

FINDING FRANCESCA

A guide to supporting young
people to explore ARTIST ROOMS,
Francesca Woodman

ARTIST
ROOMS

ON TOUR WITH THE

ArtFund♥



TATE

NATIONAL
GALLERIES
SCOTLAND

About this resource

“Finding Francesca” is for anyone working with young people and aims to support you in working with your groups to explore the ARTIST ROOMS collection of photographs by American photographer, Francesca Woodman.

The resource has been developed by Heritage Learning, the Ferens Art Gallery and Future Ferens, a group of volunteers age 18-25 who undertake project work to make the gallery more accessible and attractive to younger audiences, with generous support from the Art Fund and the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

In this resource, you will find information, activities and project case studies to help you investigate the ARTIST ROOMS Francesca Woodman exhibition with young people and make your own creative responses. Some young people may never have visited an art gallery before, whilst others may be regulars at local cultural events and exhibitions.

We hope this resource will help you support, challenge and inspire them all.

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What is ARTIST ROOMS?

ARTIST ROOMS is a new collection of international contemporary art which has been created through one of the largest and most imaginative gifts of art ever made to museums in Britain. The gift was made by Anthony d'Offay, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the Scottish and British Governments in 2008.

ARTIST ROOMS On Tour is an inspired partnership with the Art Fund - the fundraising charity for works of art, making the ARTIST ROOMS collection of international contemporary art available to galleries throughout the UK.

To see the full ARTIST ROOMS collection please visit:

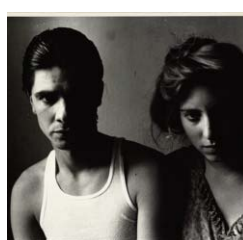
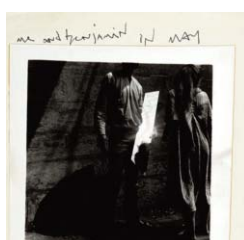
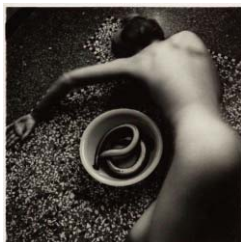
www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms

www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms

To find out more information about ARTIST ROOMS On Tour please visit:

www.artfund.org/artistrooms

Who is Francesca Woodman?



 [click to view these images online](#)



Born in Denver, Colorado on the 3rd April 1958, Francesca Woodman is best known for her black & white unconventional portraits and self-portraits.

Woodman first started taking photographs in her early teens, whilst at boarding school in Massachusetts and during her short career took over 800 pictures. Many of her photographs were taken in Italy where she stayed with her family in the Florentine countryside and at Rhode Island, USA where she studied at the School Of Design.

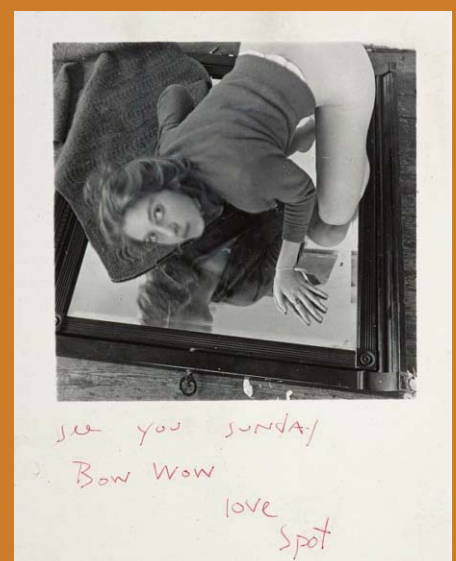
Francesca suffered from depression following a move to New York in 1979 and in 1981, after a failed relationship she tragically took her own life at the tender age of 22.

Her legacy is probably one of the most unique and singular collections of photographs ever created by somebody so young. The majority of the 18 Francesca Woodman photographs in the ARTIST ROOMS collection were acquired by Anthony d'Offay from her former boyfriend Benjamin P Moore. Many of the images include intimate messages to him written in their margins, these messages make up part of the artwork.

Woodman photographed herself, often nude, but her pictures are not self portraits in the traditional sense. She is usually seen half hidden or obscured by slow exposures that blur her figure into a ghostly presence. These beautiful and yet unsettling images evoke a sense of transience and timelessness. They also



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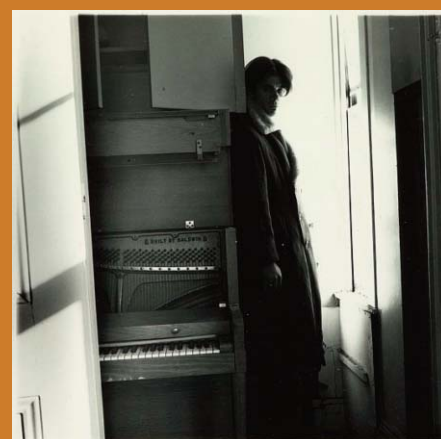
convey an underlying sense of human fragility, the latter heightened by the photographs' intimate scale.

Woodman continuously explored and tested the medium of photography. In particular she challenged the idea of the camera's fixing of time and space which was then taken as one of its fundamentals. Her playful manipulation of the medium was combined with carefully selected props, vintage clothing and decaying interiors adding gothic atmosphere.

Her importance as an innovator is all the more significant when viewed in the context of the 1970s at which time the status of photography was still regarded as marginal compared to both painting and sculpture. Her example set a new precedent and can be seen to have led the way for a successive generation of American artists such as photographers Cindy Sherman and Nan Goldin.

She has been described as the last great Modernist photographer, working within the tradition established by leading Surrealist artists such as Man Ray and Claude Cahun. Her interest in Surrealism is apparent in the themes and style of her work and was drawn from a strong awareness of European modernism due to her home life. She was raised bilingually and spent summers at her parents farmhouse near Florence. Italian culture and her family were amongst the most significant influences on her artistic development.

Her father, George Woodman, was a painter and photographer and her mother a ceramicist sculptor so

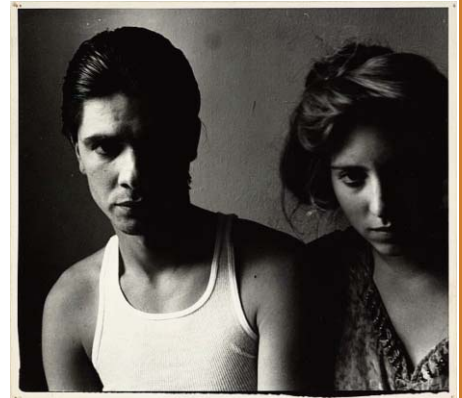


'She has been described as the last great Modernist photographer.'



she was brought up in an environment that was unusually receptive to art and where making and talking about it were second nature. Her father lectured in photography at the University of Boulder in Colorado and the family hosted many visiting artists and critics such as David Hockney and Richard Serra through this connection.

Today many prestigious galleries around the world have Francesca Woodman photographs in their collections, including The National Galleries of Scotland. The Ferens Art Gallery in Hull acquired five Woodman prints for their permanent collection as part of this project.



Why does Francesca Woodman appeal to young people?

Age and Experience

Francesca Woodman's entire body of work was produced as a young person. In fact, her entire portfolio was created over just eight short years.

Her photographs explore many themes that affect young people who are in transition from adolescence to adulthood, such as relationships, sexuality, questions of self, body image, alienation, isolation and confusion or ambiguity about personal identity.



The "Die Young" Effect

Those who die young are always something of an enigma, leaving us with questions of what might have been had they lived. Suicide is a taboo subject but one that draws fascination, especially when the perpetrator is well known and talented. Just think of Ian Curtis, Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse or Sylvia Plath. Like them, Francesca died young, aged just 22 and left behind an exceptional legacy.

Her images capture a life cut short which makes them poignant today. Her ghostly presence within the photographs, whether blurred, partially hidden, obscured, camouflaged, fragmented or disguised is intense and powerful, sometimes disturbing and most of all, intimate.

Truth and Fiction

All young people are conscious of how they present themselves and how they would like others to perceive them. Francesca was no different. Although photographs are often interpreted as truth, Francesca's pictures are thoughtfully staged. She created an imagined reality through her use of locations, lighting, clothing, props and her own body.

Francesca plays with distorting reality into a surreal fantasy by squeezing herself behind mantelpieces or into small cupboards. Her desire to hide herself by creeping naked under a half upturned door, or pulling wallpaper over herself like a blanket forces the viewer to consider her underlying vulnerability, isolation and alienation. She seems to be retreating into the material of the building.

Atmosphere

Woodman's photographs are most often very small scale, encouraging us to examine them closely, to look deep inside to decipher their messages. When we find Francesca, she often appears naked or partially clothed, disguised or abstracted by slow shutter speeds.

Typically her photographs show disintegrating empty rooms, with cracked and shattered masonry, dust, flaking paint or peeling wallpaper interspersed with damaged fixtures and fittings. Props are often dark, gothic single items of furniture such as a chair, a

mirror, a piano or a cabinet filled with taxidermy. The photographs have a cinematic quality that young people today may relate to films and music videos they are familiar with.

Timelessness

Francesca wears vintage clothing that obscures our sense of time within history by not defining a particular era or place. Fashion has always had a fascination with the past and often takes inspiration in a thirty year cycle. In the 80s we were intrigued by the 50s and today we look back nostalgically at the 80's.

Francesca's photographs were taken in the 1970s yet she takes her inspiration back to the 1800s and 1900s, defying the usual cycle of fashion.

Her prints are mostly atmospheric black and white, reminiscent of surrealist films and photography from the 1920s. A deliberate choice when colour was widely available, this increases the ambiguity of date within the pictures, leaving Francesca forever trapped in a timeless world.

Liz Kay - Future Ferens

“The element of Woodman's photography I find most intriguing is the way she uses her body and the camera almost to play disarming metaphysical pranks - The idea of being in limbo, and of thresholds between different worlds, of states of being is something that forms a theme in many of her images.”

For further information visit

<http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/artist-rooms/francesca-woodman>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/collection/artistrooms/artist.do?id=10512>

Or play the ARTIST ROOMS game at

<http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/artist-rooms-game/>

Visiting ARTIST ROOMS, Francesca Woodman with young people

Before you visit

If you are unfamiliar with visiting galleries you may be feeling apprehensive. Art galleries can be inspiring places and can introduce young people to experiences and ideas that will develop their imaginations, creativity, personal and social skills. They don't have to be silent places and are often full of activity. Some young people may have a view that galleries are not for them. A key aim of ARTIST ROOMS is to make contemporary art accessible to young people and promote it to the 13–25 age group.

To help protect their collections and ensure all visitors have a good experience, most galleries do not allow you to touch the artwork or frames and food and drink is not allowed. They also appreciate your respect for other visitors in your behaviour and use of language.

Discussing the following questions before your visit may be useful:

Has anyone been to an art gallery before?

**If not – why?
What stopped you?**

What do you think it will be like?

Why do we have galleries?

Who do you think galleries are for?

What is art?

Can you think of anything you shouldn't do in an art gallery?

At the gallery

You can challenge some of the young people's preconceptions.
Is the gallery as they imagined it would be?

The following questions may be useful:

How do you feel when you visit the gallery?

**Do you feel confident? Inspired? Excited?
Or uncomfortable? Unimportant?**

Is it a new building or an old building?

What does the architecture tell you about the building?

Does the architecture fulfil a role or say something about the art that's housed within it?

Do you feel you have to behave in a certain way when you enter the gallery?

Is the gallery noisy and busy or quiet like a library?

Think about the art you have seen over the years.

Do you prefer to look at traditional paintings of landscapes or do you prefer modern art, abstracts, combinations of mediums etc?

Explain your reasons!

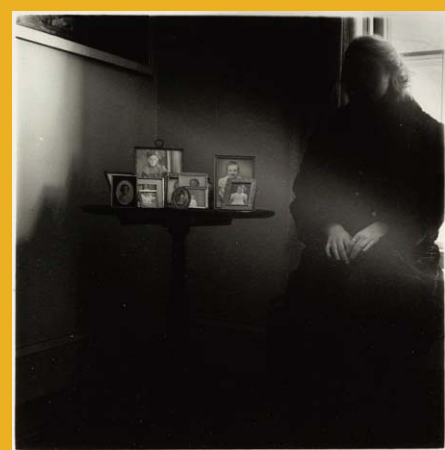
Exploring the exhibition

When exploring art with young people it is important that they feel comfortable in expressing their opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Their opinions may differ from established views of art but this is just as valid. It is an alternative interpretation of the work. Young people will often bring a completely different perspective to viewing an artwork as, like anyone, they will make sense of it using their own experiences, values and emotions.

Look very carefully at the images on display. Use the questions on the next page to promote discussion about the collection of work on display. You can print and copy the question sheet for young people or use it yourself as a prompt.

You can also take along sticky notes and ask young people to write down their views and feelings about specific photographs that appeal to them. Collect their sticky notes together on a large sheet of paper and discuss their responses.

Do any key themes jump out?



“This image seems to stay with me, it’s not a typical immediately identifiable Francesca photograph, but has a slightly more serious tone and sense of foreboding, which is exactly what I like about it – it shows another side to the artist, a side which is perhaps more often covered up. I love the light and the sense of self and identity in this one.”

**Michelle Campbell
(Future Ferens)**

Question Sheet: Is Francesca Playing Games?

Describe the atmosphere Francesca Woodman creates in her photographs

The **ARTIST ROOMS** collection of photographs once belonged to Francesca's boyfriend and some of them have hand written, personal messages written around or underneath the image. How does the message affect your opinion of the work?

Do the photographs remind you of anything?

Though her images were produced in the 1970s when colour photography was available, the images are black and white and very small. Does this affect how you view them?

How does the size of the photograph affect the way you look at it?

Why do you think Francesca printed her images on such a small scale?

Describe the places Woodman has chosen to take her photographs.

Woodman deliberately stages her photographs, often dressing up in vintage clothes. Is she creating a truthful image of herself? What do you think?

Although sometimes covered up or obscured, Woodman shows a lot of nudity in her work. What do you think of nudity within art?

Pick one Francesca Woodman photograph and write down how the photograph makes you feel.

Do you think some people may find it difficult to look at nude photographs? Why?

Is there a difference between nudity in art and nudity in films or popular music videos?

Explain why -

Why did you choose it?

Getting Inspired by Francesca: Case Studies and Activities.

Francesca Woodman's photographs have proved to be a terrific source of inspiration for young people. The Ferens Art Gallery and Heritage Learning in Hull secured funding from the Art Fund, through ARTIST ROOMS on Tour, to deliver youth engagement projects and events to help us develop our ARTIST ROOMS exhibition, ensuring it was relevant to young people and enabling them to engage with it when it was on show. Future Ferens volunteers collaborated with young people from a range of youth settings and professional artists to develop creative responses to Woodman's work.

This section contains case studies and a selection of activities that you can use with young people to develop Woodman inspired creative work yourself.

Case Study: Francesca – Explorations into Sound & Music



Before the launch of the exhibition sound artist and musician Jason Heslewood and theatre practitioner Nikki Mellors were commissioned to work with Future Ferens and a group of young people from the Warren Centre to use their artforms to find out how young people responded to Francesca Woodman. The young people's responses would go on to influence the development of the exhibition.

A key element of the project was to collect responses from young people who were not regular users of the gallery and allow their voices to be heard on a level playing field alongside Future Ferens volunteers. For this reason, we decided that music and sound was the ideal way for the young people to express their responses as it did not rely on any prior knowledge of art and it would place all of the young people in the group on the same level.



Following ice breaker activities, the artists and the young people started the project by looking at projections of Woodman's photographs and talking about the feelings and emotions they conjured up. The challenge was to recreate the feelings and emotions discussed into a sound and music piece, which would form part of the ARTIST ROOMS exhibition. Theatre practitioner Nikki also worked with the young people to collect written and spoken responses that would go on to influence the interpretation in the exhibition.

Over a four-night period, a studio was set up in the Ferens Live Art Space. The group used hand held recorders to roam the building capturing sounds from around the galleries, making use of the natural reverb in the spaces. The recordings included footsteps, doors closing and people chatting. The group also worked with percussion instruments, guitars, keyboards and effects pedals. One Future Ferens member recorded a spoken word piece using the messages written on Woodman's photographs to trigger further responses.

The recordings of music, ambient sounds and dialogue were edited together to create one long piece of music, which was made available to exhibition visitors via headphones.



Activity: Knowing Me Knowing You

This activity is to help groups who don't all know each other, mix and find out about each other. It can be used as an ice breaker and also starts young people thinking about ideas around identity. The activity works well with the whole group sitting around a large table together. Each person will need drawing and writing materials and some paper. It is important that members of the group show respect for each other and treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves.

Task 1:

Think how you would describe yourself.

You can either write it down or draw a picture to represent yourself. Try to be as truthful as you can. Keep your descriptions to one side – we will come back to them at the end.

Task 2:

Now choose someone in the group you already know and describe this person, again written or drawn.

Task 3:

This time choose someone in the group you have never met or don't know very well and describe this person.

Task 4:

Go around the table and compare descriptions of each person starting with those made by people who do not know them and ending with their own description.

Conclusion:

How accurate are other's descriptions of you?
How different are their interpretations from your own?
Does the person that knows you better have more information?

Learning Point 1:

Relate this discussion to investigating artwork.
If we know nothing about an artist, we can still make judgements and interpretations of their work based on what we can see and our own experiences.

Learning Point 2:

If we know more about their life and work we can add another level of interpretation when we look at the work.

Activity: Visual Profiles

Materials:

Digital cameras, PCs or laptop and printer

Paper

Art materials

Newspapers and magazines (fashion, music, media etc)

Start the session with a discussion about Facebook or other online social networks.

What do you choose to share with one person?

What would you share with a group?

What would you share with everyone?

What do you want people to know or think about you?

Do others judge you by the profile you create?

Do you edit details of your life online?

Do you tell the truth?

Create a visual profile:

Create a visual image to represent the profile you want to present to other people. You can choose to be truthful or present a fictional identity. Use the materials provided to create an image profile that you would like to present to other people.

Activity: Sound Responses

Materials and equipment:

Selection of musical instruments

Objects and materials that make interesting sounds
(these could be dried leaves, paper, foil, umbrellas etc)

Sound recording equipment.

Woodman images projected or printed out for each member of the group.

Discuss the following questions:

Can you describe the atmosphere Woodman creates in her images?

How do the images make you feel?

Can you see anything in the image that would make a sound and what would it sound like?

What kind of sounds would describe the atmosphere in the image?

Where has the photograph been taken – what kind of sounds do you think there would have been in that location?

Create your sound responses:

Use the instruments and materials to generate sounds that reflect young people's responses to the images.

You do not need to be able to play an instrument or create pieces of music. The sounds created can be abstract. Think about film soundtracks and soundscapes that create atmosphere. You can also use your voice to create sounds.

Case Study: Francesca's World – Young People Turn the Camera on Themselves



Future Ferens members collaborated with Photographic Artist, Sarah Daniels and youth groups aged 12-18 years to explore Francesca's photographs and create their own Woodman inspired images. The photographs produced were included in our ARTIST ROOMS exhibition, displayed as though hung up to dry in a darkroom.

**Switched on Media:
Step Away From The Computer!**

'Switched On Media' are a group of young people interested in digital technologies, including film and animation. Their youth worker suggested they take part in the Woodman photography project because he wanted them to engage with activities that were different to their usual computer based interests. He wanted the young people to work outside of their familiar comfort zone and discover a new kind of creativity.



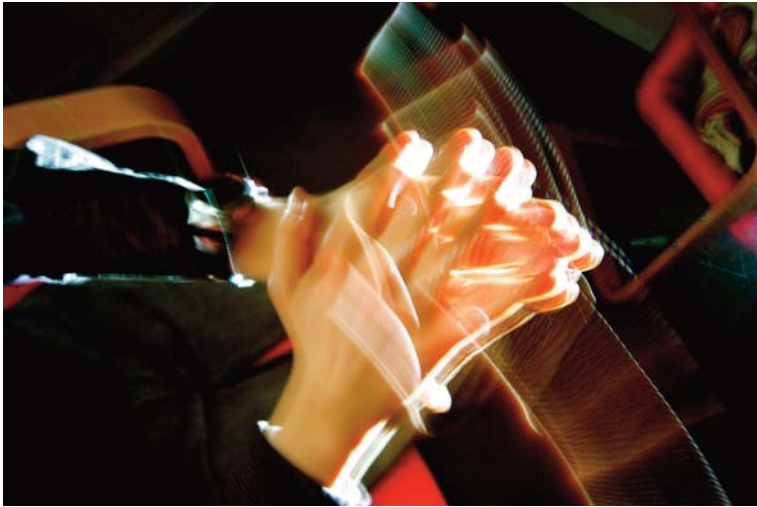
After looking at Francesca's photographs the group wanted to produce their own photographs that played with an abstracted reality. They were not necessarily interested in the social themes seen in her work but were inspired by her ability to play with light, form, distortion and abstraction.

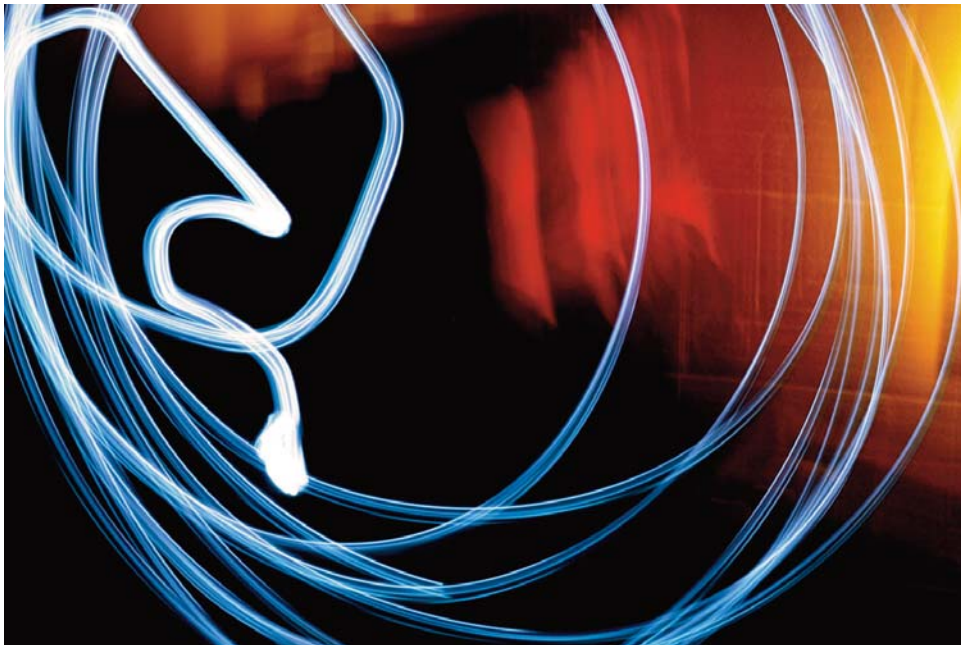
Future Ferens volunteers acted as mentors to the young people and together in darkened corridors, they created ethereal photographs using torches and a data projector to produce obscure lighting, which when coupled with long shutter speeds fashioned haunting images of hands, faces and body movement.

What do you think?

"I really enjoyed the photography sessions. They really were fun. I loved the dressing up and posing. It was a really different experience. It was great to work with Future Ferens, they were friendly and helpful, giving me new ideas on how to improve the photographs. I gained a lot from taking part. It's inspired me to take up photography at college".

**Liam, Aged 16
(Switched on Media)**





Activity: Who Needs Computers?

Participants:

Groups of 3 people or more

Equipment Needed:

Camera (Not fully automatic)

Tripod

Lighting:

Natural light, torch or electric lamp

Optional:

Coloured photographic gels

Method

Working together as part of a team find a room within your building, which is not flooded with natural daylight. For example, shut all the adjoining doors and work within a corridor or hang fabric or paper over windows and turn off electric lighting so the area is dimly lit.

Photographer:

Set the camera up with the flash turned off (the shutter speed of the camera will automatically slow down) and place on a tripod. Alternatively and if possible with your equipment, set the camera to a slow shutter speed but leave the flash on. This creates a freeze frame effect where the camera will capture any movement as a blur.

Assistant:

Use the torch or another source of light to shine in the areas you would like lit. If you have coloured gels then hold them up to create bold colourful casts of light.

Model/s:

On the photographer's cue move your body to create blurry shapes or shadows. For example; if you keep your body still and just move your head then the end result will be a static body with the head as an abstracted blur.

Useful Tips:

Remember, if the light source is behind the subject then the subject will be in silhouette. Alternatively, if the light source is shone directly on the subject then the light may bleach out any detail. Play with the light to see where it casts shadow.

Arts Alive: Shadows of Francesca

'Arts Alive' are a group of girls aged 11-14 years. They are especially interested in dance so when they looked at Woodman's photographs and saw the shapes created by her body against the dilapidated backdrops they were immediately intrigued and inspired.

The group met in the early evening at an old mothballed school. Mentored by the Future Ferens volunteers, the group looked at Woodman's photographs and then brainstormed their own ideas. They instantly seized the opportunity to use the old Victorian building as the perfect backdrop for their photographs.

The battered single paned sash windows allowed blocks of sunlight to beam across old wooden and linoleum floors. Patches of damp in the old school hall mimicked the crumbling and stained backdrops seen in Francesca's work. Outside on the 'all weather' sports pitch the setting sun created vibrant distorted shadows of the human form, which the girls experimented with whilst creating dance and acrobatic moves for their photographs.



Vintage props from the Heritage Learning museum object handling collection were taken to the youth centre, including hats, gloves, fur coats, stoles and umbrellas. The young people dressed up and created dramatic poses similar to those seen in Francesca's photographs. Dressing up gave them confidence; they created characters that explored gender, self and their own identity. They could control their own stage and relished dictating the mood of the fictional scenes. Inspired by fashion and their own contextual experience of a celebrity culture the young women became performers in a fantasy world conjured up out of their own imagination. The props were used to disguise or elaborate emotion, scenes were acted out in spilling sunlight or in lonely empty storerooms.

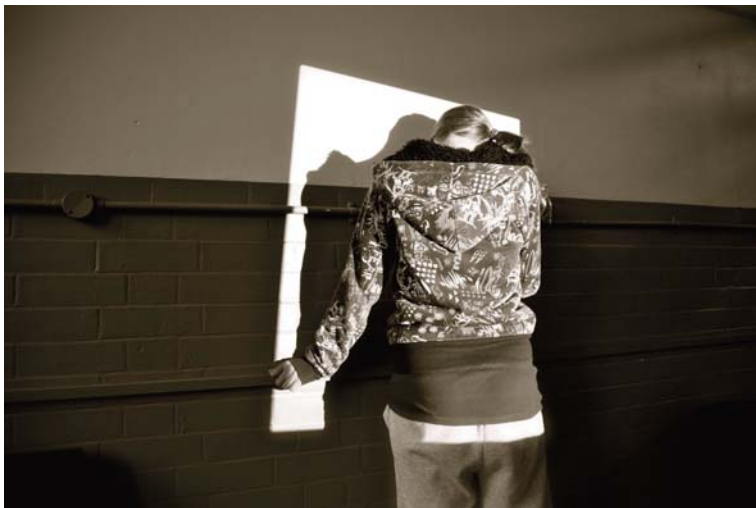
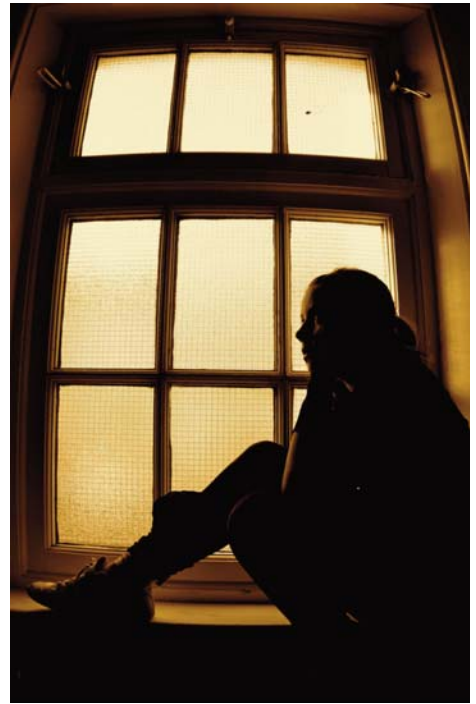
The young women's Woodman inspired photographs used pose, costume and the decaying institutional building to create powerful, sometimes dark, theatrical photographs.

What do you think?

"The photography project went down really well in my opinion, the young women really enjoyed it, they got let loose and were able to showcase the building. They have a very specific interest in dance and they used their dance moves to create shapes that were just beautiful. For me the pictures tell a story and to start with I don't think the young women and myself could see that story, but when you actually put them together and see the shadows, shapes, lights, rough surfaces, smooth surfaces you thought Wow! Photography really can tell a story".

**Raveen Ghuman
(Hull City Council Youth Worker)**





Activity: Shadows of Francesca

Participants:

Working in pairs or in groups of three

Equipment Needed:

Camera (Not fully automatic)

Tripod

Lighting:

Natural light, torch or electric lamp

Props:

Dressing up clothes, umbrellas, accessories, single pieces of furniture i.e. a chair, a table etc

Location

If you meet in an old building look at it as if for the first time.

Is it crumbling or in need of a lick of paint anywhere? Is there just a blank brick wall?

Think about the whole building and grounds not just the rooms you usually use. Where possible, try to get permission to gain access to unused rooms. If it is a sunny day, have a look to see how natural light enters the building, does it create beams or shadows?

Use places and sources of light around the building to create your backdrops.

Method

Photographer & Assistant:

Look around your building or grounds to see where you can get the best use out of natural light. See where shadows fall. If natural light is poor then use a powerful torch or lamp to manufacture your own light and shadow. Set the camera up on a tripod with the flash turned off. If you have enough light then you may not need the tripod (experiment first and see if your pictures are in sharp focus – if they are not then make sure that you use the tripod).

Models:

Dress up in character and set up a tableau or scene for your photographs. Think about what will be in the photograph in terms of props and background. Use Francesca's photographs for inspiration. Use the props and dressing up clothes to mimic a timeline or era. Remember everything in a photograph has a meaning. For example, if you are recreating a scene from a bygone era make sure you do not have a computer in the photographic composition.

Heighten emotion or mood by using facial expressions and use body language and posture to give meaning.

Useful Tip:

The atmosphere and meaning of a photograph can change depending on whether you make it colour, black and white or sepia (antiqued). Use computer software or the camera itself to set the effects and colour options.

West Hull Youth Theatre: Performing Photography

West Hull Youth Theatre is a group of young people aged 13-18. They meet once a week and participate in drama games, improvisation, mime and study practical drama techniques.

It was the first time the theatre group had been asked to interpret a visual artist's work through performance and to begin with, both the youth leader and the group were a bit perplexed as to how they could successfully link up with a photography project. There was initial confusion about how a performing art like drama could be explained via the language of still imagery. The group were so used to expressing themselves via sound and movement, they thought it might prove tricky to craft the same message into an isolated static photograph.

The group did some fantastic brainstorming with the Future Ferens volunteers to identify themes seen in Woodman's work and how they could be defined by using drama as the means of expression.



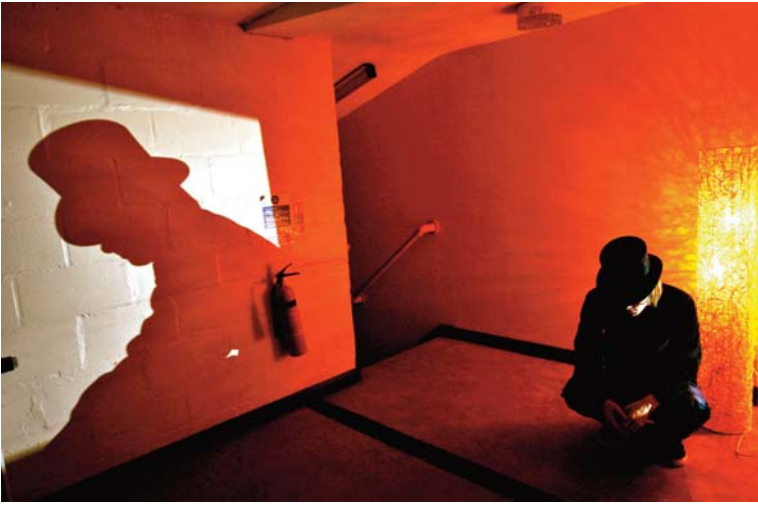
The group felt Francesca's photographs suggested isolation, loneliness, alienation and fear, but were also enigmatic and surreal. The group worked as a team to interpret these themes via practised drama techniques, including freeze frames and improvisation. As with previous sessions, vintage outfits and props, including empty picture frames were introduced and after dressing up, the group became confident and relaxed.

When dressed up members of the group really got into character and this resulted in the creation of very dramatic and haunting still images, which were displayed as part of the ARTIST ROOMS exhibition.

Following on from the photography sessions the theatre group took the initiative of developing their explorations of Francesca Woodman into a theatrical performance which was showcased at the Francesca Woodman Closing Event at the Ferens Art Gallery.

The performance, a stylistic piece called 'Nobody's Looking At You' was inspired by shadows and light found in Francesca's photographs. It examined the trouble we sometimes have in finding our true identity. The performance explored feelings of fear, vulnerability and insecurity.





Drama Workshop: 'Who Am I?'

Participants:

Working in groups of five

Introduction

Discuss the themes surrounding identity and personal experiences of self-identity

Discuss the following questions:

Who Am I?

What does it all mean?

What feelings of vulnerability do the Francesca Woodman photographs evoke?

Think of questions you might ask yourself when on a confident voyage of self-discovery. Then write down five questions you would ask yourself when you are unsure of yourself.

Examples

Where do I go from here?

What do I do now?

Does anyone like me for me?

Verbalising (option 1)

When everybody has thought of their questions, ask them to individually stand up and say their questions out loud.

One at a time each person verbalises one question, then sits down and points to the next person until each person in the group has stated all of their questions.

Ask the group to convey their feelings and frustrations when speaking (what do we feel when we are unsure of ourselves?). Afterwards, discuss how the questions made the group feel. Were they acted out realistically?

Verbalising (option 2)

When the group has completed their questions choose a confident participant to walk onto centre stage and start saying out loud their first question.

Just as the first person is about to start verbalising their second question, the next person in the group walks onto stage and says their first question.

Just when they start their second question, the next person starts up and so it continues until everyone in the group is talking and walking at the same time. The volume gets louder as more and more people are talking.

Levels of frustration increase until everybody is shouting as they struggle to be heard over anyone else. The middle person of the group is so irritated and infuriated by the constant noise, they shout 'STOP'. Everyone else is stunned into silence. They then ask 'Why doesn't anyone ever listen to me?'

End with a discussion about how it felt to repeat such negative thought processes and questions. What effect did it have on the people watching?

How do you think it would feel if the whole exercise was completed with positive upbeat questions?

Activity: Woodman Still Image Tableau

Participants:

In groups of four or five

What is a Tableau?

A tableau is a performance where a narrator tells the story and the rest of the actors do not talk. In silence the actors accompany the narrator and help to tell the story by making their bodies into pictures.

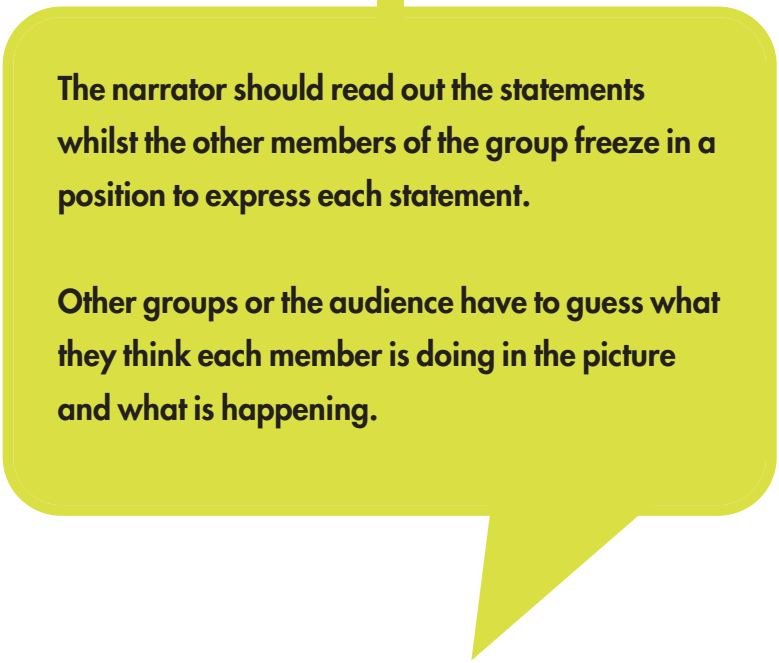
They freeze in a position, like a still photograph, they then move to another position and then freeze again. Each position tells the audience what happens next.

Method

Discuss themes in Francesca Woodman's work. You can take either a light-hearted approach such as how she played with and warped reality or debate heavier themes that can sometimes affect young people like loneliness, self-identity, gender, sexuality, isolation, fear, bullying.

Ask each group of five to choose a photograph. Together they should write down a series of statements that describe what they think is happening in the picture and how they feel.

They should imagine they are inside the photograph!



The narrator should read out the statements whilst the other members of the group freeze in a position to express each statement.

Other groups or the audience have to guess what they think each member is doing in the picture and what is happening.

Case Study: Curve Contemporary Dance – Moved by Francesca



To broaden the appeal of the ARTIST ROOMS Francesca Woodman exhibition at the Ferens Art Gallery, Future Ferens wanted to explore how dance could be used to interpret Woodman's work. Curve Contemporary Dance, a new group of young contemporary dancers aged 18-25 were commissioned to create a performance in response to the photographs of Francesca Woodman.

The group researched the artist by visiting the exhibition and reading about the artist. They then based their choreography and choice of music on a hand picked selection of photographs that they thought could be successfully interpreted through the medium of contemporary dance. The group were intrigued by Francesca's surreal self-portraits and in particular how she disguised her face and body to create beautiful yet dramatic imagery. Each dancer worked on a solo piece, which was representative of a selected individual photograph. The dancers used the self-portraits to represent isolation and surrealism within their piece. Initially certain members of the group struggled to understand the artist and why she created photographs of herself in derelict surroundings. As part of the overall programme we decided to film 'Curve' rehearsing on location so agreed to meet at one of Hull's disused docks.



It was whilst at the old docks that the group really started to understand Francesca's mindset and discovered how an empty and desolate location enhanced their understanding of the artist. Curve Contemporary Dance then went on to deliver outreach workshops with youth dance groups and as a finale, presented their piece 'Self' to an invited audience in the Ferens Live Art Space.

"The atmosphere of the pictures is very surreal, quite gothic. Some are a bit disturbing. When researching Woodman we started to understand the relevance of her depression and her way of expressing it by incorporating desolate backdrops in her pictures. When we went down to the disused docks we were very inspired. It gave us a really good appreciation as to why this photographer took her pictures in derelict buildings amongst broken windows, or against tiles or broken bricks. It gave us a better understanding of the artist and of our own dance and what we were trying to achieve. It gave us a push to get more meaning behind it"

**Gemma Barker, Lead dancer
(Curve Contemporary Dance)**





Activity: Moved by Francesca

Participants:

20-25 participants.

Equipment:

Ipod, docking station (unless the venue provides itself), or CDs, Francesca Woodman pictures .

Style of music:

Fun popular music for the warm-up, contemporary styles of music for the tasks .

Props:

Empty frames

E.g:
Surreal
Disguise
Shy
Eerie
Depression

Method of the Class:

Start with a warm-up along with stretches. Show examples of the Francesca woodman pictures to the class and discuss the themes that come through and words that could inspire the dance.

Task 1: Solo Task:

Each participant should choose a photograph and look for body shapes and movements within the image. Create a short solo using these shapes and movements. (5-10 mins)

Task 2: Group Dance

Split the class into groups of five and give them an empty frame to work with. With this they have to create their own interpretation of the frames on the basis they are making 'Art within Art!' taking inspiration from being within an art gallery. They need to teach each other their solos and incorporate parts of them within the group dance. (15 mins)

Participants present:

Each group will perform that peice. After each dance presented discuss what you liked , what styles and themes and what poses from the pictures did you recognise.

Cool down and stretch to finish.

Case Study: Gallery Events



The ARTIST ROOMS Francesca Woodman exhibition at the Ferens Art Gallery was supported by a series of events designed and delivered by Future Ferens volunteers, in consultation with gallery staff.

This included an exhibition launch event, an outreach event at a local shopping centre and three open access gallery workshops to support young people and families in accessing Woodman's work. The following activities were popular at our gallery and outreach events and could easily be replicated in any setting.





Your Last Text Message

Francesca Woodman often wrote messages to her boyfriend on her photographs and Future Ferens members thought that a simple 'message' based approach would be an excellent ice breaker in getting passers by instantly involved, and then interested in visiting the exhibition. Willing participants wrote the last text message they had sent or received on a small white board and were photographed holding it. The message, in essence revealed a little bit about the person in the portrait.

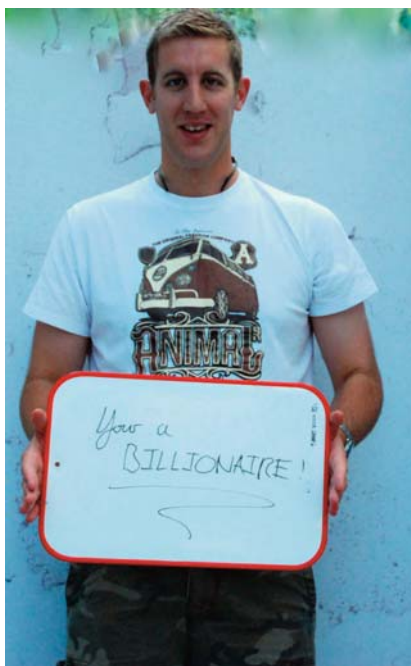
Text messages are very much of the moment; they are usually a response to a question or a simple statement. They are an instant means of communication for many of us and especially for young people who often send hundreds a week. Some of the messages pictured at our events were full of sentiment and declarations of love. Others were simply a statement of fact about where someone was or what they were doing – 'I'm two minutes away!'

When these statements were combined with portraiture they became humorous, poignant, ironic or even profound.



Some messages were meaningless because they were just a segment of an ongoing conversation; other text messages included one from a library requesting the return of borrowed items or from a phone provider stating a 'Top Up' account balance.

Couples were photographed together and in one image the female's last message declared her love for him, but the male since responding to the original text had then sent another one to a third party that simply said 'RUN!' The communications were initially unrelated and just a coincidence but together in a portrait revealed a playful humour.



Activity: Your Last Text Message

Participants:

Drop in

Equipment Needed:

Camera

Tripod

Backdrop (plain white paper or old wallpaper tacked to a wall)

Props:

Small white board, which can be cleaned (not card)

Photographer:

Turn the camera 45° so you can take photographs in the portrait format. Set up the camera on the tripod. Experiment with the flash turned on and off.

Be careful with the flash, it might bleach out the text on the board.

Method

'Your Last Text Message' sessions are an exercise you can do with a small group or with numerous people in a public space. Participants reveal a little bit about themselves so it is an excellent way of building up trust and confidence in a group and a method of opening up dialogue for further discussions.

Participants:

Write down your last text message on a board and pose for your portrait.

Vintage Revival and Who's In The Frame?

In "Vintage Revival" young people dressed up in vintage clothes and props, loaned by Heritage Learning and posed for portraits, which were then displayed in the ARTIST ROOMS Francesca Woodman exhibition. "Who's in the Frame" saw participants holding up and posing through empty frames of various sizes.

Many of the participants then brought friends and family members back to the gallery to see their pictures and the exhibition.





Activity: Self Portraits – Truth Or Fiction

Participants:

Groups – Any number

Equipment Needed:

Camera

Tripod

Backdrop

Props:

Dressing up clothes, accessories, masks,
empty picture frames, make up

Method

Working as a group designate a photographer or take turns.

Choose a backdrop or background to create atmosphere. Will your photograph be taken inside or outside?

Choose how you would like to present yourself.

Do you want to dress up or disguise yourself?

Will your portrait be truth or fiction?

Using the props and accessories create a persona.

Use body language and gestures to create mood.

Is your adopted persona real and reflective of you, or are you a fictional character?

Is your persona an aspiration of who you would like to become, or someone you used to be?

Does somebody you admire, or somebody famous influence your photographic persona?

When the photography is complete, collate all the images into a slideshow and watch as a group.

Open up discussion about portraiture and self-portraiture.

How did people represent themselves?

Did they appear altered or represent themselves completely differently to how you already see them?

Were you surprised or intrigued?

Did you learn something new about the person?

What did the portraits reveal?

**As a group discuss the following themes:
Preconceptions, stereotypes, culture, identity, gender, sexuality or debate any other subject the photographs revealed.**

Further Reading

Francesca Woodman
Edited by Corey Keller.
Text by Julia Bryan-Wilson,
Jennifer Blessing.
(2011)
ISBN: 9781935202660

Francesca Woodman
By Francesca Woodman,
Philippe Sollers, David Levi
Strauss and Elizabeth Janus
(1998)
ISBN-10: 3931141969

Francesca Woodman and
the Kantian Sublime
By Claire Raymond (2010)
ISBN-10: 0754663442

Francesca Woodman
By Chris Townsend (2006)
ISBN: 9780714844305

Francesca Woodman's Notebook:
With George Woodman's Afterword
By Francesca Woodman
(2011)
ISBN-10: 8836621171

Useful Websites

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0eSyJiEKJA>

<http://www.leithonthefringe.com/the-shows/beyond/>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-al9i9QjHhg&feature=player_embedded#!

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Volunteers

Thank you to all Future Ferens volunteers for your dedication and hard work in making the ARTIST ROOMS Francesca Woodman exhibition and associated projects a success.

Young People

Thank you to all of the young people who made these projects possible.

The Warren

West Hull Youth Theatre

Arts Alive

Switched on Media

Young dancers from Wyke College

Youth Workers

Raveen Ghuman

Rita Pataky

Paul Hawksworth

Lynn Hubbard

Hellen Urben

Thank you to Hellen Urben of West Hull Youth Theatre for contributing activities to this resource.

Artists

Curve Contemporary Dance

Hellen Urben

Jason Heslewood

Nikki Mellors

Sarah Daniels

Claire Sawden

Thank you to Gemma Barker of Curve contemporary Dance for contributing activities to this resource.

Ferens Art Gallery

Claire Longrigg

Kirsten Simister

Heritage Learning

Sarah Daniels

Sarah Howard

David Alcock

This resource was produced by Heritage Learning
For further information contact us on 01482 318733
or Email: heritage-learning@hullcc.gov.uk

The following Francesca Woodman photographs appear on pages 4-8, 14:

Untitled 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Space², Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1978 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1978 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Untitled (FW Crouching Behind Umbrella), Circa 1980 | Photograph on paper

Eel Series, Roma, May 1977- August 1978 | Photograph on paper

Providence, Rhode Island, 1976 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Italy, May 1977- August 1978 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

From Angel Series, Roma, September 1977 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

Space², Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1978 | Photograph on paper

Untitled, 1975-1980 | Photograph on paper

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TATE



an electric angel design : www.electricangel.co.uk