

The Immigrant Experience



ADDISON
Addison Gallery of American Art

This Portfolio Guide contains selected artworks and ideas to connect the Addison's collection with classroom themes, disciplines, and curricula.

Digital images of works from this Guide can be downloaded from the Addison's website for use in classrooms. Visits to explore works in the Addison's Museum Learning Center can be arranged as a complement to the viewing of current exhibitions.

www.addisongallery.org

What can we learn about the values and beliefs of society from the ways in which artists document, depict, or comment on the immigrant experience?

How do the narratives of images made by immigrants compare to documentation by others?

Documentary illustrations and photography often aim to capture moments that reveal an individual or group of people and their place in the larger society. This **Permanent Collection Portfolio Guide** features a sampling of works from the Addison's collection offering varied perspectives and discussion points for exploring the ways in which immigrant experiences and voices have been documented over time.

Educators are encouraged to use this Guide and the expanded **Portfolio Image List** as a starting point, a place from which to dig deeper, ask questions, and make new connections for class plans and projects.

For online use, click the images in this guide to access digital images in the Addison's online database.

Images highlighted in grey are ideas for materials from outside the Addison's collection of American art that can enhance the potential for both personal and global connections.

For more information about resources from the **Phillips Academy Archives and Special Collections**, contact Director Paige Roberts at proberts@andover.edu.

SELECTED THEMATIC APPROACHES

Social Documentation – How does social documentary photography tell stories about immigration and immigrant experiences?

Collaboration and Immigrant Voices – How can images and writing function in context to share a more complete, inclusive story?

A Thomas Nast (1840–1902), *The Chinese Question* (#24), 1871, from *Harper's Weekly*, wood engraving on newsprint, museum purchase, 1987.193.21



A

B Jacob A. Riis (1849–1914), image from *The Battle with the Slum*, 1902, bound volume with photographs and illustrations, gift of James L. Sheldon, 1991.107



B

C Berenice Abbott (1898–1991), *Chicken Market*, from series *New York IV*, neg. 1937, print 1979, gelatin silver print, gift of Robert Feldman (PA 1954) in memory of Beth Lisa Feldman, 1980.20.8



C

D Lewis Hine (1874–1940), *Women at Ellis Island*, 1910, gelatin silver print, museum purchase, 2012.14



D

E Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946), *The Steerage*, 1907, photogravure on Japanese vellum, gift of Georgia O'Keeffe and Elizabeth Davidson, 1953.24.1



E

Social Documentation

What can we learn about the values and beliefs of society from the decisions made by artists documenting, depicting, or commenting on the immigrant experience?

How does social documentary photography tell stories about immigration and immigrant experiences?

In an 1871 political cartoon printed in *Harper's Weekly*, **Thomas Nast** criticizes bills proposed to limit immigration from China. In his illustration, Columbia, the feminine symbol of the United States, shields a Chinese man and reminds a gang of thugs that "America means fair play for all men." Similar empathy can be seen in the work of Danish immigrant and social reformer **Jacob Riis**, whose use of explosive magnesium flash powder to light his photographs made visible to the middle class the lives of the many immigrants living in tenement housing in New York City. Later, in photographer **Berenice Abbott's** 1930s extended study *Changing New York*, storefronts represent the influences of immigration and cultural exchange on the city's evolving identity and landscape.

Images of immigrants at Ellis Island attempt to give voice to the experiences of the anonymous. **Lewis Hine's** photographs at the turn of the century record pride and dignity. In his 1907 photograph *The Steerage*, **Alfred Stieglitz** focuses on the separation between voyagers paying the highest and lowest fares aboard a ship departing Ellis Island, returning to Europe.

F Robert Frank (b. 1924), *Parade – Hoboken, New Jersey*, from series *The Americans*, neg. 1955-56, print c. 1981, gelatin silver print, museum purchase. 1989.77.1



F

G Oscar Palacio (b. 1970), *Grass Over Asphalt*, 2002, chromogenic print, gift of the artist in memory of Hugo Jaramillo, 2006.35



G



H

H Arthur H. Fellig (Weegee) (1899-1968), *Children Asleep on Fire Escape*, c. 1943, gelatin silver print, museum purchase, 1978.98



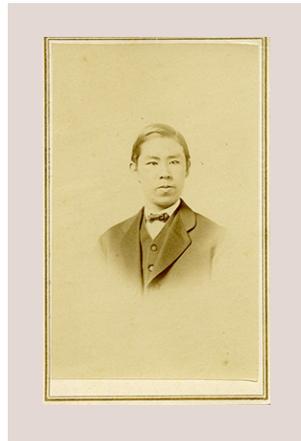
I

I Wendy Ewald (b. 1951), *Q from the Alphabet Project, North Carolina*, from series *A Spanish Alphabet, Bethesda Elementary School students, Durham, North Carolina*, 1998, gelatin silver print, gift of the artist in honor of Adam Weinberg, 2006.53.20

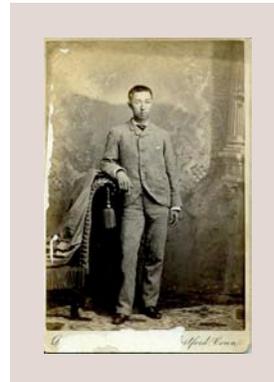


J

J Bill Owens (b. 1938), *Because we live in the suburbs we don't eat too much Chinese food. It's not available in the supermarkets so on Saturday we eat hot dogs.*, from series *Suburbia*, neg. 1972, print 1998, gelatin silver print, gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010), 2006.77.18



K



L

K anonymous, *Joseph Neesima, Class of 1868, Founder of Doshisha University, Japan*, **Phillips Academy Archives and Special Collections**, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/paarchives/13472368984>

L anonymous, *Chentung Liang Cheng, Phillips Academy Class of 1882*, **Phillips Academy Archives and Special Collections**, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/paarchives/11469120454/in/photostream/>

Collaboration and Immigrant Voices

How do the narratives of images made by immigrants compare to documentation by others?

How can images and writing function in context to share a more complete, inclusive story?

Just as Swiss immigrant **Robert Frank** documents a 1950s America in his series *The Americans*, Colombian-born contemporary photographer **Oscar Palacio** brings an outsider perspective to a keenly observed landscape. Born in what is now Ukraine, Arthur Fellig, known as **Weegee**, photographs both the seedy and the innocent in New York, including children sleeping on a fire escape in 1943.

Photographer **Wendy Ewald** works collaboratively with her subjects to voice their experiences through the inclusion of their writing directly on the photographs. The image titles in **Bill Owens's** 1970s series *Suburbia* often quote the subjects depicted, such as the image *Because we live in the suburbs we don't eat too much Chinese food. It's not available in the supermarkets so on Saturday we eat hot dogs*. On display at the **Phillips Academy Archives** is both writing by and photography of **Joseph Neesima**, Phillips Academy class of 1868, who fled from Japan as a stowaway on an American ship, and who later founded Doshisha University, now the largest private educational institution in Japan. Also available for exploration at the Archives is the scrapbook of **Chentung Liang Cheng**, Phillips Academy class of 1882, who came to Phillips as part of the Chinese Educational Mission (CEM), which sent Chinese students to America.



Arranging a Visit to the Museum Learning Center

At least two weeks in advance or preferably more, contact:

Jamie Gibbons
(978) 749-4037

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to schedule your visit and discuss possible themes, applicable portfolios of works, and related activities.

Curriculum Connections and Resources

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

History/Social Studies

- the history of immigration
- the economics of immigration
- immigration and settlement patterns (maps)
- tenement housing
- The Industrial Revolution
- The Progressive Era
- Ellis Island

English

- immigrant narratives
- life in tenement housing
- books by Junot Diaz

- books by Julia Alvarez
- books by Edwidge Danticat
- *Farewell to Manzanar*
- *The House on Mango Street*
- *The Joy Luck Club*
- *What is the What*
- *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

Art

- representation
- portraits and types
- portraits and self-portraits
- visual narratives
- visual biographies
- images and text

- works in series
- photography
- social documentation

Science

- biology and race

Math

- immigration data and statistics
- the economics of immigration

CONNECTIONS TO ADDITIONAL THEMATIC PORTFOLIOS

American Identity

Race/Otherness

Types/Stereotypes

Portraits/Self-portraits

The Power of Photography

Images and the Media

TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCES

Abbott, Berenice. *Changing New York*. New York: The New Press, 1999.

Ewald, Wendy. *American Alphabets*. New York: Scalo Publishers, 2005.

Frank, Robert. *The Americans*. New York: Scalo Publishers, 2000.

Library of Congress. *Themed Resources: Immigration*. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration>

Palacio, Oscar. *American Places*. San Francisco: California Institute of Integral Studies, 2013.

Riis, Jacob. *The Battle with the Slum*. New York: Dover Publications, 1998 / *How the Other Half Lives*. New York: Penguin Books, 1997.

Local historical organizations:

- The Andover Center for History and Culture. <http://andoverhistorical.org/>
- Lawrence Heritage State Park. <https://www.mass.gov/locations/lawrence-heritage-state-park>
- Lawrence History Center. <http://www.lawrencehistorycenter.org/>
- Lowell Historical Society. <http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/>
- Phillips Academy Archives and Special Collections. <http://www.noblenet.org/paarchives/>