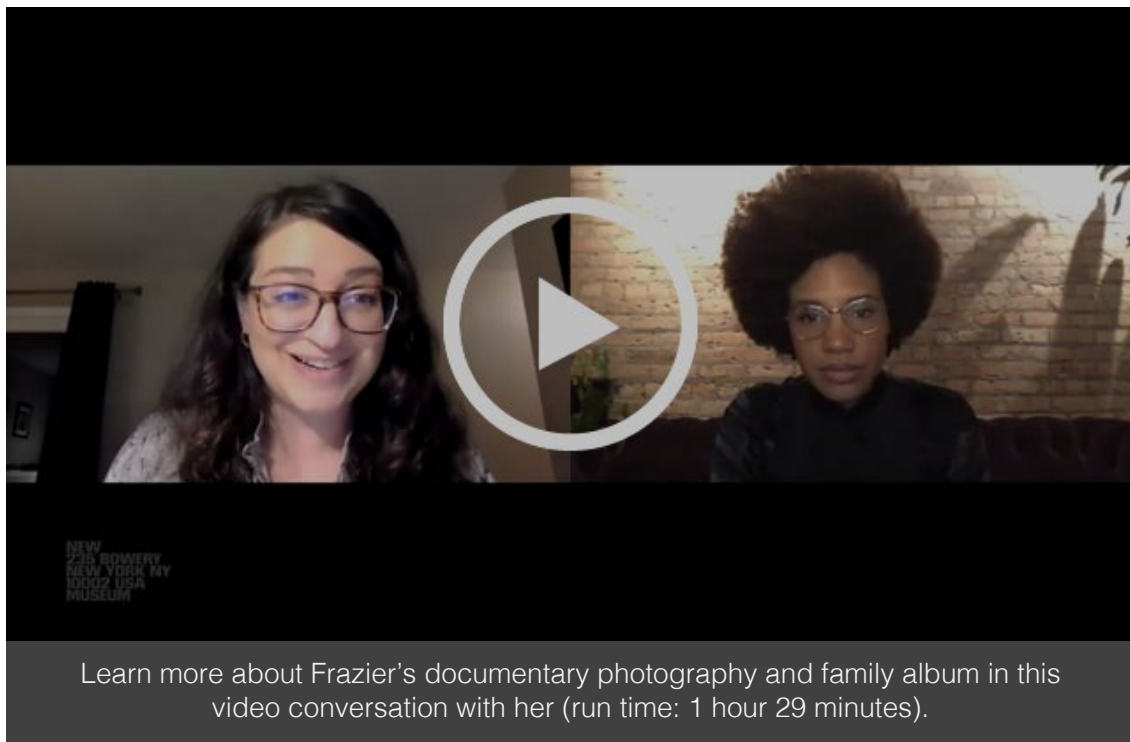

FAMILY ALBUM

New Museum Kids Menu provides families with activities to learn about contemporary art and ideas at home.

Photographer LaToya Ruby Frazier's (b. 1982, Braddock, Pennsylvania) series *The Notion of Family* (2001–14), now on view in **"Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America,"** documents three generations of women in her family—herself and her mother and grandmother—alongside the decline of her childhood home, Braddock, PA. Home to Andrew Carnegie's first steel mill, Braddock spiraled into disrepair as the steel industry waned. Through her black-and-white photographs that capture intimate, everyday moments at home, and record the town through landscapes and aerial views, Frazier reclaims a narrative portrayed by the media that omitted the mostly Black residents and the ways poverty, environmental pollution, and governmental policies impacted long-term health and quality of life.

"...I see myself as an artist and a citizen that's documenting and telling the story and building the archive of working-class families facing all this change that's happening, because it has to be documented... My grandmother who grew up there in the '30s when Braddock was prosperous and a city itself that everyone came to, to my mother growing up there in the '60s during segregation and white flight and the beginning of the collapse of the steel industry, to myself growing up there in the '80s and '90s when the factories were already dismantled and the War on Drugs kind of hit its peak... I'm not saying that it's a dying town, I'm saying that we survived... So for me, it's a triumphant story. It's really a testimony..."

– MacArthur fellow LaToya Ruby Frazier captures the town that survived



KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

- **document:** to record or depict events, places, and/or people through photographs, video, and/or writing
- **family album:** a series or group of images depicting members of a family
- **narrative:** a written or spoken account of events; a story
- **self-portrait:** a portrait of an artist produced by the artist; a portrait of oneself taken with a camera or created through drawing, painting, or sculpture





START WITH ART: LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER

- What details do you notice in Frazier's *The Notion of Family* photographs? Do any words or images stand out?
- How would you describe the pose in Frazier's *Self Portrait* (2009)?
- How would you describe Frazier's mood in *Self Portrait* — does she seem happy, sad, thoughtful, peaceful?
- How does *Self Portrait* compare, contrast, or relate to the other images you see in the series?
- If you were to create a new self-portrait of your own, how would you pose,

and what kind of background would you include?

LOOK AROUND

How can Frazier's black and white **family album**, **self-portrait**, and landscape photographs of Braddock, PA, inspire us to create our own **narratives** through photography?

- What kinds of photographs do you see at home? Are there individual portraits or group photographs? Are there landscapes? Are the photographs black and white, in color, or both?
- Are photographs in albums, on digital devices, framed, and/or hanging visibly?
- When you view photographs from events you attended, how do they tell the story of what you experienced or remember?
- Do you take photographs to remember special occasions or even everyday events?
- Do you take selfies, or pose for photographs others record?

MAKE ART

Let's make a **family album**, **self-portrait**, or portrait of our home and neighborhood through existing and new photographs.

Materials

- Camera or device that can record photographs (e.g. a phone or tablet)
- Existing photographs
- Optional: A book or album for printed photographs, or access to a digital device where you can organize photographs into a narrative

Making

1. Think about whether you want to document your family, yourself, your home and neighborhood, or a combination.
2. Decide if you want to use existing photographs, take new ones, or combine new photographs with existing ones. Also consider if you will use only color photographs, black and white, or a combination.
3. Look through existing photographs, asking an adult to help you find ones you might not know about. You might call or email other relatives to ask if they can send you photographs, especially ones from a particular event, like a birthday.
4. If you are taking new photographs, decide if you want to pose family members or take more casual snapshots. Frazier's images are in between being staged and candid.
5. Consider including yourself in photographs, similar to how Frazier includes herself. You can take selfies, or rotate which family members take the photograph and which ones appear in it.
6. If you focus on self-portraits, think about how the background or

environment can help share more about your mood and who you are.

7. Arrange your printed and/or digital images to tell a story. The story doesn't need to be chronological and can reflect memories, special occasions, or specific timeframes. For instance, you might want to include photographs of birthday celebrations of yourself, your siblings, or adults at home at the same age.

REFLECTION

- How did you decide whether to document your family, yourself, your home and neighborhood, or all of these?
- As you looked through photographs, what kinds of memories emerged?
- What other stories might you tell through photographs?

NEW
235 BOWERY
NEW YORK NY
10002 USA
MUSEUM

IMAGES: "Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America," 2021. Exhibition view: New Museum, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni (featuring *The Notion of Family* (2001–2014) by LaToya Ruby Frazier; LaToya Ruby Frazier, *Self portrait (March 10am)*, from the series, *The Notion of Family*, 2002. Gelatin silver print, 24 x 20 in (61 x 50.8 cm) Courtesy of the Artist and Glad-stone Gallery, New York and Brussels

Our mailing address is:

New Museum
235 Bowery
New York, NY 10002

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#)

