called to use.
2. Think of this piece of paper as a canvas to visualize your life journey as if it was a river. Use the following questions as a guide, feel free to add any that resonate with you or your group.
 - What are the key moments that have had an impact on who you are today?
 - Which experiences or relationships led to your interest in telling stories and photography?
 - Which are the most important relationships in your life?
 - Which places marked important transitions in your life?
 - What would your life look like if it were a river?

AUTHOR

Natalia Guerrero

GRADE LEVEL

all ages

TIME REQUIRED

1 session / 45 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED

paper, notebook, pens, colors, pencils

KEY IMAGES

[Image Bank](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

photoville.com/edu

The Photoville Education program is in partnership with:



PhotoWings

Connecting: River of Life

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Note: Imagine all these life stories as a river, the river of life! What would that river look like? Does it come down a mountain? Or perhaps it has multiple streams and connecting bridges, maybe there is a dam that represents a moment in your life or it has lots of wild flowers, or maybe it ends or begins in a waterfall. The possibilities are as infinite as your imagination. How can you use images to symbolize important moments of your life on this river?

Students may want to brainstorm or sketch before they begin creating their river of life.

3. A lot of memories might have come up for you. Sit with them and take a deep breath. Remind yourself life is very complex, filled with lots of beauty and joy, but also anger and grief. You are the owner of your own stories. This means you get to choose how you tell them, when and to who.

- What feels important for you to share in this moment?

Note: Share what feels right and what you think will allow you to feel connected to others and yourself. Once you have an idea of what you want to share, start from the beginning! It can be before you were born or when you were born! Our stories come from a legacy of ancestors and we might choose to start from before you took your first breath out of your parent's womb/belly.

4. Once everyone is done with their river, the group will gather in a circle and welcome each participant's river of life into the space.

- What are the stories they want to share?
- What does each drawing or symbol represent?
- What is one story they would like to explore as a photo project?

5. Closing Circle: After everyone has shared you can use this opportunity to reflect back to the group what was heard as an affirmation of the work they did. Everyone in the circle has been both a listener and storyteller, similar to the process a photographer takes on. Use this opportunity to ask some debrief questions. This space will allow for further connection within the group and trust building.

- What did you hear that resonated with you?
- What story or stories would you love to see documented in a photo project (yours or other peoples)?
- Did you realize anything about the way in which you love telling stories? Are you more visual or are you more like the historian who likes to write things down? Is it linear, with multiple chapters or is it just one image that speaks for itself?

- How do you think this way of storytelling translates into how photography and memory work?

6. Your photo journey has begun even with just putting things down on paper. The River of Life will become a blueprint for future photo projects as it serves as a reminder of all the windows into potential ideas to explore and connect to.

Connecting: Mapping Windows into Personal Documentary

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Define who you want to connect to and why. This session is dedicated to making space to map out all the windows into potential ways in which we can connect to stories we want to tell. Through reflection we can connect to all the possibilities of stories we want to tell and that will bring us a sense of purpose through our photography.

Facilitation Notes:

Remembering and exploring our personal stories can be a very beautiful and yet vulnerable activity, bringing up all types of feelings for all of us. This activity can be used as the beginning of an individual and collective photo journey to create trust and identification within the group. Encourage participants to take time to reflect on what feels comfortable to share and what doesn't. It's a great way to begin reviewing all the nuances of ethics around documentary work and respect for people's personal stories and privacy. Make sure to hold the space by modeling how to honor everyone's experiences. Everyone is welcome to share as little or as much as they want.

Change any prompts and questions as needed to reflect your groups interest, age and overall goal of the program.

Guiding Principles/Framing Questions:

- Where will your photo journey begin?
- What can this opportunity open up? What I am looking to uncover or connect to?

1. Ask participants to grab a piece of paper/note pad and pen/pencil. In response to the prompts below, they will write, draw, doodle and express themselves in any way they need to start brainstorming.

AUTHOR

Natalia Guerrero

GRADE LEVEL

all ages

TIME REQUIRED

2 sessions

MATERIALS NEEDED

paper, notebook, pens, colors, pencils

KEY IMAGES

[Image Bank](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

photoville.com/edu

The Photoville Education program is in partnership with:



PhotoWings

Connecting: Mapping Windows into Personal Documentary

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2. Create a focal point for your photography projects! Give students the task to think of each of the following categories as opportunities to identify windows into their own personal stories and innate way of telling them. Have students reflect on some prompts that most resonate with them.

- Objects: Name or draw objects at home that have a special meaning to you, a story behind it that you would love to tell or uncover. What stories does it tell?
- People: Who are the people in your life you would like to connect to more? Hear their stories? Who can help you to connect to your notion of legacy?
- Photos: What types of photographs do I have at home? How are they archived/stored? Who took those photographs? What moments were chosen to be photographed? Do I have any questions about any photo?
- Music/Sound: What is a song or sounds that remind me of growing up? What were the stories told in my family? Which ones were not? What was the format of storytelling (dinner table conversations, through song or books...) How do we connect listening and oral history to our photo projects?
- Nature / Land / Space: What land or space do you connect to? Which are the places growing up that hold the most significance to your personal story? How does this relate to the "locations" a photo project could take place in?

3. Closing Circle: Thank everyone in advance for sharing and listening. Invite students to share as little or as much as they want about the windows into their personal stories. Make sure to hold the space by modeling how to honor everyone's experiences.

- Which of these windows/prompts have stories you want to connect to and document through photography?
- What research or conversations need to happen in order to get started?
- Will my project be affected by the harm systems of power/oppression have had in our family relationships? If so, could this be an opportunity to bridge that gap? If not, how can I still pursue this project with a different angle?

If you have multiple sessions with your students look into [other lesson plans on this toolkit](#) to continue to explore family stories/legacies and photography.

4. Identify where your group will go next. Will they all create a photo project based on family photo archives, choose a person in their life to explore portrait/documentary photography, or maybe a combination of? How about utilizing objects that hold memory and tell a story?

Connecting: Mapping Windows into Personal Documentary

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

SEE MORE STUDENT EXAMPLES IN THE [IMAGE BANK](#)



Photo by **Fatmata Bah**



Photo by **Miyagi Scott**



Photo by **Miyagi Scott**



Photo by **Denzel Soriano**

Connecting: Identifying Dominant + Creating Counter Narratives

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Students explore how dominant narratives about their community are created and reinforced through web searches, algorithms, history textbooks, & media. After identifying what the dominant narratives are regarding their community, students then disrupt and speak back to the dominant narrative by creating their own counter narratives.

Facilitation Notes:

This lesson is best taught once students have discussed an awareness of identity, how we carry these intersecting identities, and how our identities affect the way we navigate the world (race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality, ability, & more).

Check out the Photoville lesson plans themed [Identity and Representation](#) for resources to have these discussions.

1. Begin with a warm up activity. Have students, individually or in groups of 2-3, create a web search of a community or neighborhood they identify with. Search terms such as: 'beautiful' or 'women bronx' provide results for generative discussion. This conversation can also be generated through school curriculum especially within Social Studies courses by bookmarking how often students see their identities represented in the curriculum. Then, have students create a list of their noticings through the following guiding questions:

- Who is represented?
- What is implied by this Google search?
- Which stories are missing? Who is missing?
- Is this a full picture?
- Extended questions:
 - How often do you see your community reflected in what you're learning?
 - What have you learned about your personal identity & community from school?
 - When have you seen your family represented in what you're learning? In art pieces?

AUTHOR

Wendy Barrales

GRADE LEVEL

middle-high school

TIME REQUIRED

3-5 sessions

MATERIALS NEEDED

internet access, paper, pen, post-its

KEY IMAGES

[Image Bank](#)
[WOC Archive](#)
[WOC Archive](#)
[Instagram](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

photoville.com/edu

The Photoville Education program is in partnership with:



PhotoWings

Connecting: Identifying Dominant + Creating Counter Narratives

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Points to Consider:

- Searching the web is one of the fastest and most common ways that we obtain information so it's important to think critically about who is missing.
- Dominant narratives in algorithms, textbooks, and other forms of media & text are all created by a human, and that human's lived experience affects the way those artifacts are created. Many times, the artifacts are not created from the community represented and we should be critical of the identities people carry and their relationship to how a story, image, or algorithm is created.

2. Another way to begin this conversation is through the work of [Kehinde Wiley](#). First, show a more traditional painting by Google searching '[Napoleon Bonaparte painting](#).*' Then, ask students to write a story about this image, or journal about the following questions:

- What is this painting telling us?
- What identities are showing up?
- How are these identities being represented?
- What words (adjectives) would you use to describe this image?

Debrief through a partner share or in a small group. After students share their initial thoughts, show Kehinde Wiley's [Rumors of War](#) as a reimagined counter narrative. Take note of the images 'Officer of the Hussars' and 'Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps'.

Now, answer the same questions (above) for Kehinde Wiley's counter-narrative piece.

3. **Define** dominant narrative & counter narrative: **Dominant narrative** can be used to describe the lens in which history is told by the perspective of the **dominant** culture. This term has been described as an "invisible hand" that guides reality and perceived reality. They also continue to reproduce inequalities in that they do not tell the full story and have historically been rooted in the experiences of cis-heterosexual white men. A counter narrative speaks back to the dominant narrative and nuances the story — fills the gaps.

Connecting: Identifying Dominant + Creating Counter Narratives

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

4. Create a T-chart on a large piece of paper or on the board, labeled **dominant narrative** (or Napoleon Google search) on the left and **counter narrative** (or Kehinde Wiley) on the right. Students will list respond to the following questions about each image. They will write their answers on post-its and place them in respective categories, **dominant narrative** and/or **counter narrative**.

- Who is represented?
- What is implied by this visual representation and comparison?
- Which stories are missing? Who is missing?
- Is this a full representation of your community? Is this a full picture of who you are?

In a whole group discussion, ask students to take note of what they notice listed in each column.

5. **Discuss** what a counter narrative would look like. Using the example above, how would we speak back to classic art? Who is not included in the types of pieces? Using the 'women bronx' example, who is not included in this google search? Who lives in this neighborhood? What are our lived experiences and how can we make these experiences more visible? Which parts of our experiences do we want to highlight? Showing Kehinde Wiley's piece as an example of a counter narrative, what would yours look like?

6. As individuals or as a group, students will **explore** their own dominant and counter narratives. Create a T chart and label each side **dominant narratives** and **counter narratives**. What are some dominant narratives that are perceived about a specific identity, community, neighborhood, of which you feel connected to? List them on the left side of the column. Now that you've brainstormed dominant narratives, add to the counter narrative column: how do you want to speak back to those dominant narratives? How do you want to nuance this story?

Facilitators Note: It's best to choose narratives you identify with because of the sensitive nature of retelling stories and the importance of being the authors of our own stories. Many times, dominant narratives can be associated with stereotypes but not always.

Connecting: Identifying Dominant + Creating Counter Narratives

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7. **Create** counter narratives through the creation/selection of photographs. Choose five photos (existing, take new ones, or collage) that you will caption and curate to speak back and disrupt dominant narratives. Get creative! Consider the following methods:

- Create a themed collage with photos that represent parts of your narrative that are not always seen. You can create this collage by juxtaposing photos as a way to show your complexity.
- Capture your home life or your commute to school, what parts of these moments do you want others to know? What do we learn about your identity through these photos?
- Choose a specific dominant narrative and speak back. What photograph would you create that provides a counter story to what a general audience would assume?

7. **Exhibit** and showcase your projects! Group student projects by themes (you'll notice that the project themes will overlap and have trends based on identity, historical event, neighborhood etc.) Have students create an artist statement to accompany their projects.

Artist Statement Template:

ARTIST NAME

Title of your piece

Materials used to create your piece

YEAR, CITY, STATE

Paragraph 1: At least 3 sentences for your biography. Include your name, pronouns, age, how you identify, etc. Include how you identify as an artist

Paragraph 2: A general introduction to your work including dominant & counter narratives you explored through this activity.

Paragraph 3: Discuss your photo selection process and what inspires you. What materials you used etc. (Collage? Existing photographs? Where/When/How you took the photos)

Making: Photographic Re-Imagining of the Familial Portrait

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Students will ultimately re-imagine an archival photo either from their family, community, or within history. They will use the work of Willow Naomi Curry and Tiffany Smith's Project [The Fourth Ward Photo Parlour](#) and Lebohlang Kganye's [Ke Lefa Laka: Her Story](#), as mentor artists to see how re-photography is a way to connect to the past. They will read their personal photograph through a set of visual literacy exercises and assess how they want to depict themselves in their recreations. Once they are finished with their project, they might extend the process to their home space and find ways of understanding the role of historical studio photography in their own community and within their personal identities.

Continuity of the Past and Present: Family Photography and Identity

1. Students will look at Willow Naomi Curry and Tiffany Smith's Project [The Fourth Ward Photo Parlour](#) as a mentor artist for the project. It is a modern day recreation of the [Teal Portrait Studio](#), a Black-owned business in Houston's Fourth Ward, one of the first Freedom Towns in the U.S. Begin by watching the [Artist Talk with Willow Naomi Curry and Tiffany Smith](#) video.

Willow and Tiffany created the photo parlour to provide the same service as the Teal Portrait Studio, by creating and gifting representations of the community members with images that emphasize beauty, dignity, and empowerment. Their project emphasizes the Fourth Ward as a living community of historical significance that is of value because of the people who live there. In recent history, the community organized to register Fourth Ward as a historic place, when the city's urban renewal project threatened its

AUTHOR
Kamal Badhey

GRADE LEVEL
middle-high school

TIME REQUIRED
4-5 sessions

MATERIALS NEEDED
camera, copy of an archival photograph, copy of a personal photograph, elements from the archival photograph (based on student's needs), light source

KEY IMAGES
[Image Bank](#)
[Artist Talk with Willow Naomi Curry and Tiffany Smith](#)
[Artist Talk with Karen Miranda Rivadeneira](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
photoville.com/edu

The Photoville Education program is in partnership with:



Making: Photographic Re-Imagining of the Familial Portrait

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survival. The Fourth Ward also faces the effects of gentrification.

Teal Portrait Studio, established in the Fourth Ward in 1919 by Elnora and Arthur C. Teal, operated for over 40 years, with Elnora as the main photographer.

'The studio was best known for its excellent portraits, in which the beauty and dignity of the sitter were emphasized. The polished elegance of the Teals' work was prized by their predominantly black clients.' —Texas State Historical Association

Suggested discussion questions (choose the ones that feel most resonant for your students)

- Willow and Tiffany were interested in the Teal Studio, in many ways because Elnora was considered the better photographer in this husband/wife studio duo. What is the cultural significance of her role in the studio?
- What did the Teals provide for the community between 1919 and 1960? What other historic events were happening during this time period?
- The photographs in the Fourth Ward Parlour are intended to live in the families' homes, rather than on a gallery wall. Why do you think this is important for the artists?
- What does it mean to have an aesthetic history? By discovering the Teal Studio, how are Willow and Tiffany creating a missing link between the past and present?
- In this project, how are people in the community connecting with the past by engaging with the pop-up studio?
- What do you feel like the Fourth Ward Parlour images draw inspiration from?
- What are some visual cues that show the continuity from historical times to present day?
- What are the similarities and differences of old and new photographs?
- Why do you think the artists place candid, older studio portraits, and archival family photographs next to each other as a means to empower the sitter?
- What is the role of archival, familial, or community photographs in your life? Why do you think it

Making: Photographic Re-Imagining of the Familial Portrait

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is important to look at them?

- How does looking at an old photograph activate your imagination?

Reading Our Archival Photographs

Students will bring in formal studio portraits, everyday images, or historical photographs of their family and community that they would like to re-photograph and re-interpret. Next, they will engage in an exercise to do a basic observational and interpretation of their own images:

1. Pick one person in the photograph.
2. Make a list of 20-30 things that you notice about this person.
3. What are some of the characteristics of this person? What do you think their job is? How are they relating to the other people in the photograph? How were they feeling that day? What do their facial features tell you?
4. Where is the photographer in relationship to the people in the photograph?
5. Why do you think they are taking this portrait? If they could narrate something with a dialogue or a journal entry, what do you think they would say?
6. Does your photograph have a visual language, aesthetic history, or details that you relate to?

Re-Photography: Embodying, Empowering and Reshaping Your Community's Portraiture and Past

1. As a group of students, engage in the act of Re-Photography. Students will try to recreate a scene from a family or historical archive and create a new photograph. They will experiment with meaning, lighting, aesthetics and cultural symbols within the photograph.

Essential Questions

- Do you want to re-interpret/change the story that has been inherited by your culture/ community? What new questions do you have about your heritage?
- How can photography help you connect with the past?

Making: Photographic Re-Imagining of the Familial Portrait

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

2. Introduce the work of [Lebohang Kganye](#) and her quote:

'My reconnection with my mother became a visual manipulation of 'her-our' histories. I began inserting myself into her pictorial narrative by emulating these snaps of her from my family album. I would dress in the exact clothes that she was wearing in these 30-year-old photographs and mimic the same poses. This was my way of marrying the two memories (mine and of my mother).... She is me, I am her, and there remains in this commonality so much difference and distance in space and time. I realized that I was scared that I was beginning to forget what my mother looked like, what she sounded like, and her defining gestures.' —Lebohang Kganye

- How does Kganye respond to her mother's archival photograph?
- What does she do to insert herself into her mother's photograph?
- Why do you think Lebohang Kganye wants to wear her mother's clothes and repeat her gestures?
- Why is this connection important?

Responding to our Archival Images through Re-Photography

Students will brainstorm and plan out different ways that they can respond to their archival photograph to prepare for making their 'Re-Photography' image.

- Juxtaposition: Students will place a copy of a image of themselves next to their archival image. Using mapping and writing, they can see themselves in relation to their archival image. Examples can be a figure in history, their ancestors, or members of their community.
 - Circle the elements of the photograph that you connect with and those which contrast with your life
 - What do you have in common? What is different?
 - Write your comments and observations on the copies of the photographs. Feel free to be as expressive as you like.
- Reshaping Your Portrait: Students will decide what aspects of their archival image they would like to embody by listing visual elements that they would like to borrow.
 - What are the environments, clothing style, and colors like within your photograph?
 - When you create a 'Re-photography' image and look at your archival image are there elements that you would like to change or even subvert?
 - Would you like to change any roles within the sitters? Gender, profession, or age?
 - Would you like to add textiles or other contemporary aspects?

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- Working with Details and the Environment: Students can get inspired by the environments and details within their archival photographs. They can choose to highlight various aspects of the image or add their own details. How do changes in the environment and its details create new significance in a re-photographed portrait?
 - What are the objects from your archival photograph? Would you like to find something similar for your 'Re-Photography' image?
 - Are their objects from your contemporary life or family that you would like to include?
 - How can you create a set for your sitter by thinking about the placements of objects and furniture?
 - What can you mix and match (cultures, time periods, imagined places/elements)?
 - Non-Verbal Clues: Students should look at how non-verbal clues exemplify the traits of the people in their archival photograph and 'Re-photography' images.
 - What might we know about the people in the photograph based on these visual elements?
 - What are we learning from their clothes, belongings and body language?
 - How are they fashioning themselves?
 - Does the material culture of the archival photograph inform us about what type of community this was?
 - Are there elements of your 'Re-Photography' image that you hope to share with future generations?
- Facilitation Note:** For these elements, educators can refer to [Elnora Teal's](#) and [Tiffany Smith's](#) representations and design within their photographs. Both of these artists construct a visual language in their work. Elnora had luxurious items on her sets and chose to emphasize the beauty and dignity of her sitter in a time when Black Americans were fighting for basic rights. Smith is creating continuity between the past and present by creating sets that could inspire similar feelings as photographs made by Elnora.
- Pride/Representation/Empowerment: Thinking of the Fourth Ward Parlour and Tiffany Smith's artwork, students will decide if there are specific elements that they would like to bring into the photograph to empower themselves in their photograph. In many of her projects, Tiffany Smith brings the high back wicker throne chair into her portrait sets. This object has the ability to empower a sitter and is frequently seen in vernacular photographs of Black and Brown communities.
 - What elements would you like to bring into your photograph that will make you feel empowered?
 - Would you bring members of your community or friends?
 - Would it take the form of clothes, furniture, decorations, lighting, or makeup?

Making: Photographic Re-Imagining of the Familial Portrait

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- Gesture: Take a notice of the gestures of the person in the archival image.
 - Do you want to emulate the sitter in the archival photograph or subvert the gesture that is being expressed?
 - How will you position your body?
- Lighting: What lighting situation would you like to use for your portrait? Assess where the light source is in your room.
 - Is it window light, a lightbulb, or sunlight? Place the sitter by the light source.
 - What direction is the light coming from?
 - What type of mood do you want in your photograph?
 - Move the light source or the sitter until you have the mood that you feel like sets the tone for your photograph.

Reflection

What was it like to embody people from your community/ancestors through re-photography and studio portraiture? How did it feel? How did you construct or make your photograph? What elements did you add or take away and why?

Extension Activities

Photographing at Home with Family and Friends

1. Tips for engaging your sitter:
 - Take time to talk with your sitter without the camera.
 - Explain to the sitter what you will be doing and why it's important to you.
 - Help them find elements that they would like to add to their photographs.
 - What are some other ways you can give agency to family and friends that you are photographing?
 2. Have your sitter pick an archival photograph that they would like to respond to. Ask them similar questions that you asked yourself.
- What would you like to....
 - Wear, gesture, change in the photograph?
 - What objects would you like to add or take away?

Making: Photographic Re-Imagining of the Familial Portrait

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3. Collaborate with your sitter. Spend time talking with them as artist Tiffany Smith does.

- What elements of the archival photograph are they interested in?
- What story would they like to tell about their past, present, and future?
- Use the strategies of 'Re-Photography' to help you collaborate and connect with people in your community

4. Allow your sitters to explore themselves as an older family member photographing younger ones, and as a younger family member taking a portrait of an older member. What are the possibilities? What do these dynamics reflect back? How can this exercise be a tool for repairing or strengthening relationships?

Research a Photo Studio

Students can research studio photography in their locale and other areas around the world. What are some historical photographs that are taken where they are from? What are the current geographical and political issues in the area? What's missing in the archive? Do you see yourself in these studio pictures? Is there an archive in another region that you relate to more strongly? Where is that archive?

STUDENT EXAMPLES:



Archival Photograph with Re-interpreted Artwork.

Title: **no.1**

Artist: **A'ssia Rai**

Caption: I drew a self portrait keeping in mind gestures I've seen in myself, my family and culture, doing so helped me to try and grasp a way of being not relayed through words by my elders.

Making: With Yourself

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

One great way to begin this journey could be with yourself! Look into your family albums and choose one photo of when you were young and one when you were older. You will use your creativity to think about what images go well together, edit photographs into one image utilizing an editing app and reflect on your own life history.

Facilitation Notes:

Show example photos of this exercise so students can see how the photographer intentionally places both photos into one. See examples in the [Inspiration Bank](#) and/or create one yourself! Students love to see a facilitator's younger self in photos.

1. Give students the task of looking into their family archives the day before to bring their photos the next session. They will need to bring two photos — one from when they were young and one when they are older.

2. Teach students best practices of scanning photographs. There are some apps that can be downloaded on their phone if they don't have access to a scanner. [PhotoScan by Google](#) is free.

3. Once students have their photographs, teach them the basics of removing a background using the editing apps accessible to them, and placing it over another photograph, pattern or painting. This can be an opportunity to go over the basics of photo editing.

4. Reflect individually as a journal activity or share in a group discussion. Here are suggested questions below. Select those that are most resonant with your students.

- What came up for you while putting this collage together?
- What does your family "archive" mean to you?
- What does coming of age look like in photography?
- What does it mean to grow up?
- How has your older self cared for your younger self? What piece of advice would you give your younger self? What advice would you

AUTHOR

Natalia Guerrero

GRADE LEVEL

all ages

TIME REQUIRED

2 sessions

MATERIALS NEEDED

paper, notebook, pens, colors, pencils, access to an old and current photograph of themselves

KEY IMAGES

[Image Bank](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

photoville.com/edu

The Photoville Education program is in partnership with:



PhotoWings

Making: With Yourself

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

give your older self?

- What is your relationship to your own family history? How will you tell it when you are older?
- What do you want your legacy to be? What is your family's legacy and heritage?
- Who are your ancestors? What have you learned from them? What have you unlearned?
- What type of future ancestor would you like to be?

5. Closing Circle: thank everyone for sharing and listening. If you have multiple sessions with your students look into the other lesson plans on this toolkit to continue to explore family stories/legacies and photography.

STUDENT EXAMPLES:



Fatmata Bah (they/she)

"Baby Teeth", with this collage I pay homage to this wide-eyed, buck-tooth lil girl who was taught early on, if she didn't have the right set of chompers, she better learn how to master the closed mouth laugh.

You are enough.

Photos used: a childhood photo, photo of my teeth taken during a dental visit, and a gleeful portrait taken by a friend.

Shay Lin (they/them)

I wanted to do a photo collage to share a personal story with the group around the history of my chosen name, Shay. When I was born I was named Ashley and now I go by Shay.



Sharing: Community Sharing

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

This activity walks students through defining the core audience for their work, mapping their community for exhibition spaces, creating an exhibition proposal and producing a community exhibition.

AUTHOR

Jasmin Chang &
Wendy Barrales

GRADE LEVEL

middle–high school

TIME REQUIRED

3–4 sessions

MATERIALS NEEDED

flip chart paper, writing
utensils

KEY IMAGES

[Photoville Public Art
Projects](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

photoville.com/edu

Where Should We Exhibit?

Organizing a community exhibition starts with knowing who your audience is and meeting them where they gather.

1. Upon students' finishing their photography project, ask them to reflect on their core audience. Have each student list the top 5 people that they would like to view their photography project and why.
2. Now brainstorm with students about where their audience gathers. Set up 3 sheets of flip chart paper around the classroom, and label them 3 types of community spaces: Outdoor Space, Businesses, and Indoor Space. Divide students into three groups, one for each sheet of flip chart paper.
3. At their first sheet of flip chart paper, give the groups 10 minutes each to list out as many specific locations for that type of community space that they can think of. (ie. for Indoor Space, students could list schools, churches, community centers etc.)
 - Remind them to refer back to their list of 5 core audience members. Where do their 5 people frequent?
 - Ask them to be specific (i.e. PS378 vs school and Navy Yard Boys & Girls Club vs. community center)
4. Rotate groups to the next flip chart paper. Give the groups 5 minutes to add additional specific locations for this second type of community space.
5. Rotate groups to the last flip chart paper. Give the groups 3 minutes to add additional specific locations for this third type of community space.

The Photoville Education
program is in partnership with:



Sharing: Community Sharing

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

6. Give students 10 minutes to walk around and review all the ideas on the flip chart paper, considering these questions:

- Which locations jump out to them?
- Which locations do they have connections to?

7. Poll the class to determine: what are the top locations that jump out to them, and which of these do they have a connection to?

8. Decide the top 2-3 locations to pitch to based on where there's an overlap. Is there a top location that a few students have connections to?

Creating an Exhibition Proposal

1. Create a simple exhibition proposal to share with each location. Address the following questions in your exhibition proposal:

- What is your photography project about?
- Who is this group of students?
- Why did you decide on this location?
- What would you like to activate in this space (an exhibition or event)
- Include pictures of your students and of their photography

To collectively write the proposal, you could divide your students into groups to address each question. The groups can brainstorm, and then write 1 paragraph about the question.

2. Compile this information altogether into a PDF to pitch the locations.

3. When pitching locations, remember to leverage your personal connections, and to follow up! As you're looking for a location, keep sharing and ask your students to do that as well. You never know when a personal connection or conversation can turn into a lead.

Visiting the Location

1. For locations that are open and interested in an exhibition, you'll want to organize a visit to the space with the representative to explore the possibilities.

Sharing: Community Sharing

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

2. During your site visit, consider and ask the representative:

- **Space:** Which spaces may we use to display work? Think outside the box and look at walls, windows, tabletops, menus, TVs, fences. Does the representative have any ideas about where you could show your work?
- **Time:** Is there a preferred time and duration for our class exhibition? May we organize an opening event in your space? If so, is there a preferred time?
- **Collaborating:** This is a community collaboration, so get to know the space, ask them what they need and how your exhibition could support them.

Perhaps it's a restaurant that wants to attract more lunchtime customers. Could you hold a lunchtime event? Could you include a lunchtime discount code with your exhibition invitation?
Perhaps it's a local park who wants to create more programming for the community. Could your opening event be open to the community and family-friendly?

Producing the Exhibition

Based on the space available and your budget, you have many different options for producing your class exhibition. Here are a few possibilities with links and background information.

Hanging Vinyl Banners

Considerations

Pros: good for outdoors, long-term exhibition, very durable

Cons: cost, need a suitable location to hang banners and permission to do so

Example: <http://www.communityheroes.nyc>

The Community Heroes project displayed hanging banners in a local public park for a duration of 10 months. They partnered with the community group at the park to help.

Printing Options: <https://assemblynotrequired.org>

Projection/Movie Screening

Considerations

Pros: can have a large audience and no printing costs required.

Cons: one night event.

Example: <http://www.communityheroes.nyc/neighborhood-stories-by-the-red-hook-reporters>

The Red Hook Reporters project partnered with Red Hook Flicks, a local summer outdoor movie series, to show a trailer of student stories as a pre-show for each screening.

Sharing: Community Sharing

This lesson plan is part of the [Connecting through Time: Intergenerational & Family Storytelling](#) toolkit

Postcards/Book/Zine

Considerations

Pros: can be distributed very widely and be personal keepsakes.

Cons: no community gathering

Example: <https://photoville.com/projects/brownsville-community-justice-center>

The PhotoVoice program at the Brownsville Community Justice Center was a series of workshops, class critiques and field trips where students created images of their perspectives of life in Brownsville. The resulting images were compiled in a book, and also printed as postcards for distribution all over the neighborhood.

Printing Options: <https://assemblynotrequired.org>

Exhibition at Local Business

Considerations

Pros: Support local businesses, build community relationships, reach a new audience

Cons: The logistics and schedule of producing an exhibition with a working and busy business may be tricky

- Many neighborhoods have a BID that has a ton of small businesses in the area. See the link below from Bed Stuy <https://thebedstuybid.org>
- Social media is a great source of getting to know your local businesses too! Search through the explore tool on Instagram and even through hashtags such as: **#ShopLocal #BedStuy (your neighborhood's name) #ShopBlack #SupportLocalBusinesses**
- Create a list of businesses through the resources provided above. The best way to keep track of business is to create a spreadsheet or table on a document with updated information. Be sure to include phone number, address, and all social media handles.
- Contact local businesses with students. Provide students a script and have them practice with each other before contacting the business. Many times businesses are more responsive through Twitter, Instagram, & Facebook Messages so be sure to explore that route as well as calling.

Sharing: Community Sharing

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EXAMPLE: PHONE SCRIPT

Good afternoon, my name is _____ and I am calling from **[name of school/org and location of school/org]**. Do you have a few minutes to talk about our school/org and our upcoming project?

If NO—Ok great when would be a better time to contact you? Should we email? Phone call?

If YES—Great! We are currently working on **[provide context and description of the project and who your organization is/what your school/class is about]**. Through this project, we are looking for a local business to exhibit our project. This is a great opportunity for you to promote your business, create partnerships, and build community within **[name of neighborhood]**. Is this something you would be interested in participating in?

If YES—Great! Can we schedule an interview? Would you prefer to meet over the phone or in person?

If NO—Thank you so much for your time! Have a wonderful day!