

# Lesson Plan

Oak Park High School  
825 NE 79th Terrace  
Kansas City, Missouri 64118

page 1 of 5

**Lesson:** Handwritten Portraits  
**Course:** Visual Art Photography

**Teacher:** Mark Alan Anderson, manderso@nkcisd.k12.mo.us  
**Duration:** Five (5) 90 minutes meetings + out-of-class time

---

## Learning Objectives

- TLW create a portrait using a limited color palette for emphasis.
- TLW explore the personal attributes of a subject as a means for exploring their subject in meaningful detail.
- TLW use handwriting to inform a specific process of artmaking.

---

**About this course.** *The intention of Visual Art Photography is to introduce the student to the structure of art through the medium of digital photography and digital image manipulation. We will explore the visual design of photography, a process of learning new ways of seeing and creating through intentional and purposeful arrangement of visual elements. Similar to the way young children experiment with building blocks, artists play with the "building blocks" of design, thoughtful arrangements of color, value, space, texture, line, and shape...and in so doing, learn how to create meaningful images and visual messages. This course is about design and how its principles and elements affect the way we make art and look at the world around us. The curriculum is designed to impart a technical, theoretical, and historical foundation to the beginning photographic artmaker. We make a lot of photographs: the initial curricular emphasis is on the artist's options, focusing particularly on technique, image creation and manipulation. The Elements of Art and the Principles of Design provide a sound platform of formal composition and our assignments are a broad-based approach to meaning-making in art. Collectively, we look at the work of many photographers. Slide lectures and discussions focus on both traditional and contemporary aesthetic and social themes and issues surrounding the art of photography. The primary aim of this course is to inspire student artmakers to cultivate a deeper appreciation and understanding of photography, while building the confidence to make self-motivated photographic artworks.*

## Lesson Design

### Mental Set

This lesson is introduced to learners during the second semester of a one-year photography foundations course. Consequently, learners have a strongly developed formal aesthetic and are comfortably literate in the use of digital cameras and the mechanics of Photoshop. A course Blackboard site is a significant component of learning, sharing, discussion, and image archiving; learners visit the Visual Art Photography Blackboard site during the first ten minutes of each class meeting to read course-specific announcements, review that day's objectives and goals, review online readings, and to post any requisite written or visual assignments for teacher and/or peer review.

### Sharing the Objective and Purpose

Objectives are written on the white board every day and reviewed for intention and purpose before studio work ensues. Objectives are also posted on each day's Blackboard page.

### Modeling or Demonstration

Until this lesson, learners have used artificial lighting on an informal basis only. During studio sessions, learners are introduced to artificial lighting for both soft and dramatic lighting designs, reflected light, diffused light. This demonstration also contrasts techniques of artificial lighting with direct natural light and indirect/manipulated natural lighting designs.

---

## Check for Understanding

Because this course utilizes a variety of methods for delivering final image artifacts, it is important to check regularly for learner understanding of the following:

- At what size and resolution are images being generated? (11 x 14" at 300 ppi resolution.)
- What delivery method is the learner planning to use for delivery of their image artifact? (Flattened RGB .jpg file, submitted to the Blackboard Discussion Forum called "Alternative Portraits.")
- What color palette is the learner utilizing? (Limited or monochromatic color palette.)

Learner understanding of the purpose and intention of this assignment must also be checked:

- Are learners using the actual handwriting of their model? (The answer should be yes.)
- Have learners had their subject write their responses on a clean sheet of unlined paper? (The answer should be yes.)

## Practice

In practice, learners will be engaged in a series of written reflections while they locate and interview a portraiture subject of their choice. Learners will also study classic examples of portraiture in an historical context as well as contemporary images of photographic portraiture. The primary activity is comprised of both planning and execution: Stress is placed upon the importance of intention and purpose in the creation of portraiture. Learners probably will not begin to engage in actual studio work until the second or even third day of the lesson.

## Closure and Extension

Written/shared reflection, along with group review/display of work is of key importance to learners as they develop a conceptual understanding of artmaking processes. Typically, seven or eight works might be selected as student exemplars, printed to 30 x 36", mounted for exhibition (this course rotates new works out on display every ten days), and archived for inclusion in the Fine Art Department's permanent collection of student exemplars.

---

## Creativity Lab Resources

- Student exemplars (on display during entire scope of lesson)
- PowerPoint slide show of classic examples of portraiture
- Blackboard archive of image exemplars, lessons, printable aesthetics exercises, and interview worksheet
- PowerPoint slide of "My Father" by Jeffrey Wolin
- 15 Digital Cameras
- Backdrop cloth
- 15 PC workstations with Photoshop Elements 4.0
- 2 scanners
- Misc. art materials
- 9 light-weight tripods
- Two sets of artificial lights, umbrellas, and stands

## Student-provided Materials

- Digital Camera (minimum of 4 megapixels), Camera Card (recommend: minimum of 256 MB), Storage Media (for temporary storage of in-progress work; recommend: card with minimum of 512 MB free space.), CD (for permanent archiving of finished images)
-

---

## Sequence

### Day 1

- Students review Blackboard.
- Slideshow and discussion of classical portraiture (examples of both paintings and photography.)
- Direction of Discussion:

What are the common features of a "portrait?"

A portrait can tell us WHAT someone looks like, but can it really tell us much about WHO that person is or WHAT they are actually like? Can a portrait tell us ABOUT the subject beyond appearance?

- Introduction and discussion of Handwritten Portrait photography lesson.

Review and discussion of Jeffrey Wolin's portrait "My Father."

Review lesson and specifications

- Download the Handwritten Portrait Interview Sheet
- Ask your subject to complete the interview using a pen on a blank sheet of unruled white paper
- Photograph your subject using dramatic lighting on a very dark background cloth. Your photograph should be intimate and close, well planned for composition, arranged vertically, and use a limited-color or monochromatic color scheme. It should be simply arranged and crisply focussed.
- Scan your subject's handwritten words.
- In Photoshop Elements 4.0, combine the words by selective trimming and cropping in such a way as to overlap and appear to be handwritten upon the skin of the face and neck. Arrange the words to best fit your composition - remember that skin, hair, and teeth are not skin, so words should not appear in those areas. Using the Photoshop "Layers" feature, change the effect of your pasted words from "Normal" to "Multiply" to create a seamless appearance as you join multiple images together.
- Remember that what we are doing is intentional and that the portrait you create becomes much more meaningful through the introduction of personal words and phrases.
- To submit, the final image should be composed in an 11 x 14" vertical motif at 300 ppi resolution. The color mode should be RGB and the file format should be .jpg, saved at maximum quality. Final files should be submitted to the Blackboard Discussion Forum called "Alternative Portraits," along with a 150+ word personal reflection that addresses the four points of art critique (Description, Analysis, Interpretation, Judgement.)

Review student exemplars

Question and answers, check for understanding.

- Distribute materials and begin work.
-

# Lesson Plan

Oak Park High School  
825 NE 79th Terrace  
Kansas City, Missouri 64118

page 4 of 5

---

## Day 2

- Students review Blackboard.
- Students will read the Blackboard article about portraiture, conduct a Google Images search for a portrait that interests them and complete **Art Critiquing Process: Activity 3** by the start of next class.
- Discuss what we did last class, check for understanding.
- Students will have made arrangements to interview their subjects today and may begin planning their portrait session as soon as this activity is complete. Today is primarily dedicated to studio work in the Creativity Lab.
- Lighting demonstrations will be conducted today. Demonstration includes artificial lighting/flash, artificial lighting/strobe and light stand, artificial lighting/softbox and umbrella, reflected and diffused lighting designs.

## Day 3

- Students review Blackboard and turn in their Aesthetics Activity. They will print out the Art Video Worksheet.
- Ten-minute video of "ART:21 - Season Three (Roni Horn). The worksheet has specific, relevant points for students to watch for. Worksheet responses are submitted to Blackboard Discussion Forum by end of class today. Short discussion of the relevance of Roni Horn's photography to our current project.
- Lighting demonstrations continue today, with natural lighting designs emphasized. Check for understanding.
- Studio sessions in the Creativity Lab are underway for Handwritten Portraits. Some students will already be working in Photoshop to combine their images and handwritten words/phrases. Check for understanding.

## Day 4

- Students review Blackboard. They will read and respond to at least two other student responses to Roni Horn's work.
- Discuss what we did last class, what we're doing today, project concerns, check for understanding.
- Today is a studio session in the Creativity Lab.
- Class ends with discussion about process, what's working and what's not, where do we go from here, issues of aesthetics, check for understanding.

## Day 5

- Students review Blackboard and update their work as necessary.
  - Check for understanding - especially for project specifications and submission requirements.
  - Today is primarily a studio session in the Creativity Lab. The current assignment is due today and must be turned in 25 minutes before the end of class today.
  - 20 minutes before end of class, students will group review submitted images as peers. (These group critiques will typically flow into the next class meeting.)
  - Students are assigned a specific Discussion Board reflective response to the work of Jeffrey Wolin that is due on Blackboard Discussion Forum, added to their project submission no later than start of next class.
-

# Lesson Plan

Oak Park High School  
825 NE 79th Terrace  
Kansas City, Missouri 64118

page 5 of 5

## Rubric

	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs Improvement
Craftsmanship	20	19-18	17-16	15 or less
Exposure & Contrast	20	19-18	17-16	15 or less
Composition & Clarity	30	29-27	26-24	23 or less
Aesthetics	30	29-27	26-24	23 or less

# *The Art Critiquing Process*

## **ACTIVITY 3: BUILDING A CRITIQUE CUBE**

**DIRECTIONS:** As with all new things that you learn, practicing makes the task easier. This activity will give you an opportunity to practice your Art Critiquing skills.

**Step One:** Select a photograph that interests you. You may get the image from the Internet or from a magazine. A color image might be easier to reference. The photograph should be small enough to be glued to the top of the cube pattern on the next page; you may copy or scan it and then resize it in Photoshop if you need.

**Step Two:** Begin with the Description section. Remember, it is here that you are going to list the facts. Describe what you see in the photograph. Use the Credit Line information.

**Step Three:** Next complete the Analysis section. Write down how the photographer used the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design to create this work.

**Step Four:** In the Interpretation section, express your thoughts about the photograph. Why do you think the photographer chose to do certain things? What did the photographer mean?

**Step Five:** On this last side, express whether you think this was a successful work of art. Why or why not? Once all the sides are completed, sign your name and cut out the pattern. Fold and glue it together to form a cube. Turn in this page, along with your completed cube.

**Why did you select this particular photograph?** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

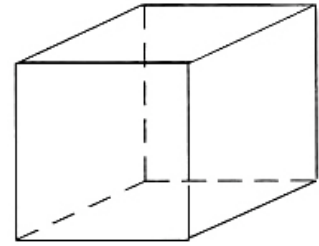
---

---

---

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Block Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Select an artwork you really like. Glue it to the section marked "Paste Image Here." Complete the four sides with the information related to each of the four steps of the Art Critiquing Process. Cut on dotted lines. Fold on solid lines. Carefully glue cube together. Do not use too much glue. You may color or decorate this in any way you wish.



A net for a cube, designed as a template for an art critique. The net consists of six rectangular panels arranged in a cross shape. The top panel is labeled **INTERPRETATION**. The middle row consists of three panels: the left panel is labeled **ANALYSIS**, the center panel is labeled **YOUR NAME**, and the right panel is labeled **JUDGMENT**. The bottom panel is labeled **DESCRIPTION**. Below the description panel is a larger rectangular area labeled **Paste Image Here**. Dotted lines indicate where to cut, and solid lines indicate where to fold. Two semi-circular tabs are attached to the left and right sides of the middle row. A 3D wireframe drawing of a cube is shown in the upper right corner of the page.

*Art Video Worksheet*

# RONI HORN

What subject does photographer Roni Horn revisit over and over again? What do you think makes this subject important to her as an artist?

---

---

---

Why do you think scale (size) is important to Roni Horn's prints? How is her work similar or different than what you might see in advertising images?

---

---

---

Why do you think Roni Horn chose to live in a light house? How do you think living this way impacted her work?

---

---

---

Roni Horn created a series of portraits that document one person over a period of time. What do you think this kind of "alternative portraiture" can tell us about a person?

---

---

---

Describe how the way Roni Horn chooses to display her images is important to her art.

---

---

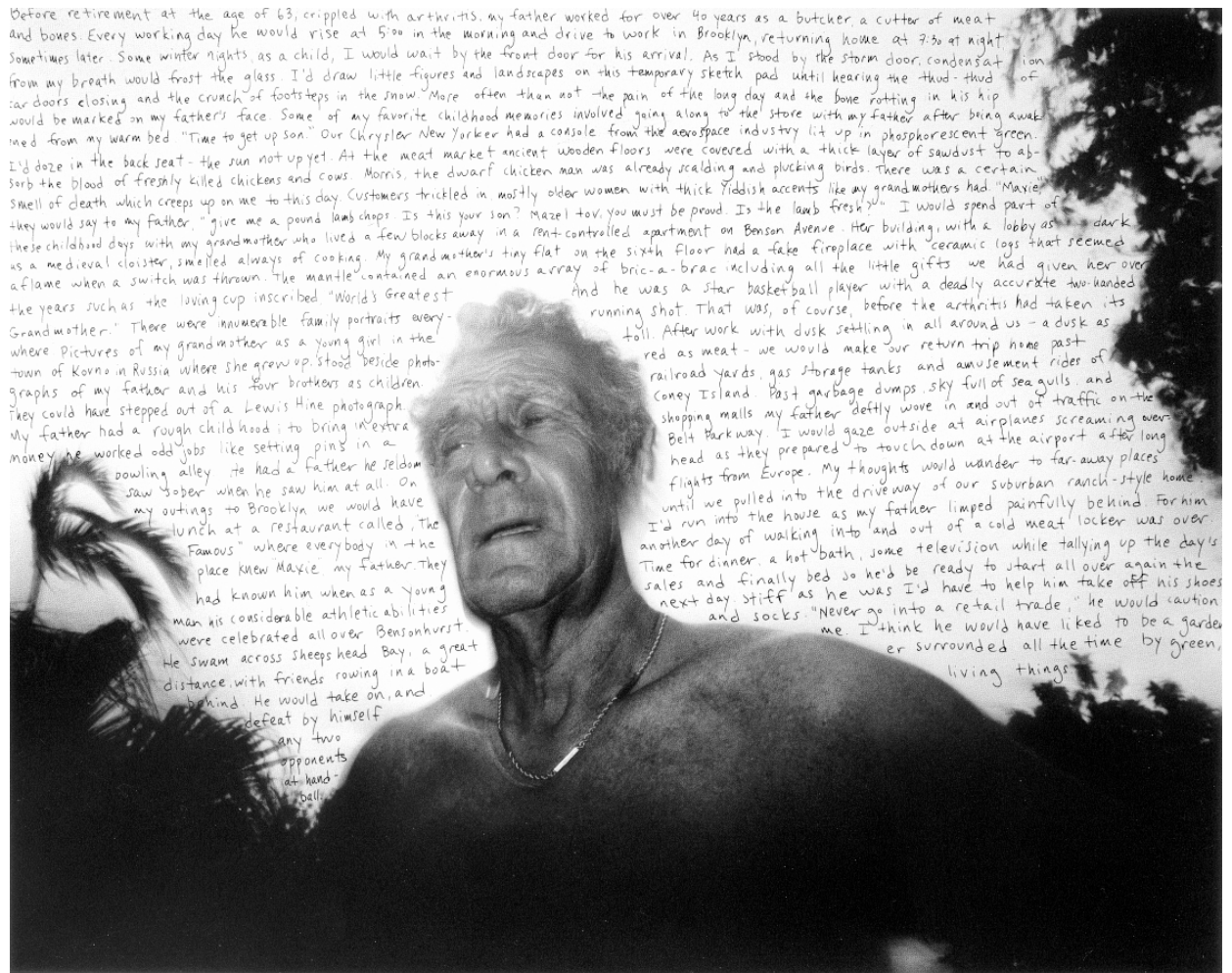
---

**10 points**

*Continue on the back if necessary*

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Block Number:** \_\_\_\_\_





**My Father, Jeffrey Wolin**  
1988, gelatin-silver print with ink, 14 1/4 x 18 1/4"  
The Hallmark Photographic Collection/The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

# Handwritten Portraits

Student Exemplars

