



The New Black Vanguard: Photography between Art and Fashion

[EXHIBITION RESOURCES](#)

EDUCATOR RESOURCE | Grades 6-8



Tyler Mitchell, *Untitled (Hijab Couture)*, New York, 2019

The New Black Vanguard: Photography between Art and Fashion is organized by Aperture, New York and is curated by Antwaun Sargent.

The exhibition is made possible in part by Airbnb Magazine.

At the Detroit Institute of Arts, major support is generously provided by Cadillac.

Additional support is provided the MSU Federal Credit Union and the Desk Drawer Fund, Maureen and Roy S. Roberts, Rhonda D. Welburn, and Bank of America.

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LEARNING TARGET

Students will explore the idea that there are many forms of beauty found in people around the world. Students will discover that there is no such thing as "normal" and that "normal" is used as a control technique.

Student will:

- participate in a range of collaborative discussions by conducting small-group and whole-class discussions on art and beauty.
- ask and answer questions about information from a speaker by analyzing a photographer's purpose.
- add visual displays to presentations by creating magazine covers that challenge beauty representation.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6-8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.3

- Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.5

- Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

Please Note: This exhibition contains a video that included some profanity and partial nudity. That segment of the video is 4 minutes out of a 39-minute video loop. Two photos in the exhibition also contain some nudity.



PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES | 1-2 CLASS PERIODS

1. Write "vanguard" on the board.
2. Ask students what they think vanguard means. Share out loud. If needed, provide a definition of vanguard. Students copy the definition.
 - a. *a group of people who are leaders in the development of new ideas for an action or movement in society, politics, art, etc.*
3. Direct students to journal to these questions:
 - a. *What leaders do we know?*
 - b. *In what area are they leading?*
 - c. *How can you be a leader?*
 - d. *In what area can you lead?*
4. Share responses in small-groups then whole-group (share in chat if virtual).
5. Display the image below (Figure A). Ask students the following questions:
 - a. *What do you feel when you see this image?*
 - b. *What details do you see in the image?*
 - c. *What might Renell Medrano be trying to show us here?*
 - d. *How does Medrano show a "different" type of beauty here?*
6. Explain to students that we will be visiting an art exhibit at the DIA displaying images similar to the one above.
7. Introduce Antwaun Sargent:
 - a. **Antwaun Sargent** is an American writer, editor, and curator, living in New York City. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker* and various art publications. Sargent is the author of *The New Black Vanguard: Photography between Art and Fashion* (Aperture) and the editor of *Young, Gifted and Black: A New Generation of Artists* (DAP). He has championed Black art and fashion by young Black photographers, and has built a youth culture around it.
8. Play the video ["A Day in the Life of Antwaun Sargent"](#)



9. Introduce the exhibition *The New Black Vanguard: Photography between Art and Fashion*; Curated by Antwaun Sargent:
 - a. The New Black Vanguard is a global movement of emerging image makers working in Africa and across the African diaspora who create contemporary portrayals of Black life. Their vibrant portraits and conceptual images fuse the genres of art and fashion photography in ways that break down long-established boundaries. From New York City to Lagos, Nigeria these artists present fresh and diverse perspectives on photography and notions of race, beauty, gender, and power. Their work seeks to challenge the idea that Blackness is homogenous. Bringing together images from lifestyle magazines, ad campaigns, museums, and social media, this exhibition celebrates Black creativity and the cross-pollination between art, fashion, and culture in constructing an image.
10. Explain that we will be creating magazine covers after the visit, inspired by the exhibit.
11. Suggested homework:
 - a. students find magazine covers at home or online for inspiration.

DURING VISIT

1. Explain the Detroit Institute of Arts' "Big Idea," or enduring understanding:
 - a. Young, Black image-makers seize control of their representation to broaden the spectrum of Black experience in photography — complicating a limiting view of Blackness historically shaped by the white gaze.
2. Explain Visitor Outcomes:
 - a. Visitors will...
 - i. See...images that reflect a broad range of Black creativity, experience, and identity.
 - ii. Feel... inspired seeing identities showcased that are historically underrepresented in museums (i.e Black, queer)
 - iii. Do...understand the various boundaries NBV photographers are breaking in photography and fashion.
3. Print copies of Figure B before visit. Allow students to self-explore using the guided handout below.
4. Direct students to stand next to a piece that stands out to them the most. Have students share out why they chose that piece.



5. Ask students what inspiration they can take from today for their projects.
6. Suggested homework:
 - a. students brainstorm ideas for their magazine covers

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES | 1-2 CLASS PERIODS

1. Post the questions below around the room prior to students arriving to class. Ask students to respond to any of the following questions on a post-it note then stick it under its corresponding question:
 - a. *What does it mean to be beautiful?*
 - b. *Who decides who is beautiful?*
 - c. *What images from the exhibit did you find beautiful?*
2. Students conduct a gallery walk and read other responses.
3. Class discussion:
 - a. *Is there one way to be beautiful?*
 - b. *Discuss how people come in all shapes, sizes and colors; beautiful in our own unique way; be accepting of all*
 - c. *What is "normal?"*
 - d. *Why does "normal" exist? (lead discussion towards keeping order and following rules; people in power maintain power)*
 - e. *What happens when we don't follow the rules? (lead discussion towards creating chaos, revolution, culture and change)*
 - f. *How can we use art to change what's "normal"?*
4. Create groups of 2-4 students to work on a magazine cover projects inspired by the exhibit they saw and the discussions they've had around it.
5. Invite students to create their covers on large post-it paper or poster board.
6. Encourage creativity and outside-the-box thinking. Ask students to explore design ideas that are outside what's "normal."
7. Students present magazine covers next class.

This educational resource was developed by Detroit Public Schools Community District teacher Bayan Founas in collaboration with the Education Programs department at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Figure A



Renell Medrano, *1984, Harlem, New York*, 2018



Figure B

Photo Title	Photographer/ Stylist/ Model	Describe the image	How does the image make you feel? Why do you think the photographer created this image?


