

# Learn with MoMA



**MoMA**

## Step 1 Look closely

1. What objects can you see in this photograph?
2. What do you think might be the relationships among these objects?
3. What story do these objects tell?

## Step 2 Learn more

LaToya Ruby Frazier grew up in her grandmother's house in Braddock, Pennsylvania. In 2009, Frazier borrowed the book *Images of America: Braddock, Allegheny County* and read about Andrew Carnegie's steel plant and the men and women who migrated from Scotland, Germany, and Italy to work there. Yet she recalls that "by the time I turned to the last page I realized that all the African Americans who had contributed to this great history were excluded."<sup>1</sup> This erasure of Braddock's Black working-class residents spurred Frazier to photograph her own family as well as working-class communities across the country and beyond.

Frazier's series *The Notion of Family* is a photo-documentary project by Frazier, her [mother](#), and her Grandma Ruby. The photographs depict scenes from her family home and include personal objects that tell stories about the people who live there. Each photograph resists and corrects the stories told in texts like the one she saw in the book about Carnegie, inserting Frazier's family back into the narrative.



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Generous support for School and Teacher Programs is provided by the Carroll and Milton Petrie Education Program Endowment, the William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund, and the Mimi and Peter Haas Endowment Fund for Elementary School Programs.

Additional funding is provided by the Ducommun and Gross Family Foundation, the Lewis B. Cullman Education Fund of The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, and by the Annual Education Fund.

Image: LaToya Ruby Frazier. *Grandma Ruby and Me*. 2005. Gelatin silver print. The Photography Council Fund. © 2023 LaToya Ruby Frazier

## Step 3 Activity: Take a photograph that tells a personal narrative

Materials: camera

1. Look through your living space and find objects that tell a story about you, your family, or your community. These could be personal effects, photographs, jewelry, etc.
2. Assemble these objects in a place that holds meaning for you. Try arranging them in different ways until you feel that the objects relate to one another and tell a narrative.
3. Adjust the lighting if needed. You may want to make some objects more visible and others more hidden.
4. Take a photograph of your composition.

## Step 4 Share!

Share your photograph with a friend or classmate, or you can email the photo to us at MoMA: [schoolprograms@moma.org](mailto:schoolprograms@moma.org).

1. LaToya Ruby Frazier et al., *The Notion of Family* (New York, NY: Aperture Foundation, 2016), 152.