

barbican



Dorothea Lange
Politics of Seeing

Vanessa Winship
And Time Folds

Creative Learning
Teacher Resource

GUILD
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SCHOOL

Introduction

Dorothea Lange / Vanessa Winship: A Photography Double Bill

The first UK retrospective of American documentary photographer Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) and first major UK solo exhibition in a public gallery of British contemporary photographer Vanessa Winship.

Your ticket allows same-day entry to both exhibitions on show at the same time in the Art Gallery.

Part of *The Art of Change* season, highlighting how artists respond to, reflect and potentially effect change in the social and political landscape.

Using this Resource

This resource is designed to provide context for the two exhibitions through a range of potential focus areas, curriculum links, spotlight on images, key questions to encourage engagement and activity ideas both in the gallery and beyond. It may be useful to school teachers or leaders of arts or youth groups visiting the exhibition.

You can draw from it to open up discussion and responses from your groups – encouraging them to explore their own thoughts, ideas, observations and interpretations about the works.

Resource created by Alison Dunne and Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning.

Plan your Visit

Barbican Art Gallery (Level 3), Barbican Centre

22 Jun 2018–2 Sep 2018

Sat–Wed, 10am–6pm (bank holiday Mon, 12noon–6pm)

Thu–Fri, 10am–10pm (bank holiday Fri, 12noon–9pm)

A discounted group booking rate of £3 per student applies to all secondary and sixth form school groups of ten or more (up to age 19).

Students under 14 go free.

For bookings and enquiries please contact the school groups booking line. Tel: 020 7382 7211 (Mon–Fri 10am–5pm) Email: groups@barbican.org.uk

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Link your exhibition visit to different areas of the curriculum

Spotlight on Images

Use a specific image or collection to guide your visit and follow up activity

Start the Conversation

Use these questions anywhere in the exhibition to open up conversation

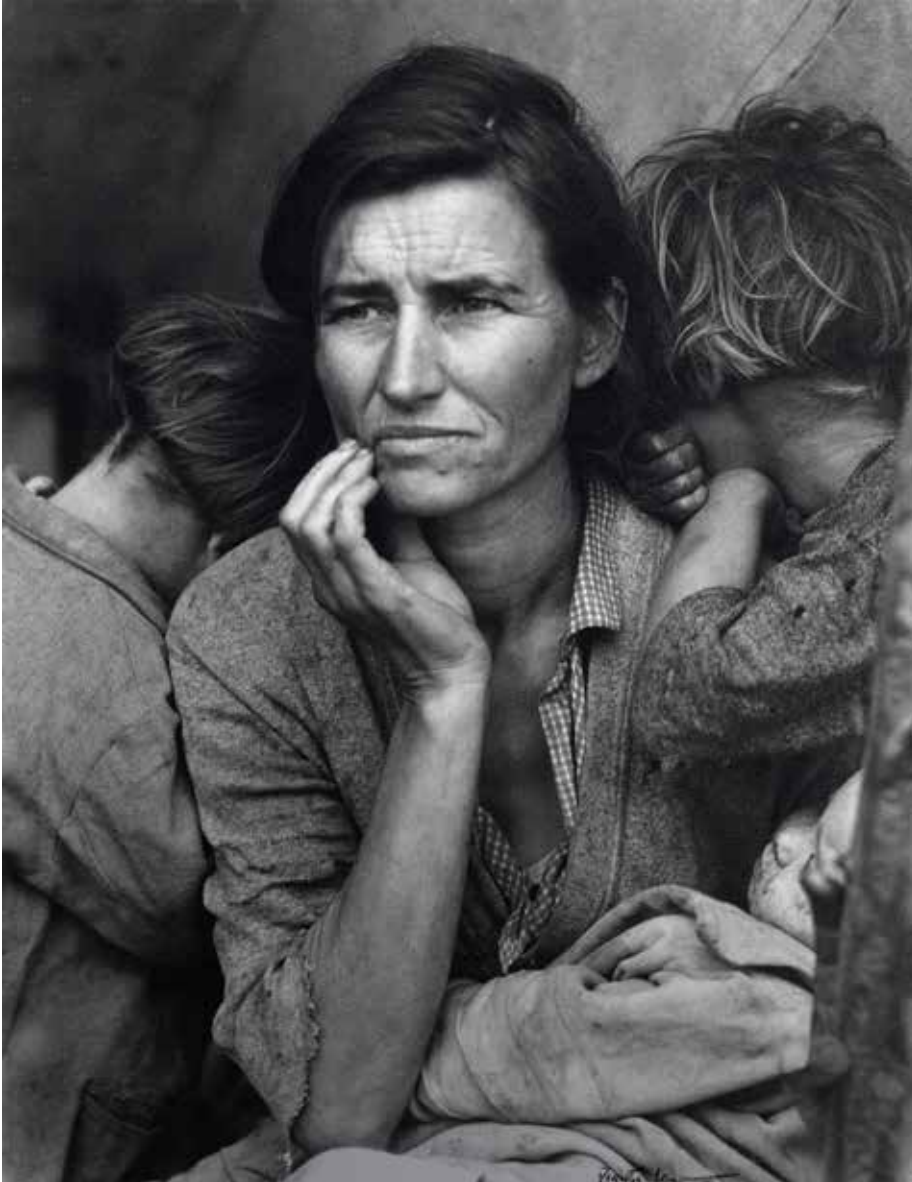
Section by Section

A useful list of exhibition sections that link to the questions in this document

Get Creative

A list of creative activities that could be done in-gallery or as a follow up to your visit

Zoom In: Dorothea Lange



Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, Nipomo, California, 1936
© The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California

Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing

The first UK survey of the pioneering American social documentary photographer Dorothea Lange (1895–1965). The exhibition *Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing* positions Lange as a critical and influential voice in twentieth-century photography, a visual activist and early environmental campaigner and a founding figure of photojournalism.

The exhibition explores Lange's belief in the transformative and motivating power of seeing and through her photographic lens we can witness the huge upheavals and change that have shaken and re-shaped the people and land of America.

In the 1920s, Lange was a successful portrait photographer with her own thriving studio and numerous wealthy clients. By 1933, however, her work took a critical turn, and in response to the inescapable reality of the Great Depression she took her camera on to the streets to document the tide of migrant workers who were leaving Oklahoma, Arkansas and other impoverished regions in the American South to try their luck in California. Lange had found her true purpose and voice - focusing on the lives and concerns of ordinary people.

A prominent advocate of the power of photography to effect change, Lange used her camera as a political tool to shine a light on society for what she saw as its cruel injustices and inequalities.

While the world has changed dramatically over the last eighty years, much of what concerned and interested Lange both photographically and socially is just as relevant today: poverty, social disruption, the erosion of rural communities and rapid growth of urban industrial society, ecological and environmental devastation, racism, women's rights. While her penetrating images of Dust Bowl refugees, Japanese American internees, shipyard workers and more were all made within a framework of objective social documentation, her work is invested with her own personal and philosophical belief in the critical role of family and community in creating a more humane society.

Zoom In: Vanessa Winship



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *she dances on Jackson*, 2011–2012 © Vanessa Winship

Vanessa Winship: And Time Folds

The first major UK solo exhibition of British contemporary photographer Vanessa Winship. The recipient of the Henri Cartier-Bresson prize in 2011, Winship is a visual poet, whose photographs are concerned with the elusive qualities of fragility and transience in history, landscape and individual lives and society.

A wanderer by nature, Winship has amassed a body of work that moves between genres – reportage, documentary, portraiture and landscape – as well as diverse geopolitical territories including the Balkans, the countries bordering the Black Sea and America.

Using photography as a tool through which to chronicle and engage with the world at large, her photographs have explored ‘concepts of borders, land, memory, desire, identity and history.’ Her most recent series *And Time Folds*, is an ongoing body of work at the heart of which lies the very human connection between the photographer and her granddaughter. It is envisaged as an exploration of the world as perceived through a child’s curious gaze, and moves seamlessly between the local and the global, the terrestrial and the cosmological, the past and present in its search for meaning, returning the photographer with a sense of circularity to the primary questions of family, home and belonging.

In work that documents and explores the effects of war, dictatorship, political change and instability, Winship never fails to see the impact on individuals and their particular lives and stories.

Her photography is a reflection of her unquenchable curiosity and drive to find out more. It is an ongoing exploration of the links, patterns and connections between things, people, times and places.

Although the works in *And Time Folds* and *Politics of Seeing* are presented as separate exhibitions there are numerous themes or areas of key focus that can be explored across the exhibition. These are highlighted in this section and explored further in the activities and questions that follow.

In Focus: Vanessa Winship

Photographer as Insider or Outsider

There has been much debate about the story behind how a photographer takes a picture. Should the photographer spend time with their subject, get to know them, gain an emotional connection and establish trust? Or is it acceptable to take a photograph quickly, without permission or connection, with the approach of a more distant outsider? Is the photographer a collaborator with the subject or an outside observer? In what ways do photographers include (or exclude) their subjects from the creative process?

Lange always considered her photographs to be collaborations, often quoting her subjects in extended captions. "I never steal a photograph. Never. All photographs are made in collaboration, as part of their thinking as well as mine." Lange preferred to establish a rapport in the spirit of participation and connection. Unlike many documentarians of her time, Lange insisted on "sitting down on the ground with people, letting the children look at your camera with their dirty, grimy little hands, and putting their fingers on the lens, and you let them, because you know that if you will behave in a generous manner, you're very apt to receive it."

Winship originally placed herself as more of an outsider, as a silent witness, choosing to keep a respectful distance from the subject. As she has said: "I've created much of this work without ever really having to say a word, just by seeing and moving quietly; once, that is, I've understood – again more often than not, without words – that I've been given permission." Winship has gradually shifted her approach to spend longer periods of time getting to know her subjects and interacting with them far more.

Ask

- To what extent does Dorothea Lange use the objective perspective of the traditional photojournalist – does she allow for a more personal subjective approach to also inform her work?
- Does sustained contact with a community lead to more meaningful results? How does that affect the outcome – atmosphere of the image, its authenticity and truth? Consider the pros and cons of the two approaches – silent observer or engaged collaborator.

Motivation / Intention of the photographer

Why do we take photos and what have photographers addressed over time? e.g. photographs allow us to 'freeze' time, strengthen memories, affirm or explore identity, to show people who weren't there, to create a piece of art, to tell a story, to document, to make sense of the world, to understand and explore, to make people notice and react, communicate ideas, curiosity, appreciation etc. Think about the motivations and intentions of the photographer and consider the following when viewing the exhibitions:

Photography as...

- A search for truth and a way to promote understanding and change
- A tool to witness and reveal inequality or injustice
- As a way to explore other lives / realities and one's own personal history
- A desire to develop relationships with people – to help people to tell their story
- As a medium to document / communicate / create visual narratives

Ask

- In what ways has the digital age changed how we communicate and understand the lives of other people? How have photos been used to communicate information or political statements? How does the context we see a photograph impact its interpretation? Where does the intention of the photographer end and the interpretation of the viewer start?

The Art of Change

Lange's photographs are suffused with a quiet outrage and a sense of empathy for people who, in different circumstances, could very easily be us. She was driven by a deep belief that seeing and photographing the effects of injustice could help provoke empathy, reform and, perhaps, change the world. Indeed her photographs awakened public awareness and created national sympathy for the thousands of migrants of the Great Depression. This included increased financial aid and food distribution. Take time to reflect on what she said, "If you can come close to the truth, there are consequences from the photograph."

Ask

- How can photographers use their medium in a socially-conscious/engaged way? What do you think Lange's 'politics of seeing' means?
- Can art be a tool for protest or social change? What messages and stories do photographs carry, and how can viewers better understand them? How can photography be used as a way to tell untold histories? In what ways do photographers embody the characteristics of artist, collaborator, documenter or social activist?

Autobiography and individual expression

Lange was often working on government-backed projects. Although she agreed with the fundamental goals of her government employers at the Farm Security Administration – such as relief for migrant workers and Dust Bowl refugees – Lange found ways to report what she considered important hidden stories. She learned how to be sensitive to political pressures while also exploring her own personal concerns and feelings of compassion for different groups. Told to emphasise the plight of white refugees, she made a point of photographing Mexican migrants in California and black sharecroppers in the Deep South. Her insistence on exposing the relationship between racial discrimination and poverty, particularly in the South, drew criticism from the agency. Consider Lange's position in this context and how she had to work with constraints from her employer whilst maintaining her own vision and integrity.

Winship's photography is autobiographical at its heart, reflecting her desire to journey and discover, to reinvent herself, to find those human connections and to work at what she has called, "the junction of chronicle and fiction". She says "I've always felt that photography is a process of literacy, both an attempt to understand the world I live in and how to represent it. I'm interested in the telling of history, and in who does the telling." Winship also creates very personally evocative images ranging from her childhood memories of growing up in the Humber region to her relationship and explorations with her grandchild.

Curriculum links

Art and Design

Both exhibitions explore how photography has been used as a medium to document the lives of individuals and communities. How can personal or political motivations be used as a starting point for making art? Where can you find inspiration and meaningful subject matter to explore?

Consider what elements of the photographers' work and collections could be read as autobiographical? Explore your own areas of interest and concerns and how they could be the basis for new artistic works.

Consider the curator's intention in presenting these works in the gallery – why do you think they have made the decisions they have?

Use the image spotlight section and question sheet to support these conversations and the creation of new creative work.

Photography

Digital cameras and smartphones make it easy to use photography as a tool for communication, but throughout history analogue photography has been used in a variety of social and cultural contexts and for a range of purposes. Examine how photography has been used to document people's stories and communicate ideas, themes, subjects and feelings. How has photography worked as a medium to communicate these ideas across cultures and languages? Consider the historical context of Lange's photographs commissioned by an American government agency and then circulated in newspapers and magazines - what may they have communicated in a pre-digital world?

Throughout the exhibition artists have used a diverse set of techniques, from portraiture to social documentary and street photography. Have a look at these different aesthetic strategies, how does it affect the message and story being told? What impact does this have on the viewer? Compare the approaches of Lange and Winship – what similarities, overlaps or differences do you notice? How do their relationships with their subjects and different styles impact the way the image is read? Why do you think the photographers have made these choices?



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *she dances on Jackson*, 2011-2012 © Vanessa Winship

English –

Written and Spoken English

Lange regularly collaborated with writers she respected and wrote her own captions. Winship often accompanies her images with personal words and notes.

Consider the importance of photography and text and how they might reinforce or heighten each other's meaning. Does giving an image a title shift the emphasis away from documentary specifics to creating more of an aesthetic art work?

In what way do words and images interplay to create different levels of meaning? Consider how image and text are used within the exhibition, comparing the strengths and limitations of each form.

How do images communicate ideas, tell stories and inspire creativity in the viewer? Students may use the photographs as starting points for free writing, which can be further developed into narratives or short stories.

Literature related to some of the issues explored in the exhibitions:

The Grapes of Wrath and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. Steinbeck was very moved by Lange's images and much of his work explores the lives of migrants in the Dust Bowl era.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee and *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* both explore the ugly face of racial prejudice in the American Depression era.

Three Elegies for Kosovo by Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare explores the centuries of turbulence in the Balkan region and the emergence of old wounds over time. Winship acknowledges the influence of Kadare on what she calls her "journey of investigation" through the region.

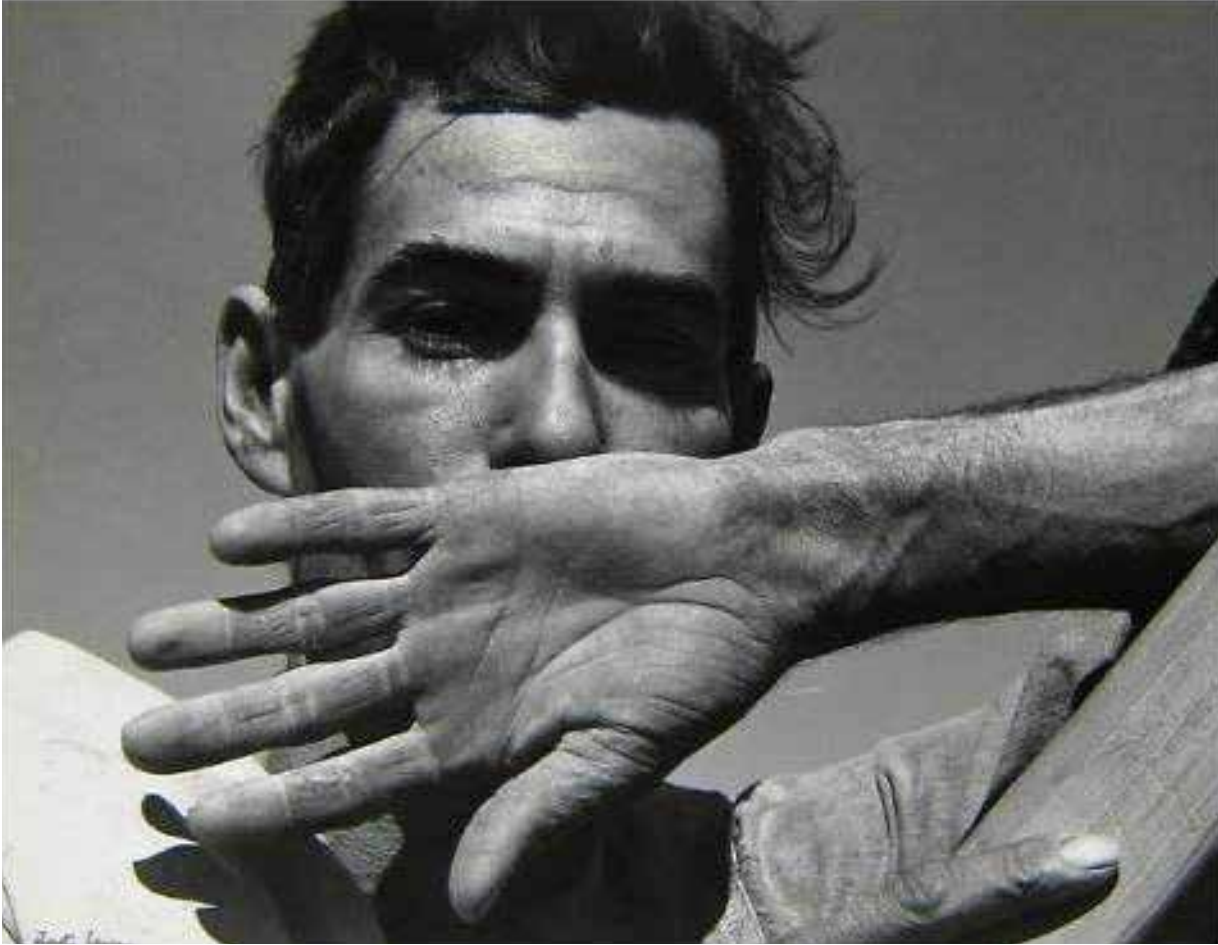
History

Consider the importance of photographs as social and historical documents, as key primary sources.

For example:

- Look at Lange's work in the historical context of the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the Dust Bowl and the Roosevelt's New Deal economics, which created the Farm Security Administration that commissioned Lange's work. As a result of her work and others, photography assumed a new and more powerful role in the agency's effort to provide relief to Dust Bowl refugees. Would you consider the resulting photographs a form of propaganda to further the aims of the government?
- Explore Lange's 1942 documentation of the 'evacuation' of American citizens of Japanese heritage to internment camps, following Pearl Harbour, and subsequent widespread anti-Japanese hysteria.
- Look at how Winship explores the harsh realities experienced by ethnic Albanian Kosovan refugees fleeing the Kosovan war, Serbian military offensive and subsequent ethnic cleansing, to Albania in 1999. Like the Dust Bowl, this crisis was of epic proportions, but this time the huge movement of population was due to the effects of war rather than economic and agricultural failure.

Curriculum links



Dorothea Lange, *Migratory Cotton Picker, Eloy, Arizona, 1940*
© The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California

Geography

Think about the conditions behind the Dust Bowl crisis that Lange photographed. Between 1934 and 1939, vast areas of the Great Plains, including parts of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas, experienced severe drought; this was coupled with exhaustion of the soil as a result of inadequate farming methods, which caused the eroded topsoil to blow away in suffocating dust storms. In addition, increased mechanisation in large scale farming often replaced human labour. The whole situation resulted in huge numbers of jobless and destitute Dust Bowl refugees (often referred to as 'Okies' on account of many originating from Oklahoma) on the move in search of a better life in California.

Music

Listen to the songs and lyrics of Woodie Guthrie e.g. 'Dust Bowl Refugee' and 'This Land is Your Land'. Guthrie was himself a Dust Bowl refugee. When he arrived in California he encountered prejudice and hostility from many locals who were angry about the influx of people arriving from the plains. Guthrie was lucky to get a job on local radio singing both traditional songs and his own songs. His radio programme was very popular with many of the migrants as the songs provided comfort, respite and a nostalgic sense of the homes and lives they had been forced to leave behind. Think about songs that are important to you personally and why.

Further Links

You may wish to explore the work of other photographers such as Margaret Bourke-White, Ansel Adams, Robert Frank, Walker Evans. Much of their work overlaps with that of Dorothea Lange and was a historical backdrop for Winship's own photographic journey across America.

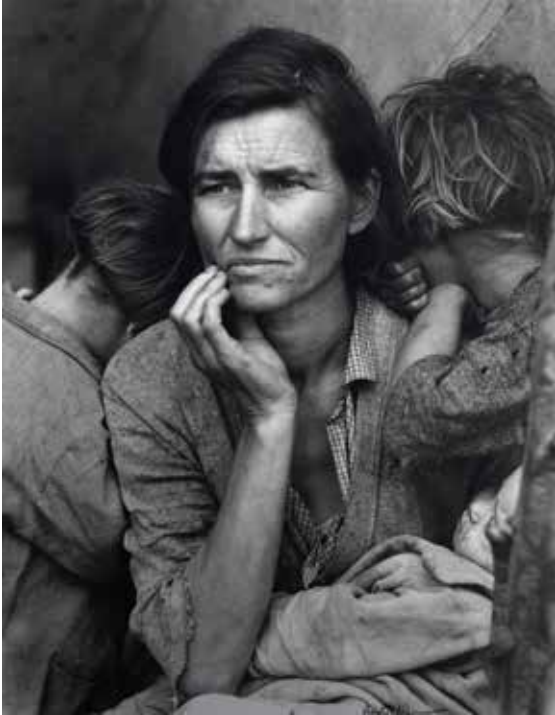
<http://www.vanessawinship.com>

<http://grabahunkoflightning.com> (Dorothea Lange through the eyes of her film maker granddaughter, Dyana Taylor)

<http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/exhibitions/killed-negatives-unseen-images-1930s-america/>

Spotlight on images: Dorothea Lange

The following groups of images can be used as a whole group activity to explore in some depth some of the aspects of both Lange's and Winship's work



Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, Nipomo, California, 1936
© The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California



Dorothea Lange, *Drought Refugees*, ca. 1935
© The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California

Dorothea Lange – *Migrant Mother*, 1936

Dorothea Lange's iconic image *Migrant Mother* is known throughout the USA and the world beyond. This is an image of a migrant worker who, like so many others, had travelled west from Oklahoma to California during the Great Depression. Despite the epic scale of the events she was commissioned to document, Lange's work captured the impact of the Great Depression on a very human and intimate scale.

Set the Scene:

As you can see, this image is part of a series. It was taken at a pea-pickers' camp where the crop had frozen and failed and around 2,500 pickers were out of work. Lange said she photographed the woman "closer and closer from the same direction. I did not ask her name or her history. She told me her age, that she was thirty-two. She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and birds that the children killed. She had just sold the tires from her car to buy food. There she sat in that lean-to tent with her children huddled around her, and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it."

Look Closer:

Look closely at the image and consider why this particular image has become so famous and iconic.

- Is it because it is a portrait of hardship and suffering combined with a depiction of strength and dignity?
- Does it communicate some of the key elements of the human condition and family unit, with more power than other photographs?
- Do you feel it is because of the 'equality' of exchange that Lange described?

- Do you think it is because this singular image asserts the power of photography to inspire empathy, change and social action? A singular image carries a different message to a series of images – what thoughts do you have on the *Migrant Mother* series as a whole? Does one image provoke a stronger emotional response than another does? If so, why? Why do you think that Dorothea Lange choose the tightly framed image and not one of the other images to reproduce and distribute? Why did the most close up, highly cropped photograph become the mythic, most enduring image? Discuss with a particular emphasis on the power of framing.

Take it Further:

- Lange's image is often compared to Madonna and Child images from art history. You could research some images and see if you agree with this or find any interesting parallels.
- The woman in the image was later found to be Florence Owens Thompson who said she wished that Lange had never photographed her. Ask your students to research Thompson further and find out more about her side of the photograph's story. Photographers for the American Government's Farm Security Administration in the 1930s and early 1940s used photography to record and respond to key issues such as joblessness, homelessness, and the effects of environmental / human-made disasters. What kind of impact do you think such images would have had on the public at the time?

Activity:

In groups consider current humanitarian/political issues on both a local and international scale. What issue would you most want to document through photography and why? What would you choose to document in order to tell the story – would you focus on e.g. people, landscapes, places or smaller details? What considerations would have to be thought through in making your work? Share thoughts and ideas.

Some students may wish to go on to create a series of works inspired by an issue they feel strongly about in society e.g. the experiences and treatment of a particular group or the homelessness crisis.

Spotlight on images: Vanessa Winship



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *Humber*, 2010 © Vanessa Winship



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *she dances on Jackson*, 2011–2012 © Vanessa Winship

Vanessa Winship - New Work, And Time Folds

In the series of photographs entitled *And Time Folds*, Vanessa Winship explores the world with her young granddaughter. The photographer wonders what her granddaughter sees and follows her gaze and curiosity – giving attention to one thing then another in an ongoing quest.

Set the Scene

The photographs have a fresh vibrant quality – of things noticed and appreciated afresh. It is a new pleasure for Winship, to see the ordinary every day through the eyes of a child; to feel the girl's world unfolding, full of new connections, shapes and ideas. It is an opportunity to meet everything with wonder and fascination.

Look Closer

As you look at the photos in this series notice the connections between things, between the present and the past, nature and human presence within it – our relationship to the natural and manmade worlds.

What kinds of things do children notice that an adult may ignore or edit out? What can we learn from very young children to help our creative processes? Notice how Winship seeks out and acknowledges the tiniest, seemingly unimportant details in her photographs – a couple of snails, a pile of sticks or a child's scribbled drawing are given as much careful attention as a wider landscape or even the moon and cosmos.

she dances on Jackson

Set the Scene

America has been photographed by so many famous photographic names (Dorothea Lange amongst many others including Robert Frank, Ansel Adams, Walker Evans). Winship said, "the United States of America is like a famous personality we feel we know. For me, this closeness came from exposure to film, photography, music, literature and popular culture."

Look Closer

When something is so familiar and already widely photographed, how can a photographer see it with fresh eyes and notice something else? Winship said she started "paying attention to events and non-events of ordinary people's lives, a state fair, a carnival, a walk along a riverbank, a church meeting, wherever I might find people. I came to understand the fundamental human desire for moments of communication and connection between people, and so my journey was reliant on the acceptance of strangers." Gradually the often small seemingly random events she saw and photographed began to connect and grow in meaning: solitary trees, a sign, a deer, ripples in water. Winship referred to 'a new state of receptivity' that made her 'begin to look in a certain way, as if moving close to the ground.' Amongst the ordinary and forgotten small towns, with broken down buildings and economic decay Winship finds people living their lives in caring relationships and communities. What kind of a rapport do you think exists between Winship and the people she encounters? Do you get a sense of her allowing people to be themselves and at ease – is there a warmth towards and connectedness with her subjects?

Activity:

Find an opportunity to go on a walk anywhere - with curiosity as your guide even the most ordinary, familiar or mundane places can be part of a journey of discovery. With your camera or phone capture the details and moments of things you might usually pass by. Let one thing you notice lead on to the next – the more you keep your curiosity switched on, the more you will see! You may want to try looking for connections between things or be guided by particular shapes, colours, forms or signs/symbols. Winship also responds to the world around her through writing so you could also try this activity with a notebook or sketchbook to capture your thoughts and observations.

Continue the Conversation

These questions will encourage deeper understanding and interpretation of the images. They can be used in a variety of ways e.g. the teacher working with the whole group or smaller groups can work on particular questions and come together to share thoughts. You may wish to assign groups sections of the exhibitions as described in the following pages, to work on their questions.



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *she dances on Jackson*, 2011–2012 © Vanessa Winship

- What do you see and notice in the photograph – what is happening?
- Where and when do you think it was taken – what clues are there?
- Why do you think the photographer has chosen to photograph this - what do you think was the photographer's motivation / intention?
- What do we learn about the people in the photograph? How? How is the subject presented – e.g. with dignity, self-possession, vulnerability.
- Can you tell how the photographer feels about her subjects? What do you think was the photographer's attitude or relationship to their subject? Do you think they are engaging closely with the subject or are they more distant / detached?
- What is the scale? Effect / impact of this? What if the scale was the opposite?
- How is subject 'framed' – is it close-up or heavily cropped or showing lots of background detail? How does this affect your response to the image?
- What is the mood or feeling of the image? How is that communicated?
- How is it lit? Where from? How? If it was lit differently would it change the feel of the image – if so, how?
- Is it a portrait? Are they turned towards the photographer or away? Natural or posed? What effect does this have? Discuss.
- What does the background or setting tell us about the person / the community or world they inhabit? Explain further.
- What future purpose might the photograph have?
- Do you think the photographer needed to be creative to take it?
- Was it taken quickly or did it take a long time?
- Do you like the image? What does it evoke for you – how does it make you feel?
- What does the image communicate / reveal to you – what do you learn from it, or reflect on?
- Could this photograph be interpreted differently by different people? What truths do you think it contains? Is there anything missing or that you think the photographer has chosen not to include? Explain.

Section by Section

Pair the summary of sections below, with questions from the previous *Continue the Conversation* page to have a discussion with your students, or give students an area of the exhibition to focus on during their visit.



Dorothea Lange, *Migratory Cotton Picker, Eloy, Arizona*, 1940
© The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *Imagined States and Desires: A Balkan Journey*, 1999–2003 © Vanessa Winship

Dorothea Lange

Dustbowl Refugees and life on the land

Explore further images of the economic and environmental crisis of the 1930s. Consider the devastation of the affected regions and the impact of being uprooted to find work in California. Look too at the images of black workers in the 'deep south' and consider some of the racial discrimination and prejudice they encountered in addition to the other hardships.

Japanese Internment

Following Pearl Harbour, widespread anti-Japanese hysteria infected the US and Lange documented the 'evacuation' of American citizens of Japanese heritage to internment camps. Do these images serve as a visual condemnation of what was happening? What is the photographer's standpoint? Note what is missing from these photographs - Lange was forbidden to photograph the barbed wire fence and the guard towers. How do you think this affects our final reading of the images?

Wartime Shipyards

Millions of women joined the workforce during the war in roles normally carried out by men. These women challenged preconceived expectations for both gender and race. Consider Lange's photographs of African American women welders - stylish, independent women at work, earning their own money and developing new skills.

Public Defender

In the mid-1950s Dorothea Lange started work on a photo-essay that explored the US legal defence system's new public defender scheme offering legal representation to those unable to afford a lawyer. Consider Lange's motivation in undertaking the series and her concern with the prejudice and inequality in the justice system, which affected poorer black or Asian minorities in particular.

Death of a Valley

The 1950s saw an end to the effects of war, a rise in population, increased urbanisation, economic prosperity and consumerism - the growth of the 'American Dream.' Consider Lange's views of this 'progress' and its price - what do the images reveal about her views and environmentalist politics?

Vanessa Winship

Balkans

A Balkan Journey - these photographs were made as she journeyed through Albania, Serbia, Kosovo and Greece in the early 2000s. Consider how these images reflect the effects on people and their surroundings of both the deadly Kosovan war and 50 years of dictatorship in Albania.

Black Sea

This work explores the lives of people living in the six countries linked together by a vast landlocked sea. For thousands of years a diversity of cultures has lived along the coast - with much political instability and shifting over time. How does Winship convey this in her images?

Georgia

Winship says of Georgia, "It is a place where people are comfortable in celebrating their good fortune at the beauty of the land they inhabit. Beneath the surface of these celebrations there is also a kind of melancholy. It is a place literally crumbling, crumbling under the weight of conflict and a post-soviet economic collapse." Do you get a sense of this within the images?

Sweet Nothings

Winship writes, "Until very recently many girls had never crossed the doorstep of a school, due to a combination of traditional values and a suspicion of anything that represented the state. I wanted to give a space for the girls to have a moment of importance in front of a camera. Every frame was made at the same distance in an attempt to give a kind of equality to each girl." Do you feel Winship succeeded in her aim and intention?

Get Creative



Vanessa Winship, *Untitled* from the series *Black Sea: Between Chronicle and Fiction*, 2002–2006 © Vanessa Winship

Activities for the gallery and beyond...

- In pairs, do back to back drawing and communicating. One person selects an image to describe whilst the other sits with their back to it. The person describing the image practices close looking and describes as much as they can. Their partner draws this information as they hear it. After 5-10 minutes swap roles. What do they notice about this exercise – e.g. the importance of careful communication, the surprise involved with such detailed close looking and analysis?
- In groups think up some questions they would like to ask the photographer or a person portrayed in the photograph. Groups can then swap questions and provide answers.
- Imagine you could climb inside the photograph. What would your 5 senses be experiencing and what feelings, emotions and thoughts would you have? This could become the basis of a related artistic response in any form of mixed media.
- Choose a photograph and develop a creative narrative to accompany it – e.g. it could be based on the possible thoughts or life experiences of the people within the image / it might include what happened before or after the image was taken and what is happening beyond the frame of the photograph.
- Ask students to pick one of the photographs and spend ten minutes doing some free writing exploring thoughts, emotions, ideas and questions that the image suggests. Responses to the exhibition can be developed using collaged text, poetry or spoken word. Students can choose to develop one aspect or theme as a starting point for a short story. Try this activity with other images.
- Create a series of works using photography / text / film or other mediums inspired by an issue you feel strongly about in society e.g. the experiences and treatment of a particular group or the homelessness crisis. Think about how you will interact with your subjects.
- Photography treasure hunt. Go on a photographic voyage of discovery (even your street or local park). Establish a list of things to photograph or let curiosity be your guide and be receptive to what you find. You could focus on specific colours, particular objects, certain shapes or textures. Set a time limit and a place to be explored. Discuss some of the resulting photographs. What has been revealed? Did anything surprise you?

Credits:

Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning

This Teacher Resource was prepared by Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning, which supports people of all ages and backgrounds to access and participate in world-class visual arts, music, theatre, dance, film and spoken word. We regularly work with schools and colleges to create unforgettable learning experiences that help to embed arts and creativity across the national curriculum. For more information please contact: creative.learning@barbican.org.uk

Resource created by Alison Dunne and Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning



The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre