

REFLECTIONS IN BLACK:  
SMITHSONIAN AFRICAN AMERICAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Art and Activism

Activity  
Discovery  
Guide

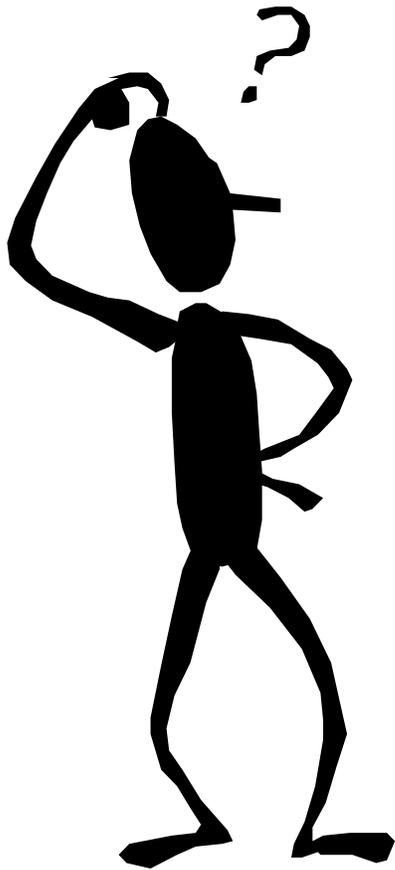


Smithsonian  
Anacostia Museum and Center for  
African American History and Culture

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# Think About...

What would it be like to live in a world without pictures?

What if photography had never been invented?

How important are photographs?

How are photographs important to history?

How do photographs bring history to life (capturing time periods, people and events)?

How do photographs help us to learn about history?

We take photographs and keep them for many different reasons. Photographs affect us in various ways.

What photographs are important to you, your family and your friends?

Why is keeping a visual history important?

**Are you collecting and preserving your photographs?**



# Welcome to:

## Reflections In Black: Smithsonian African American Photography

These activities will offer elementary, middle, junior and high school students, teachers, adults and families an opportunity to experience the contributions of African American photographers to the history of photography.

*Reflections In Black*, highlights the achievements of over 100 photographers who recorded the African American experience as daguerreotypists, portraitists, journalists, and media artists.

This exhibition is visual documentation of events, people and places. It shows the growth and development of families, communities and organizations, and shows photography as fine art.

### Art and Activism

Takes you into the civil rights movement with the freedom fighters of that era, shines the spotlight on celebrities, artists, musicians, jazz vocalists, gospel singers, sports figures, politicians, religious and spiritual leaders in the Black community.

*Although these activities are for intermediate and secondary students, we hope younger students will enjoy them as well and for families to have a shared learning and enjoyable museum experience.*

**getting started** ➔





# Discovery Activities

## In the Gallery:

Reading a Photograph  
Art and Activism Matching

You may choose which activity to do first.

In the gallery, you will find museum exhibition labels. These labels contain information you will need to complete the activities.

a photograph description label is next to the photograph itself. It gives the name of the photographer, birth/death, title of photograph, type of photograph, the year it was created, size, and the owner or lender of the photograph.



Robert L. Haggins (b. 1922)  
Malcolm X (1925-1965) with daughters  
Qubilah and Attallah at home in East  
Elmhurst, Queens, New York  
Gelatin Silver Print, 1963  
11" x 14"  
Courtesy of Robert L. Haggins,  
Bronx, New York

a biographical label is located next to the photographs made by a specific photographer. It gives the photographer's name, date of birth and death (if he/she is still living, there will be just the birthdate), and a brief history of the photographer's life.



New York photographer, Robert L. Haggins (b.1922) is best known for his photographs of Malcolm X. In the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, Haggins made photographs of the increasingly popular leader and activist while Malcolm X was a member of the Nation of Islam. Later, he captured Malcolm X's activities after he left the Nation of Islam. His most striking images are of Malcolm X in crowds in the early 1960s and with family members. Haggins's brilliant framing of this leader placed within the thronged street scene offers the viewer a surprisingly intimate portrait of Malcolm X.

## begin your discovery →



# Reading a Photograph

## Objectives:

1. Students will analyze photographs of African American photographers to explore different themes in African American life.
2. Students will develop visual literacy skills and use the photographs as historical evidence.

## Activity:

**Step 1.** Choose a theme of African American photographers to examine.  
*This activity may be done alone, in pairs or as a group.*

## Themes

- Education
- Work
- Family
- The Arts
- Sports
- Community
- Celebrations
- Civil Rights
- Famous People

**Step 2.** Search the exhibition and find a photograph that portrays one of the above themes.

**Step 3:** What does the photograph tell you about the theme you have chosen?  
Use the following chart to write your discoveries.



# Reading a Photograph



Title of Photograph \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Photograph \_\_\_\_\_

What I Observe:

People \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Objects \_\_\_\_\_

Environment \_\_\_\_\_

What I think about the photograph (possible conclusions):

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Questions I can't answer from this photograph:

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# Art and Activism Matching

Draw a line and match the photographer on the left with the name of their photograph on the right.

Keith M. Calhoun

*Black Girl with Barbie Doll*

Linda Day Clark

*A Young Moslem Woman  
in Brooklyn*

Robert L. Haggins

*House's Barber Shop*

Talib Abdul Haqq

*Cowboy*

Chester Higgins, Jr.

*Malcolm X with daughters,  
Qubilah and Attallah*

Earlie Hudnall, Jr.

*Eryka Badu*

Jeffrey Henson Scales

*The Baptism*

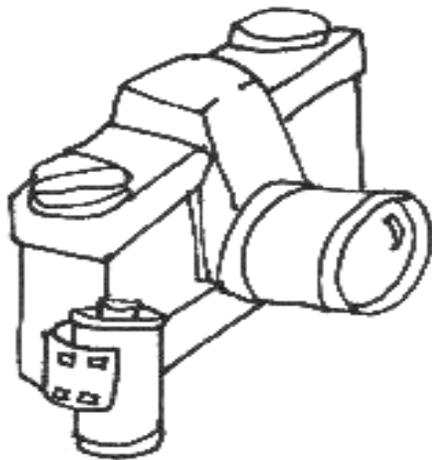


Activity Solutions,

Additional  
Information,



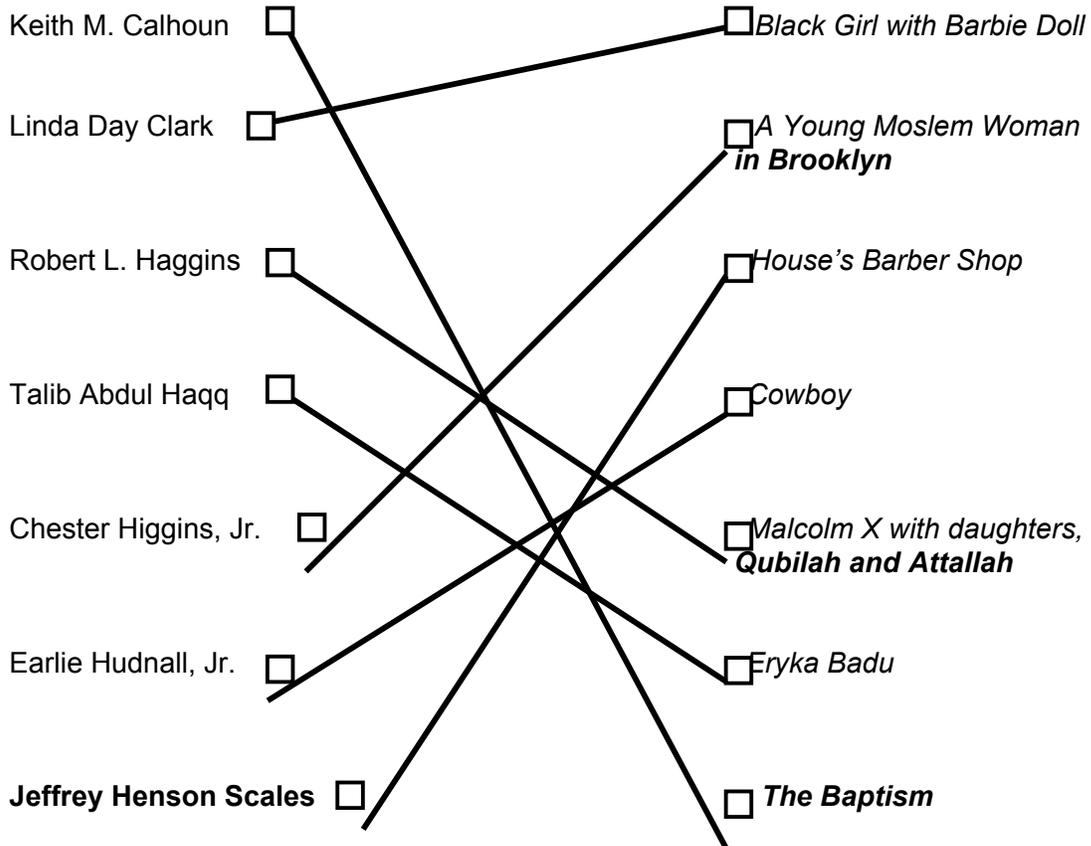
School, and



Home  
Activities

# Art and Activism Matching Solution

Draw a line and match the photographer on the left with the name of their photograph on the right.



# Creating New Words From PHOTOGRAPHER

(See Page 10)

- |           |                |            |
|-----------|----------------|------------|
| 1. ah     | 26. hog        | 51. rather |
| 2. ape    | 27. hoot       | 52. rope   |
| 3. are    | 28. hot        | 53. rot    |
| 4. ate    | 29. oar        | 54. reap   |
| 5. ear    | 30. oat        | 55. rear   |
| 6. eat    | 31. or         | 56. report |
| 7. gape   | 32. ore        | 57. roar   |
| 8. gear   | 33. other      | 58. roe    |
| 9. get    | 34. pa         | 59. root   |
| 10. goat  | 35. page       | 60. rote   |
| 11. got   | 36. paper      | 61. tap    |
| 12. grape | 37. pat        | 62. tape   |
| 13. graph | 38. pea        | 63. tar    |
| 14. grate | 39. pear       | 64. tea    |
| 15. great | 40. peat       | 65. teapot |
| 16. grot  | 41. photograph | 66. tear   |
| 17. ha    | 42. photo      | 67. the    |
| 18. hart  | 43. poor       | 68. to     |
| 19. hat   | 44. port       | 69. toe    |
| 20. hate  | 45. pot        | 70. tog    |
| 21. he    | 46. rap        | 71. too    |
| 22. heart | 47. raphe      | 72. tore   |
| 23. heat  | 48. rare       | 73. tort   |
| 24. her   | 49. rat        | 74. trap   |
| 25. hoe   | 50. rate       | 75. trape  |

# Did you know these facts about African American photographers?

That Jules Lion, a Black photographer born in France, introduced the daguerreotype (the earliest type of photograph) to New Orleans, in 1840? [The daguerreotype was invented in France in 1839.]

That Elise Harleston was one of the first African American female photographers to have her own studio? She worked in Charleston, South Carolina in the 1920s.

That James VanDerZee was the official photographer for Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)?

That Gordon Parks was the only African American photographer to work with the Farm Security Administration, part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s?

That DeWitt Keith's photograph of John Foster Dulles was reproduced on the four-cent postage stamp in 1960?

That Moneta Sleet, Jr. was the first African American photographer to win a Pulitzer Prize? He won in 1969 for his photograph of Coretta Scott King at Martin Luther King, Jr.'s funeral.

## Tips for Parents

If your child is interested in taking pictures, take him or her to see other photographic exhibitions. Talk about the images you see and what factors make a good photograph.

# CARING FOR YOUR COLLECTIONS:

## Preserving Your Family Photographs

by Carolyn Long

All of us have treasured family photographs in our homes and want to preserve them for future generations. Photographs should be stored, handled, and displayed in ways that can prevent their deterioration. Here are some guidelines on caring for your photographic collections.

### Handling Your Photographs

Avoid touching the surface of a photograph with your fingers; the acids, oils and salts in the skin can stain the image. Wear cotton gloves when handling photographs, especially daguerreotypes, tintypes, and glass negatives. You can lift paper prints by their edges if you are not wearing gloves.

### Displaying Your Photographs

Photographs on display should be framed, and matted with good quality 4-ply mat board. Matting gives support to the photograph and keeps it from touching and sticking to the glass. Use corners made of polyester film (Mylar) or paper – not tape or glue – to attach the photograph to the backing board. Small paper corners are commercially available.

Exposure to light on a continuous, indefinite basis will cause fading and discoloration. If you have an irreplaceable photograph, consider making a copy of it for display and keeping the original in storage.

### Albums

The nicest, most expensive albums have good quality paper pages, with corners made of clear plastic or paper, to which any size photograph can be attached. Another kind that is attractive and moderately priced has transparent pockets made of polypropylene film; this holds the popular snapshot sizes. Don't use "magnetic" albums which have sticky adhesive on paper pages with a clear plastic film overlay sheet; the adhesive will turn brown and could damage your photographs.

Old albums should be stored flat in archival quality boxes. Don't try to remove photographs from an old album; you could tear the photographs from an old album; you could tear the photographs and lose the meaning of the album if images are separated from their captions.

### Storing Your Photographs

Keep your collection in a room with the most stable conditions possible, not a damp basement or uninsulated attic. Photographs are sensitive to high temperatures, and fluctuating high and low humidity can accelerate cracking, fading, and staining. Warm, humid conditions promote the growth of mold.

Use chemically stable and physically durable materials to house your photographs. Folders, paper sleeves, boxes and mat board should be made of rag or chemically purified wood pulp. Never use newsprint or brown kraft paper. If you use plastic enclosures, make sure that they are free of harmful compounds that will react with the photographs; polyester (Mylar), polypropylene, and polyethylene are suitable plastics.

# CARING FOR YOUR COLLECTIONS:

## Preserving Your Family Photographs

by Carolyn Long

Keep daguerreotypes and tintypes in small boxes, wrapping their decorative cases in soft tissue. This will protect the case from abrasion and help keep dust and pollutants away from the photographic plate. Keep paper prints in folders, separated from one another by sheets of paper, or in transparent enclosures made of polyester film (Mylar) or polypropylene. Keep color slides in transparent film sleeves or slide boxes.

House glass negatives in paper 4-flap enclosures or sleeves. Store plates of the same size together upright in good quality boxes. Keep modern film negatives in polyethylene sleeves.

Keep torn photographs in good quality enclosures or have them copied. If the print is very important, you may wish to have it treated by a professional conservator. Ask your local museum's conservation staff to refer you to a reputable conservator in private practice. The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Work, 1759 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, 202/232-6636, has a conservation referral service and can direct you to members who specialize in photographs.

### Suggested Reading

*Care and Identification of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Photographic Prints*, by James Reilly.

# Early Photographic Processes and Printing

**Albumen Print** (1850) - a print made on thin paper coated with eggwhites and a salt solution and sensitized with silver nitrate.

**Ambrotype Process** (1852) - a collodion wet-plate negative. Glass backed with black velvet or paper lacquered in black, causing the image to appear positive.

**Cabinet Card** (1866) - a card mounted photograph. Size, 4 1/2" x 6 1/2". Displayed on bureaus, in cabinets or in cabinet card albums.

**Calotype Negative** (1841) - a paper print made from a paper negative. The negative was laid flat in a glass frame, and allowed to develop in the sunlight.

**Carte-De-Visite Photographs** (mid-1850s) - small visiting card portraits used as calling cards (business card today). Size, 2 1/2" x 4".

**Case Mounted** - Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes and Tintypes were sold in cases made of wood and leather, or a wood frame with heavy embossed paper or cardboard.

**Collodion Glass Plate** (1851) - Collodion is gun cotton (cottonwool dissolved in nitric acids). This mixture was poured over a sheet of glass, exposed in the camera while wet (wet plate process).

**Cyanotype Process** (1842) - blue image color and matte print surface (blue-print process). The blue color radiates an ephemeral quality.

**Daguerreotype Process** (1839) - a copper plate, with a silver surface, finely polished and made sensitive to light by iodine vapor, exposed in a camera, and developed by mercury vapor.

# Early Photographic Processes and Printing

**Gelatin Silver Print** - (1882) - modern printing processes are based on this paper. The print consists of paper coated with gelatin containing light-sensitive silver halides.

**Glass Plate Negative** (1847) - used coating of colloidian to hold silver nitrate on the surface of a glass plate.

**Hyalotype** (1850s) - a positive image on a glass plate.

**Paper Prints** (1840) - paper photographs are classified according to the emulsion used to coat the paper.

**Photogravure Process** (1870s) - a process for printing mechanically in ink, yielding rich half-tones.

**Platinum Print** (1873) - This paper had a silver-gray color, producing images with beautifully rich black tones, tremendous tonal range, and providing a permanent image.

**Stereograph** (1850) - two photographs mounted side by side, showing the same subject from different perspectives, so when viewed the image appeared three dimensional.

**Tintype** (1854) - a thin plate of tinned iron with a blackened surface. The black background made the negative image positive.

## Gallery, Classroom or Home Discussions.

### Describe:

A special photograph you remember from the exhibition. Why do you remember it?

Why was it important for African American photographers to document and record historical and cultural events in the African American family and community?

What are some differences between traditional and digital photography?

In which ways can a photograph be fine art?

## **Art and Activism**

Why is this exhibition important?

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An Activity Discovery Guide  
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1901 Fort Place SE  
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202/287-3369 Telephone  
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Hours: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm  
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