



TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR GRADES 9–12

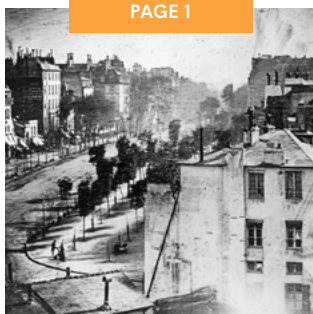
LEARN ABOUT

PHOTOGRAPHY
through explorations of
**HISTORICAL AND
CONTEMPORARY
ART IN CANADA**

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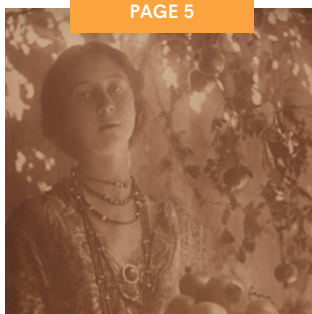
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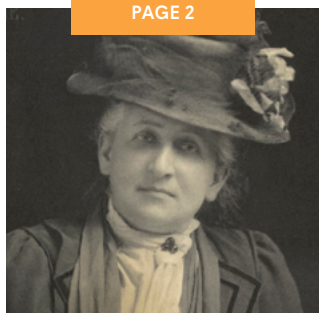
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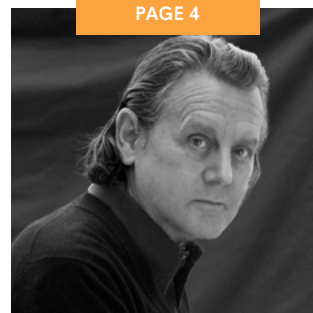
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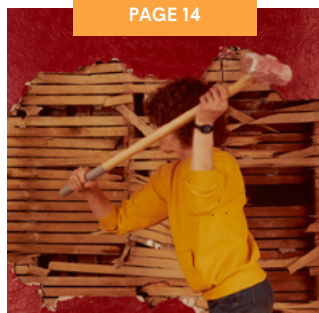
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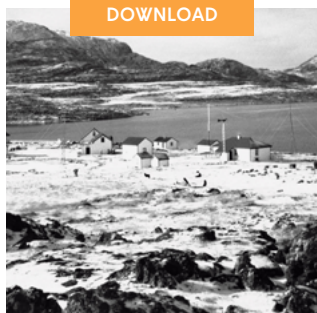
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RESOURCE OVERVIEW

This teacher resource guide has been designed to complement the Art Canada Institute online art book [Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History](#) by Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons.

The artworks within this guide and images required for the learning activities and culminating task can be found in the [Photography Image File](#) provided.

Since its introduction to the country in 1839, Canadian practitioners have taken up photography to create portraits, capture the landscape, and document noteworthy events—revolutionizing the ways Canadians see themselves in relation to the world around them. While it is hard to imagine life without it, photography’s historical development was gradual and driven by its versatility as a storytelling medium. Examining works by some of Canada’s most inventive photographers—including Minna Keene (1861–1943), Peter Pitseolak (1902–1973), and Jeff Wall (b.1946)—the activities in this guide invite students to study different genres, elements of form, and approaches to photography. Through close-looking and discussion, students will examine wide-ranging concerns related to the practice of making images, such as the use of photography as an artform, the ethics of documentation, and the notion of staging reality.

Curriculum Connections

- Grades 9–12 Integrated Arts
- Grades 11 and 12 Exploring and Creating in the Arts
- Grades 10–12 Media Arts
- Grades 9–12 Visual Arts

Themes

- History of photography
- Formal elements of photographs
- Photographic portraiture
- Documentary photography and “truth-telling”
- Contemporary photography and staged reality



Fig 1. Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Paris*, c.1838. This is purported to be one of the first photographic images produced with a daguerreotype camera.

Teaching Exercises

The exercises in this guide explore the theme of “photography” through images produced by historical and contemporary makers in Canada.

- Learning Activity #1 – Bringing into Focus: Examining the Art of Portraiture ([page 5](#))
- Learning Activity #2 – Ethics of Documentary Photography: The Camera as Witness ([page 8](#))
- Culminating Task – The Decisive Moment: Staging Reality ([page 11](#))

A Note on Using This Guide

Ethical conduct and consent are key concerns interwoven throughout the activities outlined in this guide. Educators are encouraged to engage in meaningful and respectful dialogues with students about the importance of obtaining consent to photograph their subject matter, and to recognize the many ways that photography has been used historically as a tool to map, record, and assert control over territories and peoples taken by force.

WHO WAS MINNA KEENE?



Fig 2. Portrait of Minna Keene, 1908.

Minna Keene (née Bergmann) was born in 1861 in Arolson, Germany, and emigrated to England between the late 1870s and early 1880s. While working as a governess in Scarborough, a seaside town in North Yorkshire, Minna met Caleb Keene (b.1862), who she married in London in 1887. Caleb gave Minna her first camera and she began using it to document flowers, plants, and birds. Recognizing the commercial potential of her photographic studies, Minna sold many of her images to publishing companies for use as illustrations in botanical and ornithological textbooks.

While producing images that documented the natural world, Keene regularly experimented with a range of photographic and printing techniques. Her self-published book, *Keene's Nature Studies* (1903), consists of still lifes and plant studies that echo the compositional and symbolic elements found in seventeenth-century Dutch

still-life paintings. This major work is evidence of how Keene's developing visual style was inspired by **Pictorialism**—a contemporary approach to image making that viewed photography as an artform rather than a means for documentation.

The Keenes and their two children emigrated to Cape Town, South Africa, in 1903, where Minna began to expand her subject matter. She opened a studio in the family's home and produced portraits of members of the Cape Town community. Her portraits from South Africa—which was then a British colony—illustrate how Keene used Pictorialism's formal elements, such as a soft focus and diffused lighting, to express the artistic value of her medium. The subjects of her portraits ranged widely, from affluent white settlers to members of the colony's working class Muslim population, such as the sitter in *Our Malay Washerwoman*, 1903–13.

In 1912, Caleb immigrated to Canada, and Minna and their children joined him in Montreal the following year. Minna and their daughter, Violet, were shortly thereafter commissioned by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to produce publicity photos of the Rocky Mountains. The commission resulted in works such as *Evergreens and Mountains, CPR*, 1914–15, which provided new perspectives on vistas that were already deeply familiar to many Canadians.

Keene and her daughter Violet worked at a time when women were often unable to make a living in the arts. Together, they set up commercial portrait studios in Oakville, Ontario, and in Montreal, where they attracted a diverse clientele. When Minna passed away in 1943, Violet continued to run their business and became a well-known portrait photographer in her own right.



Fig 3. Minna Keene, *Evergreens and Mountains, CPR*, 1914–15. Like many prominent photographers of her time, Keene was commissioned by the CPR to produce photos that would help boost tourism to the West Coast of Canada.



Fig 4. Minna Keene, *Girl with Fruit Tree*, c.1910. An example of a photograph produced in the Pictorialist style, the aim of this work is to convey a feeling through formal qualities such as tonal balance and composition.



Fig 5. Minna Keene, *Fruit Study*, c.1910. In some of her earliest works, Keene explored the aesthetic dimensions of photography by adopting the compositional and symbolic elements of still-life paintings.

WHO WAS PETER PITSEOLAK?



Fig 6. Aggeok Pitseolak, *Peter Pitseolak with his favourite 122 camera*, c.1946–47.

working for the Baffin Trading Company. Through experimentation with different techniques, Pitseolak quickly became a significant teacher, inspiring a younger generation of Inuit photographers, including his grandson Jimmy Manning (b.1951).

Pitseolak used the camera to document Inuit culture in a manner that could be passed down to future generations. Through his photographs, he also documented modernization in his community during the 1940s and 1950s—a period of heightened social change for Inuit living on the land. His body of work stands in stark contrast to contemporaneous photographs taken by Canadian government officials who used forms of documentary photography to justify and implement the permanent relocation of Inuit communities to the high Arctic and to lay claim to the North. Pitseolak brought his camera on regular hunting expeditions and to events involving members of the Kinngait community—as seen in his photograph *Campers gathering in Cape Dorset for umiakjuakkanak* (“big ship time”), c.1940–60. His images were collaborative as he would often work with participants to compose a shot or have them wear a particular garment that carried significance to them (such as an amauti, a traditional parka made of seal fur worn by Inuit women).

Pitseolak worked often with his wife, Aggeok, who is featured in much of his work and who helped him develop prints in huts and in igluit (spaces where they could moderate fluctuations in temperature). After Pitseolak contracted tuberculosis in 1945, his poor health prompted a shift away from documenting life on the land. Pitseolak turned to portraiture, and his portraits of family and friends, such as *Aggeok and Udluriak Pitseolak with Mark Tapungai and Petalassie*, c.1940–60 reflect his affection for those closest to him. Many of Pitseolak’s photographs became templates for drawings, another mode of expression he took up upon being hospitalized.

After his death in 1973, the Canadian Museum of History purchased more than 1,500 of his negatives and photographs. The first exhibition of his work was organized by the McCord Museum in Montreal in 1975.

Born in 1902 in Tujakjuak (Nottingham Island), Nunavut, Peter Pitseolak is widely known as the first photographer to capture traditional life in the Arctic from an Indigenous perspective. An early encounter with American photographer and filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty (1884–1951)—who is known for producing the film *Nanook of the North*, 1922—prompted Pitseolak’s interest in the potential of photography as a “truth-telling” medium and a method for preserving the stories, customs, and activities of daily life from within his community.

A self-taught photographer, Pitseolak used borrowed cameras to hone his skills until purchasing his own camera in 1939 while



Fig 7. Peter Pitseolak, *Aggeok and Udluriak Pitseolak with Mark Tapungai and Petalassie*, c.1940–60. Pitseolak often asked his subjects to choose their own poses or wear garments with personal significance to them.



Fig 8. Peter Pitseolak, *Campers gathering in Cape Dorset for umiakjuakkanak* (“big ship time”), c.1940–60. Pitseolak documented events in his community, such as this gathering to meet a Hudson’s Bay Company ship carrying supplies.

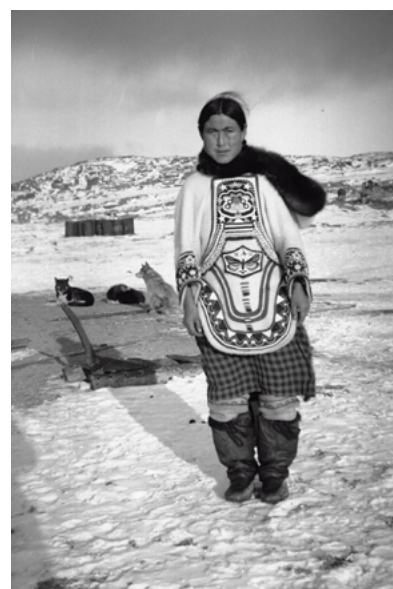


Fig 9. Peter Pitseolak, *Aggeok Pitseolak wearing a beaded amauti*, c.1940–60. In this portrait, Pitseolak’s wife, Aggeok, wears an amauti, a sealskin garment designed with a large hood and a pouch in which to carry a small child.

WHO IS JEFF WALL?



Fig 10. Portrait of Jeff Wall.

Jeff Wall was born in 1946 in Vancouver, British Columbia. A photographer and scholar of the history of [Conceptual art](#), Wall is best known for his large-scale back-lit colour transparencies displayed in light boxes, a format he began working with in the late 1970s. Wall's works often synthesize the formal elements of photography with components from other art forms, including painting, cinema, and literature, staging compositions that appear, at the outset, to be scenes witnessed in everyday life.

Many of Wall's early works evoked the history of art making by referencing and reinterpreting well-known historical works of art—a testament to Wall's deep knowledge of art history. His *Picture for Women*, 1979, for example, recalls *A Bar at the Folie-Bergère*, 1882, by French painter Édouard Manet (1832–1883), evoking Manet's play with perspective in a contemporary medium. Wall considered *Picture for Women* to be his first successful composition that challenged the photographic tradition by questioning the notion that photography is a medium for “truth-telling.” In contrast to

photographs taken spontaneously—capturing the right moment at the right time—Wall's images are highly staged, but meant to appear as if they document an event as it occurred.

In the 1980s, Wall pushed the idea of staged reality further through his construction of vignettes exploring the limits of photographic representation. Along with other Vancouver-based artists, such as Roy Arden (b.1957), Stan Douglas (b.1960), Ken Lum (b.1956), and Ian Wallace (b.1943), Wall reimagined photography as a form of Conceptual art. These artists, known collectively as the [Vancouver School](#) (though not all the artists have embraced this label), were united not for sharing the same concerns about aesthetics, but for recognizing the photograph as a constructed space through which to tell a story.

Many of Wall's photographs are the result of elaborate productions involving multiple sets, cast members, and a crew of technicians and studio assistants. Since the early 1990s, Wall has incorporated the use of digital technology into his practice to create montages of individual negatives, which he blends together to create what appears to be a single, unified photograph.

Wall's work continues to be exhibited widely and with critical acclaim, and he is the recipient of some of the nation's most prestigious art prizes, including the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement, which he won in 2008. Wall lives and works in Vancouver.



Fig 11. Jeff Wall, *Double Self-Portrait*, 1979. Wall is revered for creating complex mises-en-scènes in his photographic works, such as in this “double” self-portrait.



Fig 12. Jeff Wall, *The Drain*, 1989. Though Wall derives many of his compositions from life, he has also produced a large body of images staged from imagined scenarios, such as the one depicted in *The Drain*.



Fig 13. Jeff Wall, *Picture for Women*, 1979. Created after a nearly decade-long hiatus from artmaking, this work helped establish Wall as an innovator in the field of Conceptual photography.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

BRINGING INTO FOCUS: EXAMINING THE ART OF PORTRAITURE

Since the invention of photography in the mid-nineteenth century, portraiture has remained one of the most popular genres of image-making and has played an important role in developing both the artistic and social functions of the photograph. The genre was popularized in particular by Pictorialists like Minna Keene (1861–1943), who experimented with formal elements—such as framing, focus, lighting, and contrast—to achieve artistic effects, advancing the idea that photography could be used as an artistic tool rather than solely for scientific documentation. In this activity, students will examine two of Keene’s most significant portraits made in the Pictorialist style. Through a close-looking exercise, they will discuss how form impacts the construction of a portrait and its subject matter.

Big Idea

Formal elements of portraiture

Learning Goals

1. I can use my critical thinking and creative skills to analyze a photograph.
2. I can identify formal elements of the photograph, including framing, focus, lighting, and contrast, and explain how they operate visually.
3. I can examine the social and aesthetic functions of portraiture as a photographic genre.

Materials

- [Image File](#)
- Minna Keene [biographical information sheet](#)
- [Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History](#)
- Thinking journals
- Whiteboard
- Pens, pencils, and whiteboard markers

Process

1. Begin with a reading exercise by assigning the passages “1890–1930s: The Growth of Photographic Art” and “Imagining Identity through Portraiture” from *Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History*. Have students reflect upon the social functions of portraiture as well as the early debates about photography as an art form in its own right.



Fig 14. Minna Keene, *Pomegranates*, c.1910. Featuring Keene’s daughter, Violet, this portrait was named Picture of the Year at the London Salon in 1911.



Fig 15. Minna Keene, *Our Malay Washerwoman*, 1903–13. Many of Keene’s critically acclaimed portraits, especially those produced in South Africa, were sold as postcards.

Learning Activity #1 continued

2. Introduce students to Minna Keene using the biographical information sheet. Ask students to summarize key points about the style and techniques she used to produce portraits. Record student responses on the whiteboard.
3. Project the images *Pomegranates*, c.1910, and *Our Malay Washerwoman*, 1903–13. Engage students in a comparative discussion about these portraits, noting their similarities and differences. Guiding questions may include:
 - How has the photographer framed the shot? From what angle was this photo taken? Does framing impact the formality of the portrait? What makes you say that?
 - Has the photographer used other formal elements of photography, such as focus, lighting, and contrast? Which formal elements are the most striking or evident in each portrait? What makes you say that?
 - Do you think the photographer is trying to communicate something about the sitter? What do you think she is trying to communicate? What makes you say that?
4. Capture key words from your discussion on the board and highlight specific terms related to Pictorialism, the main stylistic influence in Keene’s oeuvre. The teacher may wish to share a definition of Pictorialism, as well as a few additional photographic examples, to help students understand this term.
5. Divide students into groups of 3–4 and share the following additional portraits by other prominent photographers in Canada. Prompt each group to engage in a close-looking, comparative analysis activity of the three photographs using the discussion questions from Step 3.
 - Unknown, *Tintype of Young African American Woman Seated at Table*, n.d.
 - Hayashi Studio, *Kiyoshi Shirimoto and his dog*, n.d.
 - Harold Mortimer-Lamb, *Emily Carr in her Studio*, c.1939



Fig 16. Unknown, *Tintype of Young African American Woman Seated at Table*, n.d. This portrait is part of a remarkable collection amassed by the Bell-Sloman family, who came to Canada via the Underground Railroad in the 1850s.



Fig 17. Hayashi Studio, *Kiyoshi Shirimoto and his dog*, n.d. Based on Vancouver Island, Hayashi Studio was founded by Senjiro Hayashi (1880–1935) and produced an impressive body of portraits for immigrant clients.



Fig 18. Harold Mortimer-Lamb, *Emily Carr in her Studio*, c.1939. Mortimer-Lamb captures the characteristic intensity of B.C.-based painter Emily Carr (1871–1945) in this iconic portrait taken in her studio.

Learning Activity #1 continued

6. As part of the discussion, have students think about whether they regard these portraits as forms of “art” in the same way that Keene’s portraits have been considered. Additional questions to provoke discussion might include:

- Which formal elements of photography—such as focus, lighting, contrast, and framing—are prevalent in these portraits?
- Do such elements suggest a more artistic approach, or a more documentary approach? What makes you say that?

7. Regroup and have students appoint one group member to summarize their observations for the class. Capture key words and ideas that help highlight the ways that specific visual styles and elements of photography impact the construction of a portrait. Engage in a class discussion on how these affect the way portraits are viewed (either as an art form or as a piece of documentation).



Fig 19. Minna Keene, *Untitled*, c.1910.

LEARNING ACTIVITY # 2

ETHICS OF DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY: THE CAMERA AS WITNESS

Until the mid-twentieth century, photography was embraced as a tool for bearing witness to events. Documentary photography has largely been considered a “truth-telling” genre requiring its own ethical code for reporting on noteworthy occurrences. Indigenous photographers like Peter Pitseolak (1902–1973) have taken up this genre to record social, political, and environmental changes within their communities, using the camera as a tool for connection at a time when traditional ways of living were drastically in flux. In this activity, students will consider the documentary side of photography by studying the formal elements of Pitseolak’s photographs. They will work collaboratively to produce their own code of ethical conduct for documenting the people, places, and pastimes that matter most to them.

Big Idea

Ethics of photography

Learning Goals

1. I can use my critical thinking and creative skills to analyze a documentary photograph.
2. I can identify and explain how photographs document specific events and people.
3. I can explain the ethical considerations of documenting people and events through photography.
4. I can apply my learning by skillfully and ethically documenting people and events through photography.

Materials

- [Image File](#)
- Peter Pitseolak [biographical information sheet](#)
- [Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History](#)
- World Press Photo’s [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Google Maps](#)
- Cameras
- Computers, laptops
- Whiteboard

Process

1. Introduce students to Inuk photographer Peter Pitseolak using the biographical information sheet. Have students summarize key points about how and why he took up photography and the subject matter he sought to document.
2. Introduce students to the geographical location of Kinngait, Nunavut, using [Google Maps](#), and briefly discuss the climate and terrain.

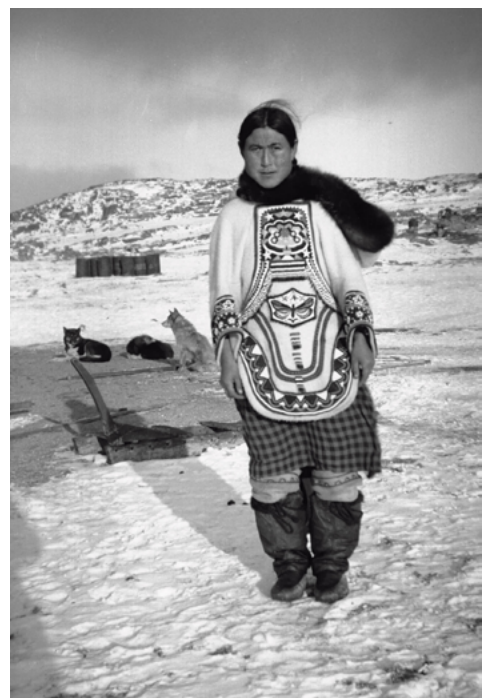


Fig 20. Peter Pitseolak, *Aggeok Pitseolak wearing a beaded amauti*, c.1940–60. Pitseolak’s wife, Aggeok (pictured here), helped him devise methods to develop film in the harsh Arctic climate.

Learning Activity #2 continued

3. Share Peter Pitseolak's photographs *Aggeok Pitseolak wearing a beaded amauti*, c.1940–60, *Distant view of Cape Dorset*, c.1942–43, and *Ashevak Ezekiel and Kooyoo Pitseolak leaving on the dog sled*, c.1940–60. Each of these images exemplifies Pitseolak's approach to photographing people, places, and pastimes within his community. Lead the class in a close-looking activity examining each photograph. Questions to prompt discussion could include:

- Why do you think the photographer has decided to document this specific subject matter? What makes this event, person, or place noteworthy, and has the photographer highlighted this significance in any way (e.g., by using elements of form such as composition and depth of field)? What makes you say that?
- Do you think the photographs have been staged in any way? What elements of form might suggest this?
- Does the practice of staging a photograph impact its function as a “truth-telling” document?

4. Continue the discussion by instructing students to compare Pitseolak's work with the following examples by contemporary documentary photographers. Refer to the same discussion questions from above.

- Claire Beauregard-Champagne, *Duyen, Thien's mother, learns French at the COFI (Orientation and Training Center for Immigrants)*, 1980, from the *Thein & Hung* series, 1980–95
- Tayo Yannick Anton, *Backway*, from the “Yes Yes Y'all” series, 2013

5. Throughout the discussion, encourage students to think about the ethics of documentary photography. Ask students to review the World Press Photo's [Code of Ethics](#) and summarize its main points, especially terms of consent, transparency, treating participants with dignity and respect, and considerations of the safety of those involved.

6. Return to the images by Pitseolak discussed earlier in the session and ask students to consider the following: Do you think the photographer (Pitseolak) acted according to a code of ethical conduct? Why / why not?



Fig 21. Peter Pitseolak, *Distant view of Cape Dorset*, c.1942–43. Pitseolak took up photography to document how the implementation of permanent settlements, like this one at Cape Dorset, profoundly altered the nomadic lifestyles of Inuit.



Fig 22. Peter Pitseolak, *Ashevak Ezekiel and Kooyoo Pitseolak leaving on the dog sled*, c.1940–60. Pitseolak's photographs of community activities, such as this one produced while on a hunting expedition, offer an insider's perspective on life in the Arctic.



Fig 23. Claire Beauregard-Champagne, *Duyen, Thien's mother, learns French at the COFI (Orientation and Training Center for Immigrants)*, 1980. Part of a larger project about Vietnamese immigration to Montreal, this image highlights the photographer's focus on developing her work in dialogue with her subjects.

Learning Activity #2 continued

7. After reflecting upon Pitseolak's ethical approach to documentary photography, prompt students to develop their own ethical code as a class. Record their statements on the board. Photograph the finished ethical code and prepare a more formal copy that will live in the classroom space and on the class learning management system.
8. Once the class has worked together to formulate their own code of ethical conduct, assign students their creative activity, which asks them to produce a photograph documenting either a person (or a group of people), a place, or a pastime. Students must approach their subject matter in adherence to their agreed upon code of ethics.
9. Provide students with the time to shoot their photographs (they may need time outside of class to do so).
10. Once students have produced their photographs, have them write a short essay reflecting on how they approached their participants and how their photograph adheres to the class code of ethics.
11. Display the students' photographs and ask them to present informally on the stories they have sought to tell with their work.



Fig 24. Tayo Yannick Anton, *Backway*, 2013. This photograph captures the vivacity and energy of an event known as Yes Y'all, a monthly hip-hop dance party celebrating the diversity of Toronto's 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

CULMINATING TASK

THE DECISIVE MOMENT: STAGING REALITY

The status of the photograph as both a form of art and a tool for documentation began to shift between the 1960s and 1980s, when major galleries in Canada began collecting and exhibiting photographs as contemporary art. In response to the belief that art should express an idea, artists such as Jeff Wall (b.1946) began making images that critiqued the very nature of photographic representation, presenting moments that appeared spontaneous but were in fact carefully staged using formal elements such as the “[rule of thirds](#).” In this activity, students will examine one of Wall’s most well-known photographs, the composition of which is inspired by the work of Japanese master printmaker Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849). Students will collaborate to stage their own photograph inspired by a work from Canadian art history.

Big Idea

Conceptual photography

Learning Goals

1. I can define “decisive moments” and identify them in photographs.
2. I can identify rules of composition and how they are used in photographs.
3. I can use artistic and historical sources as inspiration for the art I make.
4. I can create photographs that respond to specific prompts.

Success Criteria

To be added to, reduced, or changed in collaboration with students.

1. Photographs are created with care for materials, concept, and process. The student’s best work is shared with the class.
2. Artist statement and documentation of the creative process show a thorough understanding of how specific elements of form can be used to tell a visual story.
3. Student presentations are clear and demonstrate understanding of the “decisive moment.”
4. Critique of peers’ works is kind, constructive, and supportive.

Materials

- [Image File](#)
- Jeff Wall [biographical information sheet](#)
- Cameras
- Computers, laptops
- Photo editing software
- Whiteboard



Fig 25. Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993. Considered one of the artist’s most ambitious works, *A Sudden Gust of Wind* highlights Wall’s deep knowledge of art history and his interest in composing dynamic, thought-provoking images.

Culminating task continued

Process

1. Project Jeff Wall's photograph, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)*, 1993, without providing additional context about the artist or about how the work was created. Engage students in a close-looking activity to assess the work, examining elements of its composition and how they are used to tell a story. Questions to provoke discussion might include:

- What is the subject matter of this photograph? What event is taking place?
- How do you think the photographer captured this image?
- What is the story of this photograph?
- Has the photographer used any specific formal elements in the photograph? Which are the most prominent?

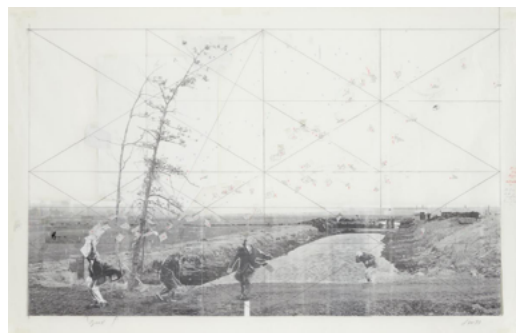


Fig 26. Jeff Wall, *Study for A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)*, 1993. This preparatory document illustrates the careful process behind Wall's final work, with the foreground figures superimposed over photographs of the landscape backdrop.

2. Walk students through the concept of the “[rule of thirds](#)” by asking them to identify how this has been implemented in Wall's work. The teacher may also opt to show students Jeff Wall's *Study for A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)*, 1993, as a companion to the photograph.

3. After discussing the photograph, introduce students to Jeff Wall and his work using the biographical information sheet. Have students summarize key aspects of his [Conceptual photography](#) practice and then ask them if they believe that *A Sudden Gust of Wind* is a staged photograph.

4. Show a [short video](#) featuring Jeff Wall explaining how he produced *A Sudden Gust of Wind*. Ask students to briefly summarize the story of how the photograph was made.

5. Project Hokusai's print, *Yejiri Station, Province of Suruga*, c.1830–31, alongside *A Sudden Gust of Wind* and lead students in a comparative analysis of the two works. Ask students if they believe that Wall's photograph has successfully captured “[the decisive moment](#)” in Hokusai's print (and have students provide their own definitions of what “the decisive moment” entails).



Fig 27. Jeff Wall, *Untitled production photo for A Sudden Gust of Wind*, Richmond, B.C., 1993.



Fig 28. Katsushika Hokusai, *Yejiri Station, Province of Suruga*, from the series “Thirty-Six views of Mount Fuji,” c.1830–31. Hokusai's prints featuring different seasonal views of the iconic Mt. Fuji have long served as a source of inspiration for artists, both in Asia and the West.

Culminating task continued

6. Once students have reflected on the concept of “the decisive moment,” assign their creative activity. Pair students into groups of 3–4 and instruct the groups to select a work of art produced by a Canadian maker. The work can be in any medium, but it should be a representational or figurative work of art that tells a visual story. See below for a short list of suggestions:

- Helen McNicoll, *Sunny September*, 1913
- Alex Colville, *Dog in Car*, 1999
- Itee Pootoogook, *Three Hunters Canoeing Across the Current*, 2013

7. After the groups have selected their artwork, ask them to reflect more critically on their choice. What do they think is the most important element of the work? Instruct them to identify the decisive moment and brainstorm how to restage it in a Conceptual photograph.

8. Once the brainstorming is complete, give students time to stage and shoot their Conceptual photographs based on a work in Canadian art history. The planning and production may take several days. Make sure to provide ample time for groups to edit their photograph if they wish.

9. Display the photographs in the classroom and lead students in a gallery walk. Have each group present their photograph, the concept behind its making, and the steps they took to shape the composition. Ask students to critique each other’s works by analyzing formal elements of the composition and reflecting on the implementation of the decisive moment.



Fig 29. Helen McNicoll, *Sunny September*, 1913.



Fig 30. Alex Colville, *Dog in Car*, 1999.



Fig 31. Itee Pootoogook, *Three Hunters Canoeing Across the Current*, 2013.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Supplementary Materials Provided by the Art Canada Institute

- The online art book *Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History* by Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/photography-in-canada-1839-1989/>
- [Photography Image File](#) with artworks and images related to this guide
- “Who was Minna Keene?” biographical information sheet ([page 2](#))
- “Who was Peter Pitseolak?” biographical information sheet ([page 3](#))
- “Who is Jeff Wall?” biographical information sheet ([page 4](#))

GLOSSARY

Here is a list of terms that appear in this resource guide and are relevant to the learning activities and culminating task. For a comprehensive list of art-related terms, visit the Art Canada Institute’s ever-growing [Glossary of Canadian Art History](#).

Conceptual art

Traced to the work of Marcel Duchamp but not codified until the 1960s, “Conceptual art” is a general term for art that emphasizes ideas over form. The finished product may even be physically transient, as with land art or performance art.

Pictorialism

An international movement that flourished from the 1880s to the first decades of the twentieth century and prompted the idea of photography as art rather than as a scientific or documentary tool. Pictorialists experimented with a variety of photographic techniques to achieve artistic effects. Their photographs are broadly characterized by soft focus and diffuse lighting.

Vancouver photo-conceptualism

Also known as the Vancouver School, the term originated in the 1980s in reference to a group of artists in Vancouver, including Jeff Wall, Roy Arden, Stan Douglas, Ian Wallace, Ken Lum, and Rodney Graham, who diversely incorporated Conceptual art’s concerns into their photographic practices. These include Wall’s staged tableaux, Douglas’s historical recreations, and Lum’s pairings of photographs and text. The movement, while not always embraced by those who fall under its label, has had an international impact on contemporary photography.



Fig 32. Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983–84. One of Canada’s most celebrated photographers, Lake’s works exploring issues related to gender and identity have helped advance photography’s evolution as a contemporary art medium.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

The following external resources can be used to augment the learning activities and materials provided by the Art Canada Institute. They are to be used at the teacher's own discretion.

"A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)" – TVO Today

<https://www.tvo.org/video/a-sudden-gust-of-wind-after-hokusai>

"Twentieth-Century Photography" – Art History Teaching Resources

<https://arthistoryteachingresources.org/lessons/twentieth-century-photography/>

"Rule of Thirds – Everything You Need to Know" – Nashville Film Society

<https://www.nfi.edu/rule-of-thirds/>

World Press Photo

<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/>

Code of Ethics – Photographers Without Borders

<https://www.photographerswithoutborders.org/code-of-ethics/>

"5 Steps to an Ethical Photography Practice" by Danielle de Silva – Photographers Without Borders

<https://www.photographerswithoutborders.org/online-magazine/5-steps-to-an-ethical-photography-practice>



Fig 33. Hannah Maynard, *Hannah Maynard and her grandson, Maynard McDonald, in a tableau vivant composite photo, c.1893*. While Maynard operated a successful portrait studio in Victoria, she is also known for her experimental works using multiple exposures, such as in this staged portrait with her grandson.

FIGURE LIST

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Cover Images: Attributed to Gabriel Lippmann, Faverol, Normandy, 1914, Lippmann interferential colour plate. Private Collection.

Derogy stereo camera, c.1870, wood, leather, metal, and glass, 21.5 x 26.5 x 45.5 cm. George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York.

Brewster-style stereoscope, unknown maker, c.1850, wood, metal, foil, and glass, overall (lid open): 12.5 x 18.5 x 15 cm. George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York. Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York.

Eastman Kodak Company, Brownie Box Set, c.1901, various materials, 15.2 x 40.6 x 22.9 cm. Collection of the George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, Gift of Robert and Lynne Shanebrook (2021.0002.0001–0014). Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum.

Fig 1. Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, *Boulevard du Temple, Paris*, c.1838, daguerreotype. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Fig 2. Portrait of Minna Keene, 1908, platinum print, 20.2 x 15.6 cm. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto.

Fig 3. Minna Keene, *Evergreens and Mountains, CPR*, 1914–15, gelatin silver print. Collection of The Image Centre, Toronto, Gift of the Sturup Family, 2020 (AG05.2019.1004:0839). Courtesy of The Image Centre. © Estate of Minna Keene and Violet Keene Perinchief.

Fig 4. Minna Keene, *Girl with Fruit Tree*, c.1910, bromide print mounted to two-ply period support, 31.7 x 38.1 cm. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto. © Estate of Minna Keene and Violet Keene Perinchief.

Fig 5. Minna Keene, *Fruit Study*, c.1910, silver bromide print with single-ply support, 32.3 x 24.7 cm. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto. © Estate of Minna Keene and Violet Keene Perinchief.

Fig 6. Aggeok Pitseolak, *Peter Pitseolak with his favourite 122 camera*, c.1946–47, black and white negative, 11.4 x 6.4 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-180). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 7. Peter Pitseolak, *Aggeok and Udluriak Pitseolak with Mark Tapungai and Petalassie*, c.1940–60, black and white negative, 6.3 x 11.4 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-1196). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 8. Peter Pitseolak, *Campers gathering in Cape Dorset for umiakjuakkanak ("big ship time")*, c.1940–60, black and white negative, 6.3 x 11.4 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-278). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 9. Peter Pitseolak, *Aggeok Pitseolak wearing a beaded amauti*, c.1940–60, black and white negative, 5.7 x 8.9 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-684). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 10. Portrait of Jeff Wall. Photo: James O'Mara. Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery.

Fig 11. Jeff Wall, *Double Self-Portrait*, 1979, transparency in lightbox, 172 x 229 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Jeff Wall.

Fig 12. Jeff Wall, *The Drain*, 1989, transparency in lightbox, 229 x 290 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Jeff Wall.

Fig 13. Jeff Wall, *Picture for Women*, 1979, transparency in lightbox, 142.5 x 204.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Jeff Wall.

Fig 14. Minna Keene, *Pomegranates*, c.1910, carbon print, 48.2 x 35.2 cm. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto. © Estate of Minna Keene and Violet Keene Perinchief.

Fig 15. Minna Keene, *Our Malay Washerwoman*, 1903–13, silver gelatin print. Collection of The Image Centre, Toronto, Gift of the Sturup Family, 2020. Courtesy of The Image Centre. © Estate of Minna Keene and Violet Keene Perinchief.

Fig 16. Unknown, *Tintype of Young African American Woman Seated at Table*, n.d. Bell-Sloman Collection of the James Gibson Library, Brock University, St. Catharines. Courtesy of the James Gibson Library, Brock University, St. Catharines.

Fig 17. Hayashi Studio, *Kiyoshi Shirimoto and his dog*, n.d., digital print and scan from glass plate negative. Collection of Cumberland Museum and Archive (C140-108). Courtesy of Cumberland Museum and Archive.

Fig 18. Harold Mortimer-Lamb, *Emily Carr in her Studio*, c.1939, black and white photograph, 35.7 x 27.8 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (1980.087.003). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Fig 19. Minna Keene, *Untitled*, c.1910, carbon print mounted to single-ply period board and additional two-ply period board, 21.6 x 27.9 cm. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto. © Estate of Minna Keene and Violet Keene Perinchief.

Fig 20. Peter Pitseolak, *Aggeok Pitseolak wearing a beaded amauti*, c.1940–60, black and white negative, 5.7 x 8.9 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-684). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 21. Peter Pitseolak, *Distant view of Cape Dorset*, c.1942–43. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-215). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 22. Peter Pitseolak, *Ashevak Ezekiel and Kooyoo Pitseolak leaving on the dog sled*, c.1940–60, black and white negative, 6.4 x 8.9 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (2000-1625). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Fig 23. Claire Beauregard-Champagne, *Duyen, Thien's mother, learns French at the COFI (Orientation and Training Center for Immigrants)*, 1980, from the Thien & Hung series, 1980–95, gelatin silver print, 27.7 x 35.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Claire Beaugrand-Champagne.

Fig 24. Tayo Yannick Anton, *Backway*, 2013, from *As We Rise: Photography from the Black Atlantic* (Aperture, 2021). Courtesy of the artist.

Fig 25. Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993, transparency on lightbox, 229 x 377 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Jeff Wall.

FIGURE LIST

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Fig 26. Jeff Wall, *Study for A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)*, 1993, transparency on lightbox, 77.3 x 121.5 cm. Collection of the Tate Modern, London, U.K., Purchased 1997 (T07235). Courtesy of the artist and Tate Modern. © Jeff Wall.

Fig 27. Jeff Wall, *Untitled production photo for A Sudden Gust of Wind*, Richmond, B.C., 1993. Courtesy of the Jeff Wall Studio. © Jeff Wall.

Fig 28. Katsushika Hokusai, *Yejiri Station, Province of Suruga*, from the series "Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji," c.1830–31, colour woodblock print on paper, 24.3 x 36.3 cm. Collection of the Brooklyn Museum, New York, Gift of Frederic B. Pratt (42.74). Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum. Photo credit: Brooklyn Museum.

Fig 29. Helen McNicoll, *Sunny September*, 1913, oil on canvas, 92 x 107.5 cm. Collection Pierre Lassonde. Courtesy of Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. Photo credit: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Idra Labrie.

Fig 30. Alex Colville, *Dog in Car*, 1999, acrylic polymer emulsion on hardboard, 36 x 62.4 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchased with funds provided by the Art Sales and Rental Society, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2002 (2002.89). © A.C. Fine Art Inc.

Fig 31. Itee Pootoogook, *Three Hunters Canoeing Across the Current*, 2013, coloured pencil, 76.2 x 111.7 cm. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts. © Dorset Fine Arts.

Fig 32. Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983–84, chromogenic print, oil paint, and lumber, 162.6 x 109.2 x 10.2 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Courtesy of Suzy Lake. © Suzy Lake.

Fig 33. Hannah Maynard, *Hannah Maynard and her grandson, Maynard McDonald, in a tableau vivant composite photo*, c.1893, black and white glass plate negative, 25 x 20 cm. Collection of BC Archives, Royal BC Museum, Victoria (F-05031). Courtesy of BC Archives, Royal BC Museum.