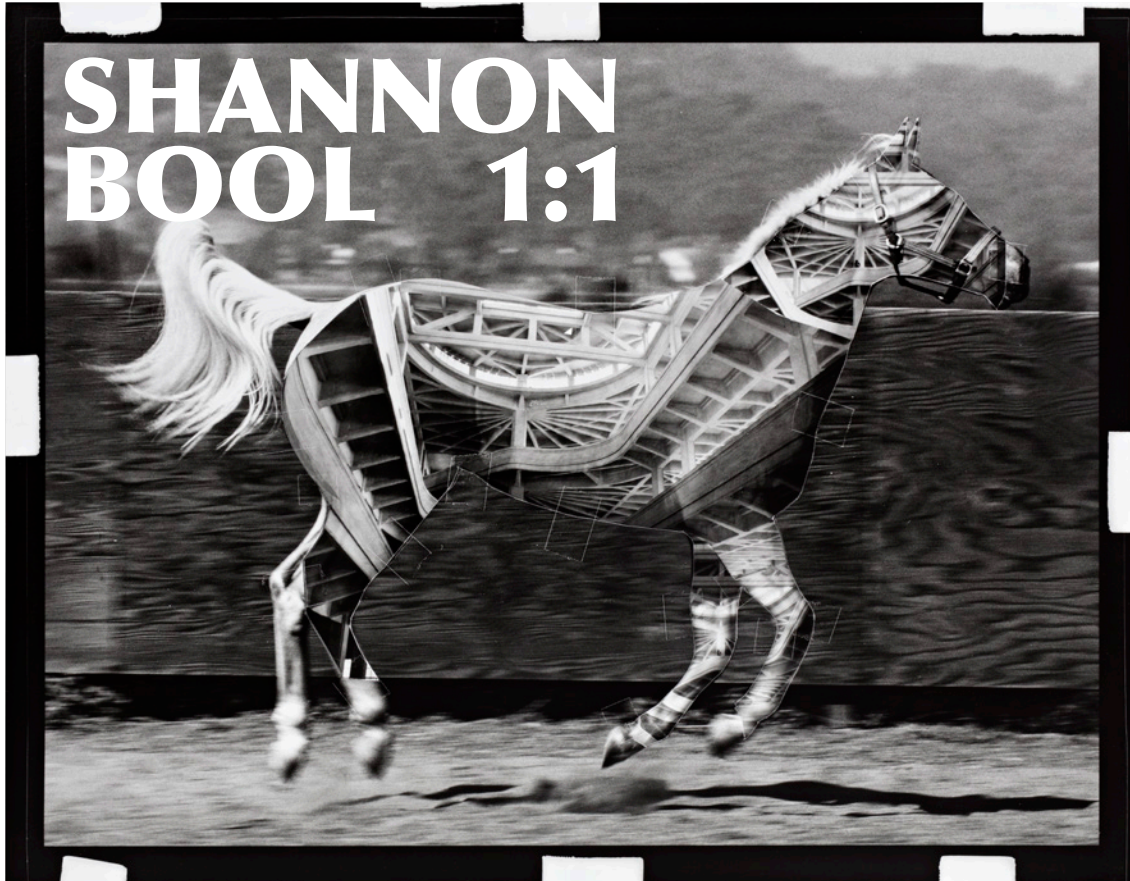
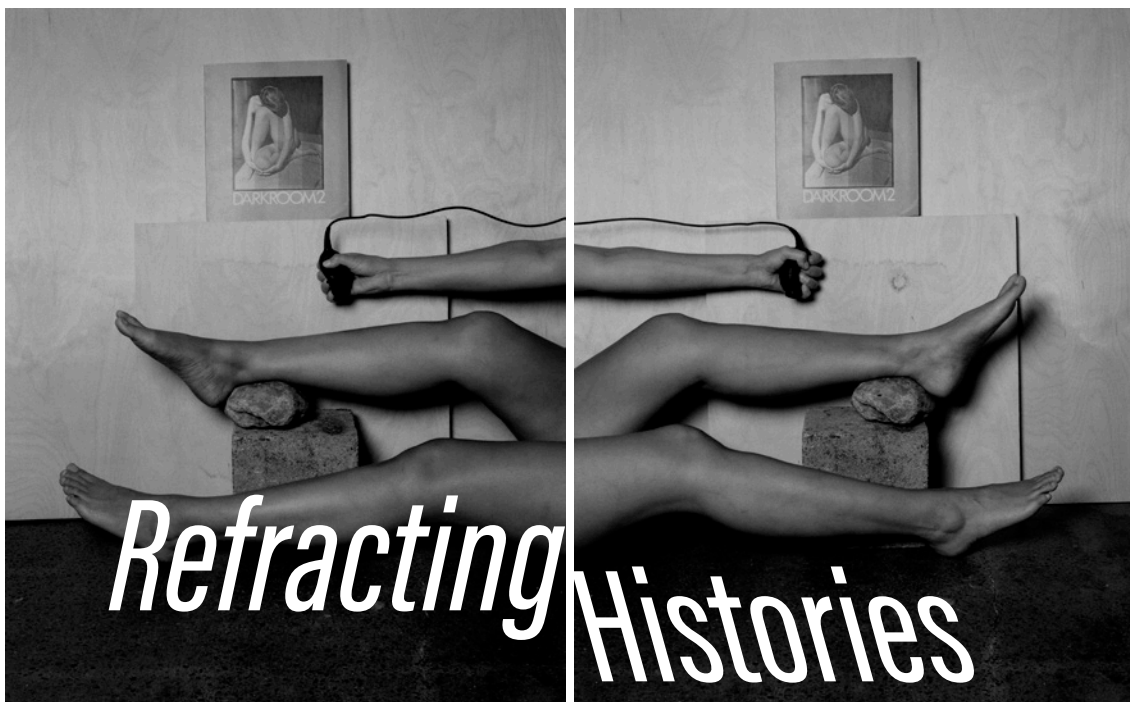


Education Guide



Shannon Bool
Horse of Oblivion 2,
2019



Tarah Krajenak
Self-Portrait as
Weston/as
Charis Wilson,
1936/2020

This guide serves as a viewer supplement to the exhibitions *Shannon Bool 1:1* and *Refracting Histories* and can be used for engaging with the exhibition. The guide includes information about the works on view, questions for looking and discussion, classroom activities, and suggested readings. You may learn more about educational programs at the MoCP [here](#). To schedule a tour of the exhibition or print viewing with your class, please go [here](#). This guide was created with contributions from Columbia College Chicago graduate students: Jessica Hays, Ash Huse, Giselle Mira-Diaz, Noah Fodor, and Hillary Johnson.



Shannon Bool
Eastbound Borderline, 2022

The MoCP is supported by Columbia College Chicago, the MoCP Advisory Board, the Museum Council, individuals, and private and corporate foundations. The 2022-2023 exhibition season is sponsored in part by the Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation, the Pritzker Traubert Foundation, the Efroymsen Family Fund, the Henry Nias Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. *Shannon Bool 1:1* and *Refracting Histories* have been generously supported through The David C. and Sarajeon Ruttenberg Impact Fund for Photography.



INTRODUCTION

The two exhibitions on view, *Shannon Bool 1:1* and *Refracting Histories*, both explore histories of art and architecture through reframing and reinterpreting dominant narratives. Shannon Bool's work looks to the history of modernism to reveal connections between architecture, consumer culture, and feminist concerns. Bool's photo-based tapestries, **photograms**, and sculptures probe the history of modernist architecture, often revealing aspects of **patriarchal standards** and **colonialism** that underly the legacies of some of architecture's most famous practitioners. Meanwhile the eight artists in *Refracting Histories* critically consider the traditional photography canon to challenge, interrogate, or deconstruct well-known legacies. These artists reveal contributions of overlooked makers as well as pervasive discriminations that maintain the status quo.



Kelli Connell and Natalie Krick
Suits, 2022

Introductory Questions for Looking and Discussion:

A canon is a criterion by which something is judged. Canons exist in the fields of film, literature, and painting, to name a few. Artists or artworks in a canon have been deemed by enough people over time to be important, and therefore taught in academic settings and text books. Considering the basic idea of the canon, consider these questions:

- How might canons be helpful? How might they be harmful?
- What visual artworks, books, or films come to mind when you think of a canon? Where did you learn about these pieces? What words come to mind when you think of them?
- What do you think the exhibition titles *1:1* and *Refracting Histories* could mean? What do you imagine you will see in these two exhibitions, based solely on their titles?

SHANNON BOOL 1:1

Shannon Bool (Canada, b. 1972, lives and works in Berlin, Germany) uses materials unconventionally to upend authoritative histories by blending elements of art history and popular culture. In this exhibition, Bool presents photo-based tapestries, photographs, and sculptures, to probe the history of modernist architecture. The exhibition title, *1:1*, plays off the scale used for architectural drawings and models—representations that match the size of the planned structure in real life—as Bool’s works examine equivalencies in the narratives surrounding modernism.



Shannon Bool
Eastbound Borderline, 2022

KEY THEME

MODERNISM

Modernism is a movement in art, design, and architecture that arguably began in the late nineteenth century. Modernism formed as a reaction to the many societal and cultural changes of the time that were a result of the industrial revolution and, later, from the disillusionment caused by the World Wars.

Modernism is defined by many characteristics, including:

- the rejection of art traditions that preceded it
- innovative experimentation with form
- in painting, a tendency towards abstraction
- in architecture, a tendency towards geometrical shapes and straight lines and eschewing ornamentation
- in photography, modernism marked a shift away from images that appeared [atmospheric and somewhat painterly](#), and towards [straightforward depictions of modern life, or surrealist still life juxtapositions](#)
- an emphasis on techniques, materiality, and process as part of the artwork itself

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Shannon Bool, *The Weather*, 2019

In this large-scale tapestry, Bool presents a view from the interior of Farnsworth House: a glass and steel home designed in 1945 by renowned modernist architect, Mies van Der Rohe. The house was commissioned by Dr. Edith Farnsworth, who was a fan of modernist design, in Plano, Illinois. Farnsworth disliked the home he built for her and found herself feeling exposed in her see-through walls. She stated that the house was “a monument to Mies van der Rohe,” and that she felt like “a prowling animal, always on the alert.” Farnsworth and Mies entered a legal argument about whether she should have to pay for the significantly over-budget home that did not meet her expectations.¹

Bool created this tapestry using an image made from the interior of the Farnsworth house, depicting the view of a blanket of fall leaves below a bare tree. She then overlaid embroidery of spring-like flowery patterns taken from Roman tiles, a suggested contrast in seasons that inspired the work’s title.

1. James Barron, “When Mies Van Der Rohe Went on Trial,” *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, March 17, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/broken-glass-mies-van-der-rohe-farnsworth-house-alex-beam.html>.



Shannon Bool
The Weather, 2019



Farnsworth House exterior. Not in the MoCP collection or exhibition. Photographer unknown; image courtesy of <https://edithfarnsworthhouse.org/about/>



Farnsworth House interior. Not in the MoCP collection or exhibition. Photographer unknown; image courtesy of <https://ourhouseisourworld.wordpress.com/2014/11/05/the-farnsworth-house-the-eyes-of-the-skin-reflection/>

Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Look closely at the image of the exterior of the Farnsworth House above. What design elements stand out the most to you? How would you describe these elements?
- [Take a virtual tour of the interior of the Farnsworth House.](#) How do you imagine it might feel both physically and emotionally to be in this space? What about the architecture makes you feel this way?
- As you look at Bool's large-scale tapestry, what might she be saying about the design of the house and the way that it sits in the landscape? What words would you use to describe the mood or emotions around Bool's piece?
- Why do you think that Bool chose to make a tapestry about this specific home that was so disliked by the client? Why do you think Bool chose to work in this material and to make the tapestry at this scale?
- What associations might you have with tapestries and woven arts? Where do you usually encounter these artforms?
- What do you notice about the patterns and embroidery on the image? How might Bool's embroidery contradict hallmarks of modernism?

Deeper Reading: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Germany 1886—1969) is most well-known for his innovative and straightforward building design that combined [glass and steel](#). He was the last director of the Bauhaus school in Nazi-occupied Germany, until he came to Chicago to act as the chair of the architecture department at the Institute of Design, also known as the New Bauhaus (and now housed in the Illinois Institute of Technology). Many Mies buildings remain architectural highlights in Chicago today, including the Promontory apartments in Hyde Park, the Federal Building at 230 South Dearborn, and multiple buildings on the IIT campus in Bronzeville, including S.R. Crown Hall, the Commons at IIT, Perlstein Hall, and the IIT Chapel.

To learn more about the New Bauhaus school and to see how it also shaped the history of photography, see our curricular guide [here](#).

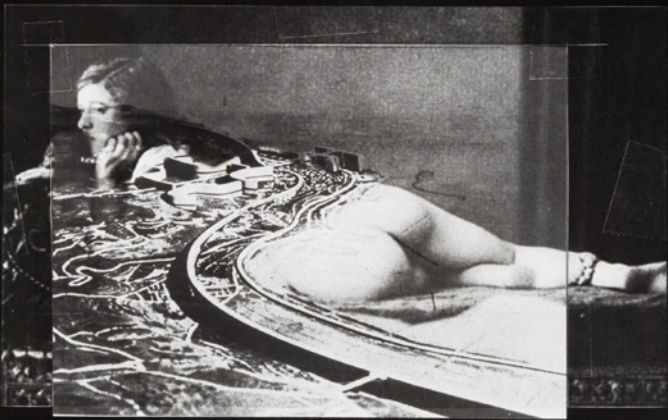
EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Shannon Bool, *Bombshell 4*, 2018

Bool's *Bombshell* series investigates the work of the famous modernist architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known as Le Corbusier (French, b. Switzerland, 1887-1965). In 1931, Le Corbusier visited Algiers, the French colony in Africa, on the hundred-year anniversary of French rule. He hoped his modernist plan for the city would establish it as an international center of Africa, and obsessively worked on the plan for eleven years. The plan proposed a major structure of curved bridges and elevated highways that would separate or complicate Algerian street-level social customs and traditions, as well as upend ancient mosques and ruins dating back to the 10th century. Le Corbusier declared: "Here is the new Algiers. Instead of the leprous sore which had sullied the gulf and the slopes of the Sael, here stands architecture... architecture is the masterly, correct, and magnificent play of shapes in the light."² The plan never came to fruition.

Bool creates **photograms** by overlaying Plan Obus drawings with images postcards of the time that exoticized North African women as sex objects. Le Corbusier was known to have visited brothels during his many trips to Algiers and credited female bodies as inspiration for his curvy designs. Bool's *Bombshells* title plays on the French word *obus*, which means both "bomb" and "shell."

2. Brian Ackley, "Le Corbusier's Algerian Fantasy," Bidoun, January 10, 2006, <https://www.bidoun.org/articles/le-corbusier-s-algerian-fantasy>.



Shannon Bool
Bombshell 4, 2018



Le Corbusier (architect) and Lucien Hervé (photographer),
Plan Obus, Algiers, 1930; image courtesy of Fonds Guillaume
Jullian de la Fuente Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/
Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Shannon Bool, *Horse of Oblivion 1*, 2019

Bool's collage series, *Horses of Oblivion* (2019) comments upon photomontages made by Italian architect, designer, and photographer Carlo Mollino (Italy, 1905–1973). Mollino originally made his photomontages showing the Equestrian Club of Turin that he designed with galloping horses, most likely to convey ideas of strength and progress that modernism was intended to evoke. Bool horses are incorporated with image fragments of **brutalist** and modernist architecture, making the body of the horse appear as an absurd amalgam of elements that deflates the symbolism and power associated with both animal and architect.



Shannon Bool
Horse of Oblivion 1, 2019



Carlo Mollino, unknown title, c. 1941



Carlo Mollino, *Photomontage of the Horse Riding Club*, 1941.
© Carlo Mollino, Collection Rob C. Beyer

Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Consider the title of this series, *Horse of Oblivion*. What statement do you think Bool is making with this title?
- Looking at Bool's many projects together, what do you think she is saying about modernism at large?
- As a photographer, Mollino was preoccupied with making highly sexualized surrealist images of women, even keeping a cadre of misogynistic images in a secret apartment. Does knowing this information, and also the information about Le Corbusier's visits to brothels, impact your views on the architects' legacy? Can we separate the art from the artist? Should we? Should makers of the past be held to the same accountability we expect of artists today?

Refracting Histories

Refracting Histories is an exhibition on the MoCP's second and third levels that features eight artists who continue Bool's interest in looking critically at art and design histories that are often uncontested. While some artists appropriate well-known photographs into new forms, others set up a constructed environment to visualize lost histories. Collectively, the exhibition honors the malleable nature of photography as a fitting medium to redirect, reinterpret, and expand upon prescribed doctrines.



Nona Faustine

Like A Pregnant Corpse The Ship Expelled Her Into The Patriarchy, Atlantic Coast, Brooklyn, NY,
from the *White Shoes* series, 2012

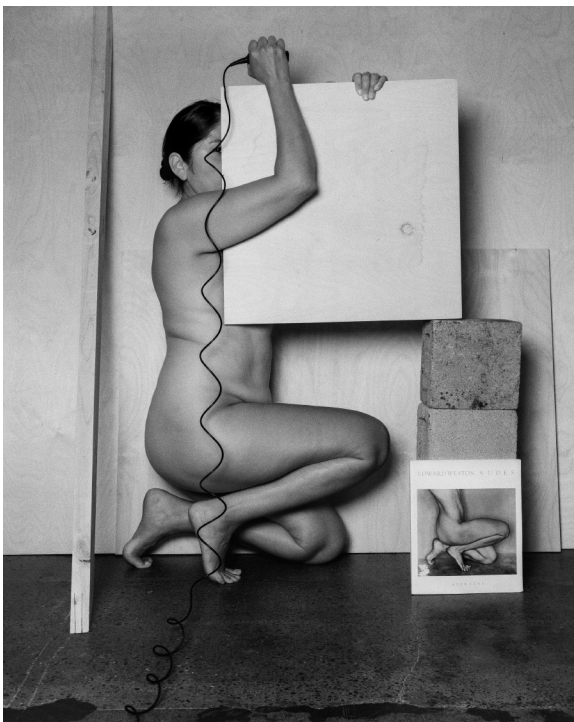
Introductory Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Before looking at this exhibition, are there any people you would consider to be “masters” of photography? When and where did you learn about these artists? Do these makers vary in nationality, gender identity, or ethnicity? Are there any similarities you notice about the way these artists create their photographs?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Tarrah Krajnak, *Master Rituals II: Weston's Nudes*, 2020

Tarrah Krajnak (Peru, b. 1979) uses her body to re-create nude images Edward Weston (United States, 1886–1958) made of Miriam Lerner (1896–1976), Bertha Wardell (1896–1974), and Charis Wilson (United States, 1914–2009). Weston was drawn to tactile surfaces and organic forms and, in addition to nudes, he also photographed landscapes, natural forms, still lifes, and portraits over the course of his 40-year career. Each woman acted as his collaborator, model, romantic partner, and muse. By revealing the camera shutter release in hand, Krajnak asserts herself as the maker of the image, and amplifies the creative role Weston's models played. In the dual act of expanding the frame and giving ownership to the model, Krajnak asks us to consider who has helped people achieve fame and recognition in this field—and what is left out of this process of adoration.



Tarrah Krajnak, *Self-Portrait as Weston/as Bertha Wardell*, from *Master Rituals II: Weston's Nudes*, 1927/2020.



Edward Weston, *Knees of a Dancer*, Glendale, 1927, © 1981 Arizona Board of Regents, Center for Creative Photography. Not in MoCP Collection.

Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- What do you notice about the way Krajnak **frames** her image? What do you notice about the way Weston frames his image?
- Why might Krajnak choose to include wooden panels, cinder blocks, and book pages within the frame? What do these details add to the narrative?
- How does Krajnak's work on the female nude build on the critiques Bool presents about modernism?
- Look carefully at Krajnak's titles, like *As Charis Wilson/as Edward Weston* (1934/2020) and *As Bertha Wardell/As Edward Weston* (1927/2020). How do the titles support the concept of her project?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Kelli Connell and Natalie Krick, *o_Man!*, 2022

Kelli Connell and Natalie Krick (United States, b. 1974 and 1986, respectively) place a contemporary feminist lens on the work of Edward Steichen (American, b. Luxembourg, 1879–1973) and his position as the curator of the famous exhibition *The Family of Man*. This exhibition featured 503 images Steichen chose to represent the state of humanity at the time. It was initially presented in 1955 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and then toured globally for seven years and was seen by more than 10 million people. Connell and Krick work collaboratively to layer and appropriate works that were in the *Family of Man* exhibition and also some of Steichen's own photographs. Their interpretations bring his work into a current dialogue about power, with a humor at once whimsical and deliberate.



Kelli Connell and Natalie Krick
the power to do great harm, 2022



Kelli Connell and Natalie Krick *men making decisions*, 2022

Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Notice where Connell and Krick have added pops of color to the images and frames. What role does color have in this project?
- Look closely at the images Connell and Krick chose from the 503 works in *The Family of Man*. Why might they choose these specific images? What do they all have in common?
- Look at the text panels, which were made with techniques typically seen in redacted poetry. How does the text add to the images? What types of words or phrases are the artists emphasizing?
- The figure wearing the black suit in the image above is J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904–1967), the inventor of the atomic bomb. Does knowing the identity of the person in this photograph change the way you read the photograph? Why might the artists choose to split the image in two?

ACTIVITY

Make your own redacted poetry

Redacted poetry alters an existing text to create a poem through the process of elimination. Compare Connell and Krick's redacted poetry to the original text in *The Family of Man*, seen here:

on and

On

and on

on

and on

and on.

Kelli Connell & Natalie Krick
On and on and on and on, 2022

*Nuclear weapons and
atomic electric power are
symbolic of the atomic age:
On one side, frustration
and world destruction:
on the other, creativity
and a common ground
for peace and cooperation.*

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission

From *The Family of Man* publication, 1954;
not in the MoCP exhibition or collection.

Select one piece of text from a magazine, book, letter, or advertisement. Identify what words you want to emphasize from the text passage. You can search for words that repeat, isolate words that speak to you, find patterns on the page, or find new words within words. Using white out or white tape, remove the sections you do not want to see. Think about what the original text said compared to your final composition. Does your redacted poem challenge or change the meaning of the original source? Once your work feels complete, take turns reading your poem out loud, creating pauses where the white spaces are on the page. How does the poem compare when spoken?

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Tom Jones, *North American Landscape*, 2013

Tom Jones (Ho-Chunk, b. 1964) reimagines photographic icon, Edward Curtis (United States, 1868–1952) and his 1907 book, *North American Indian*. As an outsider, Curtis portrayed a stylized version of the historic Indigenous American rather than the actual people he encountered, and in so doing he downplayed the contemporary aspects of their lives. Jones's photographs feature plastic toys that match trees found in the backgrounds of Curtis's images to speak to the ways many Indigenous groups and identities that have been flattened into one idea of "Indian-ness" over time.



Tom Jones
A Maricopa Landscape, from *The North American Landscape* series, 2013



Edward S. Curtis,
Maricopa Women Gathering Fruit from Saguaro Cacti, 1907.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/90710181/>
Not in MoCP exhibition or collection.

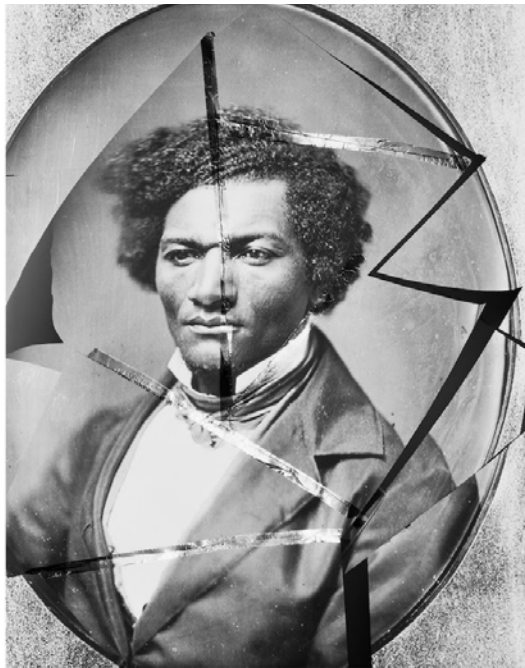
Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- What do you notice about the material quality of the objects in Jones' photographs? What do you think Jones is trying to convey by using toys?
- Consider the two images above. Edward Curtis often dressed people in clothes and regalia to remove influences of colonialism and to instead show a nostalgic and romanticized view of Indigenous Americans. How might symbols used in Jones's works open a dialogue about the ways harmful stereotypes can be perpetuated in society through photography and art?

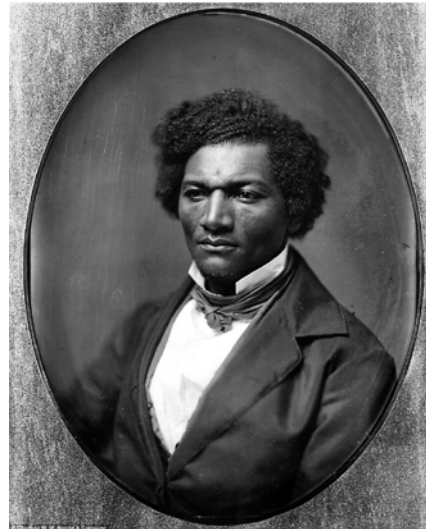
EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Aaron Turner, *Seen, of light and legacy*, 2022

Aaron Turner (United States, b. 1990) presents multiple prints of US abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass (United States, 1818–1895), who was the most photographed person of the nineteenth century. Douglass understood the power of photography to shape stories and sat for 160 portraits during his lifetime. Turner’s series features mediums from across the history of photography, ranging from a **cyanotype** to a **daguerreotype**.



Aaron Turner
from *Seen, of light and legacy*, 2022



Photographer unknown, c. 1848
Not in the MoCP collection or exhibition;
Collection of the Onondaga Historical Association.

Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Frederick Douglass noticed that the new medium of photography made it possible for people of all class backgrounds to “possess more perfect likenesses”³ of themselves. Do you think Douglass’s vision for photography and representation was realized?
- Frederick Douglass could be considered the first person to promote the selfie. Why is self-representation important? What can we learn through looking at images of other people?
- Look closely at the original portrait of Frederick Douglass. Why might Turner choose to change this particular image out of the [160 portraits that Douglass sat for during his lifetime](#)? Why might Turner choose to slice and add tape to the original portrait?
- Turner stated in an interview: “even though [my work] deals with history and politics and race—what it’s really about is illusion, shadow, manipulation of light.”⁴ Why do you think the artist created the same portrait of Douglass in so many different types of prints? What do you think he is saying about the material qualities of photography?

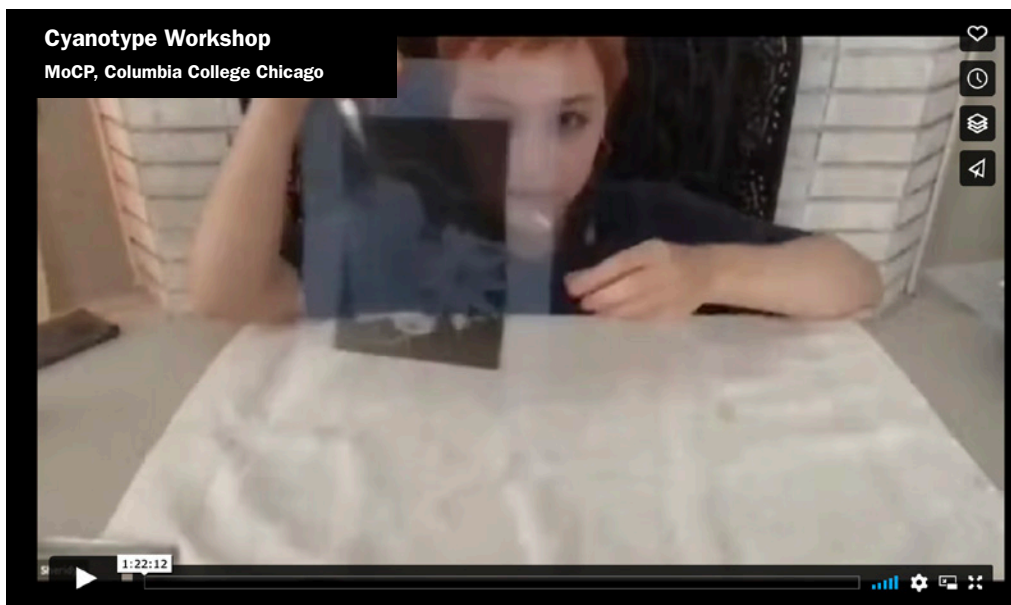
3. “Frederick Douglass Papers: Speech, Article, and Book File, 1846-1894; Speeches and Articles by Douglass, 1846-1894; Undated; ‘Pictures and Progress,’ Manuscript Fragment,” The Library of Congress, accessed October 20, 2022, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss1187900521/?loclr=blogpic>.

4. Stephanie Smittle. “‘Black Alchemy’: A Q&A with Photographer Aaron Turner.” Arkansas Times, January 20, 2022. <https://arktimes.com/rock-candy/2022/01/06/black-alchemy-a-qa-with-photographer-aaron-turner>.

ACTIVITY

Make your own cyanotype photogram

Cyanotype is a historic photo process that is easy to do at home. Cyanotypes were invented in 1842 and are made with iron salt solutions exposed with UV rays from the sun, which give the prints a signature blue tint. Once the exposure is complete the paper or textile is washed and left to dry. You can make your own cyanotypes at home with the help of our video tutorial [here!](#)



Process image of **Aaron Turner**
Seen #2, 2018, *Black Alchemy Vol. 2*, 2022

Deeper Reading: Photograms

A photogram is made by placing objects or negative on light sensitive paper. Negatives or objects are arranged by hand onto the surface of the paper, and the image is exposed in light. Shannon Bool uses the photogram technique in her *Horse of Oblivion* and *Bombshell* series. The outlines of transparent tape can be seen in these images as Bool's method of connecting together multiple negatives. Sonja Thomsen also employs the photogram technique in images seen within her installation, *Orbiting Lucia*.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

Sonja Thomsen, *Orbiting Lucia*, 2022

Sonja Thomsen created this site-specific installation to bring recognition to Lucia Moholy (United Kingdom, b. Austria-Hungary 1894–1989), who is largely excluded from the narrative of art history. Lucia was a prolific artist, teacher, and writer who frequently collaborated with her husband, painter and Bauhaus educator László Moholy-Nagy (United States, b. Hungary, 1895–1946), during the time that they were married from 1921 until 1929. Although many people learn about the life and work of László Moholy-Nagy, few learn about Lucia, and many of her contributions were attributed to László alone. Thomsen embedded video, photographs, light, and a moving mobile into the MoCP architecture, to create an experience that gives physicality to Lucia’s invisibility.



Sonja Thomsen
Lucia Legend iv, 2022

Questions for Looking and Discussion:

- Observe the installation from multiple perspectives: from standing at the bottom of the stairs and looking up, from standing in the middle of the stairs, and from standing at the top of the stairs looking down. How does the experience of the installation change, depending on your viewpoint? What details do you notice from different perspectives?
- Look closely at the moving mobile in the center of the installation. What does this shape resemble or signify to you?
- In the video, we hear artist Birthe Piontek reading both German and English versions of an essay that Lucia Moholy wrote to correct the historical record of her absence. Why do you think the artist chose to have both languages read separately, instead of providing clear subtitles to one language or the other?

Glossary of Terms

Patriarchy/Patriarchal: A system of relationships, beliefs, and values embedded in political, social, and economic systems that structure gender inequality in which positions of dominance and privilege are primarily held by men.

Colonialism: The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting its people through economics, land use, displacement etc. In the process of colonization, colonizers may impose their religion, language, economics, and other cultural practices on its inhabitants.

Brutalist architecture: An architectural style that emerged during the 1950s in Europe. Brutalist buildings are characterized by minimalist constructions that emphasize materials, textures and structural elements over decorative design.

Appropriation: A common practice of artists utilizing pre-existing objects or images that then take on new meaning. There is also appropriation in a cultural way that can be applied to art as well.

Framing:: How one composes an image in the camera's viewfinder; the organization of elements within the image.

Daguerreotype: The first successful photographic method created in 1838 and named after Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre. The image is fixed onto a polished silver-coated plate of copper that is made light sensitive with iodine vapors and exposed in the camera. It is developed with mercury fumes and fixed with sodium thiosulfate. The images are one of a kind with extreme detail and a reflective background.

Cyanotype: An alternative photographic printing process recognized for its blue hue. The process was developed by Sir John Herschel in 1842. The process usually involves mixing the chemicals Potassium ferricyanide and Ferric ammonium citrate. Once mixed properly the paper, textile or absorbent material is coated with the solution. A negative or object(s) can be placed onto the light sensitive surface and exposed to UV light or the sun. Once the exposure is complete the paper or textile is washed and left to dry. Similar to photograms, Cyanotypes leave an imprint of the object while areas exposed to light are a deep blue tone.

Illinois Learning Standards Addressed in this Guide

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.6

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HISTORY

SS.6-8.H.1.SS.MC. Evaluate the significance of historical events to multiple groups and the relationship to modern-day movements and events.

SS.9-12.H.1. Evaluate the context of time and place as well as structural factors that influence historical developments.

FINE ART

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

VA:Re7.2.8: Compare and contrast contexts and media in which viewers encounter images that influence ideas, emotions, and actions.

VA:Re7.2.I: Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.

VA:Re7.2.II: Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.

VA:Re7.2.III: Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, timeframe, or culture.

MEDIA ART

Anchor Standard 8: Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work.

MA:Re8.1.8: Interpret meanings of a variety of media artworks, focusing on intentions, forms, and various contexts

MA:Re8.1.I: Interpret meanings and reaction to a variety of media artworks, focusing on personal and cultural contexts.

MA:Re8.1.II: Interpret meanings and influence of a variety of media artworks, based on personal, societal, historical, and cultural contexts.

MA:Re8.1.III: Interpret meanings and impacts of diverse media artworks, considering complex factors of context and bias.

MoCP Museum of
Contemporary
Photography

Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO