



Primary Focus: Photography as an art medium

Secondary Focus:

To discern what makes a photograph fine art.

Photography as an art medium can be very powerful. But what really makes a photograph fine art versus just an ordinary snap shot?

Should it send a powerful message or convey emotion for it to be fine art? Through viewing these diverse photographs students will be able to formulate their own opinions to this important question.

Consider the difference between **candid** and **posed** photographs. Have the students give their opinion which classification each photograph falls into.

Slide 1, by Julia M. Cameron. Did the artist pose their subject for this piece? How does the gaze of the subject make you feel? Would this piece be different if it was not a close-up?

Slide 2. Notice how the gaze is different here - how has the mood changed in this piece? What about the props the artist used here - why do you think she used them?

Slides 3 & 4 by Stieglitz: The one of Georgia O'Keeffe is compelling due to its untouched nature. It just exudes honesty with its crisp, black and white colors.

(The students should remember O'Keeffe as they studied her work last year).

With the *Steerage* photograph you can talk about '**point of view**'. What is point of view? Where is the photographer standing? Why do you think he chose that point of view? Why do you think he chose this subject to photograph?

There are more slides but this should help you formulate your own questions for the rest. Another suggestion is to give a very brief history of photography. You probably will not have time to show all the slides. You can pick the artists you like best. Be sure to share your opinion with the class.

Some other questions to pose:

- What was the purpose of this photograph?
- Some say that photography is a medium of honesty. Do you agree? How can it not be honest?
- Can you change or manipulate a photograph?
- Do you like black and white images or color. Which do you think is more powerful and why?
- What genre of fine art photography do you like best? Portraits? Landscapes?