# Unit 12: Photography

## Unit Student Learning Objectives

### Unit 12: Photography (one week)

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Identify artists and describe qualities associated with Photography (Course Goals: 1,2,4,5, GE: 1,4,6,7, Core skills: A, D, E)
2. Define key terms associated with this medium and it's artists (Course Goals: 1,2,4 GE: 1,4,6,7, core skills: A, D, E)
3. Question the theory and philosophy behind photography as an artform, and question it's role in the visual arts. (Course Goals: 2,3,4,5,6 GE: 1,4,6,7,9 core skills: A, B, C, E, F, G)

### Artists covered:

* Gordon Parks
* William Eggleston
* Bernd and Hilla Becher
* Edward Burtynsky
* Thomas Demand
* Philip Lorca Dicorcia
* Cindy Sherman
* Niki S. Lee
* Erwin Wurm
* Roni Horn

[Gordon Parks]http://www.gordonparksfoundation.org/archives/535

## Unit Student Assessments & Activities

### Introduction (ULO 3-4)

Photography has been with us throughout this course. From the very first lecture we talked about the crisis it created in the plastic arts. When technology came along that could capture a person’s likeness completely, traditional artists had to prove they still had something to contribute to society.

We saw photography again in performance art. Wherever temporary art needed to be preserved, photography was there to provide documentation. In fact, all of the art we have seen to date, we have seen because of photography. With digital photography, we are able to look at artwork in class that just went on exhibit in a gallery in New York or anywhere else in the world.

It is such a common occurrence in our lives that it can almost become transparent. Today, we will focus on photography as a medium, and see how it has not only supported contemporary art, but also shaped it. I have picked ten artists for us to consider, starting with works from the beginning of our course and ending with some contemporary works.

**Gordon Parks** was a photographer who worked for Time magazine, often documenting the lives of the poor and working class, and examining issues of race and inequality.**William Eggleston** is often credited with bringing color photography into the world of fine art, and is well known for the "road trip" theme of photographic documentation. He would often compose books of images he took while traveling around the United States. **Bernd and Hilla Becher** are best known for creating grids of similar industrial structures (steel towers, gas tanks, etc.) They carefully document the structures in the same lighting conditions to emphasize the similarity and differences. **Edward Burtynsky** examines large-scale industrial landscapes with an eye for both the sublime beauty and ecological devastation. **Thomas Demand** carefully constructs life size paper sculptures of interiors and machines, photographs them, and presents the photographs as the final piece. **Philip Lorca Dicorcia** investigates the 'non event'. This is his term for sometimes carefully posed, sometimes spontaneous instances where the subject is witdrawn and unaware of the photographic moment. He uses flashes and lighting that often isolates the subject from the background, heightening the drama within the photo. **Cindy Sherman** uses elaborate makeup to create self portraits where she presents herself as a *type*-- either a stereotype or an even an absurdity. **Niki S. Lee** does something similar, but inserts herself into subcultures in these disguises, questioning the nature of racial and social identity. **Erwin Wurm** creates a hybrid of humor, sculpture, and performance in his *one minute sculptures* and presents them as photographs. **Roni Horn** examines the nature of time and identity through intimate portraits of family and friends.

### Textbook : Read Chapter 11 Conceptual Art (ULO 1-3).

Please read Chapter 11 in *Twentieth Century American Art* by Erika Doss, pages 227-248. Then test your understanding by answering the Textbook Review Questions in the next section.

### Textbook Chapter 11 Review Questions (self assess): (ULO 1-3)

The answer to these questions can be found in chapter 11 of *Twentieth Century American Art* by Erika Doss.

Answer these questions as best as you can after reading this weeks chapter in Twentieth Century American Art. You can try the quiz multiple times. You will be graded on the completing the quiz but you are allowed to make mistakes and correct your answers. Use this as an opportunity to test your comprehension of the material and see what you missed, and as preparation for the midterm and final.

Q: What happened to the relationship between modernism and postmodernism in the 1990s? A. Debates about their differences faded, allowing for fresh aesthetics and perspectives. B. Postmodernism became the dominant style, and modernism faded into the background. C. After several decades of postmodernism, modern aesthetics and perspectives returned and dominated. D. The prevailing definition of modernism changed, rendering the distinction irrelevant. ANSWER: A POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC

Q: Which of the following is NOT an example of the darker art to come out of LA in the 1990s? A. Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* pieces featuring artifacts from the history of slavery. B. Chris Burden's violent performance art or post-apocalyptic sculptures. C. Paul McCarthy's performances utilizing meat, blood, chocolate and puppets. D. Mike Kelley's crude performances and sculptures using stuffed animals and crocheted blankets. E. MoCA's 1992 show *Helter Skelter*. ANSWER: A POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC

Q: What is NOT an example of an artist using materials in a way that primarily investigates the body? A. Thorton Dial's discarded material collages. B. Kiki Smith's mixed media figurative sculptures. C. Robert Gober's hyper-real wax casts. D. Janine Antoni's cast chocolate and soap. E. Mathew Barney's performances utilizing Vaseline and climbing equipment. ANSWER: A POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC

Q: How were artworks dealing with issues of Race and Identity further complicated in the 1990s? A. Artists began examining the idea of multiple, bilingual, or hybrid cultural identities. B. Artists such as David Byrne began examining their ethnic roots through Afro-pop. C. A backlash against affirmative action meant fewer minority artists received funding. D. An appreciation for world art meant America's art dealing with race became irrelevant. ANSWER: A,B POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC

Q: How was the role of the museum critiqued by artists in the 1990s? A. Museums were seen as presenting the spoils of Western colonialism. B. Museums admission was seen as prohibitively expensive. C. Museums only showed the works of European and American masters. D. Museums were critiqued for being "entertainment complexes" complete with restaurants and movie theatres. ANSWER: A,B POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC

### Explore: Artist websites (ULO 1-4)

* [Gordon Parks](http://www.gordonparksfoundation.org/archives/535)
* [William Eggelston](http://www.egglestontrust.com/)
* [Philip Lorca Dicorcia](http://www.thecollectiveshift.com/show/portfolio/diCorcia)
* [Edward Burtynsky](http://www.hexnut.nl/?page_id=23)
* [Bernd and Hilla Becher](http://www.americanphotomag.com/article/2011/11/instant-expert-bernd-and-hilla-becher)
* [Cindy Sherman](http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/cindysherman/)
* [Niki S. Lee](http://www.tonkonow.com/lee.html)
* [Thomas Demand](http://www.matthewmarks.com/new-york/artists/thomas-demand/)
* [Erwin Wurm](http://www.juxtapoz.com/Current/erwin-wurm-qone-minute-sculpturesq-open-eye-gallery-liverpool) ### Presentations: Artist Videos (ULO 1-4)

Please watch the following videos:

#### Philip Lorca Dicorcia

[Roni Horn](http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/roni-horn)

### Interactive activities: artwork identification, and terminology (multiple chances, self assess)(ULO 1, 2)

#### Identify names of XXX Artists

Q: Select all the artists who are photographers A.Gordon Parks B.William Eggleston C.Bernd and Hilla Becher D.Edward Burtynsky E.Roni Horn F.Philip Lorca Dicorcia G.Cindy Sherman H.Niki S. Lee I.Tala Madani J.Ernesto Neto ANSWER: A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H POINTS: 5 TYPE: MS

#### Identify artwork images from the slideshows

run mulchexec.py

Q: This is an artwork by: ANSWER: A: B: C: D: POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC IMAGE: http://jonathangabel.com/images/art125/

#### Multiple Choice Definitions

Q: A. B. C. D. ANSWER: A POINTS: 5 TYPE: MC

### Discussion Board Question relating to slideshows and readings (ULO 1-4)

Now that you have become familiar with the artists and concepts presented in this unit, it is time to start making connections. Here is your chance to apply what you learned in the readings to some of the artwork you have seen.

**First**, you will start a thread by answering the Essay question below.

**Then** you will reply to at least two (2) other students posts to get the discussion going.

Please make sure you meet the **due dates** for these posts.

#### Essay Question:

Many of the photographers we studied this week could also fit into a previous unit. Pick one photographer from either the lesson material or one you have found on your own, and explain how their work also reflects the interests of artists we have studies under a different label.

### Additional Artists to Study (ULO 1)

*You will not be tested on the following material, but if you are interested in studying further anything we discussed this week, these artists could also fit into this category*

* Andreas Gursky
* Tatsumi Orimoto
* Zhang Huan
* Gregory Crewdson
* Charlie White
* Wendy McMurdo
* Hiroshi Sugimoto
* Barbara Probst
* Alec Soth
* Cai Guo Qiang
* Carrie May Weams

### Optional links for further self-study (ULO 1-4)

*You will not be tested on the following material, but if you are interested in studying further anything we discussed this week, these links are a good place to start:*

* [Erwin Wurm website](http://www.erwinwurm.at/)
* [Barbara Probst website](http://www.barbaraprobst.net/)
* [Edward Burtynsky TED talk](http://www.ted.com/talks/edward_burtynsky_on_manufactured_landscapes.html)
* [Roni Horn interview](http://www.jca-online.com/horn.html)