



## TITLE

# FINDING NEW MEANING IN HISTORY THROUGH ART: HUNG LIU'S PORTRAITS



GRADE LEVEL: MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

**SUBJECT:** History, Art, Social Science, English

**THEME:** Activism, Bias and Stereotype, Civil Rights, Identity and Culture, Immigration, International Affairs

### OBJECTIVES:

**Students will be able to:**

- View the paintings of Hung Liu as a window into both her life and that of her adopted country, America.
- Identify key themes in her life as evidenced by the paintings in the lesson.
- Engage with history as Hung Liu has done by linking images of the Depression and other periods in American history (Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese American Incarceration) to stories or history they may already know.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- In what ways does photography enable an individual to create their own kind of history?
- How do Lee's photographs demonstrate the intertwining of Asian American history with American history?
- How did Lee express the themes of belonging, inclusion, and exclusion through his photography?
- In what ways can we utilize photography as a means to advocate for causes?

### CLASSROOM TIME:

1 - 2 Periods



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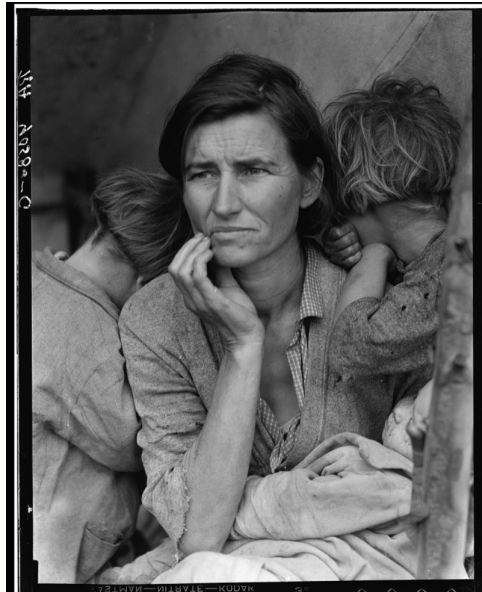


## BACKGROUND:

“History is not a static image or frozen story. It is always moving forward.” - Hung Liu

Ice Breaker:

Ask students if they know this photograph or have seen it before.



Show them the next slide of Hung Liu's reinterpretation of a similar Dorothea Lange photo, “Migrant Mother: Mealtime.”:



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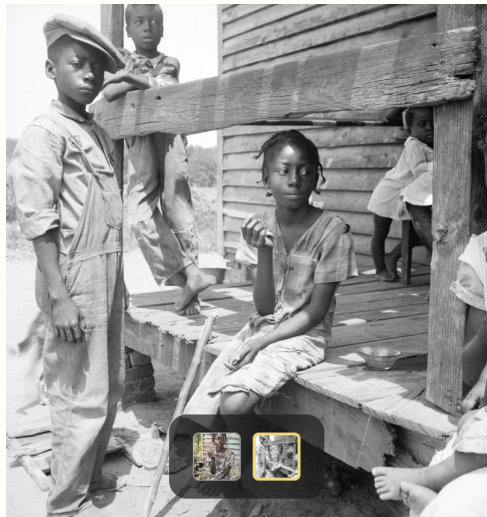
**BACKGROUND:**

Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery  
<https://npg.si.edu/exhibition/hung-liu-portraits-promised-lands>

(Navigate from the page to the link below “Migrant Mother: Mealtime”)  
 Engage with students through a close study of the photo. Gather their responses, either in writing or through discussion. Based on their answers, tell them what the photograph is, who the photographer was, and the backstory to it. Also, tell them that Lange took a series of pictures of the woman and children but that this is the best known.  
<https://guides.loc.gov/migrant-mother>

Encyclopedia Britannica:  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dorothea-Lange>

Activity: Note: If time is an issue, this painting can be skipped. Explore the images... just one more.



Show the “Introduction to the Exhibition” (1:48) which can be found on a link from the main page:

Tour: <https://npg.si.edu/exhibition/hung-liu-portraits-promised-lands>

Activity: Timeline: Use the timeline and the accompanying glossary and questions to expand student’s understanding of Hung Liu’s life and art. Teachers are encouraged to spend time as needed to discuss the events on the timeline.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/15h-WqQpTXpBMrQ-P9A9JA6vrKjVLHPD37NeFdO\\_o-8o/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/15h-WqQpTXpBMrQ-P9A9JA6vrKjVLHPD37NeFdO_o-8o/edit)

**Assessment:** The questions about the obituary of Hung Liu serve both to guide the students through a collection of her work and also allow for them to assess their impact on students personally.



## SOURCES:

Dorothea Lange, Farm Security Bureau

Depression Era photos

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2017762891/>

1936. U.S. Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information. Prints & Photographs Division.

<https://guides.loc.gov/migrant-mother>

National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage-month.htm>

Cascone, Sarah. Artnet news, 13 August 2021.

<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/hung-liu-obituary-1998353>

Langer, Emily. The Washington Post. 17 August 2021.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/hung-liu-dead/2021/08/17/b5efd74c-fb7f-11eb-8a67-f14cd1d28e47\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/hung-liu-dead/2021/08/17/b5efd74c-fb7f-11eb-8a67-f14cd1d28e47_story.html)



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