

In Our Own Image Education Resource

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Photo Museum Ireland

Introduction

At the Gallery of Photography our goal is to establish the canon of Irish Photography and situate the development of photography in Ireland within broader technical, historical and artistic developments internationally. In Our Own Image exhibition at Dublin castle brings together for the first time a dazzling array of photos. It features photographs across a broad spectrum of Irish life that give us an insight into the significant role that the medium has played in our social and political evolution.

This resource is aimed mostly for secondary school students but may also be suitable for pupils in 5th and 6th class primary and for Youthreach students and adult education. It can be downloaded as and used as an interactive workbook.

Instructions

Download the set of resources and high resolution photographs.

Begin by looking at photographs and discussing first impressions. Don't reveal the caption for the photograph until later.

Use the grid and Example 1 to develop a vocabulary in relation to photography and visual thinking.

Use the Glossary of Photography Terms to help build a vocabulary.

Explore the Gallery of Photography Timeline to explore the technical and social development of photography in Ireland Timeline Demo

Use the Timeline Education Resources
<https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/educational-resources/>

Engage with other archives and exhibition partners listed in the educational resources. There is also a longer list of resources at the very end.

Technical Approach

ISO
Aperture.
Shutter Speed.
Lighting.
Type of camera.
Tripod used?
Film or digital?
Colour or black and white film.

Idea

What genre, style or artistic approach to photography? (For example is it a family portrait or an example of pictorialism, documentary etc)

What ideas inspired the making of the image?
Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Does the photograph contain any symbol or metaphors?

Visual Aspects and Composition

Framing.
Angle of View.
Point of view.
Rule of Thirds.
Golden Section/Ratio.
What is the main subject of the photograph?
Foreground, middle ground, and background.
Color, Shape and Line, Pattern and Texture,
Light and Dark (Tone).
Movement (Is there a sense of anything moving in the photograph?)
Focus (What areas are sharp and clear and what areas are blurry?)
Balance (Do you think all the elements work well together in the frame?)

Context

Local, national or international context?
Where was the photograph taken?
Why was the photograph taken?
When was it taken? Historical context.
Does the caption or text with the photograph give you more information about it?
What social, political or economic events inspired the making of the image?
What do we know about the photographer?
Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Credit and copyright information?



Mary Rosse's three sons, Clere, Randal and Charles, and Jane Knox (sister of Lord Rosse) at the mouth of the Leviathan telescope, c.1858

Technical Approach

ISO? - Very low, about 5.

Aperture? - A small aperture and shallow depth of field is used as the background and foreground are out of focus.

Shutter Speed? - A slow shutter speed was used. We know this because one of the children is out of focus. A high shutter speed is needed to capture movement without blurring.

Lighting? - Natural Daylight.

Type of camera? - View Camera.

Tripod used? - Yes tripods were needed for cameras until about 1888 when George Eastman Kodak introduced the Kodak #1 which brought photography within reach of millions of people

Film or digital? - Rosse used the wet collodion process and the wax paper process.

Colour or black and white film? - Black and White.

Ideas

What genre, style or artistic approach to photography? (For example is it a family portrait or an example of pictorialism, documentary etc)? - This photograph is a group portrait that also documents important scientific and historical events.

What ideas inspired the making of the image? - Mary Rosse.

Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling? - The two boys look happy and are smiling into the camera.

Does the photograph contain any symbol or metaphors?

Visual Aspects and Composition

Framing? - The mouth of the telescope is centrally placed in the frame as a focal point.

Angle of View? - Wide angle.

Point of view? - Shot from below the subject looking up.

Rule of Thirds. Golden Section/Ratio.

What is the main subject of the photograph? - A family portrait inside a telescope.

Foreground, middleground, and background? - Foreground: Looks like grass or stone. Middleground: Telescope and people. Background: A building and mechanical structure.

Color, Shape and Line, Pattern and Texture, Light and Dark (Tone)? - Very interesting oblongs, lines and circles. A lot of contrast. Interesting textures created by chains, rails, rivets etc.

Movement (Is there a sense of anything moving in the photograph?) - The child with the hat is out of focus indicating they moved during the taking of the photograph.

Focus (What areas are sharp and clear and what areas are blurry?) - The people in the photograph are mostly in focus with the foreground soft.

Balance (Do you think all the elements work well together in the frame?) - Very strong composition with the circle of the telescope opening centered well inside the frame.





Context

Local, national or international context? -

It was taken of the largest telescope in the world, at the time. It was named 'The Leviathan'.

Where was the photograph taken? - Birr Castle, County Offaly.

Why was the photograph taken? -

As a portrait of Mary Rosse's children and her sister. To show the scientific work being done at the castle to a wider audience.

When was it taken? Historical context. - c.1858

Does the caption or text with the photograph give you more information about it? - Mary Rosse's three sons, Clere, Randal and Charles, and Jane Knox (sister of Lord Rosse) at the mouth of the Leviathan telescope, c.1858.

What social, political or economic events inspired the making of the image? During the Victorian era there were many advances in scientific discovery. The famine had just ended. independence was talked about widely.

What do we know about the photographer? Mary Rosse was an internationally acclaimed early pioneer of photography and one of the most admired women in scientific circles of her day. Mary married William Parsons, 3rd Earl of Rosse in 1836 and together they rebuilt the ancestral home, Birr Castle. As early as 1842, they had a daguerreotype apparatus at Birr and established a darkroom in the Castle which is one of the oldest in the world. Starting in the 1840s, they made Birr a center for scientific discovery by building the world's largest telescope there. (Much of the structural ironwork was designed and cast by Mary, who was also skilled blacksmith). Their work programmes supported some 500 local people during the Great Famine.

Credit and copyright information? Courtesy
Birr Castle, Gardens & Science Centre.

Background to Exhibition

IN OUR OWN IMAGE: PHOTOGRAPHY
IN IRELAND 1839 TO THE PRESENT

LAUNCH EXHIBITION FOR OUR YEAR-
LONG PROGRAMME CHARTING THE
HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN IRELAND

Curated by Gallery of Photography Ireland in partnership with the Office of Public Works, Dublin Castle, our In Our Own Image: Photography in Ireland 1839 to the Present survey exhibition charts how the medium has both reflected and shaped Irish cultural identity, from the work of the earliest photographic pioneers up to the emergence of a recognizably modern state. Throughout the period of intense change that characterized Ireland in the late 19th and into the mid-20th century, we see how photography served as a mirror for shifting experiences of what it meant to be Irish. More than that, it also defined the way we saw ourselves, creating an image of life on the island of Ireland that still forms part of our identity today.

Acknowledgments

This education resource has been produced in conjunction with the In Our Own Image - survey of photographic practices in Ireland 2022. We would like to thank all the organizations who have made this possible.

Office of Public Works,
Dublin Castle,
The National Library of Ireland,
The National Museum of Ireland,
National Museums NI,
The National Archives,
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland,
RTÉ Archives,
UCD Archives,
Irish Folklore Commission,
University College Cork,
Sean Sexton Collection,
Creative Ireland,
and the Arts Council of Ireland.

Supported by:
Dublin City Council Commemorative Committee,
The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts,
Gaeltacht, Sport and Media,
The Department of Foreign Affairs,
The Heritage Council of Ireland,
Office of Public Works, Dublin Castle,
Creative Centenaries NI,
RTÉ Supporting the Arts

Resources and Links

Gallery of Photography
<https://www.galleryofphotography.ie/>

Photo Album of the Irish
<https://www.photoalbumoftheirish.com/>

National Library Photography Collections
<https://www.nli.ie/digital-photographs.aspx>

National Library Photography Collections Flickr Stream
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nlireland/>

Dublin City Council Visual Thinking Strategies
<http://www.dublincityartsoffice.ie/supporting-communities/programmes-for-children-young-people/visual-thinking-strategies>

National Folklore Collection
<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbeg>

National Gallery of Ireland
<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/explore-and-learn/schools>

The Library Project
<https://www.thelibraryproject.ie/>

Belfast Exposed
<https://www.belfastexposed.org>

Belfast Photo Festival
<https://www.belfastphotofestival.com/>

Source Magazine
<https://www.source.ie/index.php>

Life Magazine
<https://www.life.com/photographer/>

Photo Pedagogy
<https://www.photopedagogy.com/>

World Press Photo
<https://www.worldpressphoto.org/collection>

Practical Activities
How to Make a Camera Obscura and Darkroom
<https://briancreganphotography.com/How-to-make-a-Pinhole-Camera-or-Camera-Obscura>

John Gunne Cameras in Dublin sells film, develops it and scans it. They also sell some second hand film cameras and reusable film cameras.
<https://www.johngunn.ie/>

Conn's Cameras
<https://connscameras.ie/>

National Museums NI

Education Resource 1

Theme 1:

Early Pioneers.

Curriculum Links

Primary:

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Art, Primary Language, Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE).

Junior Cycle:

History, Visual Art, English, Engineering, Science, Technology, Maths.

Senior Cycle and LCA:

English, Physics, Chemistry, Art, History, Physics and Chemistry, Politics and Society, English and Communication, Maths.



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Photo Museum Ireland

Background

Since its invention in 1839 photography has recorded and shaped of our identity. Early pioneers of photography in Ireland were often members of the aristocracy. They had the education necessary to enable them master the cumbersome early photography techniques - mixing complicated chemicals and make their own prints in their darkrooms. It also took several minutes to take a photograph so you had to stay perfectly still for a very long time!

Many of the pioneering Irish photographers had with connections to scientific and photographic circles abroad and their work was highly regarded. Living a life of privilege in the big houses offered these early photographers access to time and money needed to develop their craft, something not available to most working people. Later the evolution of technology made photography cheaper and more accessible to the masses.

Photography was considered a suitable pastime for women. Excluded from many professions, pioneering Victorian women such as Augusta Dillon and Mary Rosse embraced the new medium to international acclaim. Photographs from this period they turned their cameras on themselves, their families and the world around them record their domestic lives, their families and the world around them.

Mary Parsons, Countess of Rosse

Mary Rosse (1813–1885) was an internationally acclaimed early pioneer of photography and one of the most admired women in scientific circles of her day. Mary married William Parsons, 3rd Earl of Rosse in 1836 and together they rebuilt the ancestral home, Birr Castle. As early as 1842, they had a daguerreotype apparatus at Birr and established a darkroom in the Castle which is one of the oldest in the world. Starting in the 1840s, they made Birr a center for scientific discovery by building the world's largest telescope there. (Much of the structural ironwork was designed and cast by Mary, who was also skilled blacksmith). Their work programmes supported some 500 local people during the Great Famine.



Find Out More

The pioneering work of Mary Rosse and her husband, The Earl of Rosse.

<https://birrcastle.com/photography/>



Explore

Write about this photograph using the grid. Choose two aspects from each of the four section headings and write about them.

Use the Photography Glossary ([hyperlink here](#)),

Timeline
<https://timeline.galleryofphotography>.

and the GPI Exhibitions Archive <https://www.galleryofphotography.ie/exhibitions-archiv>

to broaden your understanding and deepen your knowledge.

Mary Rosse's three sons, Cleve, Randal and Charles, and Jane Knox (sister of Lord Rosse) at the mouth of the Leviathan telescope, c.1858

Technical Approach

ISO
 Aperture.
 Shutter Speed.
 Lighting.
 Type of camera.
 Tripod used?
 Film or digital?
 Colour or black and white film.

Idea

What genre, style or artistic approach to photography? (For example is it a family portrait or an example of pictorialism, documentary etc)

What ideas inspired the making of the image?
 Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
 Does the photograph contain any symbol or metaphors?

Visual Aspects and Composition

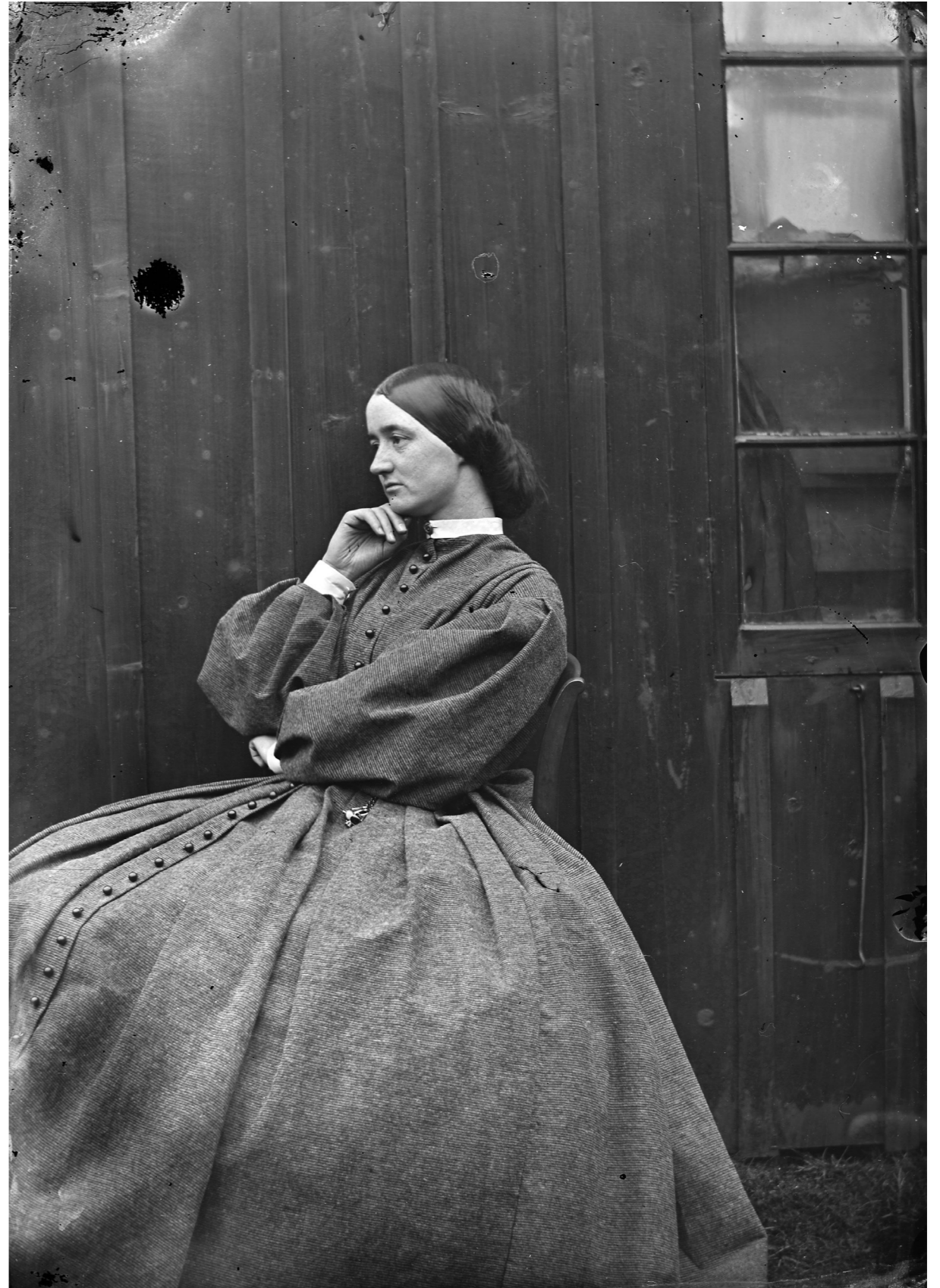
Framing.
 Angle of View.
 Point of view.
 Rule of Thirds.
 Golden Section/Ratio.
 What is the main subject of the photograph?
 Foreground, middle ground, and background.
 Color, Shape and Line, Pattern and Texture, Light and Dark (Tone).
 Movement (Is there a sense of anything moving in the photograph?)
 Focus (What areas are sharp and clear and what areas are blurry?)
 Balance (Do you think all the elements work well together in the frame?)

Context

Local, national or international context?
 Where was the photograph taken?
 Why was the photograph taken?
 When was it taken? Historical context.
 Does the caption or text with the photograph give you more information about it?
 What social, political or economic events inspired the making of the image?
 What do we know about the photographer?
 Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
 Credit and copyright information?

Augusta Crofton Dillon

Augusta Crofton Dillon (1839 - 1928) of Mote Park House, Roscommon and Clonbrock House, Ahascragh, Galway. Crofton was a talented amateur photographer. Her work is included in one of Ireland's finest photographic collections - the Clonbrock Collection at the National Library of Ireland - and is highly sought-after by private collectors worldwide.



Self-portrait of Augusta Crofton in front of the Collodin House, Mote Park, County Roscommon, c. 1865 CLON 21. Clonbrock Collection, Courtesy National Library of Ireland

Early Photographs from the Sean Sexton Collection

Born in Co. Clare, Sean Sexton is one of the world's pre-eminent collectors of photography. Amassed over forty years, his archive of Irish historical photographs is regarded as the best private collection in existence. While it includes rare original works from the immediate post-Famine era when photography was primarily the preserve of the privileged, Sexton has made it his mission to uncover the faces and places of the ordinary people. Courtesy Sean Sexton Collection



Unknown photographer
Ambrotype of a labourer, c.1855
Courtesy Sean Sexton Collection



Questions for Discussion

What were the challenges facing the early pioneers of photography in Ireland?

Can you think of some reasons why many of them were women?

What were the preferred themes for these pioneers and why do you think they chose them? Compare them to themes explored by professional and amateur female photographers in popular culture and social media today?

What other subjects do you think these photographers could have chosen? Think about the social and historical context of the time they were working?

Research other pioneers from the exhibition and beyond. Use the Gallery of Photography Timeline to trace and examine the development of photography in Ireland.

Activity

Birr Castle was an important hub for scientific discovery in the nineteenth century. Mary Rosse's darkroom is one of the oldest in the world. Create a Camera obscura at your school like the one in the Gallery of Photography. You can find instructions here on how to make one or a pinhole camera.

<https://briancreganphotography.com/How-to-make-a-Pinhole-Camera-or-Camera-Obscura>

Camera obscura projection and darkroom setup at St. Patrick's Primary School, Hazelhatch. Teacher Mary Fox, artist Brian Cregan. (©Brian Cregan 2019)

Education Resource 2

Theme 2:

Photography as an Eyewitness.

Curriculum Links

Primary:

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Art, Primary Language, Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE).

Junior Cycle:

History, Visual Art, English, Maths.

Senior Cycle and LCA:

English, Art, History, Politics and Society, English and Communication, Maths.



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Photo Museum Ireland

Background

Photography's role as an eyewitness to history expanded rapidly in the nineteenth century. Its ability to record an accurate image soon made it popular for portraits, documenting scientific discoveries, and to record historic events. Photographs were also used as evidence in campaigns for social justice and reform. We can describe these types of photographs as being 'straight' or 'documentary' and representing reality more closely.



Thomas Joseph Wynne (1838 – 1893) was an American – Irish photographer and shopkeeper. In 1867 he established a successful photographic studio in his shop on Market St. Castlebar, Co. Mayo. This fascinating self promotional image attests, Wynne was involved in photography at all levels – taking portraits and commissions, copying manuscripts, as well as selling fine art reproductions.

Wynne Photography Collection, WYN1, Courtesy National Library of Ireland.

Photography as Eyewitness



James Glass was a photographer from Derry city who took photographs of the bleak conditions endured by tenant farmers. Some of his images were used in an important trial during the Land Wars as a testimony on how people lived at the time in rural Ireland.

Explore

Write about the photograph using the grid on the right. Choose two aspects from each of the four section headings and write about them.

Use the Photography Glossary ([hyperlink here](#)),

Timeline
<https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/> <https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/educational-resources/>

and the GPI Exhibitions Archive
<https://www.galleryofphotography.ie/exhibitions-archive>

to broaden your understanding and deepen your knowledge.

Example 2: Photograph 5 in Glass album:
 View of ruinous Gweedore dwelling with two women working in the ground in the foreground.

Technical Approach

- ISO
- Aperture.
- Shutter Speed.
- Lighting.
- Type of camera.
- Tripod used?
- Film or digital?
- Colour or black and white film.

Idea

What genre, style or artistic approach to photography? (For example is it a family portrait or an example of pictorialism, documentary etc)

What ideas inspired the making of the image?
 Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
 Does the photograph contain any symbol or metaphors?

Visual Aspects and Composition

- Framing.
- Angle of View.
- Point of view.
- Rule of Thirds.
- Golden Section/Ratio.
- What is the main subject of the photograph?
- Foreground, middle ground, and background.
- Color, Shape and Line, Pattern and Texture, Light and Dark (Tone).
- Movement (Is there a sense of anything moving in the photograph?)
- Focus (What areas are sharp and clear and what areas are blurry?)
- Balance (Do you think all the elements work well together in the frame?)

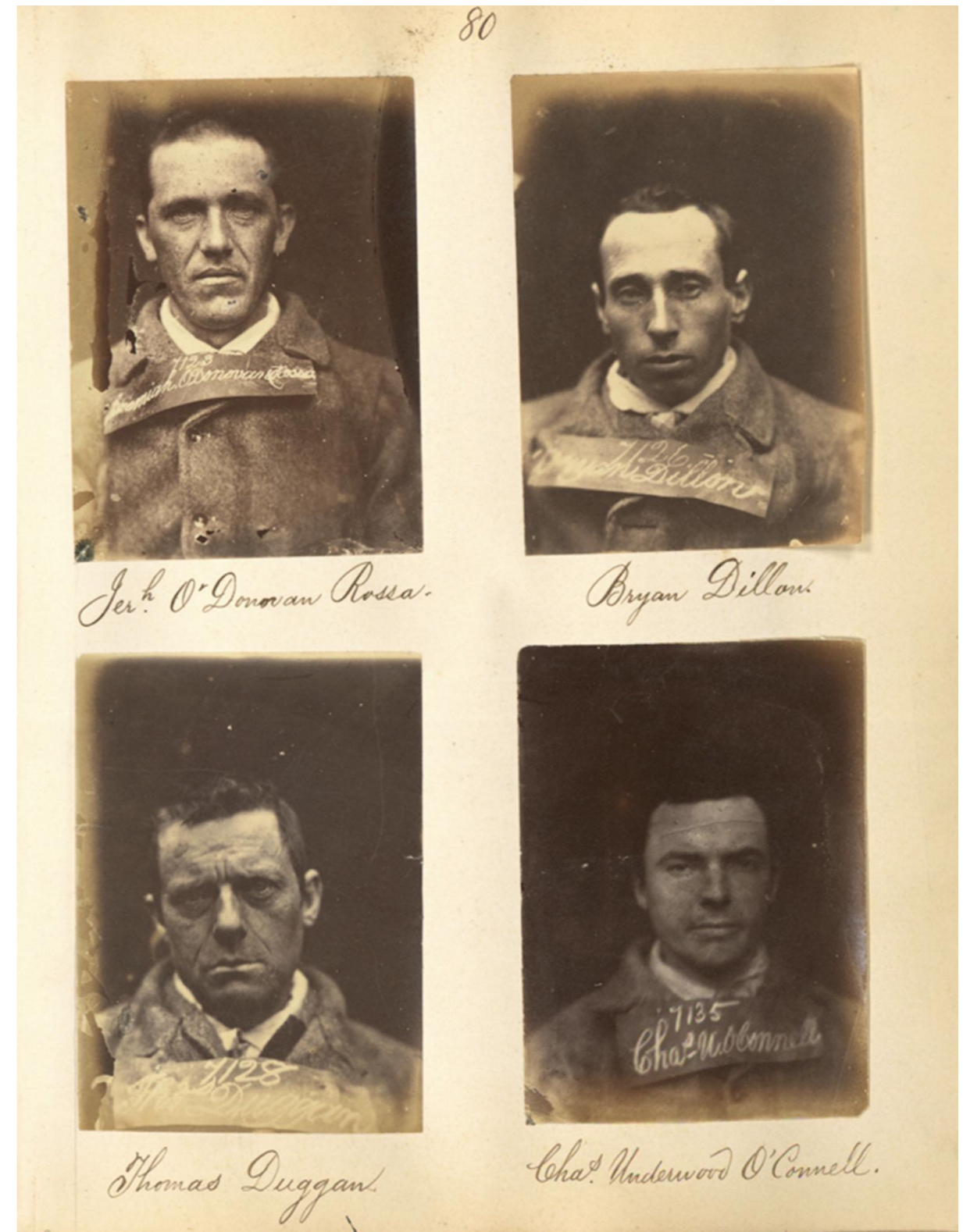
Context

- Local, national or international context?
- Where was the photograph taken?
- Why was the photograph taken?
- When was it taken? Historical context.
- Does the caption or text with the photograph give you more information about it?
- What social, political or economic events inspired the making of the image?
- What do we know about the photographer?
- Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
- Credit and copyright information?

Pages from the 'Larcom Album' show photographs of untried prisoners - suspected Fenians including Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa - that were taken in Mountjoy Gaol, Dublin in 1865-6.

O'Donovan Rossa (top left) wrote about this portrait being taken. He described how he was positioned in front of the camera with a pasteboard pinned to his chest, and jocularly added of the photographer: 'he never had the manners to tell - what artists never failed to tell me - that I made an exceedingly good picture.'

The album dating from 1866 originally belonged to Sir Thomas Aiskew Larcom, the permanent Under Secretary for Ireland, from 1853 to 1869.



Fenian political prisoners, including some of the leaders of the Fenian Brotherhood and its Irish wing, the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, November 1866

MssCol 1694
Courtesy The New York Public Library

Questions for Discussion

Use the timeline to explore the living conditions and social circumstances of people in the decades around the 1870s <https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/>. How do they compare to the scene shown in the James Glass photograph?

Does photography still play an important role in social justice? Can you think of any recent examples?

What is the role of a photojournalist in telling news stories?



Courtyard, Beresford Street, Dublin;
Townsend Street, Dublin;
Street view, Summerhill, Dublin.

These lantern slides were produced by Thomas H. Mason to document urban poverty in Dublin. They were presented by John Cooke to the Dublin Housing Inquiry in 1913 as part of a campaign to improve living conditions for the city's poorest residents. Darkest Dublin Photographic Collection, RSAI Lantern Slide Collection, Box 07. Courtesy Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland

New Tipperary.

During a major dispute between tenants and the landlord on the Smith-Barry estate in Tipperary, the construction of new streets and a market arcade for evicted tenants became national and international news. The National League led a huge drive to publicize and fund the building project, which became known as New Tipperary. The Lawrence Company in Dublin dispatched a photographer to document the events. Credited to Robert French, the images featured in political slide shows and formed the basis of newspaper illustrations at home and abroad.

Dillon Street, New Tipperary, Tipperary Town, c.1890; Parnell New Tipperary, Tipperary Town, c.1890
Lawrence Photographic Collection, L_ROY_02573, L_ROY_02574; L_ROY_02571
Courtesy National Library of Ireland



Activity

Photographers have been involved in social change and reform since the nineteenth century. Photographers like Thomas Holmes Mason, Glass, Dorothea Lange, Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine used it as a tool to expose injustice and inequality, and promote political reform. Contemporary documentary photographers, artists and photojournalists create projects that spotlight issues around environment, climate change, poverty, human rights and inequality.

Create a poster, short video, animation or digital story about an issue that interests you.

Begin by working in pairs or groups to brainstorm ideas and explore projects by artists and photojournalists. Use photographs, video clips and illustrations you have created and assemble them in a way that highlights your issue. Present your final piece to the class.

<https://dublintermentexperience.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/orla-fitzpatrick-shows-a-picture-can-speak-1000-words/>



Find Out More about this Image and Lewis Hine's campaign to end child labour in America.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/nclc.02873/>

<https://www.europeana.eu/ga/blog/children-in-the-machine-lewis-hines-photography-and-child-labour-reform>

Fourteen year old spinner in a Brazos Valley Cotton Mill at West. Violation of the law. Matty Lott runs six sides. See family group and their story. Location: West, Texas. colour digital file from b&w original print

Education Resource 3

Theme 3:

Photography and Society.

Curriculum Links

Primary:

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Art, Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE).

Junior Cycle:

History, Visual Art, English, Engineering, Science.

Senior Cycle and LCA:

English, Art, History, Politics and Society, English and Communication.



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Photo Museum Ireland

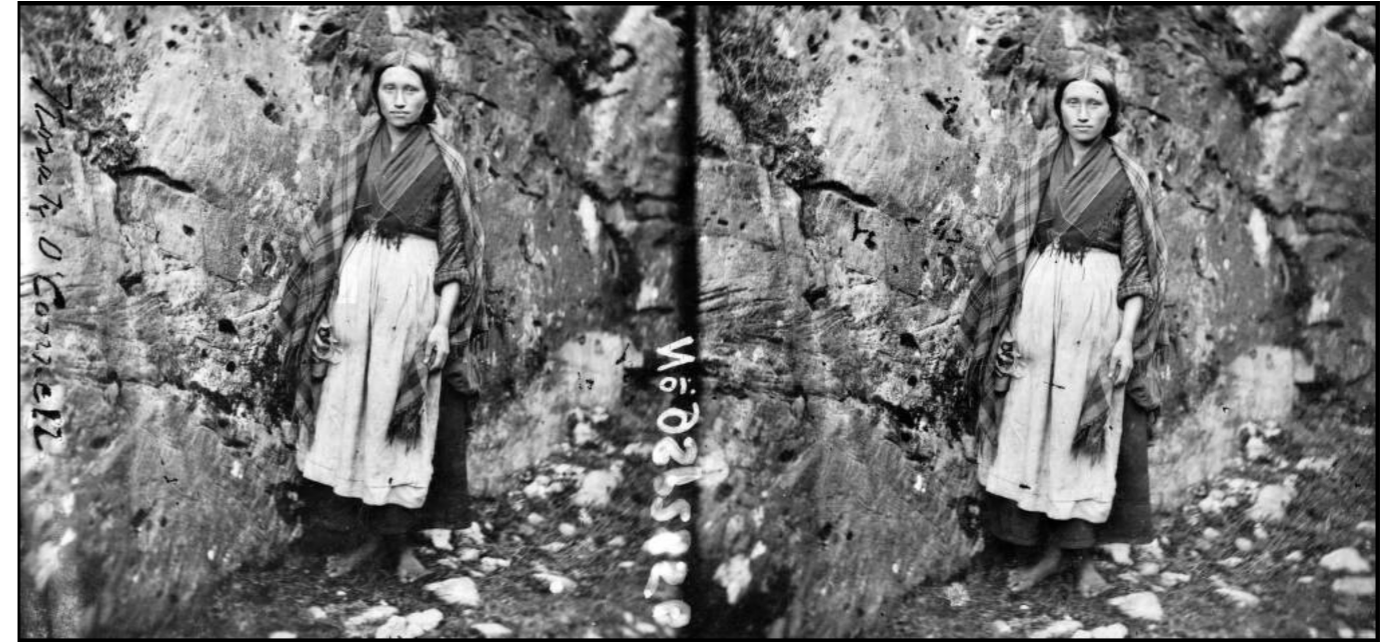
Background

Many photographers like J.M. Synge, Robert Welch and Jane Shackelton documented heritage sites in the south and west of Ireland. Access to these places was helped by the expansion of the railways. In towns like Killarney and Westport, colonial tourism quickly developed around these areas of natural beauty. The idea of Irishness was increasingly commodified through photography, such as with popular images of the 'Gap Girls,' made for tourists. These stereoscope images were a very popular type of photography that gave a three dimensional effect when viewed with a special device.

Find Out More

Watch the story of stereoscopy and the Victorian fascination with 3D photographs here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1_OVfmfNDo



Explore

Write about this photograph using the grid. Choose two aspects from each of the four section headings and write about them.

Use the Photography Glossary ([hyperlink here](#)),

Timeline,
<https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/>

and the GPI Exhibitions Archive
<https://www.galleryofphotography.ie/exhibitions-archive>

to broaden your understanding and deepen your knowledge.

Frederick Holland Mares (fl.1865-1875)
or James Simonton (fl.1862-1863)

These portraits of young women at the Gap of Dunloe, Killarney, Co. Kerry, are one of the first instances where images of Irishness were commodified for the tourist market. Made into stereocards by the Lawrence Company, many of the real-life 'Gap Girls' sold these or similar photographs as part of their regular trade to tourists.

The Stereo Pairs Photograph Collection, STP_2851, STP_2853, STP_2855, STP_2856, STP_2857, STP_2854
Courtesy National Library of Ireland

Technical Approach

ISO
Aperture.
Shutter Speed.
Lighting.
Type of camera.
Tripod used?
Film or digital?
Colour or black and white film.

Visual Aspects and Composition

Framing.
Angle of View.
Point of view.
Rule of Thirds.
Golden Section/Ratio.
What is the main subject of the photograph?
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Movement (Is there a sense of anything moving in the photograph?)
Focus (What areas are sharp and clear and what areas are blurry?)
Balance (Do you think all the elements work well together in the frame?)

Idea

What genre, style or artistic approach to photography? (For example is it a family portrait or an example of pictorialism, documentary etc)

What ideas inspired the making of the image?
Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Does the photograph contain any symbol or metaphors?

Context

Local, national or international context?
Where was the photograph taken?
Why was the photograph taken?
When was it taken? Historical context.
Does the caption or text with the photograph give you more information about it?
What social, political or economic events inspired the making of the image?
What do we know about the photographer?
Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Credit and copyright information?



MEVAGH CROSS AND LUCKY STONE, ROSAPENNA, CO. DONEGAL. RW. 2275.

Robert John Welch (1859–1936)
Mevagh Cross, Rosapenna, Co. Donegal

Strabane-born Robert John Welch (1859–1936) established his active commercial photography business in Belfast in 1883. Between 1894 and 1904, he was the official photographer to the shipbuilding firm of Harland & Wolff, documenting the construction and launch of the Titanic and the Olympic. Welch also worked for the Congested Districts Board. A keen naturalist and antiquarian, he produced studies of ethnographic and archaeological subjects, and also worked extensively for the Congested Districts Board. Seen together, Welch's images have an artistry and a striking sense of modernity that still resonates today.

Welch Collection, BELUMYW.04.699
Courtesy of National Museums NI

Questions for Discussion

Compare the photographs of the 'Gap Girls' with other portraits on the Timeline.

Do you think the young women photographed in the 'Gap Girls' series were taken advantage of or do you think they enjoyed their image being shared with tourists?

Describe the point of view of the photographer.



Activities

An environmental portrait tells us more about a subject through using a location that has a special meaning for them or including props that relate to who they are and the things they are interested in. We call this creating context in photography.

Inspired by the Gap Girls series, create your own environmental portrait with a partner or as part of a group. Think carefully about the story you want to tell and brainstorm how you will make it happen. Consider composition and framing, location, lighting and props. Create depth in your image by carefully choosing how the foreground, middle-ground and background work together to create a series of layers.

Use the Rule of Thirds to position your subject, horizon line and other important elements in your composition. Think of using a place with interesting shapes, colours and textures. Leading Lines are a composition technique used to help draw the viewer into your image toward the subject of your photograph. The lines can be natural or man made for example a road, a river or the lines of a building.

It might be helpful to look through some projects like these in the GPI archive.

<https://www.galleryofphotography.ie/national-photography-collection-1>

Photographer unknown (possibly Robert Welch)
Commercial lantern slides of Irish scenes, c.1900
Courtesy Sean Sexton Collection

Education Resource 3

Theme 4:

Modernism and the 20th Century.

Curriculum Links

Primary:

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Art, Primary Language, Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE)

Junior Cycle:

History, Visual Art, English, Engineering, Science, Technology.

Senior Cycle and LCA:

English, Art, History, Politics and Society, English and Communication.



Modernism and
the 20th Century

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Photo Museum Ireland

Background

In the 1920s with the invention of the lightweight Leica, cameras became more portable, enabling photographers to explore new ways of looking to capture a moment in time. It heralded a new era of experimentation that was inspired by the avant-garde approaches to image making in the art world. In Ireland the new state was distinctly modern and dynamic. Careful use was made of photography in the framing of public spectacles and nation-building projects during the first decades of the state's existence. Almost in spite of itself, Ireland couldn't avoid embracing the modern world. It is in this context that the practice of photography as an artistic pursuit begins to take shape. Fuelled by the desire to visualize the realities of a rapidly changing country, photographers started to move beyond documentation, asking questions both of national identity and of their medium in the process. This meant rethinking what Irishness could look like and how it might be seen – these are questions we still face today, and that still animate the diverse practices of Irish photography.



Explore

Write about this photograph using the grid below. Choose two aspects from each of the four section headings and write about them. Use the Photography Glossary, Timeline Timeline Demo <https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/educational-resources/> and the GPI Exhibitions Archive Exhibitions Archive — Gallery of Photography Ireland to broaden your understanding and deepen your knowledge.

Technical Approach

ISO
Aperture.
Shutter Speed.
Lighting.
Type of camera.
Tripod used?
Film or digital?
Colour or black and white film.

Visual Aspects and Composition

Framing.
Angle of View.
Point of view.
Rule of Thirds.
Golden Section/Ratio.
What is the main subject of the photograph?
Foreground, middle ground, and background.
Color, Shape and Line, Pattern and Texture, Light and Dark (Tone).
Movement (Is there a sense of anything moving in the photograph?)
Focus (What areas are sharp and clear and what areas are blurry?)
Balance (Do you think all the elements work well together in the frame?)

Idea

What genre, style or artistic approach to photography? (For example is it a family portrait or an example of pictorialism, documentary etc)

What ideas inspired the making of the image?
Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Does the photograph contain any symbol or metaphors?

Context

Local, national or international context?
Where was the photograph taken?
Why was the photograph taken?
When was it taken? Historical context.
Does the caption or text with the photograph give you more information about it?
What social, political or economic events inspired the making of the image?
What do we know about the photographer?
Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Credit and copyright information?



Photographer unknown.

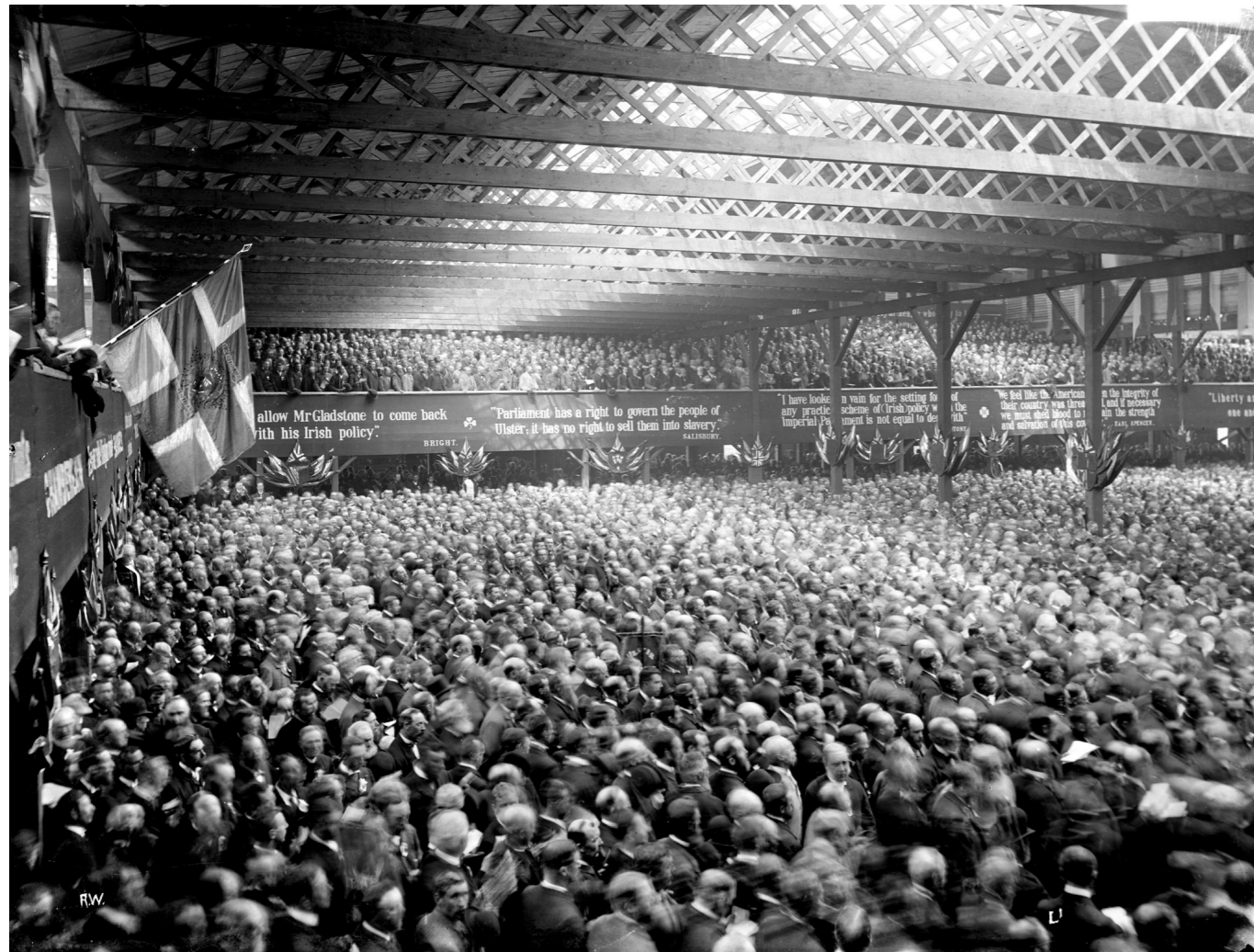
Part of the funeral procession of Dick Cullen, a soldier in the 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, IRA, 1920 or 1921

NMIHE-EW-2003-001
Courtesy National Museum of Ireland

Questions for Discussion

What are the key techniques that photographers used from the 1920s onwards?

Can you identify approaches to photography in Ireland in terms of themes and techniques from the 1920s onwards?



Robert John Welch (1859–1936)

Ulster Unionist Convention pavilion. Interior view during Convention, showing a section of the audience.

Date unknown.

Welch Collection, BELUMYW10.7910
Courtesy National Museums NI

Activities

Photograph a natural or man made landscape. It can be an area of natural beauty or a local landmark. Try framing your subject in different ways by using a wide shot, medium shot and close up. Shoot from above (Bird's Eye View: Using a camera angle from above that points down and over your subject.) Or below (Worm's Eye View: Using a camera angle low to the ground but pointing upwards.)

Links

A-Z of Modernism in Photography

AZ of Modernist Photography | Tate:
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photography/a-z>

Education Resource 5

Theme 5:

Contemporary Approaches.

Curriculum Links

Primary:

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Art, Primary Language, Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE)

Junior Cycle:

History, Visual Art, English.

Senior Cycle and LCA:

English, Art, History, Politics and Society, English and Communication.



Contemporary
Approaches

Copyright Brian Cregan /
Photo Museum Ireland

Background

As we follow the story of photography we see its influence grow in Irish society over time. Fuelled by the desire to visualize the realities of a rapidly changing country, photographers started to move beyond documentation, asking questions both of national identity and of their medium in the process. This meant rethinking what Irishness could look like and how it might be seen – these are questions we still face today, and that still animate the diverse practices of Irish photography. At The Gallery of Photography the new National Photography Collection cuts across photographic styles and periods to foster a dialogue between the wide range of approaches that make up Irish photography. It is a space where the work of different artists can form a dialogue across time and connect with new audiences. This is particularly significant as we mark the centenary of the state, providing an opportunity to reflect on how photographers have grappled with our shared histories and how diverse Irish cultural identities have been represented.

Explore

Write about this photograph using the grid below. Choose two aspects from each of the four section headings and write about them. Use the Photography Glossary, Timeline

<https://timeline.galleryofphotography.ie/>

and the GPI Exhibitions Archive

<https://www.galleryofphotography.ie/>

exhibitions-archive to broaden your understanding and deepen your knowledge.



Find Out More

Get a behind the scenes insight into how Mandy O' Neill collaborated with a group of young women in Dublin to create a striking series of Portraits.

<http://www.mandyooneill.ie/new-gallery-1/mg9539ds7f6g6yphze2qva6hffukua>

Portrait of Tulu from the series 'Where Will We Meet?' 2021
©Mandy O' Neill

Technical Approach

ISO
Aperture.
Shutter Speed.
Lighting.
Type of camera.
Tripod used?
Film or digital?
Colour or black and white film.

Visual Aspects and Composition

Framing.
Angle of View.
Point of view.
Rule of Thirds.
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Does the photograph invoke a mood or feeling?
Credit and copyright information?

Activity

Using the text and images in Mandy O' Neill's notebook, from 'Where Will We Meet?' make a list of the ideas, inspiration and challenges she faced when making portraits with young people. How does she approach working with them in terms technical and creative choices she makes as a photographer. How does the voice of the young people involved influence the work? What other challenges were there during the making of the work?

Try working in pairs or small groups to make some portraits of each other based on your research.

<http://www.mandyoneill.ie/new-gallery-1/mg9539ds7f6g6yphze2qva6hffukua>

