

Storytelling through Photography

Documenting the New Normal

Documentary Photography in American History...



Definitions:

Documentary photography is a style of photography that provides a straightforward and accurate representation of people, places, objects and events, and is often used in reportage

Social documentary photography or concerned photography is the recording of what the world looks like, with a social and/or environmental focus. It is a form of documentary photography, with the aim to draw the public's attention to ongoing social issues. It may also refer to a socially critical genre of photography dedicated to showing the life of underprivileged or disadvantaged people.

“Everybody loves a well-told story because stories are the best way to evoke emotions. They can make us excited, laugh, cry or feel empathy for someone else. But perhaps the best thing about stories is relatively simple: stories about other people help us to better understand ourselves. And this is the reason why visual storytelling has such an important role in photography.”



*Take a look at these photos/ links and the stories the photographers
were trying to tell/capture...*



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“As I drove across the country, from Bates to my home, I saw how signs that typically display traffic information have been switched over to COVID-19 warning signs. This was when the weight of the situation really hit me. I saw signs that urged travelers to self-quarantine, or that cash was no longer accepted at toll stations, and others that said that we are ‘Stronger Together.’ It was truly eye-opening to see how rapidly everything was changing.” —

Jackson Sell '22







“The objective of this image, and the series it belongs to, is to convey both the solitude and unity that various closing signs represent. Each store had their own way of stating their closure. I wanted to capture this image because we are in such a unique time.” — *Max Bartley*

'22





“The quarantine has been a stressful and chaotic time for most people, me included. I have been lucky to be able to engage in more lighthearted activities. Board games have played a part in making the best of a stressful situation and using the extra time to relax and have fun.” —
Cecely Sterling-Maisel '23



Now it is your turn....

We have been quarantined and home for some time now. New routines have been developed. Rules established. Habits formed. Whether we realize it or not, we have each developed a “new normal” and things have changed.... Grabbing a mask now when you leave the house along with your keys and cell phone. Pausing when you see someone in public approaching your 6 foot radius. Feeling a sense of “alert” when you see a store actually has paper towels and sanitizer available. A sense of anxiety when you watch a movie where kids are gathered at a party (what? without masks?!) Knowing all the ingredients you have in your kitchen now that you make every meal at home. A sense of familiarity to the books you’ve finally begun reading A sense of pride working more hours at your part time job and helping contribute to your family who may need it during this time. All of these changes, good or bad, have become part of our new daily routines, and although many things are the same, for each of us it is a little different.

Your next assignment is to document this new normal. Show us through your photos. Create a series of photos that are personal to you, or even speak globally, to what you and others are experiencing. You may focus on your feelings, or possibly what others are going through. Maybe how you feel as a graduating senior HS student, but you can also document how this has affected others close to you- your aunt who is a nurse on the front line, of your sibling working at the grocery store...

How can you show us what you/others are feeling and experiencing through the photos you take and the way you take them?

Assignment-

Take a series of documentary style photographs that tell a story. It can be your story or capturing someone else's. You should have a plan prior to shooting to guide you, but remain flexible as you see and experience more. You will submit a plan, shoot & submit screen shots of camera roll, then pick best 5, edit and submit with text in google slides on canvas.

Part 1: Brainstorm some ideas. As mentioned above, these may change as you see new opportunities but you are to come up with a list of 5 ideas/concepts or images you would like to capture that you will type up and submit. (*these can be concrete ideas like “my mom the nurse and her scrubs”, or abstract ideas like “fear”, “hope”, etc.) These ideas will be submitted in a google doc worksheet that will be posted on canvas and due May 15th (pr. 12) and May 18th (pr.2) **Begin shooting right away

Assignment-

Part 2- Begin shooting your ideas. If it involves others you may want to interview them a bit and record their responses to include with your final work. You will take a screenshot of your camera roll (about 12 photos, unedited) and submit to show progress. This will be due as an assignment on May 19th (Pr. 12) & May 20th (pr. 2) **begin picking your best and editing

Part 3- Pick one of your best photos (that has been edited already) and share with the class in a discussion post. You may include text with your post for context if you feel necessary but it is not required. After posting, comment of two of your peers work. This will be due Thursday May 21st (Pr. 12) and Tuesday May 26th (Pr.2) **Memorial Day weekend-dates may change

Assignment-

Part 4- Pick your 5 strongest images. They may all go together, or capture various ideas, people, moments, etc. Edit to strengthen- remember the guidelines to composition, lighting, vantage point (where you stood while taking the photo) as well as contrast, color etc. Once edited, create a google slides presentation and place one photo on each slide. You may leave room for text, quotes, narratives, etc. Once finalized, submit to the designated assignment location on canvas. This will be due Wednesday May 27th (Pr. 12) & Thursday May 28th (Pr. 2).



Reminders:

a lot of these examples had people in them but you DO NOT have to include people. Small detailed shots can tell just as much of a story, if not more, as a wide portrait or action... remember the saying “less is more”

You may also choose to include yourself, and self portraits. Just remember all photos must be taken BY you

This is a stressful time for many but not all images need to express just the negatives... many people are doing great things, positive messages, acts of heroism- you can pick and choose multiple “feelings” or “messages” you hope to document with your photos.

Times like these occur once in a lifetime or every couple 100 years...you will have these personal photos documenting this time forever to share with your family and loved ones- take pride in your work.

Most importantly remember- Have fun with this!