

Learn with MoMA



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Step 1 Look closely

1. What do you notice about the pose, gestures, and expressions of the figures in this photograph?
2. What do you notice about the setting?
3. What do you think the connection might be between the figures in this photo?

Step 2 Learn more

Dawoud Bey is a photographer known for his street photography portraits. Between 1988 and 1991, he made a series of street portraits of Black Americans of all ages. He approaches his subjects in a spirit of collaboration, asking to take their photo and giving them an opportunity to choose how they want to present themselves. This is opposite to how many street photographers work, taking covert photos of unsuspecting subjects. This ethical practice allowed Bey to capture intimate and timeless images. Bey often photographed adolescents, saying, "My interest in young people has to do with the fact that they are the arbiters of style in the community; their appearance speaks most strongly of how a community of people defines themselves at a particular historical moment."¹

This photo, taken in 1989, is titled *A Couple at a Main Street Bus Stop, Rochester, NY*.

Step 3 Activity: Take a portrait photo

Materials: camera

1. Choose a person you would like to photograph. This could be a friend, family member, or someone in your community.
2. Talk to this person to see if they are willing to be photographed. If so, ask where they would like to be photographed, what they would like to wear, and how they would like to pose.
3. Once the person is in their chosen pose, take a photo.
4. Title the photo with the name of the person, where the photo was taken, and include any other information the subject wants people to know about their photo.

Step 4 Share!

Show your photo to the person that you photographed and ask them if they think the photo captures who they are at the moment. You can also email the photo to us at MoMA: schoolprograms@moma.org.



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Image: Dawoud Bey. *A Couple at a Main Street Bus Stop, Rochester, NY*. 1989. Gelatin silver print. Acquired through the generosity of Ruth Nordenbrook. © 2023 Dawoud Bey

1. Kellie Jones, "Dawoud Bey: Portraits in the Theater of Desire," in *Dawoud Bey: Portraits 1975-1995* ed. by A.D. Coleman, Jock Reynolds, Kellie Jones, and Dawoud Bey (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1995) 48.