

GRAY

In Black and White

Adding Titles to Photographs

Summary: In this activity, students will examine the role of titles for artwork. Students will personally respond to the exhibit [Gray in Black and White](#) by creating titles for the photographs.

Maryland College and Career Readiness

This activity connects to MCCRS Visual Art.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive

E:9-12:1: Hypothesize ways visual imagery influences perceptions or affects human experience.

Introduction

All of the photos in the exhibit [Gray in Black and White](#) are deliberately titled “Untitled” by J.M. Giordano. These photos were taken during the Baltimore Uprising and are being shown in an exhibit marking the five-year anniversary of the events.

Step 1: Have a discussion with your students about creating (or not creating) titles for artwork. It’s a good idea to record their responses for them to refer back to. Ask students to discuss:

- What purpose a title serves.
- Does it provide a visitor with clues how to look at a photo?
- Does it provide insight into what part of the photograph a viewer should prioritize? Or does it limit the viewer’s deeper examination of the work?
- Does it provide hints about the context of the photo? Or does it pose more questions about the content of the photo?
- Ask students why they think some photographs receive titles and other are called “untitled.” Is there a difference between photographs that are created as artwork and photographs taken to document an event? Is there a difference between historic photos and contemporary photos?

Step 2: Ask each student to select a photograph from the [exhibit](#) and look closely at the image.

- What do they see in the photograph?
- What do you think the photographer wants you to see?
- What do you think the photographer wants you to feel?

Step 3: Have students read the [timeline and other resources](#) to learn about the context of the photos. Ask students to reflect if they feel that the images successfully represent the events and people depicted.

Step 4: Ask students to write a title for their selected photograph. Have students write an explanation for their title. Remind them to include their observations and research in their explanation. Encourage students to share their responses with each other.



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