

Photojournalism

Mrs. Bible Digital Photography 2020

Lewis Hine | Cotton Mill Girl | 1908

Photojournalism

“We know that photographs inform people. We also know that photographs move people. The photograph that does both is the one we want to see and make.” - Sam Abell, photojournalist

When we think of photojournalism, newspapers and magazines come to mind with their focus on news and current events. These images often record war, natural disasters, and other terrible experiences. But documentary images don't have to be about catastrophes. Magazines like *National Geographic* feature dazzling images of exotic places and people, as well as photographs of the daily lives of people close to home.

The most important aspect of **documentary photography** is that they tell a story. This is the journalism side of photojournalism. Good photojournalism takes a stand on a subject or an event and has a definite point of view. The attitudes, **bias**, and feelings of the photographers come through their images. Many times it's this emotional content that connects the viewer to the image and its subject, and creates a hard-hitting photograph.



Alberto Korda | Guerillero Heroico | 1960



It's important to remember that documentary photographs **should always be truthful**: nothing should be faked by making things up on a computer to create new "realities."

In recent years, the role of the media and news has been pretty controversial.

There has been a lot of turmoil regarding the *trustworthiness of news outlets and their coverage of events*. Photojournalism has always played a big part when it comes to the news coverage, but the difference could be the unprofessionals with smartphones.

Although the role of photojournalism has changed quite a bit, it is still a vital and important part of the modern news. Furthermore, *it also raises awareness of current global problems* and presents them on a whole different level.

History

Photojournalism has its roots in war photography, with Roger Fenton pioneering the field during the Crimean War. **Fenton was the first official war photographer**, shooting images that demonstrated the effects of war. His work was published in the Illustrated London News, bringing these images to a mass audience for the first time.

During the **American Civil War**, **photographer Mathew Brady** captured scenes of camp life and the battlefields for Harper's Weekly. Brady began by photographing troops prior to their departure, playing on the idea that they might not return and would want a portrait for their relatives.

In 1861, he began his journey photographing the American Civil War, at times placing himself in danger during battle—though technological limitations stopped him from being able to shoot photos while the subjects were in movement. Brady's was a large operation, with him employing over 20 assistants, each equipped with a mobile darkroom. While he has sometimes been criticized for not taking all of the images himself, his work has garnered him recognition as one of the **pioneers of photojournalism**.



View of the lines of Balaklava from Guard's Hill, Canrobert's Hill in the distance, the sirocco blowing. 1855. (Photo: Roger Fenton / Library of Congress)

Scene showing deserted camp and wounded soldier. (Zouave) (Photo: Mathew Brady / U.S. National Archives)





Room in a Tenement in New York City. (Photo: Jacob Riis / Museum Syndicate)

In the second half of the 19th century, the field would expand beyond war and disaster photos.

Photographer **John Thomson** depicted the lives of people on the streets of London. From 1876 to 1877, *Street Life in London*. This revolutionized the field of photojournalism by using images as the dominant means of storytelling.

A Danish immigrant, **Jacob Riis** arrived in the United States in 1870. His seminal work, *How the Other Half Lives*, documented the lives of immigrants living in New York's slums and tenements. Used as a catalyst for social reform, his work showed the real power that photojournalists can have for spurring change.

Photojournalists of the Golden Age

From the 1930s through the 1970s, photojournalism saw its “golden age,” where technology and public interest aligned to push the field to new heights. Photo-driven magazines like *Berliner Illustrate Zeitung*, *The New York Daily News*, and *LIFE* employed large staffs of photographers and used the photo-essay as a means to disseminate news.

Women also became leading figures in the field, with **Margaret Bourke-White** being the *first American female war reporter and the photographer* of the first *LIFE* cover. **Dorothea Lange** was one of many photographers employed by the Farm Security Administration to document the Great Depression. Her *Migrant Mother* image became an iconic representation of the era.

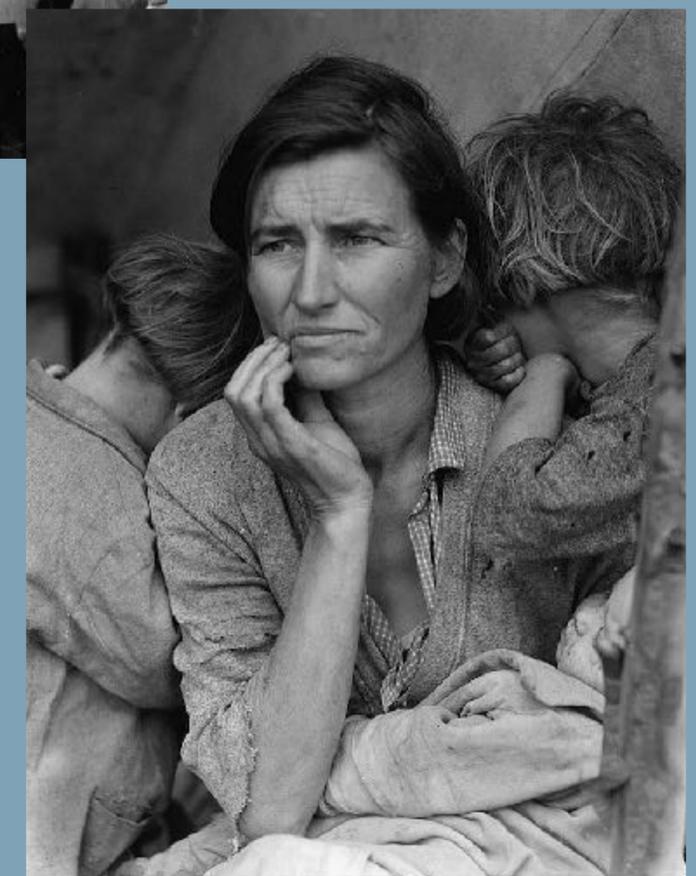
Gordon Parks, was one of the first African American documentary photographers (1912-2006). Parks became a freelance photographer in 1941, but quickly landed a job with the *Farm Security Administration*. He went on to work for *Glamour* and *Vogue* and then *Life* Magazine in 1948. His landmark photo essays of the Black Muslims and their leader, Malcom X, as well as his images of the Civil rights movement were immensely popular.

In 1947 photojournalists **Robert Capa**, **David “Chim” Seymour**, and **Henri Cartier-Bresson** were among those who created **Magnum Photos**. This photographer owned cooperative harnessed the collective strength of its members to cover the great events of the 20th century, and establishing photography as a career.



American infantrymen dropping their personal belongings into boxes because regulations forbid any identification except dog tags, in preparation for their night raid on German positions. Italy. 1945. (Photo: Margaret Bourke-White)

“Migrant Mother,” Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California. c. 1936. (Photo: Dorothea Lange / Library of Congress)

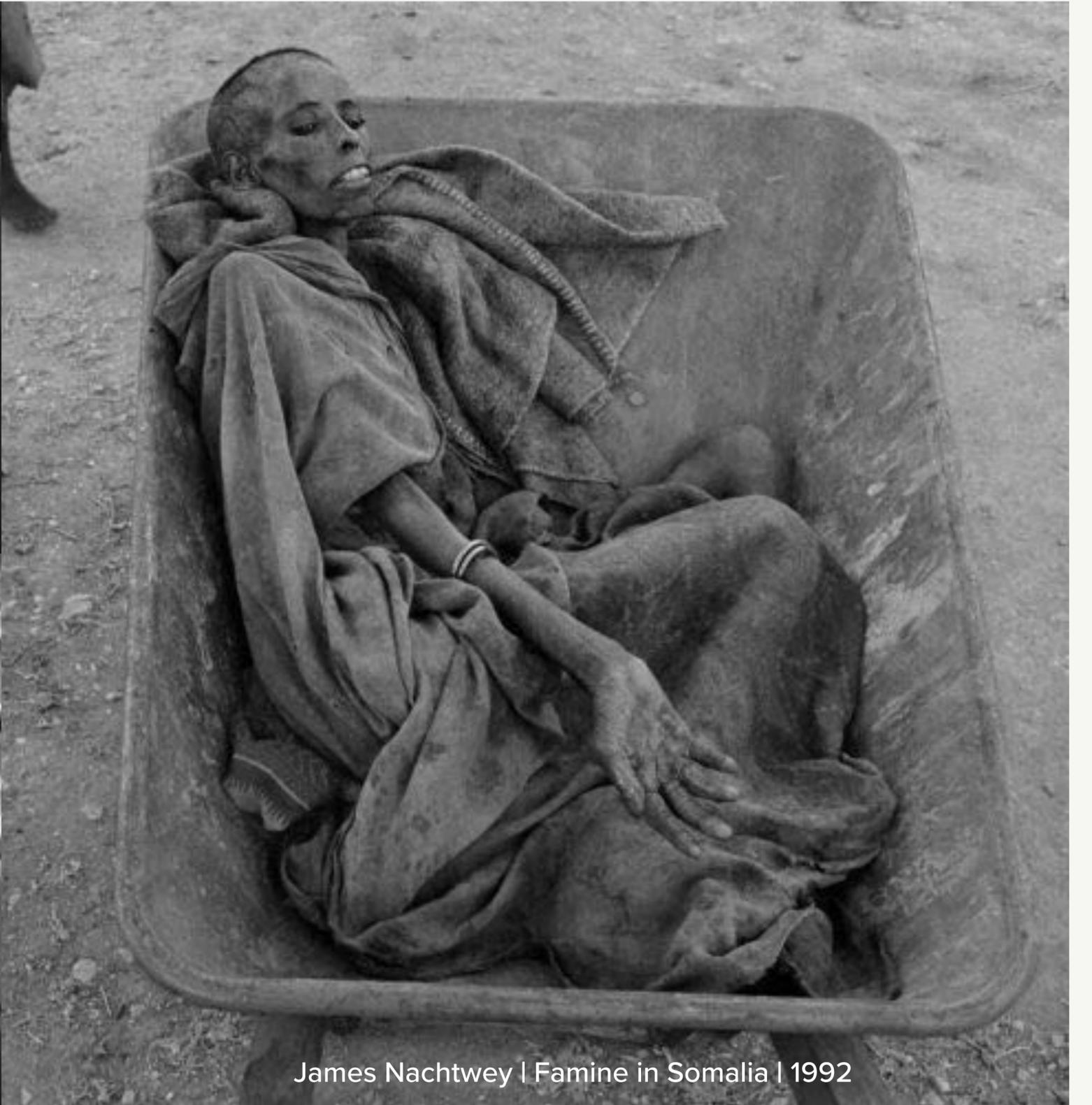




Alfred Eisenstaedt | Inaugural Ball | 1961



Eddie Adams | Saigon execution | 1968



James Nachtwey | Famine in Somalia | 1992



Photojournalism in the Age of New Media

As new media tools and social networks have become more widely utilized, the powerful images of the world's crises are delivered directly to the laptops and smartphones of people around the globe.

New media works quickly, but Verification can be a technical or legal obstacle for photojournalists and news agencies because *it's difficult to verify the original photographer, place, time, and subject.*

In places like Libya where journalists are outlawed -- or disaster zones like post-quake Haiti where communications were interrupted -- the linkages of social networks can be turned into a means of observing and communicating (*or, in the case of a tech-savvy dictatorship, surveilling*) the origins of political unrest or the makings of a world historical moment. But, new media also comes with challenges for photojournalists: **while a single snapshot may tell a thousand-word story, the trick is to get that story right.** Citizen journalists on the ground **do not necessarily create the narrative storytelling at the heart of valuable photojournalism.**

With the rise of photos online, photographers are much less needed in newsrooms, and jobs are being reduced due to the rise of smart phones and all the photos being uploaded online. **“It was about the caliber of journalism and the caliber of photography that was being produced. Now we’re willing to accept anything we can afford to buy from someone who’s already there”.**

One of the biggest concerns for major news services like the Associated Press, Getty Images and Reuters is that **an out-of-context photograph can prove disastrous in a post-conflict zone**, which is more likely to happen in the current era.

People take images as truth much more than words, and images can be manipulated. They can be used by someone with a vested interest to frame things in a certain way.

Government manipulation and Propaganda (images of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view) is certainly an issue. The volume and unreliable sources of media makes verification problematic and means that **conflict imagery is often left open to misinterpretation and, subsequently, reactionary violence.** With images, there's a huge danger of producing false impressions or false information with bad analysis.

Original Image



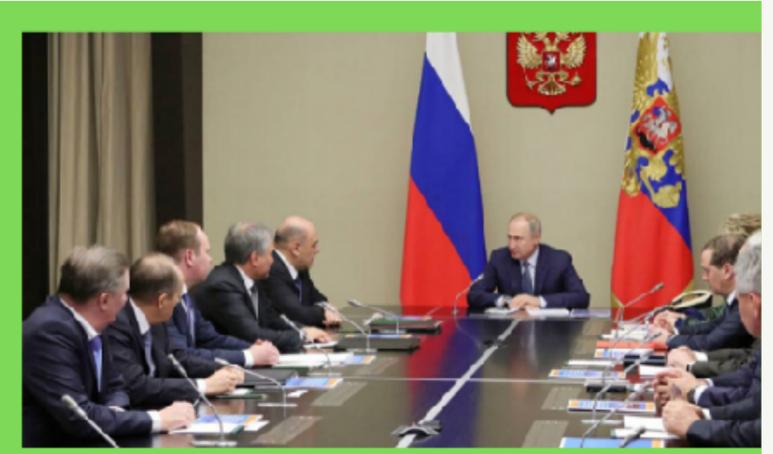
A Satmar Hasidic newspaper from Brooklyn, edited and removed Clinton and Tomason due to its policy of not running photographs with women because of modesty laws.



Manipulated



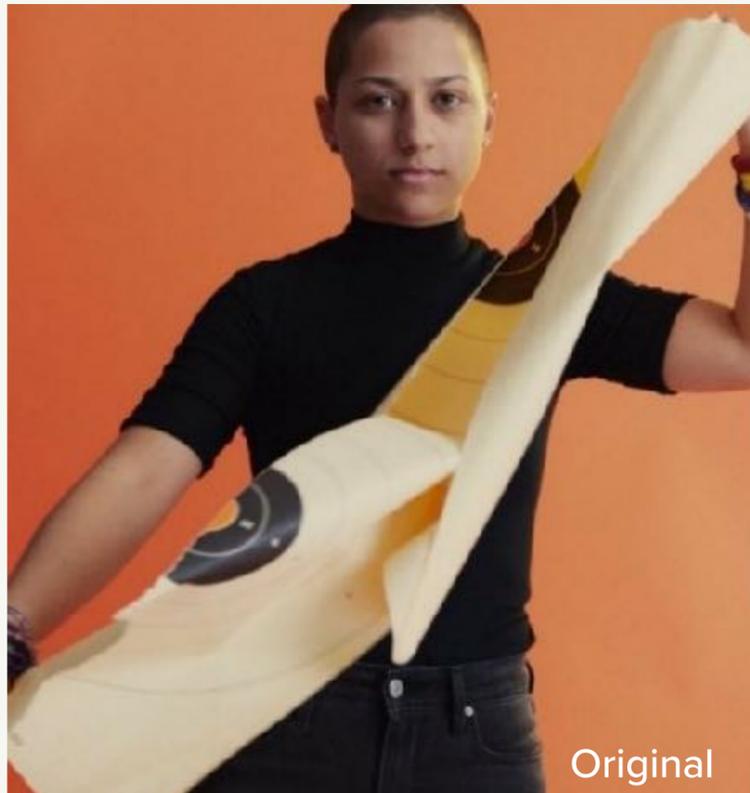
Manipulated (Fake)



Original



Original



Original



Original

The Single Image

Newspapers and magazines are filled with single images that show us glimpses of other people's lives. The most successful of these images are dynamic compositions that are full of energy and life, and brimming with emotions and drama. They can also focus on the absurdities and humor that are everywhere in life. Even though it is impossible to tell a complete story about anything or anyone with one photograph, **single-image documentary photographs** try very hard to do just that.

Your image should focus on people who are reacting to the events that are happening around them. They could be doing their jobs or enjoying their hobbies, performing music or playing a sport. Try to avoid having the subjects look directly into the camera or pose for the photograph.



The Photo Essay

The **photo essay** is similar to a documentary because it tries to capture events that really happened. By illustrating a larger story with several images, the photographer can tell that story more completely, showing more aspects of the story and focusing on the smaller details that might otherwise be left out.

The photographer can also show the sequence of events in the story. Newspapers and magazines run occasional examples, but many photo-essays are intended to become books. These stories require a larger commitment from the photographer.

A photo-essay has room for many different kinds of pictures. Take some overall shots of the setting or scene, with or without people, and you can include shots of the surrounding architecture or landscape. Next, get closer and capture people in the setting doing whatever they do. You can then get closer and focus on your subject's facial expressions. You can also include images of them using tools or instruments and images of those items separately as well.



Street Photography

Street photography can look a lot like photojournalism, except that it doesn't really try to capture specific news events or stories. It is more like art photography. Its goal is to capture a single instant in time, when people and their surroundings come together in interesting and beautiful shapes and combinations.

Street photography can seem somewhat random. What really separates it from other kinds of photography is that the images represent ideas like "injustice" or "strength," instead of just being the reality of what is shown in the picture. **Street photography** combines the subject matter of photojournalism with the formal composition and symbolism of art photography. It also uses **metaphors**, where one thing is used to describe or represent something else. For example a photo of a broken and abandoned doll can be a visual metaphor for lost childhood.



GARRY WINOGRAND, *New York, 1972*



Rules & Ethics

Photojournalism can have a real impact on politics and the public view, and policy making. *Photojournalism should always be seen as the objective view.* With the photographer having an active influence on the scene, it is obvious that ***there is always a subjective view to a degree.***

Identify Your subjects:

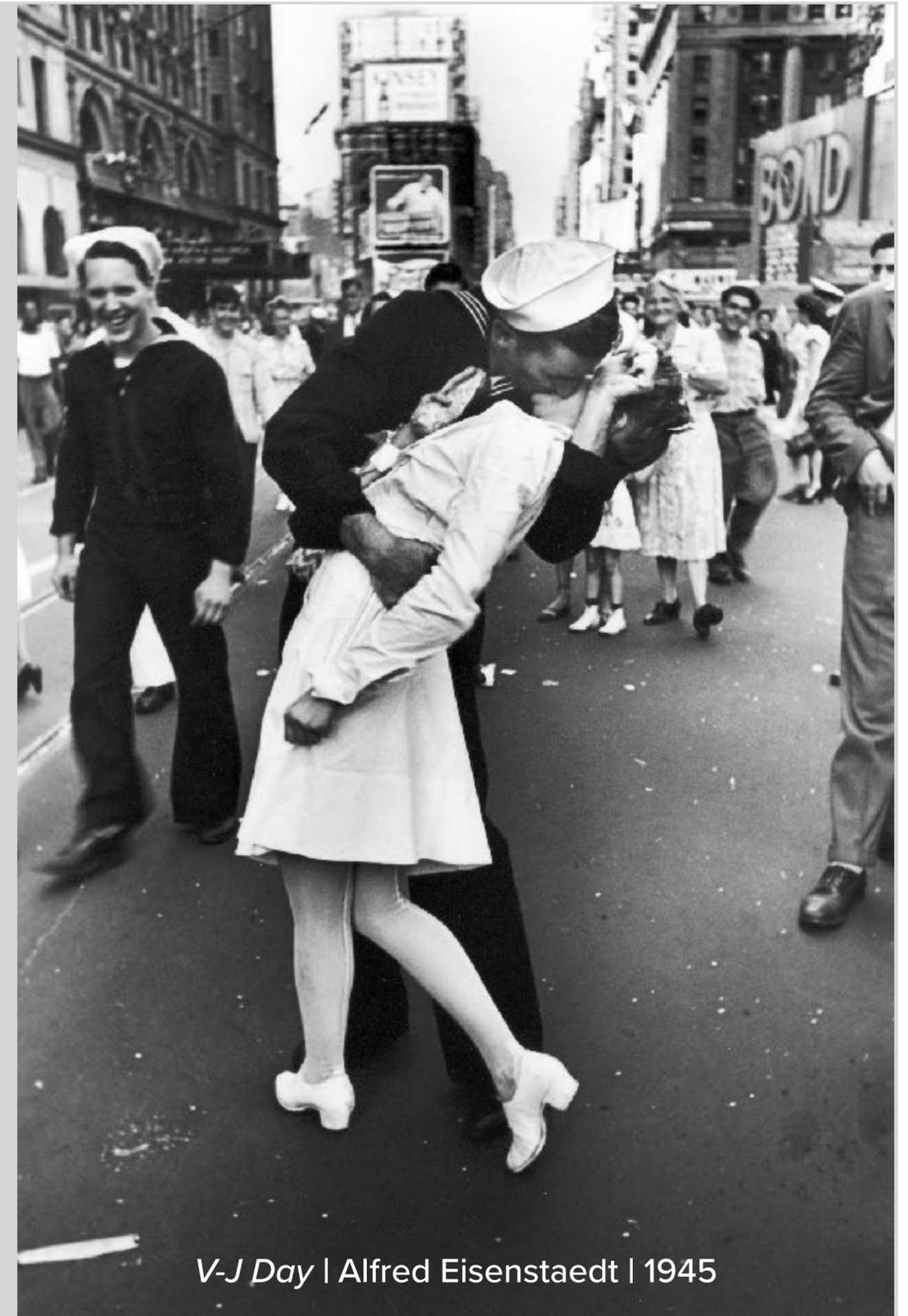
In ***Street Photography***, your subjects or what their background is does not matter. What is more important is the single picture and the story it tells. ***It isn't important if the story reflects the real situation.*** *Street Photography is not about the objective truth*, it is about telling a story and the subjects are only anonymous props.

In ***Photojournalism***, there is a different standard. The story that is told should be as close to the objective truth as possible. If a person is the main subject in a photojournalistic work, then it becomes increasingly important to know their name. The name does add some legitimacy to the picture and the story that it tells. In addition, the photojournalist should also ask for more background information. This helps to ***understand the context of the photograph and the people that are in it.***

Be Candid: Photojournalism is about telling real stories. Those stories can be told the easiest when the photographer simply captures what is happening in front of him. Posing or re-enacting is something that should be left to Hollywood.

Have Guts: To get unique pictures, the photojournalist must enter a world, that most are afraid to. He has to have the guts, to overcome fear and get close to his subjects. Not be afraid of any repercussions and be determined to tell an outstanding story.

Avoid photo manipulation: The pictures are meant to show real scenes, any manipulation, such as photoshop editing, does break this goal.



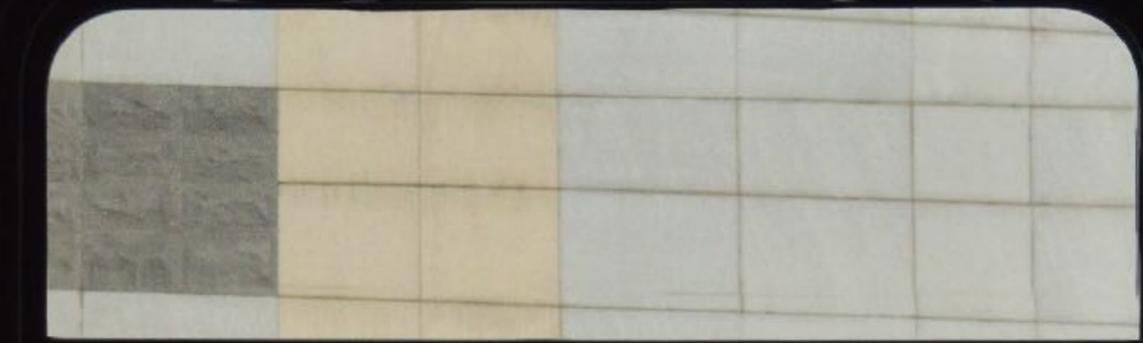
V-J Day | Alfred Eisenstaedt | 1945

Tips & Tricks

Emphasis directs a viewer's attention to what is important in your image. Dominance and subordination can emphasize certain elements in an image. **Dominance** makes some parts of the image more important by making them bigger in the frame, while **subordination** makes other parts less noticeable.

Emphasize the main subject by making it fill the frame. A telephoto lens can do this. Getting close with a wide-angle lens can also make the subject appear bigger than anything else in its surroundings. You can also create dominance by making the subject brighter than its surroundings.

When you are out photographing, look around for parts of a scene that you could use to **frame** and isolate elements in an image. Windows, doorways, arches, and architectural elements are excellent ways to create a frame for your subject within the image.



Key Terms

- **Documentary photography** is photography that tells a story.
- **Bias** is prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.
- **Propaganda** information or images, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.
- **single-image documentary photographs** are dynamic compositions that are full of energy and life, and brimming with emotions and drama, they can focus on the absurdities and humor that are everywhere in life.
- **Photo essay** is similar to a documentary because it tries to capture events that really happened illustrated in a larger story with several images,
- **Street photography** combines the subject matter of photojournalism with the formal composition and symbolism of art photography.
- **Dominance** makes some parts of the image more important by making them bigger in the frame

- **Subordination** makes parts less noticeable in the image.

To Do:

- Add to your Google Doc of the Key Terms for Class.
- Take Google Quiz.
- **Assignment:** Create 3 stand alone images that tells enough about a person or event that a viewer can understand what is occurring in the photograph. It should feature one person or a small group of people in a setting that explains something about the event the image captures. The subject and background should both be in focus. Post the images, along with a title for each on blog **titled:** *The Single Image*

