

Identity, Role Play, and Expression

Spring 2012 Exhibitions Teacher Guide

**Making A Presence: F. Holland Day in
Artistic Photography**
MARCH 27 – JULY 31, 2012

**In Character: Artists' Role Play in
Photography and Video**
APRIL 14 – JULY 31, 2012

Life Lines: The Art of Elizabeth Enders
APRIL 28 – JULY 31, 2012

**Lines of Action: Selections from the
Permanent Collection**
APRIL 28 – JULY 31, 2012

Eye on the Collection
APRIL 28 – JULY 31, 2012

Addison Gallery of American Art
Phillips Academy, Andover, MA

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FREE GROUP VISIT HOURS BY
APPOINTMENT:
Tuesday-Friday 8am-4pm

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TEACHER RESOURCES,
WORKSHOPS,
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Defining Individual Identity

How do artists reveal personas in images?

The exhibition *Making a Presence: F. Holland Day in Artistic Photography* explores the work of artist, publisher, bibliophile, and critic **F. Holland Day** (1864–1933) and the ways in which he utilized costumes and props in his portraits and self portraits to explore multiple personas of himself and his subjects. Whether dressed in costume and posed in portraits made by fellow photographers, including Alvin Langdon Coburn, Edward Steichen, and Clarence White or encouraging friends and models to do so in his portraits of them, Day took pleasure in creating artistic photographs that were often inspired by historical, mythological, and metaphysical subjects.

Day was one of the prominent leaders of the American Pictorialist movement, advocating that photography be held in the same esteem as painting and other fine arts. Posing for photographer and friend Frederick H. Evans, Day presents himself in Algerian costume (fig. 1). Swaths of white cotton are wrapped loosely around the artist's frame and face, and the subtle contrasts of light and dark in the sumptuous fabric lend a painterly quality to the image. Deliberate costume, in concert with the soft and moody candlelight, transform Day from his identity as a well known Bostonian into a mystical and exotic figure.

Day's awareness of himself as a sitter translated into the composition of his own photography of his models and muses. *Pepita* (fig. 2) reveals a young woman in elaborate headdress and robe seated against a decorative Art Nouveau inspired background, conveying Day's interest in creating evocative and sensuous images that suggest elaborate stories about those he photographed.

The use of clothing and props in portraiture to communicate identity had long since been embraced by painters. Like Day, the painter **Thomas Eakins** (1844-1916) took great care in planning and composing his portraits. In his painting *Professor Henry A. Rowland* (fig. 3), on view in the exhibition *Eye on the Collection*, Eakins portrays Rowland in deep concentration, seated in three-quarters profile. His pince-nez and tweed suit create a distinguished and professorial feel. Combined with the instrument he holds for measuring light, the assistant in the background, and the mathematical equations along the frame, the viewer is able to quickly surmise Rowland's scholarly persona.

Cover: F. Holland Day, *The Question [Mrs. Cora Brown Potter]*, 1897, platinum print, 4 1/2 in. x 6 in., The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the National Media Museum. Purchased with the assistance of The Art Fund. Photo credit: National Media Museum/SSPL



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3

fig. 1: Frederick Henry Evans, *F. Holland Day in Algerian Costume*, c. 1901, platinum print, 9 3/8 x 3 1/2 in., F. Holland Day Collection, Norwood Historical Society, Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Photograph © 2011 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; fig. 2: F. Holland Day, *Pepita*, 1900, platinum print, 7 15/16 x 7 1/16 in., The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the National Media Museum. Purchased with the assistance of The Art Fund. Photo credit: National Media Museum/SSPL; fig. 3: Thomas Eakins, *Professor Henry A. Rowland*, 1897, oil on canvas, 80 1/4 x 54 in., gift of Stephen C. Clark, Esq., 1931.5, Addison Gallery of American Art; fig. 4: Gillian Wearing, *Self Portrait as my Father Brian Wearing*, from *Album*, 2003, gelatin silver print, 66 x 51 1/8 in., Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY. Charles Clifton Fund, 2004, P2004:14.4, Image courtesy of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Photograph by Tom Loonan; fig. 5: Jacob Lawrence, *Kibitzers*, 1948, 20 x 24 in., egg tempera on masonite, gift from the Childe Hassam Fund of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1951.3, Addison Gallery of American Art; fig. 6: ©Lorna Simpson, *1957-2009 Interior*, 2009, gelatin silver prints, dimensions variable, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Margaret Fisher Fund, 2010.1, Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Exploring Group Identity



fig. 4



fig. 5

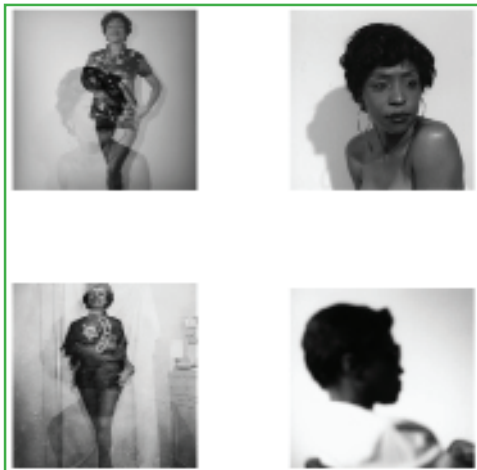


fig. 6

**How does family help shape and reflect one's identity?
How are individual identities connected to and
influenced by community identity?**

In her series *Album*, on view in the exhibition *In Character: Artists' Role Play in Photography and Video*, Gillian Wearing (b.1963) re-creates photographs of her family using herself as the model (fig. 4). By donning elaborate prosthetic masks to assume the identity of her father, mother, and various other family members, Wearing explores the ways in which her identity is intertwined with those of her family members. The viewer must examine the image carefully to notice the small area of the mask that reveals Wearing's own eyes and identity peering through.

In response to a request from Langston Hughes to illustrate a collection of poems examining the daily life of African Americans, painter Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000) focused his attention on his own neighborhood of Harlem in New York City. *Kibitzers* (fig. 5), on view in the exhibition *Eye on the Collection*, reconstructs a group of men, young and old. The looming shapes and vibrant colors along with intense areas of shadow and light express the heightened state of anxiety this game of checkers presented to the players and the passerby. By painting the men from behind and concealing their faces, the artist allows all men in the community to be represented through a unifying moment in his neighborhood.

While Lawrence masks his indistinguishable subjects, contemporary artist Lorna Simpson (b. 1960) uses as inspiration a large group of found photographs featuring African American men and women engaged in every day activities as well as women in pin-up style poses. For her work *1957–2009 Interior* (fig. 6) on view in the exhibition *In Character*, Simpson made her own self-portraits mimicking the originals, positioning herself as a contemporary reflection of an unknown individual and inserting herself into the imagined narrative of the anonymous original sitters.

VISUAL BIOGRAPHY TELL THE STORY OF YOU

How do you understand and convey your identity to others? What roles do you play within your family, among your friends, and in your community? In what ways is your personal identity intertwined with cultural, gender, racial, and/or group identities? Write a personal statement. Directing a friend with a camera, then create a self-portrait that communicates your identity. Compare the writing and the photograph. What does the writing reveal that the portrait does not? Finally, how might you combine the writing and the photograph to create a complete visual biography?

For more information on this activity or to participate in a public online sharing of associated student work, please contact Kait Ziskin.

Role Play

How do artists use role play and masquerade to question society and its assumptions about gender, age, race, and culture?

Kalup Linzy's (b. 1977) childhood experience of watching daytime soap operas with his family has repeatedly influenced his work as an artist. Also borrowing from the now ubiquitous reality shows where talented youth from all walks of life can become superstars overnight, Linzy's video *Melody Set Me Free* (fig. 7), on view in the exhibition *In Character*, makes heavy use of the types often cast in these shows. Linzy plays the role of a young woman competing for her chance at fame while struggling to maintain a sense of connection with her family. As Linzy and his fellow actors lip synch his recorded dialogue, the audience is intentionally made hyper-aware of the roles that are played and is asked to question their implications on societal values.

Japanese artist Tomoko Sawada (b. 1977) uses costumes and makeup to explore the various identities of women in traditional and modern day Japanese culture. In her *OMIAI* series (fig. 8), featured in the exhibition *In Character*, each portrait represents an individual looking for the right match in an arranged meeting and possibly marriage. In costume, Sawada creates a variety of different Japanese archetypes through self-portraiture, from the woman dressed in traditional kimono to the contemporary woman clad in a leopard print dress and platform boots. Sawada's recognizable portrait setting and format references the documentation of individuals from cartes-de-visites to school portraits. By presenting herself in many costumes, playing a variety of roles, Sawada asks us to think about the ways in which we may change or alter ourselves to impact our relationships with others.

In George Benjamin Luks' (1867-1933) painting *The Little Madonna* (fig. 9), from the exhibition *Eye on the Collection*, a young girl sits in the street holding her doll and gently kisses its forehead. Luks mimics the iconic mother and child relationship through the child and her doll, demonstrating the ways in which children experiment with new roles and thereby explore an identity associated with adulthood.



fig. 7



fig. 8



fig. 9

fig. 7: © Kalup Linzy, *Melody Set Me Free* (detail), 2007, DVD, Studio Museum in Harlem; fig. 8: © Tomoko Sawada, *OMIAI* (#7), 2001, chromogenic print and mixed media, 12 3/8 x 10 5/16 in., Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Kate, Maurice R. and Melvin R. Seiden Purchase Fund for Photographs, P2004.14, Photo: Allan Macintyre © President and Fellows of Harvard College; fig. 9: George Benjamin Luks, *The Little Madonna*, c. 1907, oil on canvas, 27 3/8 x 22 1/4 in., gift of anonymous donor, 1930.4, Addison Gallery of American Art; fig. 10: Henry Inman, *News Boy*, 1841, oil on canvas, 30 5/16 x 25 1/8 in., museum purchase, 1955.14, Addison Gallery of American Art; fig. 11: © Yasumasa Morimura, *A Requiem: Where is the Dictator?* 2, 2007, c-print mounted on alpolc, 59 x 47 1/4 in., Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York; fig. 12: Elizabeth Enders, *Armies and Honors*, 1977, watercolor, colored pencil and pencil on wove paper, 12 9/16 x 15 3/16 in., gift of the artist (AA 1957), 1981.90, Addison Gallery of American Art.

Interactions with History

How do artists interact with and comment on historic and cultural issues?



fig. 10

Nineteenth century painter **Henry Inman's** (1801-1845) *News Boy* (fig. 10), on view in the exhibition *Eye on the Collection*, is filled with significant symbols that would have been understood by its contemporary viewers. While the inscription "O.K." was intended as a political reference to a nickname for presidential candidate Martin Van Buren, the building rising on the right represents the newly opened luxurious Astor Hotel. Inman's accumulated signals— the boy selling newspapers, the victorious populist political candidate, the new hotel, the sphinx as symbol of wisdom and strength, and the parting sky — work together to suggest an optimistic future through political change, economic progress, and individual industriousness.



fig. 11

Through a self-portrait technique of transforming himself into various icons, Japanese artist **Yasumasa Morimura** (b. 1951) positions his personal history within the context of national historical narratives. In Morimura's *A Requiem: Where is the Dictator? 2*, the artist recreates a depiction of Adolph Hitler as portrayed by Charlie Chaplin and through satire, Morimura denies Hitler's authority and reflects on his own personal encounters with these images and symbols during his childhood and early adulthood. The video and accompanying photographs reflect on the weight of heritage and historical significance while also implicating similar roles played in the context of today's political climate.



fig. 12

Just as both Morimura and Inman use symbols in their interpretations of history, the exhibition *Life Lines: The Art of Elizabeth Enders* demonstrates **Enders'** (b.1939) use of visual symbols in expression. Intrigued by the repetition and daily ritual of Buckingham Palace's changing of the guard and the spectacle of President Nixon's visit to China, Enders' watercolor *Armies and Honors* (fig. 12) visually connects that daily event with the rows and rows of Chinese soldiers lined up to greet the American delegation.

Perspectives on History REFERENCED IMAGERY

Artists often use recognizable symbols and iconography from particular time periods and cultures to communicate their perspectives on events in the world around them. Choose a historic or current community, national, or international event or issue about which you feel strongly. What are the visuals of this narrative? What images appear in the media or in documentation? What details, expressions, motifs, or colors are repeated? Who was/is the audience? How might you use this visual language to communicate your unique perspective?

Expressing Ourselves

How can artists express themselves through color, line, gesture, and words?

Artist **Elizabeth Enders** (b. 1939) uses the processes of painting and drawing as a way to make sense of the world around her. Through experimentation with forms and shapes as well as colors and lines, Enders articulates her unique view of what she sees and how she thinks. In *Rose* (fig. 13), Enders layers thick screens of white gouache on top of more decipherable lines of blue and pink making the potentially legible aspects of her painting impossible to read. Layers of lines and colors are a repeated element of Enders' artwork and imply the work and digging the viewer must do to get to the essence of the painting.

In *Letter to My Brother* (fig. 14), Enders employs another theme that is often present in her work: language and its connection to lines and gestures. Enders, both a writer and an artist, creates brief break-out moments in the mostly red painting to reveal expressive lines that are reminiscent of insightful words or numbers, only to be shuttered up again, censored, by the red paint.

Hans Hofmann's (1880-1966) drawing *Search for the Real* (fig. 15), on view in the exhibition *Lines of Action: Selections from the Permanent Collection*, joyfully describes and examines the shapes inherent in letters and words. In contrast to Enders's work in which words are often obscured, Hofmann plays with the ink medium through splotches, scratches, and organic shapes that connect words themselves. With squiggles and flurries of ink, the artist implies the journey from the first letter to the last bit of a phrase and works to connect the beginning and the end in line. Hofmann, a painter as well as a teacher, wrote a series of essays about his own art, contemplating that form of expression through words. This drawing became the book cover for this collection of writings.



fig. 13



fig. 14

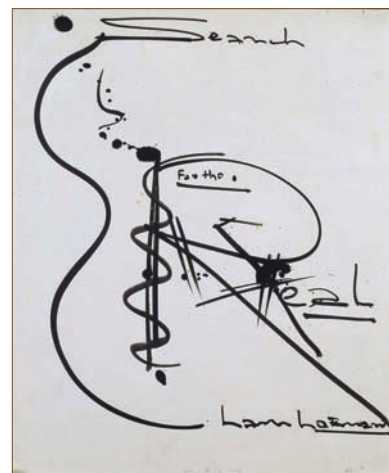


fig. 15

fig. 13: Elizabeth Enders, *Rose*, 1976, gouache on paper, 8 x 11 in., Courtesy of the artist and Robert Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.; **fig. 14:** Elizabeth Enders, *Letter to my Brother*, 1992, oil on linen, 60 1/4 x 60 1/4 in., gift of the artist (AA 1957), Addison Art Drive, 1993.1, Addison Gallery of American Art; **fig. 15:** Hans Hofmann, *Search for the Real*, c. 1948, 18 x 14 in., ink on wove paper, museum purchase, 1955.6, Addison Gallery of American Art; **fig. 16:** Winslow Homer, *The West Wind*, 1891, oil on canvas, 30 x 44 in., gift of anonymous donor, 1928.24, Addison Gallery of American Art; **fig. 17:** Jackson Pollock, *Phosphorescence*, 1947, oil, enamel, and aluminum paint on canvas, 44 x 28 in., gift of Peggy Guggenheim, 1950.3, Addison Gallery of American Art; **fig. 18:** Georgia O'Keeffe, *Wave, Night*, 1928, oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in., purchased as the gift of Charles L. Stillman (PA1922), 1947.33, Addison Gallery of American Art.

Expressing Place

How do artists express their experience of the world around them through imagery?



fig. 16



fig. 17



fig. 18

Artists across time and cultures have created visual imagery that reflects their experiences of place. **Winslow Homer** (1836–1910) spent a great amount of time at his studio in Pout's Neck, Maine, painting the dramatic landscape of the coast. His painting *The West Wind* (fig. 16), on view in the exhibition *Eye on the Collection*, depicts the power of the sea through a lone figure facing the water at the edge of a cliff while a powerful gust of wind blows her cape wildly. Despite the chaotic feeling of an impending storm, Homer has created a balanced composition as the figure, the surf, and the shrub in the center of the canvas create an upward motion to the right, while gusts of wind, surf, and spray rise dramatically towards the upper left side of the image.

On view in the exhibition *Lines of Action*, the visual energy and title of the action painting *Phosphorescence* (fig. 17) by **Jackson Pollock** (1912–1956) hint at a connection to his fascination with this natural phenomenon of streaks of light in water at night that was often visible in the wetlands near his property on Long Island. Pollock's expressive mark-making gives power to the lines and splotches of paint, conveying the drama he experienced in the landscape that surrounded him.

While Homer explored the dramatic tension of the ocean and wind and Pollock explored the action and energy of his surroundings, **Georgia O'Keeffe** (1887–1986) expressed the calming effect of the tide. With a keen eye for color and shape, O'Keeffe conveys the solitude and quiet she found on a beach at night in Maine in her painting *Wave, Night* (fig 18), on view in the exhibition *Eye on the Collection*, by simplifying the scene to its essential parts.

Imaging Place YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Through painting, drawing, photography, and writing, artists express their connections with places that are important to them. Think of a place that is important to you. If it is a place that you can visit, spend some time observing. What do you see and feel? If it is a place that you cannot visit, think about how this place exists in your memory. What do you remember most? Pay attention to all the details, including light, temperature, smells, and sounds. What style of artistic or written expression is the best way to express your unique connection to this place?

FURTHER RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

F. HOLLAND DAY

Fairbrother, Trevor. *Making A Presence: F. Holland Day in Artistic Photography*. Andover: Addison Gallery of American Art, 2012.

The exhibition catalog published for *Making a Presence*, on view through July 31, 2012.

Fanning, Patricia. *Through an Uncommon Lens: The Life and Photography of F. Holland Day*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008.

A biography of F. Holland Day by the archivist of the F. Holland Day House in Norwood, MA.

F. Holland Day House/Norwood Historical Society

<http://www.norwoodhistoricalsociety.org/index.html>

The Day House at 93 Day Street, Norwood, MA is open every Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00pm for tours and seasonal exhibits. Also open to group tours and for research by appointment year round.



fig. 19

PORTRAITURE AND IDENTITY

Bey, Dawoud. *Class Pictures*. New York: Aperature, 2007.

A series of photographs by artist Dawoud Bey exploring teenage identity and the defining of self.

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

A series of student-created alphabets facilitated by artist Wendy Ewald that explore language and group and cultural identity.

Irmas, Deborah and Robert A. Sobieszek. *The Camera I: Photographic Self-Portraits*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, 1994.

A history of photographic self-portraiture spanning the nineteenth century through the late twentieth century.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Baumbusch, Brigitte. *The Many Faces of the Face*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1999.

Explores the innumerable ways in which artists have created portraits across time and culture.

Johnson, Crockett. *Harold & The Purple Crayon*. New York: Harper & Row, 1955.

A boy uses a crayon to make his mark and thereby build his world.

Reynolds, Peter. *The Dot*. Somerville: Candlewick Press, 2003.

A young girl frustrated by her blank page finds that one mark on her page opens her creative world.

Ewald, Wendy. *The Best Part of Me*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002.

ARTIST WEBSITES

Kalup Linzy
Official Website <http://www.kaluplinzy.net/>

Laurel Nakadate
Official Website <http://www.nakadate.net/>

Tomoko Sawada
Official Website <http://www.e-sawa.com/>

Yasumasa Morimura
<http://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/yasumasa-morimura/>
Biography, selected press, and additional images.

Cindy Sherman
Official Website <http://www.cindysherman.com/>

Lorna Simpson
Official Website <http://lsimpsonstudio.com/>

Gillian Wearing
<http://selfmade.org.uk/>
A website devoted to Wearing's new documentary film about participants' struggle with playing their identities.