



OGDEN MUSEUM
OF SOUTHERN ART

Movement Mondays: Portrait Photography



Trenity Thomas, *Teenage Summer*, Archival pigment print, Photograph, 2019

Take portraits of your loved ones!

Trenity Thomas is a **self-taught photographer** who has also experimented with painting and sketching since grade school. As a photographer, he has worked in a myriad of genres including fashion, lifestyle, editorial, conceptual, sports, portraiture, and nightlife photography.

As a photographer, Trenity uses his camera to **capture the life and composition** of still life around him. His photographs have a warmth to them that pulls the viewer into the scene as if they were present - a feature that has become characteristic of his photographic style.

You can see his work at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art currently in the *Louisiana Contemporary, Presented by the Helis Foundation* exhibit on view until February 7, 2021.

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Instructions

Step 1: Look up **portraits** on the internet and in books. What is interesting about them? Be attentive to the person's facial expressions, how do you think they are feeling? Look at the **background**. Is it blank and neutral or is it busy, is there a lot of action and objects?

For example, in Trenity Thomas' photograph on the left, there are people behind the young woman, moving and there's nature, a tree in the background.

Step 2: Think about who you want to create a portrait of. It can be a parent or guardian, a friend, a pet... If you're photographing a person, remember to ask their permission first. You can also do a **self-portrait**. Why do you want to photograph that particular person or animal? Reflect on your connection to them. Why is this person or pet special to you? How will you depict this special relationship in your portrait?

Step 3: Now that you have chosen your subject, pick a place where the photograph will be taken. Remember the location of where you take the photo will determine the background of your portrait. Ask your subject to pose for their portrait! You can ask the person nicely to move according to how you want the **composition** of your image.

If you don't have access to a camera or a camera phone to take pictures use your hands and your imagination. Make a frame for your photograph by extending your thumbs and index finger. Touch the tips of your index fingers to your thumbs to make a box. Close one eye and focus on your subject in the frame. Think about the composition. What is in the **background** of the portrait?

Step 4: Now that your subject is in the right place, think about how big you want the person to be in your photograph. If you want their face to take up the whole frame, get close to them. For them to be smaller surrounded by other things, you can step a few steps back. When you are ready, photograph your subject multiple times to get the best shot possible. Say cheese! After the session is over, pick your favorite photograph.

Step 5 (optional): If you're using a digital device like a camera phone to take pictures you can edit the photograph. You can reframe the photograph or change the colors to give it a different effect. Have fun trying different styles!

Vocabulary

Self-taught: A term for artists that have not received formal artistic training, has not been part of an artistic community, and has worked alone and learned their skills on their own.

Portrait: A portrait is an artistic representation of a **person**, in which the face and its expression is central.

Background: The part of the composition in the pictorial arts that appears to be farthest from the viewer.

Self-portrait: A **portrait** of an artist produced or created by that artist.

Composition: The arrangement of elements within a work of art and how they relate to each other.

