

Front Porch Portraits

Emulating Documentary Photographers in an
Unprecedented Time

Photographers Capture History as it Happens

Photographers have always been at the front lines of every major event in history for the last 150 years. They have covered wars, social change, politics, and even pandemics. One specific time in history that was marked with great photographic coverage was the Great Depression. Many notable photographers, such as Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and Carl Mydans created photographs we still value today. These photographers in particular were focused on photographing the state of Americans in relationship to the depression. All three were known to photograph families or groups of individuals in their settings - whether they were living in tents, cars or homes.

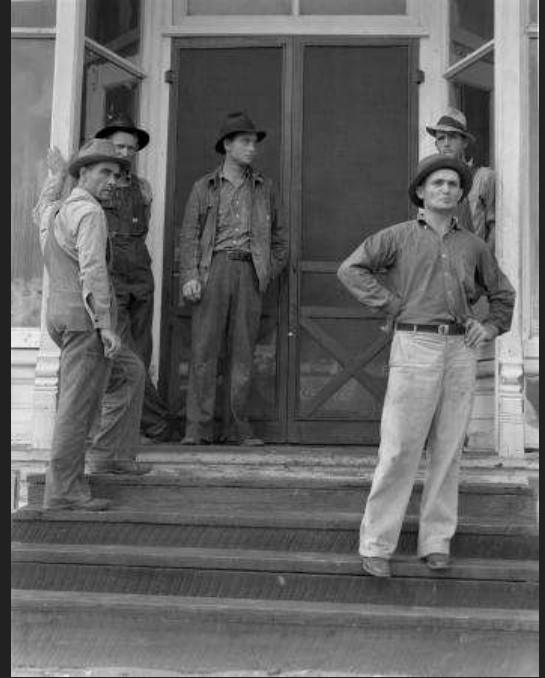
Dorothea Lange - Migrant Mother

One of the most well known photographs of this time is by Photographer Dorothea Lange entitled Migrant Mother. Learn more about this photograph from this video before we begin our project.

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/dorothea-langes-famous-migrant-mother-photo/3074/>



Dorothea Lange Examples of “Porch Portraits”



Dorothea Lange



Walker Evans



Walker Evans (cont.)



Carl Mydans



Your Assignment

Create a “Front Porch Portrait” in the same style and Aesthetic of Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and Carl Mydans. Your portrait may be:

Members of your Family (including or not including yourself) or a self portrait. Get creative on how you choose to portray your family unit.

Edit the image to be black and white. You may use a DSLR, other camera, or your cell phone. Please see the editing at home guide for editing apps.

Turn in your completed assignment and the paragraph response to the prompts on Schoology.

Assignment Tips

1. If you do not have or cannot use your front porch, use a balcony, backyard, patio, or interior room that gets the most natural light.
2. Watch for the best light and time of day - use open shade if possible.
3. If you do not have a tripod, use a chair, stool, even a shoe to balance the camera so you can use the self timer and jump into the shot.
4. Take more than one. Try some with subjects looking into the camera, looking away, and interacting with each other.
5. Editing for contrast. Remember to keep as much detail in your highlights and shadows as possible.
6. Don't worry about getting dressed up - have your family come as they are. Pjs and all.