

# GRAY

## In Black and White

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### Role of the Curator

**Summary:** In this activity, students will examine the role of the curator in the exhibit *Gray in Black and White*. Students will describe the impact the exhibit has on their personal awareness of social and political understanding. Students will curate a selection of Giordano's photos.

#### **Maryland College and Career Readiness**

This activity connects to MCCRS Visual Art.

Anchor Standard 6: Share

E:9-12:1: Describe the impact an exhibit or collection has on personal, awareness of social, cultural, or political beliefs and understandings.

E:9-12:2: Curate a grouping of objects, artifacts, or art to impact the viewer's understanding of social, cultural, and/or political experiences.

#### **Introduction**

In museums, like the Jewish Museum of Maryland, a **curator** has many responsibilities. Among other duties, they are often responsible for managing and caring for the objects in the museum's collection. They conduct research and write about the collection.

Curators also play a major role in planning exhibits. Curators typically have special knowledge or are an expert in the subject matter of the exhibit. Typically, an exhibit has one big idea that the museum is trying to tell. They use objects, documents, and photographs along with labels (text) to tell the story, or big idea. Planning an exhibit includes many steps. One of the steps is selecting what objects, documents, and images will be included in the exhibit. The curator must decide which objects best tell the story.

In [Grey in Black and White](#) the curator does not work in a museum setting, rather he does have specialist knowledge in the subject matter. Devin Allen curated the photographs by J. M. Giordano in this exhibit by selecting certain images from Giordano's collection. Devin Allen was born and raised in West Baltimore. Allen gained national attention when his documentary photograph of the Baltimore Uprising was published on a Time Magazine cover in May 2015 – only the third time the work of an amateur photographer had been showcased there.



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**Step 1:** Have students look at J.M. Giordano’s photographs in the [Gallery](#). Encourage them to think about their personal response to these photographs. What do emotions do the photos cause? How?

**Step 2:** Then ask students to read Devin Allen’s [curator’s statement](#). After reading the statement from Devin Allen, have students revisit Giordano’s photographs. Rather than thinking about each individual photograph, encourage students to think about the photos as a whole.

What story is being told?

How is the story being told?

Do they notice anything different about the photographs after reading Allen’s statement?

Has their personal response to the photographs changed?

**Step 3:** Ask students to curate their own mini-exhibit using Giordano’s photos from the [Gray in Black and White](#) exhibit. Have students choose three photographs and answer the following questions:

Why did they choose those photos?

What story do they tell together?

Were there photos that they wanted to include but had to leave out?



“Untitled.” Photograph by J.M. Giordano, 2015



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