

When Photography becomes Art

Elements of Photography

Learn to look, feel and express yourself
through photography

Elementary

KBr

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Barcelona Photo Center



1.

Light

Lighting is the fundamental element when taking your photographs. Also, depending on whether there is a lot or very little light, your photographs will produce different sensations.

Classification

Hard light: usually natural, incorporating a lot of sunlight. This produces highly defined shadows.



Lee Friedlander, *Knoxville*, 1971

Soft light: barely any shadows, lighting is produced by a low intensity source.



Fazal Sheikh, *Abdul Aziz, with a photograph of his brother Mula Abdul Hakim*, 1996-1998

Observe the images

What kind of lighting does each photograph have: artificial or natural?

If you observe where the light is coming from, you will see the effect light has on the object or person being photographed:

- **Frontal**: right in front of the subject. Gives a natural appearance.
- **Sideways**: gives the image more volume due to the contrast between light and shadow.
- **Backlighting**: light shines from behind; the subject being photographed appears very dark.
- **From above**: the light source is above the subject generating a mysterious effect.

Activity 1: Creating a Story

Photographers Fazal Sheikh and Lee Friedlander want to know what emotions you feel when you look at their photographs and would be delighted for you to imagine a story including all the details you see. Therefore, they have sent you a post card with two photographs, some questions and a game.

In order to construct this story you can work in groups or with your family. Read the questions and answer as a group. Next, create a story from one of the scenes.

Let's get to work!

In order to create the story we recommend following these steps:

- 1 Choose a photograph and mark it with a circle.
- 2 Name a writer who will be in charge of writing down the story for everyone.
- 3 One of you will begin the story with the sentence "Once upon a time...". Next, everyone will add a sentence to the story you are creating.
- 4 When everyone has added their sentence, make up a title for the story.
- 5 Finally, choose a spokesperson to present your story to the class.



What feelings does the light in each photograph make you feel: happiness, mystery, sadness, peacefulness?

What do you think is happening in each photograph, or what do you think might happen?

In what country do you think each one of these photographs was taken?

2. Framing

Framing is the photographer's choice regarding what must be within the scene and who or what is the protagonist.

Classification

Wide frame: a very general layout that depicts the place where the action is being developed. In some cases, the subject can be lost because of the backdrop's fundamental role; this might help to transmit the photograph's emotion.



Harry Callahan, *Eleanor, Indiana*, 1948



Cristina García Rodero, *El danzante azul*.
El hito, Cuenca, 1980

Classification

Detailed framing: a specific element is highlighted for the viewer, granting it prominence within the scene.



Lee Friedlander, *New York City*, 1965



David Jiménez, *Infinito n.º 45, año 2000*, 1994

3.

Point of View

Point of view is where we place ourselves in order to take a photograph.

There are different points of view; special sensations will be generated when looking at the photograph depending on which one we use.

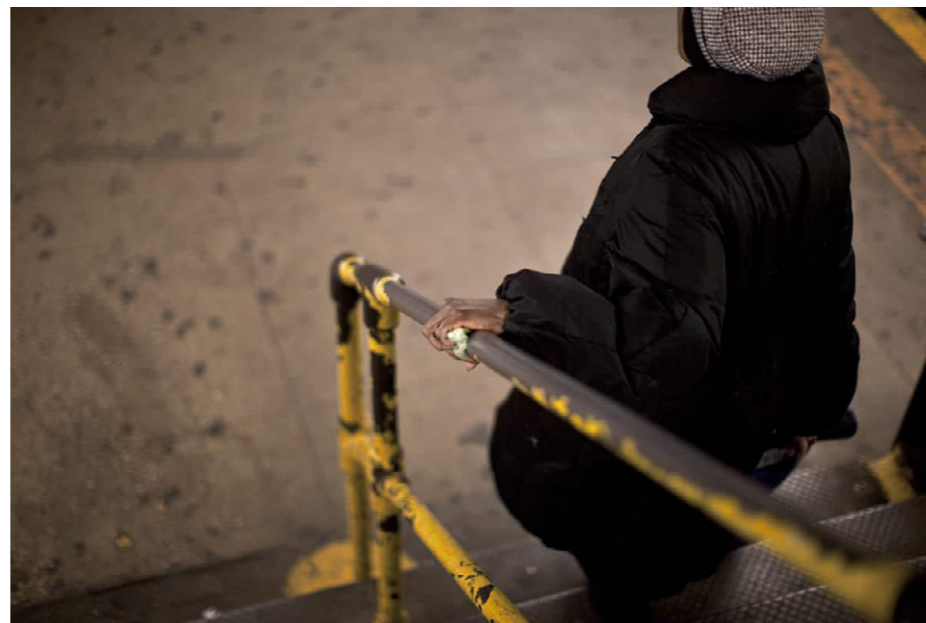
Classification

Normal: at eye level relative to the subject being photographed, or in front of the object. Describes the scene in a natural way.



Garry Winogrand, *New York City*, 1968

High angle: the photograph is taken from a higher position. This creates the sensation that the person or object being photographed is smaller.



Fernando Maquieira, *New York 2011*, 2011

Low angle: taking the photograph from a lower position grants the person or object being photographed more importance making it appear bigger than in reality.



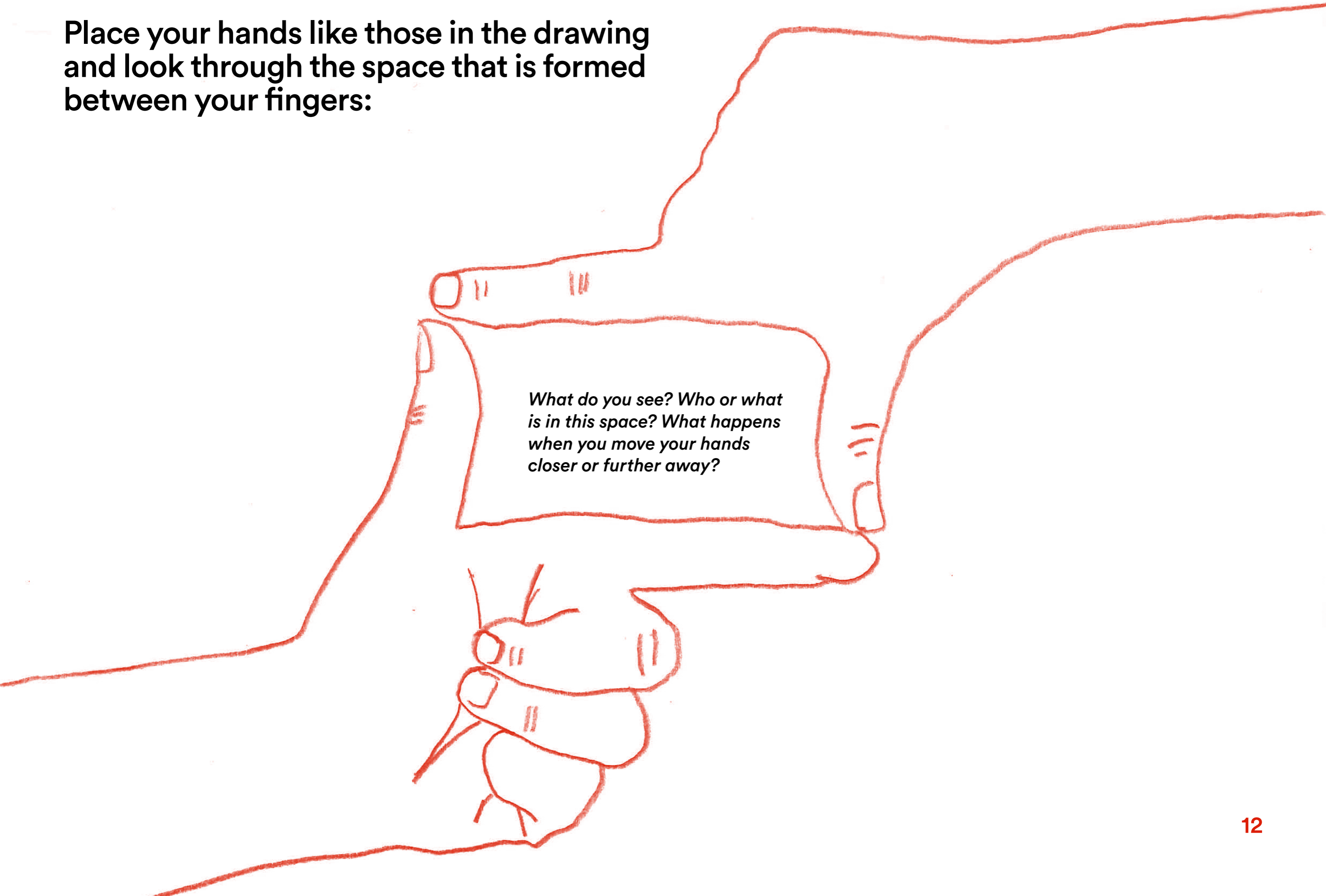
Graciela Iturbide, *Nuestra Señora de las iguanas*, Juchitán, México, 1979

Activity 2: **Our Hands Can Be Our Camera!**

**Let's transform our hands into a camera
so we can experiment with framing and
point of view like a photographer**

Place your hands like those in the drawing and look through the space that is formed between your fingers:

What do you see? Who or what is in this space? What happens when you move your hands closer or further away?



Now, imagine you've received an assignment to take a picture of an object and a portrait of a friend.



Let's begin with the object. Choose the object and place your hands in position. When you see the object through your fingers, get closer or move further away depending on how you want to take the photograph: as a whole, with a large large background or only one part. Choose the moment you like best and click the camera's trigger... click, click! You have your first photograph! What framing did you choose?

Next, the portrait of a classmate. Remember that a portrait is an image of a person. Put your hands in position once again and look through them until you see your friend. Move around in order to find different points of view: from above, from below or at eye level. Choose whether you want to capture their face only or their entire body. When you have it, call out: "Stay still!" Click the camera's trigger... click, click! You have the photograph!

Tell us:

- 1 What point of view did you choose?
- 2 What sensation or emotion does that point of view produce?

4. Black and White

Color

Surely, all of your photographs are in color, but you should know that many artists like to take photographs in black and white. Until recently, artists only took photographs in black and white, although they have already incorporated color into their works.

Black and white photography is a type of visual language that highlights shapes and light. Color photography is another language that adds information to the scene; it also provides a way of displaying different tonalities of light from a given time period or territory.

Reflection Exercise and Visual Activity

Have you
seen any black
and white
photographs?

Do you like black and white photographs?
Do they produce a special sensation?

Do you have black and
white photographs at home?
Are they old or new?

Observe the following photographs and tell us:
Do you see yourself reflected in these portraits of children?

Look at their clothing, their traits, what they are doing;
are they alone or accompanied? Where do you think they
are from?

Would you like to have your portrait taken like them?
Out of the five portraits, which one is your favorite?



Paul Strand, *John MacLellan, Locarnon, isla de South Uist, Hébridas Occidentales, 1954*



Jitka Hanzlová, *Untitled, Michalka, 1992*



Helen Lewitt, *New York*, ca. 1940



Jitka Hanzlová, *Johannes*, 2011



Fernando Maqueira, *Inma con su hermano Casabindo*. Jujuy, Argentina, 2006

Activity 3: Imagining Colors

We have selected two works by two great photographers and have extracted the silhouettes of the protagonists: a girl and a boy.

We propose the following challenge: each photographer has used a different language; one has taken a color photograph and the other has taken a black and white photograph. However, before looking at the original works, we want you to use your imagination:

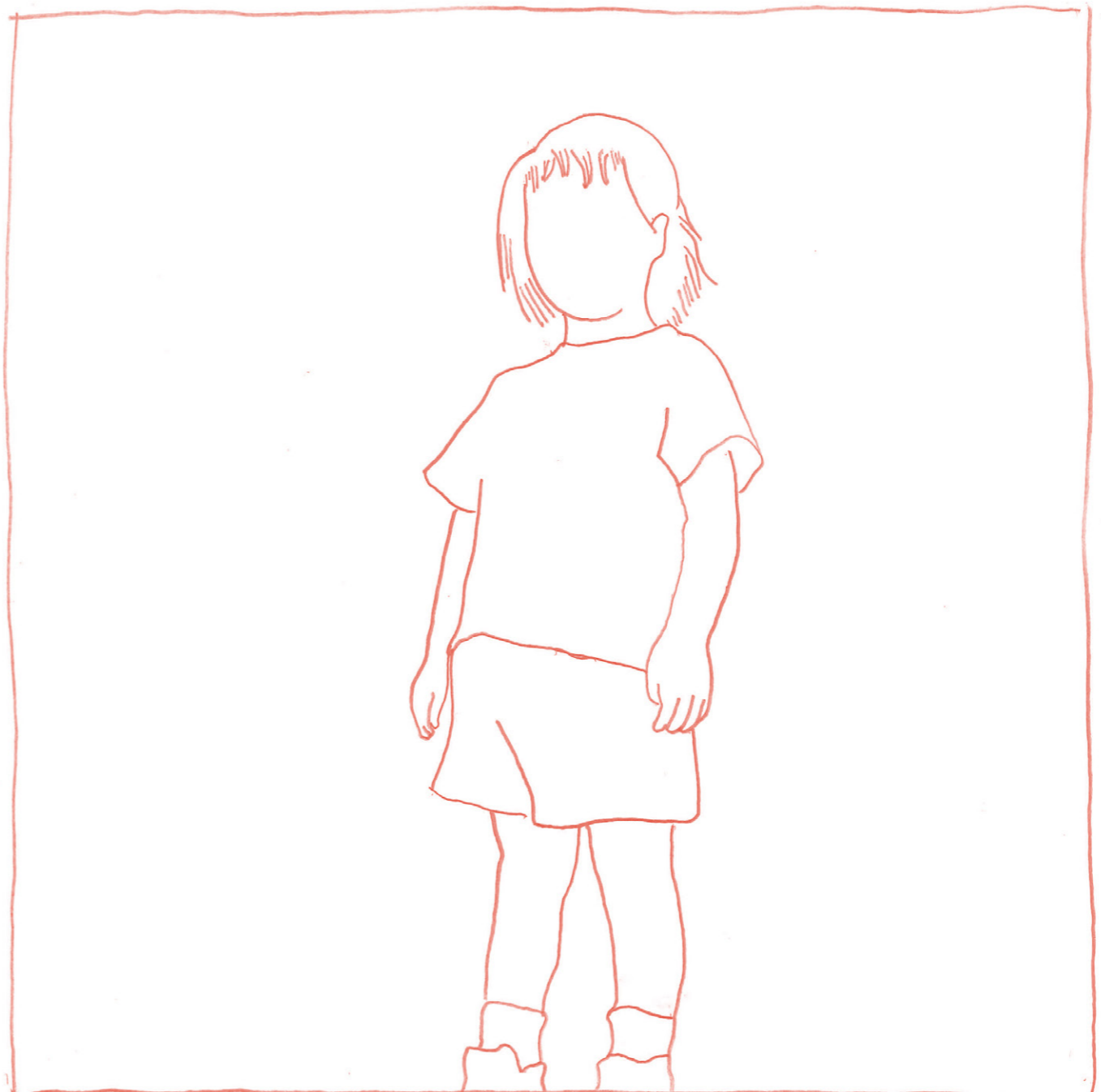
Do you dare to guess what color language each photographer has used?

Which one would you choose for each photograph? Black and white, or color?



Now, paint one of the silhouettes in color and one in white, black and gray.

When you finish, uncover the original photographs along with their actual colors. Do they look like the ones you've imagined?





Joan Colom, *Untitled*, serie «La calle», ca. 1958-1961



Fernando Maquieira, *Niña, Trevelin. Chubut. Argentina*, 2006.

Artistic Activity

The *Photocollage* of Emotions

We're going to make a *photocollage* but... what is that?

***Photocollage* is an artistic technique that consists of uniting different materials and photographic image cut-outs to create a new piece.**

Your work of art.

Phases of the Artistic Group Activity

1st Emotion: you will choose an emotion or feeling that you have felt while observing some of the photographs you have seen.

2nd Selection: when you are sure and have defined that feeling, select the image you want to use to create your photocollage. We recommend choosing 3 works we have included in the appendix.

3rd Transformation: on a piece of cardboard or on a roll of paper you will paste the selected fragments to make the photocollage. You will have to use different skills such as cutting, pasting, superimposing, repetition; in other words, you will have to deconstruct to construct once again with your selected feeling.

It would be great to add other materials such as sand, pieces of fabric, colored paper, leaves or whatever you might find nearby.

4th New representation: you will present your work to the rest of the class by groups.

Suggested Duration and Materials

Activity Dynamics:

- Reflecting on the images that have been viewed (5 minutes)
- Developing the project (20 minutes)
- Cleanup and activity conclusion, including group discussion (10 minutes)
- List of materials: scissors, glue, photographs included in the appendix, roll of white paper

Appendix

Works for The *Photocollage*



Jitka Hanzlová *Johannes*, 2011 © Jitka Hanzlová, 2021



Fazal Sheikh *Abdul Aziz*, with a photograph of his brother *Mula Abdul Hakim*, 1996-1998
The Victor Weeps (1996-1998) © Fazal Sheikh, 2021



Paul Strand *Midwinter, Near Stowe, Vermont, 1945* NEW ENGLAND © Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive, 2021



Lee Friedlander *Knoxville, 1971* © Lee Friedlander, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, 2021



Nicholas Nixon *The Brown sisters, 1979* © Nicholas Nixon, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York, 2021



Paul Strand *Facade, Gaeta, Italy [Fachada, 1952]* ITALY © Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive, 2021



Fazal Sheikh, Dawn along the Yamuna, 2005, Moksha – Portraits India (2003-2005)



Eugène Atget *St Cloud*, Copia de 1921 © Eugène Atget, 2021



Dayanita Singh *I am as I am*, 1999 © Dayanita Singh, 2021



Dayanita Singh *I am as I am*, 1999 © Dayanita Singh, 2021



Dayanita Singh *I am as I am*, 1999 © Dayanita Singh, 2021



José Guerrero *Thames #08*, 2008 Serie Thames II, London, 2008 © José Guerrero, 2021



Lee Friedlander *Philadelphia*, 1961 © Lee Friedlander, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, 2021



Graciela Iturbide *Nuestra Señora de las iguanas*, Juchitán, México, 1979 © Graciela Iturbide, 2021



Alberto García-Alix *El amo de la calle*, 1986 © Alberto García-Alix. Cortesía del artista y de la Galería Juana de Aizpuru, 2021



Garry Winogrand *World's Fair, New York City, 1964* © The Estate of Garry Winogrand, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco



Joan Colom *Sin título*, ca.1958-1961 Serie *La calle* ca.1958-1961 © Joan Colom, 2021



Garry Winogrand *New York City, 1968* © The Estate of Garry Winogrand, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco



Graciela Iturbide *Duelo en cementerio. Chiapas, México, 1975* © Graciela Iturbide, 2021



Paul Strand *John MacLellan, Locarnon, South Uist, Hebrides, 1954* HEBRIDAS
© Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive, 2021



Garry Winogrand *London, 1968, 1968* © The Estate of Garry Winogrand, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco



David Jiménez *Infinito n° 106, año 2000, 1997* © David Jiménez, 2021



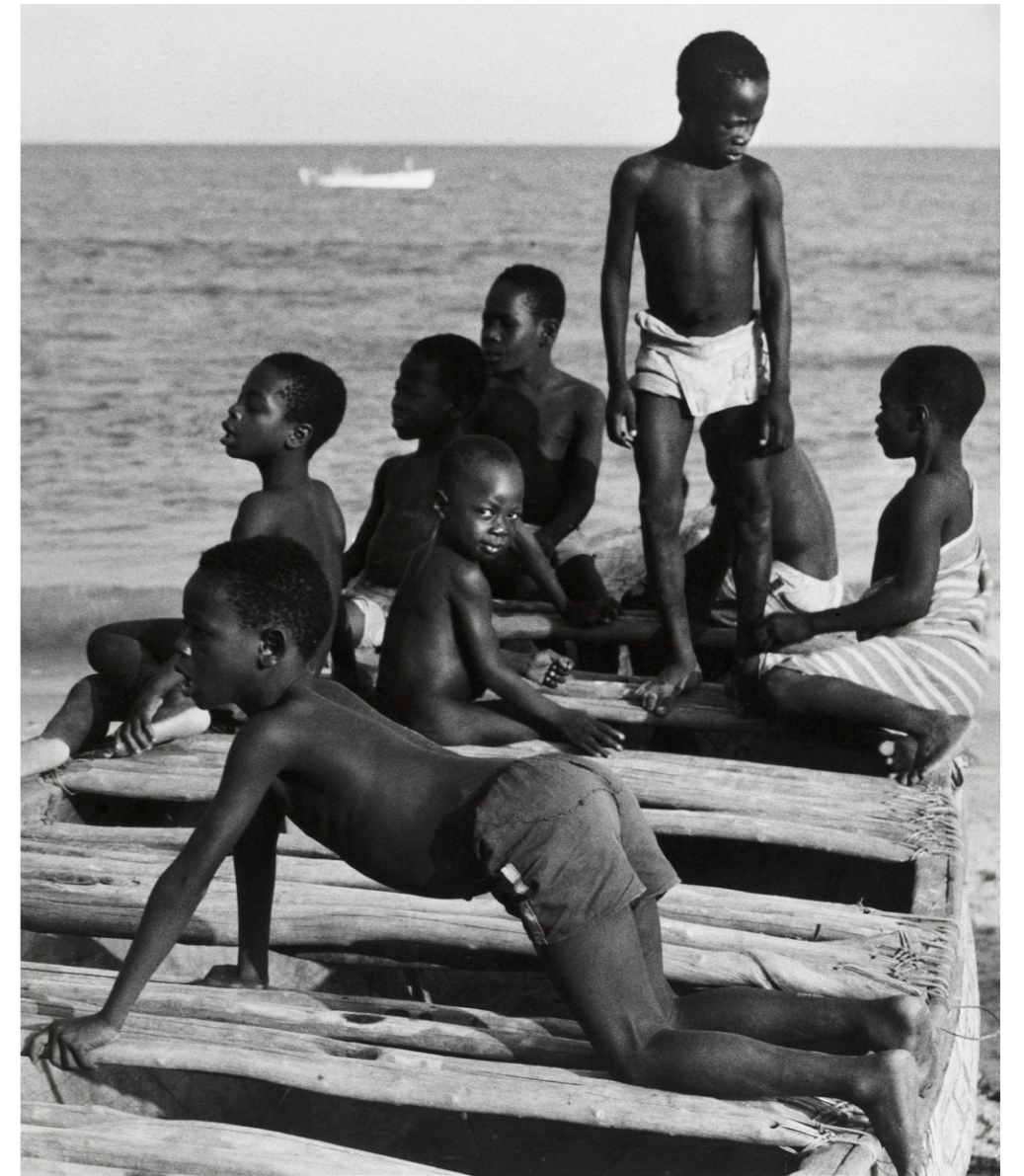
Paul Strand *The Family, Luzzara, Italy* [La familia Lusetti, Luzzara, Italia], 1953 ITALY
© Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive, 2021



Graciela Iturbide *Cementerio de Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, México, 1978* Secuencia
© Graciela Iturbide, 2021



José Guerrero *Hwy 40 (1), Texas*, 2011 Serie To Come Back © José Guerrero, 2021



Paul Strand *Boys at Cape Coast, Ghana* [Chicos en Cape Coast, Ghana], 1963 GHANA © Aperture Foundation, Inc., Paul Strand Archive, 2021



Anna Malagrida *Sin título (Fachada VIII)*, 2002 Interiores © Anna Malagrida, 2021



Emmet Gowin *Edith in Panama, Flight inside, 2003*
© Emmet Gowin, cortesía Pace/MacGill Gallery, Nueva York, 2021



Cristina García Rodero *El danzante azul. El hito. Cuenca, 1980 España Oculta*
© Cristina García Rodero, 2021



David Jiménez *Infinito nº 45, año 2000, 1994* © David Jiménez , 2021



Helen Lewitt *New York*, ca. 1940 © Estate of Helen Levitt. All Rights Reserved. May not be copied without prior written consent, 2021



Cristina García Rodero *Círculo infantil. Sugdidi*, 1995 Georgia © Cristina García Rodero, 2021



Fernando Maquieira *Niña, Trevelin*. Chubut. Argentina 2006, 2006 Ruta 40 © Fernando Maquieira, 2021



Jitka Hanzlová "untitled" 1992 / *Michalka*, 1992 ROKYTNIK (1990-1994) © Jitka Hanzlová, 2021



Jitka Hanzlová "untitled" 1993 / *Petr with Ball*, 1993 ROKYTNIK (1990-1994) © Jitka Hanzlová, 2021



Bleda y Rosa *Alcoba lateral, Sala de los Abencerrajes, Alhambra de Granada, 2005* Serie Estancias (2001-2006)
© Bleda y Rosa. Cortesía del artista y de la Galería Fúcares, Madrid, 2021



Fernando Maquieira *Inma con su hermano Casabindo. Jujuy. Argentina 2006, 2006* Ruta 40
© Fernando Maquieira, 2021



Harry Callahan *Eleanor, Chicago, 1948* © The Estate of Harry Callahan. Cortesía Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York, 2021



Robert Adams *Sin título*, ca 1973 © Robert Adams, cortesía Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco y Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2021



Robert Frank *Chicago*, ca. 1956 © Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York, 2021



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You can find more images by these artists and information about their work at Fundación MAPFRE's Collection of Photography.