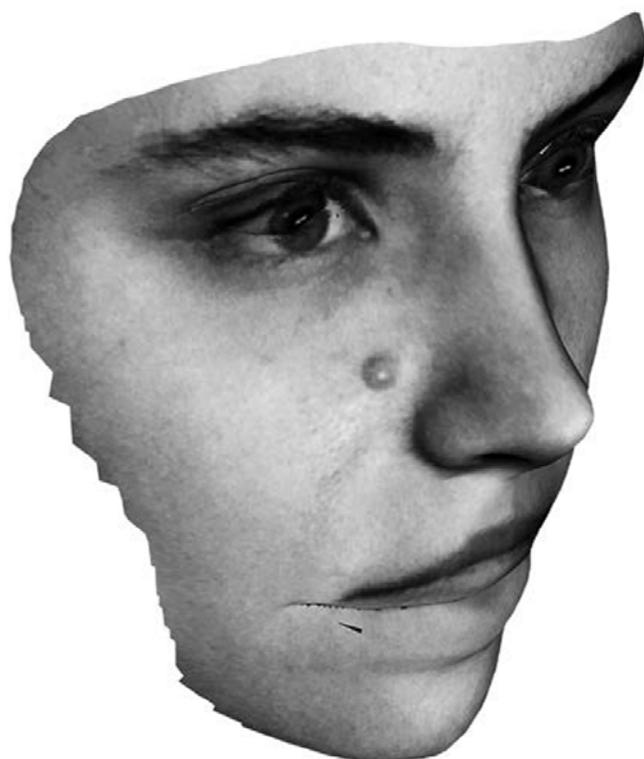


PHOTO 2021 International Festival of Photography

18 February – 7 March 2021

photo.org.au



Education Guide for Schools

Self-guided visits
and questions for discussion

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INTRODUCTION TO PHOTO 2021

PHOTO 2021 is a major new photography event for Australia. The festival features a diverse and vibrant program of inspiring free exhibitions and outdoor installations positioned across Melbourne, and regional Victoria, to encourage audiences to encounter and think about photography in new and inspiring ways.

As the ultimate medium for the digital age, photography is fundamental to the way we see and make sense of the world around us. The exhibitions and outdoor installations in PHOTO 2021 respond to a central theme—‘The Truth’ (see page 4)—and invite audiences to consider the relationship between photography and truth in a new era characterised by social media, fake news, augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

ADVICE FOR TEACHERS PLANNING A VISIT TO PHOTO 2021

This Education Guide profiles a selection of 9 free outdoor installations and exhibitions in Argyle Square, Carlton; across the CBD; and the Inner North (Fitzroy/Collingwood). Art, Studio Arts and Media teachers are invited to plan visits for their students using this advice as a guide. Some venues are located in close proximity to one another and so you may opt to see a number of installations and exhibitions to make the most of your visit.

This guide provides introductory information and questions for discussion about the artworks on display. This resource is designed for Secondary students and can be adapted for upper Primary or Tertiary groups, and indicates opening times during the school week.

In addition to the works detailed in this Education Guide there are many more exhibitions to visit during PHOTO 2021. Visit photo.org.au to find all the details.

As you plan your excursion to PHOTO 2021 please contact each gallery you intend to visit to make a booking and find out more about:

- Current COVID-safe protocols
- Opening dates and times for installations and exhibitions
- Cloakroom facilities
- Guided tours on offer for school groups
- Accessibility and facilities
- Expectations for supervision
- If there are any artworks on display that might not be appropriate for your students

Participating teachers should always follow the excursion policy of their school and the latest COVID-safe Government regulations regarding group visits. To plan your journey to PHOTO 2021 via public transport visit: <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/journey>

PHOTO 2021 THEME: THE TRUTH

Photography has always had a complex relationship with truth, stemming from the commonly held belief that cameras simply capture reality. The invention of photography fundamentally changed our collective relationship with truth because, unlike paintings and other image recording processes of the time, photography used a lens based on the optical structure of the eye. Traditional analogue photographs were largely understood to accurately capture visual information objectively through light and a chemical process. The medium gained acceptance as an accurate record of events or things in the world.

But even early on some photographers pushed the possibilities of the medium to disrupt our understanding of truth. For example, the American spiritualist photographer William H. Mumler experimented with double exposures to sell a gullible public fake 'spirit' photographs of their deceased relatives until his artifice was exposed. For a deeper insight into this, and other historical anecdotes, read the essay [A Brief History of Photography and Truth](#).

The more recent advent of digital imaging and online platforms has radically altered our collective belief in photography's hold on truth. The fact that photography is everywhere, all the time, and can be endlessly manipulated, retouched, fabricated, circulated and distributed like never before, has led to a feeling that ideas of reality and truth are less stable than ever.

The post-internet generation of contemporary photographers has embraced today's era of post-truth. They deftly manufacture and play with digital files, mediating and selecting what we, the viewer, will eventually see and not see. Today, we viewers are inclined to question everything about a photograph rather than simply accept what we see. This kind of critique is at the core of the discourse about contemporary photography.

We invite you to consider these overarching questions about truth as you explore the festival:

1. **FUTURE TRUTH:** How are new methods of making, sharing and viewing images changing our idea of truth?
2. **REVEALING TRUTH:** What power does documentary photography have in today's world?
3. **RE-INVENTING TRUTH:** How are artists using and re-using images to create new narratives and challenge pre-conceived beliefs?
4. **FICTIONAL TRUTH:** How are today's artists adopting fiction and deceit in their work?

Somnyama Ngonyama

Zanele Muholi (South Africa)

Argyle Square, Lygon St, Carlton

Outdoor work: accessible all hours

“I’m reclaiming my blackness, which I feel is continuously performed by the privileged other.”

Johannesburg-based artist and activist Zanele Muholi’s practice focusses on contemporary identity, race and gender politics in South Africa. Muholi’s work reimagines black identity and challenges stereotypical standards of beauty that too often underrepresent or exclude people of colour. *Somnyama Ngonyama* is an intensely personal new body of work, presenting a series of black and white self-portraits. In each of these photographs the artist performs with props and costumes created with everyday materials. The artist pays homage to their late mother Bester Muholi through the symbolic inclusion in the work of materials such as scouring pads. This use of materials is both satirical and highly critical of Bester’s circumstances as a maid during the apartheid era. The artist hopes these representations of African identity will give affirmation to all who doubt themselves and encourage all people of colour to tell their own truths and transcend any prejudice they face today.

Questions



1. In many of the photographs the artist is adorned in elaborate headdresses and costumes. Look carefully at the materials these are made. Create a list of these and describe your thoughts about them.
2. How do these self-portraits transcend stereotypical standards of beauty? What is considered beautiful today? Discuss
3. How do these artworks reflect Zanele Muholi’s personal feelings and thoughts about being a person of colour? Do you think that Zanele Muholi’s self-portraits are courageous? Why / Why not?
4. Consider what you already know about the history and legacy of apartheid in South Africa. Conduct some research to find out more.
5. If you were going to represent yourself in a self-portrait, what kind of props, materials and costumes would you include in your photograph, and why?
6. Think about where the artworks have been presented. What kind of impact do you think these artworks have in this public space? How might you experience the work differently in an art gallery?

Spirit is a Bone

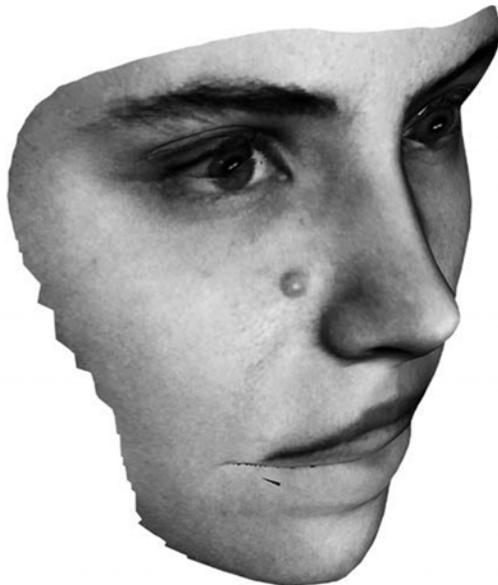
Broomberg & Chanarin (South Africa / UK)

Argyle Square, Lygon St, Carlton

Outdoor work: accessible all hours

The portraits presented within the installation *Spirit is a Bone* were not made with a normal camera. Instead they were produced by artistic collaborators Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin using a new facial recognition technology developed by software engineers in Moscow for public surveillance. As citizens move through public spaces such as train stations or stadiums, this Russian technology has the capacity to capture individual faces from a range of different angles, via a range of different lenses. The software then draws upon this data to construct a 'non-consensual collaborative portrait'; a 3D composite image of the individual that can be easily rotated, scrutinised and stored on file for future reference.

For this artwork a band member from Pussy Riot named Yakaterina Samutsevic and a number of other Moscow citizens agreed to be part of the project.



Questions

1. What do you think the artistic intention of Broomberg and Chanarin is in creating this series of portraits? How do the images make you feel?
2. How important is it to ask permission to take a photograph of someone? Discuss.
3. Do you think it is important that *Spirit is a Bone* is presented outside in a public space? Speculate on how you might relate to the portraits differently if they were presented in a gallery context?
4. How important is the scale of these portraits? Imagine they were larger or smaller. Would this impact on their presence?
5. What do you imagine might be some of the unsettling implications for this new type of surveillance technology?
6. What other forms of 3-D imaging technologies are available to contemporary artists nowadays? Do some research and create a list of some of the new methods and processes.

One of Them is a Human

Maija Tammi (Finland)

Address: Argyle Square, Lygon St, Carlton

Outdoor work: accessible all hours

Finnish artist Maija Tammi's futuristic project *One of Them is Human* is a conceptual artwork that presents portraits of three androids and one possible human. These unsettling images make us contemplate the essence of humanity and the possibility that in the future humans could become extinct or be replaced by technology. Although Erica and the other subjects of these portraits look human, at least three of them offer us an artificial being upon which to project our fears, hopes and imaginings.



Questions

1. One of Them is Human asks audiences to consider the nature of human consciousness and the idea of having a soul. How do you define 'alive'? Do you think it is possible for androids (human looking robots) to have human traits?
2. Name some famous androids in popular culture and science fiction.
3. This body of work caused controversy after winning two awards in one of the world's largest photographic competitions, The Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize. The rules state that submitted work must portray "a living sitter". If you were the judge of the prize, would you consider this work eligible? Why / Why not? Justify your response.
4. Do you think it is possible that one of these portraits is of an actual person, rather than an android? If so, which one? How can you tell that one is human?

Uncle Jack Charles (Men in Mourning)

Maree Clarke (Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung, Australia)

Address: Scott Alley, off Flinders Lane

Outdoor work: accessible all hours

Presented as part of the Metro Tunnel Creative Program

Yorta Yorta / Wamba Wamba / Mutti Mutti / Boonwurrung artist Maree Clarke is a pivotal figure in the reclamation of South-Eastern Australian Aboriginal art practices, reinvigorating elements of culture that were disrupted during colonisation. The large-scale photograph of Uncle Jack Charles is drawn from a larger body of work called *Ritual and Ceremony*. In this suite of photographs Clarke explores the mourning rituals and ceremonies of her ancestors. The artist photographed 45 Aboriginal men wearing t-shirts with designs in white ochre that reconceptualise traditional scarification. This compelling black and white portrait of Uncle Jack Charles—who is an elder, artist, actor, musician and Stolen Generation survivor—symbolises a collective grief for lost people, languages, land and culture.



Questions

1. Why do you think it is so important for Maree Clarke to revive aspects of South-Eastern Aboriginal culture today?
2. Maree Clarke often challenges preconceived notions of Indigenous art by sharing traditional stories in new ways. How has the artist used a contemporary approach to storytelling in the portrait of Uncle Jack Charles?
3. How does the scale of the photograph relate to human scale? How do you think the scale of the image contributes to its meaning?
4. How important are rituals and ceremonies in our lives today? Discuss with reference to your own experience.

Agonistes

Hoda Afshar (Iran/Australia)

Address: St Paul's Cathedral (exterior)
Corner Flinders St/Swanston St, Melbourne
Outdoor work: accessible all hours

In this series of photographs Tehran-born, Melbourne-based artist Hoda Afshar explores the experiences of people who have spoken out. The artist worked with people known as whistleblowers, who have brought to light various transgressions perpetrated in Australian institutions today. Although whistleblowing in Australia is considered a hallmark of our democracy, whistleblowers take great personal risks when drawing attention to institutional wrongdoing.

To create these artworks the artist first produced a 3D scan of each of her subjects. This was then 3D printed to create a bust. Afshar then created studio photographs of each of the busts resulting in a suite of images that both draws attention to and abstracts the identity of each of the subjects.



Questions

1. Why do you think it was important for the subjects of this series to have their identity obscured? What kind of ethical considerations are involved in producing a work like this?
2. Busts have a long history in Western art. What kind of materials might they have been sculpted from in the past? How do these historical processes differ from Hoda Afshar's method of producing the busts?
3. Consider the use of lighting and composition in the work. How does it enhance the meaning of the artwork?
4. Do you think there is any additional resonance or symbolism in choosing to present these artworks at the Cathedral? Discuss.

To Be Real

Atong Atem (South Sudan/Australia)

Address: Immigration Museum

400 Flinders Street, Melbourne

Open Hours: Daily 10am–5pm (bookings required for group visits)

South Sudanese born, Melbourne-based artist and writer Atong Atem's striking photographs are known for exploring migrant narratives, post-colonial practices and the African diaspora through portraiture. Her compositions are drenched with vivid colour, pattern and visual symbols that set the scene for exploring personal identity and collective narratives. Her subjects are empowered to control their own image through a collaborative studio process. Encompassing mythology and fantasy, belonging and truth, *To Be Real* continues Atem's exploration of the complex nature of identity and the ways in which we construct images and stories to understand ourselves and our surroundings.



Questions

1. Describe the kind of environments that Atong Atem and her subjects create through colour, pattern, make-up and props.
2. Atong Atem's artwork explores both her personal history of immigration and the collective stories of the African diaspora in Australia. Do you think the Immigration Museum is an appropriate venue to present this new body of work? Discuss.
3. Much of Atong Atem's artwork is about participating in the history of art that focusses on blackness and taking ownership of her own narrative. Can you think of any other artists who are interested in similar ideas? Compare and contrast their approach to image-making.
4. How important do you think it is for the subject of a portrait to have agency in its creation? Discuss.

Undiscovered

Michael Cook (Bidjara, Australia)

Address: This Is No Fantasy

108-110 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy

Open Hours: 10am–5pm Tue–Fri (bookings required for group visits)

Michael Cook is a Brisbane-based photo-media artist of Bidjara heritage whose artworks reimagine Australian identity through the eyes of Indigenous Australians. Cook uses photography to create hypothetical narratives about the history and contemporary realities for Indigenous Australians in which colonial histories are often altered or inverted. A skilled photographer with decades of experience, Cook works with actors, models and performers to create new narratives that challenge us to reflect on our collective histories.



Questions

1. Michael Cook deliberately imbues his artworks with a sense of ambiguity so they remain open to interpretation by the viewer. Spend some time looking at his series of photographs. Speculate on the kind of questions about Australian identity and history that Michael Cook is asking us to consider in the exhibition.
2. Michael Cook frequently stages his artworks around a narrative that takes place in a particular time period and location. Which eras do his series of photographs refer to? What locations are represented in the work? What visual clues are there in the artworks to suggest these?
3. Who is performing in his photographs? Describe the characters and the roles that they play in the stories that Michael Cook is bringing to life.
4. Michael Cook often uses digital imaging and PhotoShop to make elaborate and seamless compositions by drawing together various digital files. How has digital imaging been used in his artworks?

Pictures

Georgina Cue (Australia)

Address: Gertrude Glasshouse

44 Glasshouse Rd, Collingwood

Open Hours: Thu–Fri, 12pm–5pm (bookings required for group visits)

Melbourne-based contemporary artist Georgina Cue is known for her interest in restaging moments from 20th century Western art history through photography. Cue's practice reinterprets the visual languages of modernism, experimental film and street art to construct scenarios where she often performs as protagonist. The artist works with a range of provisional 'DIY' materials such as cardboard, spray paint, textiles and found objects to create vibrant, large-scale spatial installations that are carefully lit and documented. For this new suite of photographs Cue has removed herself from the images altogether to create a body of work that focusses on historical traditions of sculpture and still life in art. She pays homage to a diverse mix of visual source imagery including familiar compositions by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Jean Cocteau alongside lesser-known influences: avant-garde film sets from the only surviving Italian Futurist feature *Thais* and the geometric forms within Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet*.



Questions

1. How does Georgina Cue use found objects and appropriated imagery in her artworks? Discuss.
2. Georgina Cue was very interested in pushing the element of colour in these artworks and drew inspiration from fauvism and the Bauhaus as she was making her sculptural installations. Describe the use of colour in this series.
3. Georgina Cue focusses on the elements of line and pattern. Discuss how the artist has creates a sense of space and composition in her work.
4. How do two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks differ in communicating meaning? Do you think that the temporary installations that Georgina Cue photographs could be installed as artworks in the gallery? Discuss.
5. How have the artworks been situated in the gallery in relation to one another? Why do you think the artist opted to display them in this configuration?

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times

Ruth Maddison (Australia)

Address: Centre for Contemporary Photography

404 George St, Fitzroy

Open Hours: Wed–Fri, 11am–5pm (bookings required for group visits)

This survey exhibition celebrates the extraordinary practice of Ruth Maddison, one of Australia's preeminent social documentary and feminist photographers. Maddison has been creating images of Australian life and society since the 1970s, with a particular interest in capturing the daily lives and relationships of people in their homes, at work and in their communities. She is well known for her intensely personal and intimate observations, which celebrate the beauty of the everyday. Maddison's own biography often extends into her work as she spends time getting to know her subjects before she photographs them. In her early bodies of work Maddison regularly employed the technique of individually hand-colouring black and white prints.

The exhibition also premieres Maddison's new work *The Fellow Traveller*. This immersive photographic installation explores her father's radical politics and travels to Soviet Russia, China and Cuba throughout the 1950s–1980s whilst under surveillance by ASIO. Combining archival material alongside personal imagery, *The Fellow Traveller* reveals the shifting nature of personal and historical truths at a time of increasing social and political urgency.

Questions

1. Do you think the artist is respectful of the individuals who she photographs? Look carefully at some examples. How do you think she managed to capture people so at ease?
2. Some of the greatest influences of Ruth Maddison's work were her family, feminism and the everyday. Discuss how you see these influences reflected visually in some examples of her work? What kind of scenes and activities can you see going on?
3. Can you see yourself or anyone you know within Ruth Maddison's work? How do these images relate to your lives and the lives of your family and community? Discuss.
4. Throughout her career as an artist Ruth Maddison has been documenting the passage of her life and creating an archive about how she relates to the world along the way. Can you think of any other artists who do this through their artworks? How has the artist's work changed over time? Share some examples of your observations.
5. Explore Maddison's new work, *The Fellow Traveller*. What does the artist reveal about her father and his radical politics through this artwork? How has world politics changed since the end of the Cold War in 1991? Discuss. What kind of individuals might ASIO be more interested in now?
6. Maddison often employs the technique of hand-colouring photographic prints. For many feminist photographers this process can acknowledge the under-recognised history of women's work, by remembering the women who were historically employed by studios as hand-colourists before the advent of colour and digital photography. What effect does hand-colouring have on the way you relate to the work?
7. Back at school, experiment with hand-colouring some black and white photographs.

GLOSSARY

Post-truth	Circumstances in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs rather than facts
Social media	Programs and platforms that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using an electronic device
Image manipulation	Transforming or altering an image using various methods and techniques to achieve desired results.
Diaspora	The dispersion of people from their original homeland.
Avant-garde	New and experimental ideas and methods in art.

FURTHER RESEARCH MATERIALS

ARTIST TALK

Hoda Afshar and Adam Broomberg (Broomberg & Chanarin)

<https://photo.org.au/channel/photo-live-hoda-afshar-adam-broomberg/>

ARTIST TALK

Zanele Muholi

<https://photo.org.au/channel/exclusive-zanele-muholi-talk-in-melbourne-on-19-march-2020/>

ARTIST TALK

Atong Atem

<https://photo.org.au/channel/photo-live-with-atong-atem>

ARTIST Q&A

Maija Tammi

<https://photo.org.au/channel/qa-maija-tammi>

ARTIST Q&A

Georgina Cue

<https://photo.org.au/channel/qa-georgina-cue/>



IMAGE CREDITS

- 1 Broomberg & Chanarin, 'The Revolutionary', from the series *Spirit is a bone*, 2013. Courtesy the artists.
- 5 Zanele Muholi, 'Thandiwe, Roanoke, Virginia', 2018. Courtesy Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg and Yancey Richardson, New York (c) Zanele Muholi.
- 6 Broomberg & Chanarin, 'The Revolutionary', from the series *Spirit is a bone*, 2013. Courtesy the artists.
- 7 Maija Tammi, 'One of Them Is a Human #1', 2017.
- 8 Maree Clarke, 'Uncle Jack Charles (Men in Mourning)', from the *Ritual and Ceremony* series, 2012.
- 9 Hoda Afshar, from the series *Agonistes* (2020). Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery.
- 10 Atong Atem, 'Sahara', 2020. Courtesy the artist and MARS Gallery.
- 11 Michael Cook, 'Livin 'the dream (Vacation)', 2020. Courtesy the artist and THIS IS NO FANTASY.
- 12 Georgina Cue, 'Untitled', 2020. Courtesy the artist.
- 15 Ruth Maddison, 'My parents gave me a colourful life (1976)', 2020.