

**WHITNEY**

**Education**

**William Eggleston: Democratic Camera,  
Photographs and Video, 1961-2008  
November 7, 2008 - January 25, 2009**

**Pre- and Post-Visit Materials for Schools**



## About the Exhibition

*William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008* is a comprehensive selection of nearly fifty years of the artist's work. One of the most influential photographers of the last half-century, Eggleston is credited with almost single-handedly introducing color to art photography. A chronicler of the American South, he has primarily focused his camera upon his native locales of Memphis, New Orleans, and the Mississippi River Delta, although his commissioned projects have taken him all over the world.

### How can these Pre- and Post-Visit materials be used?

These materials provide a framework for preparing you and your students for a visit to the exhibition and offer suggestions for follow up classroom reflection and lessons. The following discussions, art projects, and writing activities introduce some of the exhibition's key themes and concepts:

#### I. About William Eggleston and His Work

##### II. Pre-Visit Activities and Lessons

- Looking at Photographs
- Different But Equal

##### III. At the Museum

- Guided Visits: What to Expect
- High School Dispersal Visits: What to Expect

##### IV. Post-Visit Activities and Lessons

- Photographer and Subject
- Composing with Color
- Extended Activities and Research Projects
- Resources: Related Websites and Publications

### What grade levels are these lessons intended for?

These lessons and activities have been written for Middle or High School students. We encourage you to adapt and build upon them in order to meet your teaching objectives and students' needs.

#### Front cover

*Memphis, c. 1969-70, from William Eggleston's Guide, 1976*

c. 1969-70

Dye transfer print, 15 15/16 x 19 15/16 (40.5 x 50.6)

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; gift of Mr. Morris R. Garfinkle

© Eggleston Artistic Trust

# I. About William Eggleston and His Work

---

## Early Years

William Eggleston was born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1939. Shortly after his son's birth, Eggleston's father enlisted in the United States Navy where he served as an officer for the duration of World War II. His mother, Ann, followed her husband to the Navy base in Florida, leaving Eggleston in the care of his grandparents in the small town of Sumner, Mississippi. Joseph A. May, Eggleston's grandfather and a local judge, was responsible for first introducing his grandson to photography. But even though Judge May had his own darkroom and gave his grandson a camera, Eggleston quickly lost interest: "[I] took some pictures of my dog, but they weren't very good and I was completely disenchanted with the idea of taking pictures."<sup>1</sup> As a teenager, drawing, music, film and audio recording engaged Eggleston. He also began wearing what would become his trademark suit at a time when such formal wear was becoming distinctly out of fashion.

## The Decisive Moment

Eggleston's interest in photography was reawakened while he attended college. He began at Vanderbilt University and then transferred to the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Along with taking some art courses, he became interested in French photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson and his seminal 1952 publication, *The Decisive Moment*, a large-format monograph with photographic plates and text. Eggleston internalized the concept of Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment," seeking to reduce what was happening in front of the camera to an essential, carefully composed event.

After taking his new wife, Rosa Dosset, to Paris in 1964, Eggleston returned to Memphis, deciding to turn his camera lens on the world he knew best. He became interested in finding the unfamiliar within the familiar surroundings of the South, "I had to face the fact that what I had to do was go out into foreign landscapes. What was new back then was shopping centers, and I took pictures of them."<sup>2</sup> To make these photographs, Eggleston used high-speed film and a 35mm camera.

## Context

Eggleston's youth and early adulthood were set against the backdrop of major technical and social changes in the South. Machines began to harvest cotton, leaving agricultural laborers, most of whom were African American, out of work. Simultaneously, heated racial incidents fed the momentum of the emerging Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, Eggleston's hometown of Sumner, Mississippi, became the center of public attention during the trial against three white men accused of lynching and murdering fourteen-year-old Emmett Till. The University of Mississippi at Oxford, known as "Ole Miss" would not admit black students when Eggleston was in college there. In 1962 it witnessed one of the most violent riots during desegregation, when James Meredith of Kosciusko, Mississippi, attempted to enroll in the school to become the university's first black student. In 1968, the Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike became one of the key struggles of the civil rights and labor movements, leading to a visit by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his subsequent assassination.

Eggleston's early work included grainy black and white images shot near his family's plantation, including one of African-American prisoners working on nearby cotton fields. However, he does not explicitly talk about politics in his work, preferring to let the images speak for themselves.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adam Welch, "Chronology," in *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008*. exh. cat. New York and Munich: Whitney Museum of American Art and Haus der Kunst, 2008, 270.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Booth, "Triumph of the Quotidian" in *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008*. exh. cat. New York and Munich: Whitney Museum of American Art and Haus der Kunst, 2008, 266.

## I. About William Eggleston and His Work (continued)

---

### Color

By the mid-1960s, Eggleston had begun photographing in color, defying the sensibilities of fine art photographers and collectors at the time. Eggleston relied on photo labs available through drugstores. He became interested in the snapshots taken by everyday customers and even spent a night at the photography lab studying the layout and compositions of photographs being processed. Ultimately disappointed in the color quality of his drugstore prints, Eggleston turned to Kodachrome color slide film, projecting slides for family and friends at home. In 1972 Eggleston began making dye transfer prints, a process which transformed his work and career. Typically used in commercial photography, dye transfer printing originated in the 1870s. It involves the production of three separate color negatives, made by photographing the original (usually color) negative with black and white film through red, green, and blue filters. This process, while expensive, enables the photographer to control each layer of highly saturated color and produces a relatively permanent print. Such control over color separations would only be matched by the emergence of digital photography.

Eggleston has commented: "I don't think anything has the seductivity of dyes.....By the time you get into all those dyes, it doesn't look at all like the scene, which in some cases is what you want."<sup>3</sup>

### Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art

Eggleston's highly saturated color photographs of Southern subjects became the centerpiece of his exhibition, *Photographs by William Eggleston*, at the Museum of Modern Art in 1976. The exhibition was accompanied by the monograph *William Eggleston's Guide*, the first publication of color photography by the museum. Curated by John Szarkowski, both the exhibition and publication generated controversy. In interviews, Szarkowski referred to Eggleston as the "inventor of color photography," and referred to the pictures as "perfect."<sup>4</sup> Some critics were enraged by the notion of "perfect" images of banal subjects and felt the expensive dye transfer process was wasted on Eggleston's photographs. Many believed that "real" art photography was, by necessity, black and white. For other viewers, the encounter with everyday objects and places was made fresh by Eggleston's use of surprising vantage points, color, and light. A tricycle shot from the ground implied a child's view, and a red ceiling with a single light bulb became a field of saturated color. This groundbreaking exhibition showed viewers that color photography could be great art.

### Teaching, Drawing, Video

Along with his discovery of color, the late sixties to mid-seventies proved to be a very prolific period for Eggleston. He taught at both Harvard and Yale and forged connections with other leading American photographers, such as Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Joel Meyerowitz, Tod Papageorge, and Stephen Shore. Like Cartier-Bresson, in addition to his photography, Eggleston often filled sketchbooks with drawings. Rapidly executed and tightly concentrated, his drawings further reveal his preoccupation with color. He has included his drawings alongside his photographs in a recent notebook. Eggleston has also experimented with different cameras and video. One of his rarely screened works, *Stranded in Canton*, which is included in the exhibition, is a video diary of monologues by friends, musicians, and people in their homes and at bars. Recently rediscovered and re-edited, it is an informal portrait of the Southern subculture often captured in Eggleston's photographs.

---

<sup>3</sup> Donna De Salvo, "Every Picture," in *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008*. exh. cat. New York and Munich: Whitney Museum of American Art and Haus der Kunst, 2008, 254.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Weski, "I Can't Fly, But I Can Make Experiments," *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008*. exh. cat. New York and Munich: Whitney Museum of American Art and Haus der Kunst, 2008, 11.

## I. About William Eggleston and His Work (continued)

---

### Books and Portfolios

*William Eggleston's Guide* was followed by many other books and portfolios such as *Los Alamos*, completed in 1974 but not published until 2003; *Election Eve*, a portfolio of photographs taken around the Georgia hometown of Jimmy Carter, commissioned by *Rolling Stone* during the 1976 election; *William Eggleston's Graceland*, 1984, *The Democratic Forest* (1989), and *Faulkner's Mississippi* (1990). Along with working on films with directors John Huston, David Byrne, and, currently, David Lynch, he was recently the subject of three documentaries: Michael Almereyda's *William Eggleston in the Real World* (2005), Vincent Gerard and Cedric Laty's *A Journey with William Eggleston* (2007), and Reiner Holzemer's *William Eggleston: Photographer* (2008). With chromatic intensity found in man-made objects, nature, the everyday, and the mundane, Eggleston's photographs continue to capture the strange beauty of the familiar and the unfamiliar.

## II. Pre-visit: Looking at Photographs

---

Personal photographs, digital images, and photographic reproductions in magazines and newspapers play such a familiar and integral part in our lives today; they often are viewed and consumed without much analysis. However, photographs do not simply record, nor do they provide objective visual data; they transform their subjects into images. The following lesson encourages students to take a moment to reflect on their own experience with photography and think critically, considering the many possible motivations and meanings behind a photographic image.

### Objectives

- Invite students to reflect on their own understanding of and relationship to photographic images.
- Prepare students to critically analyze photographs.

**Class Discussion:** *Where do we find photographs? Why do we take photographs? How do we take photographs?*

If possible, list your students' responses to the following questions on a board:

- Where might we expect to find photographs? Challenge your students to list as many locations as possible. Ask them to identify some differences between photographs of family and friends, and those seen in public places, online or in magazines and newspapers.
- What are some different reasons people might take photographs? Students might respond with ideas such as, "to remember, to document, to sell something, to report, to make art."
- Imagine you are taking a photograph. What decisions might you make? Ask your students to consider factors such as subject, lighting, framing, angle from which to take the picture, overall organization or composition of the image.

### Extended Project: Photo Swap

Ask each student to bring in either a photograph or a photographic reproduction clipped from a magazine or newspaper. Let them know their images will be shared with the class. If they choose to bring in an image from a publication, ask them to be sure to note the context of the image, whether or not it accompanied an article, and if it is an advertisement, which periodical it appeared in. Collect and shuffle the images, and redistribute them to your students. Give each student a piece of paper and ask him or her to respond to the following:

Describe in detail what you see. What is the subject of the image? Where do you think it might take place? Why? Based on your observations, what might be the purpose of the photograph? What are at least three questions you have about this photograph?

Post students' responses along with their photographs around the classroom. Ask the students to find their image and note their classmate's response. As a class, discuss your students' experiences both choosing and writing about a photograph. Were there any surprises?



**Figure 1**  
*Memphis, c. 1969-70, from William Eggleston's Guide, 1976*  
c. 1969-70  
Dye transfer print, 15 15/16 x 19 15/16 (40.5 x 50.6)  
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; gift of Mr. Morris R. Garfinkle  
© Eggleston Artistic Trust



**Figure 2**  
*Untitled, n.d., from Los Alamos, 1965-68 and 1972-74 (published 2003)*  
1965-68 and 1972-74  
Dye transfer print, 12 x 17 3/4 (30.5 x 45.1)  
Private collection  
© Eggleston Artistic Trust

The title of the exhibition, *Democratic Camera*, refers to Eggleston's working process. Over the course of his career, he has taken photos of many different subjects, including landscapes, cityscapes, buildings, and people. Every detail, even the most mundane, of these photographs is important. Given his seemingly impartial and exhaustive lens, Eggleston also finds it difficult deciding which works to include in exhibitions or in portfolios and frequently looks for outside help in editing his work. "I don't have any favorites," he notes. "Every picture is equal but different."<sup>5</sup>

The following lesson introduces students to Eggleston's work and encourages them to take a critical look at his photographs through the comparison of two images.

<sup>5</sup> Weski, 11.

**Materials:** Projector or printed copies of images.

## Objectives

- Provide students with an introduction to the work of William Eggleston.
- Introduce students to the role of the vantage point or point of view, composition, and framing of a photograph.
- Use comparison as a means for analyzing works of art.

## Looking at Images: A Comparison

Ask your students to find a partner with whom to work. Project or distribute images of *Memphis, c. 1969-70* (Figure 1).

- Invite your students to take a minute to look carefully at the image. Ask them to write down questions they have based on their observations.
- Ask each pair of partners to share one question with the class. If possible, record all of the questions on a board.
- Conduct a conversation with your class about the image. What is the subject of Eggleston's photograph? How can the setting or place be described? What is the time of day? Where is the tricycle placed within the frame of the image?
- Imagine Eggleston taking this photograph. From what point of view or vantage point was the camera positioned? How would the image change if he had taken the photograph of the tricycle from above, or from far away? What might Eggleston's vantage point imply about the size of the viewer in relation to the tricycle? Is it possible to determine the exact location of the place pictured in this photograph? Why or why not?

Project or distribute images of Eggleston's *Untitled* photograph from his *Los Alamos* series (Figure 2)

- Ask your students to write about differences they see between the two images. Next, ask them to look carefully for any similarities between the two.
- Invite your students to share their observations. Ask them to consider the composition of the second image, where has Eggleston placed the two figures. What is the vantage point? What information might be missing?

## Interview

Show students the *Whitney Focus: William Eggleston* video on [whitney.org](http://whitney.org). This recent video shows William Eggleston talking about his work in the Whitney's galleries. Please be advised that the beginning of the video includes an image of a man who is nude.

- Ask students to share their ideas about the video. What have they learned about Eggleston so far? What do they know about his artistic process?



### Concluding Conversation:

In preparation for their Museum visit, share the title of the exhibition, *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008*, with your students. The title draws on sentiments expressed by Eggleston, who notes “I had this notion of what I called a democratic way of looking around: that nothing was more important or less important.”<sup>6</sup> Ask your students to define “democratic” and to discuss how Eggleston’s comments about democratic looking and pictures as “equal but different” might apply to their understanding of the two photographs compared in this lesson.

---

<sup>6</sup> Weski, 14.

### III. At the Museum

---

#### **Guided Visits**

We invite you and your students to visit the Whitney. To schedule a guided tour, please visit [www.whitney.org/education](http://www.whitney.org/education).

If you are scheduled for a guided school group tour, your museum educator will contact you prior to your visit. Let them know what preparatory work you have done, how this connects to the rest of your curricula, and what you would like your visit to focus on.

Please know that we focus on careful looking and observation in the galleries, so you can expect to examine four to five works of art during your hour-long visit.

Museum educators lead inquiry-based conversations as well as sketching or writing activities in the galleries. If you are visiting during public hours, you and your students (in chaperoned groups) are welcome to stay after your guided tour.

All educators and students who have a guided tour will receive a pass which enables them free admission to the Whitney during a subsequent visit.

#### **High School Dispersal Visits**

High School students are welcome to visit the museum during public hours in a self-guided capacity. A maximum of 60 students may arrive at the museum together and must then break into small groups (no more than 4 students) to visit the galleries. One chaperone must accompany 15 students.

Discuss museum rules with students before visiting the museum. We recommend giving students something to focus on or a task to complete while in the galleries. You may want to create a worksheet, free-writing or poetry activity, or sketching assignments. We have found that artworks are more accessible if students are provided with some structure or direction. For information and sample activities, visit Learning@Whitney at <http://whitney.org/learning/>.

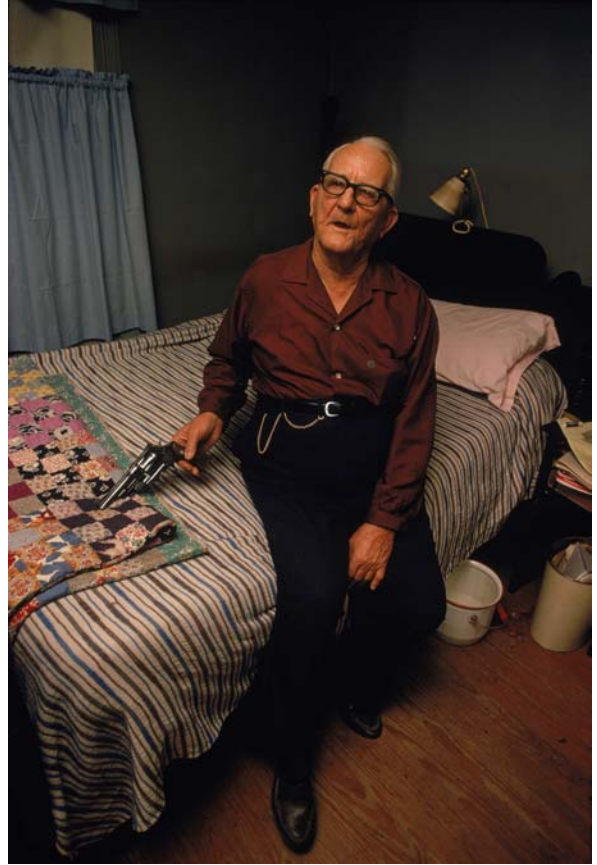
High School Dispersal Visits must be scheduled in advance. Please visit <http://www.whitney.org/www/information/group.jsp> for more information.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the Whitney!

#### IV. Post-Visit: Photographer and Subject



**Figure 3**  
*Huntsville, Alabama, 1971, from William Eggleston's Guide, 1976*  
1971  
Dye transfer print, 20 x 15 7/8 (50.8 x 40.3)  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Virginia M. Zabriskie 91.100.3  
© Eggleston Artistic Trust



**Figure 4**  
*Morton, Mississippi, c. 1969-70, from William Eggleston's Guide, 1976*  
c. 1969-70  
Dye transfer print, 13 3/8 x 8 11/16 (34 x 22)  
Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung, Hannover  
© Eggleston Artistic Trust

Building on the Pre-Visit lessons and Museum experience, this lesson invites students to take a closer look at the relationship between Eggleston and his subjects.

**Materials:** Projector or printed copies of images.

#### Objectives

- Foster a deeper appreciation of concepts and ideas explored during students' Museum visit.
- Encourage students to use comparison as a tool for discussing art.
- Invite students to consider the relationship between photographers and their subjects.
- Build on students' understanding of the role of vantage point, composition, framing, lighting, and color in Eggleston's work.

**Museum Visit Reflection:**

- Ask your students to take a few minutes to write about their museum visit. What do they remember most? What did they learn about William Eggleston? What did they most enjoy seeing? What other questions do they have—for the artist, the curators who organized the exhibition, or in general? Invite them to share their thoughts with the class.
- Invite your students to respond to an image from the Eggleston exhibition on our teen blog, **The Whit**. Direct them to <http://whitney.org/thewhit/blog/> to post their own response(s) and see how other teens addressed the questions posed on the site.

## Looking at Images:

Project or distribute images of Eggleston's *Huntsville, Alabama, 1976* (Figure 3).

- As a warm up exercise, ask your students to create an inner monologue expressed by the man in the photograph. Invite them to share their ideas with the class.
- Based on their writing, what do your students observe about the subject, setting, framing, and overall composition of the photograph? What about the lighting? From what vantage point did Eggleston take the photograph? How might they describe the man's body language? Even though he is not directly looking at the camera, how do we know the man is aware of Eggleston's presence? What can be said about the relationship between photographer and his subject?

Share the title with your students, noting that it refers to a location in Alabama. Eggleston prefers not to give his pictures titles. An exception, however was his exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in 1976 and publication, *William Eggleston's Guide*, a collaboration with the curator John Szarkowski, who suggested Eggleston give his works, such as *Huntsville, Alabama*, titles.

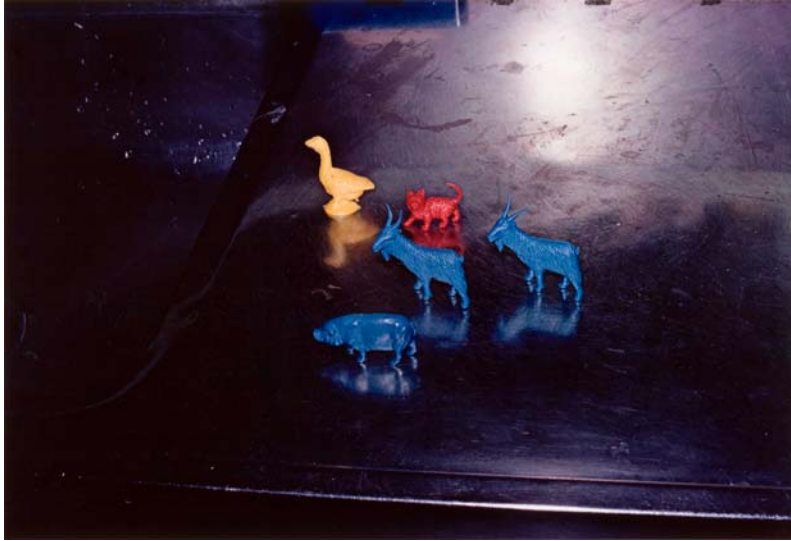
- Ask your students to share their thoughts about this photograph bearing the name of a place rather than the man pictured. What are their thoughts about the fact that Eggleston prefers leaving his works untitled?

Project or distribute images of Eggleston's *Morton, Mississippi, 1969-70* (Figure 4).

- Ask your students to compare the two images. What similarities do they notice? What differences?
- Writing exercise: Invite your students write an imagined biography for either man. What kind of life has he lived?

## Concluding Conversation:

In order to take these and many of his photographs, Eggleston had to develop a rapport with his subjects. He photographed friends and acquaintances, but he was just as likely to focus his camera on strangers. Based on the vantage points Eggleston employs in these photographs, along with their formal elements already discussed, ask your students whether or not they think Eggleston paints a sympathetic, objective, or negative image of these two men.



**Figure 5**  
*Untitled, (Memphis, Tennessee), 1971, from 14 Pictures, 1974*  
1971  
Dye transfer print , 15 7/8 x 19 15/16 (40.3 x 50.6)  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;  
gift of Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz 94.112  
© Eggleston Artistic Trust



**Figure 6**  
*Karco, c. 1983-86, from The Democratic Forest, 1989*  
c. 1983-86  
Exhibition print , 16 x 20 (40.6 x 50.8)  
Cheim & Read, New York  
© Eggleston Artistic Trust

In a recent interview, when asked why he switched from taking black and white photographs to color, Eggleston replied, "...never was a conscious thing. I had wanted to see a lot of things in color because the world was in color. I was affected by it all the time."<sup>7</sup>

Upon discovering the dye transfer process, Eggleston became fascinated by the sheer number of possible hues and tones available to him. He has argued that meaning ought not to be sought in his photographs, and perhaps nowhere else is the pure formal elements of his compositions more apparent than in his use of color, as he noted, "I don't think anything [else] has the seductivity of dyes....By the time you get into all those dyes, it doesn't look at all like the scene, which is in some cases what you want."<sup>8</sup>

The following comparison invites students to consider how Eggleston composes photographs with both form and color.

<sup>7</sup> William Eggleston, Whitney Focus Video Interview. November 4, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> De Salvo, 254.

## Objectives

- Foster deeper exploration of concepts and ideas explored during students' Museum visit.
- Encourage students to use comparison as a tool for analyzing art.
- Ask students to consider the use of color and composition in Eggleston's photographs.

Project or distribute images of Eggleston's *Untitled, (Memphis, Tennessee), 1971* (Figure 5).

- Warm Up: *What's in a Title?* Give your students a moment to look at the image, and ask them to come up with at least three titles for it. Invite them to share their favorite title with the class.
- Ask your students to comment on how the toys, which belonged to Eggleston's son, are arranged as well as the overall composition of the image. From what point of view are the toys presented? Can their scale be determined? Why or why not? What do they notice about the setting? Finally, in your students' opinion, what role does color play in the photograph?
- Warm up: *Draw and Describe*. Ask your students to select a partner and to sit with their backs to one another, with one person facing the front of the room. Ask those students facing the back of the room to close their eyes. Give each partner with their eyes closed a pencil and paper.
- Project or distribute images—only to students who have their eyes open--of Eggleston's *Karco, 1983-86* (Figure 6).
- Challenge the students looking at the image to begin describing what they see, only referring to lines and shapes. They should be very clear about where their partner should begin drawing. After five minutes, ask the drawers to open their eyes. As a group, discuss the experience, both for drawers and describers.

After the *Draw and Describe* activity, ask students to identify and discuss the role colors play in the image. How do the colors and forms lead the viewer's eye around the image?

## Concluding Conversation:

Ask your students to compare the two images. After listing the many differences between the two, what similarities can be discerned? Ultimately, what role does color play in both? Based on their experience seeing Eggleston's work in this guide and at the Museum, how do these two images reflect his "democratic" approach to picture making?

## Extended Activities and Research Projects

---

### A Sense of Place

I. Although Eggleston has taken photographs all over the world, he is best known for his photographs of the American South. His work gives viewers a strong sense of place. Ask students to select one of Eggleston's photographs of a place. They can use one of the images in this guide or can find many other images on the artist's website: [www.egglestontrust.com](http://www.egglestontrust.com), in the "Portfolio" section. Ask students to write about the place pictured by Eggleston using rich descriptive language.

II. Many writers have depicted the South in richly evocative language. Ask students to read one of Raymond Carver's or Flannery O'Connor's short stories. You may also select a passage that describes the South from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* or a William Faulkner novel. What do they notice about the language used by one or more of these authors? How does it relate to their description of Eggleston's work? What is similar or different about people and places pictured by Eggleston and those described by the writers?

### Civil Rights and the South

Divide your students into groups. Ask each group to select and research an event related to the Civil Rights Movement. Ask each group to create and give a presentation on their research. Ask them to consider how things may or may not have changed since this time.

### Pioneering a New American Photography

Eggleston emerged from a remarkable generation of American photographers forging a new photographic language, which employed a snapshot aesthetic and, often, featured urban settings. "Those few people I sought out," Eggleston reflected, "it's almost but not quite like saying they're heroes; it's more like seeking out your fellows, kindred spirits."<sup>9</sup> Such kindred spirits included photographers Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Joel Meyerowitz, Tod Papageorge, and Stephen Shore. Ask your students to research one of these photographers and to compare his/her work with Eggleston's.

### Influencing a Younger Generation

Both Sofia Coppola and Gus Van Sant openly credit Eggleston's work as directly influencing their films *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), and *Elephant* (2003), respectively. Coppola cited Eggleston's 1970s aesthetic as an important source of inspiration, while Van Sant explicitly referred to the photographer's images of clouds bisected by wires. Screen a short clip of either film, or use stills available online. Discuss how Eggleston's work may have influenced these films. Please be advised to be careful in selecting clips as both films contain violent and adult content.

### Extreme Perspectives: Hands on Exploration

Eggleston's work is noteworthy, among other reasons, for its varied and surprising angles and vantage points. In the Whitney Focus video, Eggleston talked about taking the photograph of the tricycle (on the cover of this guide) in Memphis, "...I rested the camera on the curb, I think, using something like my wallet to cushion it. I think I had sense enough to know that it was not so interesting to stand at normal standing height and look down at it. So I got down low with it."<sup>10</sup>

Using disposable cameras or any other available cameras, ask your students to experiment taking pictures from extreme and surprising perspectives. Ask them to choose two favorites to post on the classroom wall. As a class, discuss students' experiences and the impact such perspectives have on the viewer.

---

<sup>9</sup> Weski, 9.

<sup>10</sup> William Eggleston, Whitney Focus Video Interview. November 4, 2008.



## Bibliography & Web Links

---

Baldwin, Gordon. *Looking at Photographs: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Malibu: The Paul J. Getty Museum, Calif., in association with British Museum Press, London, 1991.

Cartier-Bresson, Henri. *The Mind's Eye: Writing on Photography and Photographers*. New York: Aperture, 1976.

Eggleston, William. *William Eggleston's Guide*. Introduction by John Szarkowski. 1976. New York: Museum of Modern Art. 1st edition 1976, 2nd edition 2002.

Frizot, Michael. *A New History of Photography*. New York: Konemann, 1998.

Savedoff, Barbara E. *Transforming Images: How Photography Complicates the Picture*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Sussman, Elizabeth and Weski, Thomas. *William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Wolf, Sylvia. *Visions from America: Photography from the Whitney Museum of American Art 1940-2001*. New York: Prestel, 2002

Eggleston Trust, [www.egglestontrust.com](http://www.egglestontrust.com)

George Eastman House, [www.eastmanhouse.org](http://www.eastmanhouse.org)

The International Center for Photograph, [www.icp.org](http://www.icp.org)

The Whitney Museum of American Art, [www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)

## Feedback

---

Please let us know what you think of these materials. How did you use them? What worked or didn't work? Email us at [schoolprograms@whitney.org](mailto:schoolprograms@whitney.org).

For more information on our programs and resources for Schools, Educators, Youth, and Families, please visit [www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org).

## Learning Standards

---

The projects and activities in these curriculum materials address national and state learning standards for the arts, English language arts, social studies, and technology.

Links to National Learning Standards.

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

Comprehensive guide to National Learning Standards by content area.

<http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/index.shtml>

New York State Learning Standards.

<http://www.nysatl.nysed.gov/standards.html>

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/home.html>

New York City Department of Education's *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*, grades K-12.

<http://www.nycenet.edu/projectarts/PAGES/a-blueprint.htm>

## School and Educator Programs

The Whitney Museum of American Art's School and Educator Programs are made possible by an endowment from the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Fund.

Generous support is provided by

Citi Foundation



Additional support is provided by Susan and Jack Rudin in honor of Beth Rudin DeWoody, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Inc., the Renate, Hans and Maria Hofmann Trust, Newman's Own, and by members of the Whitney's Education Committee.

## William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961–2008

This exhibition was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in association with Haus der Kunst, Munich.

This exhibition was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in association with Haus der Kunst, Munich.

Presented by **W**

In partnership with

CLARINS    LEVIEV    MAX MARA    VERA WANG LOOK

Generous support is provided by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc., Norman and Melissa Selby, The John and Annamaria Phillips Foundation, Marcia Dunn & Jonathan Sobel, Diane and Tom Tuft, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Additional support is provided by the Stephen C. and Katherine D. Sherrill Foundation, Lauren and Louis DePalo, the William Talbott Hillman Foundation, The Gage Fund, and The Chisholm Foundation.

---

These pre- and post-visit materials were prepared by Victoria Lichtendorf, Heather Maxson, and Dina Helal, Education Department, Whitney Museum of American Art. Paula Santos assisted in the publication of these materials.

---