

Teacher Guide

Garrett Bradley: American Rhapsody

December 19, 2019–March 22, 2020



America (film still), 2019. Multi-channel video projection; 35mm film transferred to video: black and white, sound, 23:55 minutes. New Orleans Museum of Art: Museum purchase, Carmen Donaldson fund, 2019. 33. Image and work courtesy the artist.

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Exhibition Overview

- Garrett Bradley is an artist and filmmaker based in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- *Garrett Bradley: American Rhapsody* is the first solo museum presentation of her work.
- There are three different works included in the exhibition: *Alone* (2017), *AKA* (2019), and *America* (2019).
- Bradley addresses themes such as race, class, familial relationships, social justice, and the history of film in her work.
- She is often inspired by the real-life stories of her subjects. Her research takes many forms including deep dives into historical archives, in-depth dialogues prompted by Craigslist want ads, and extended engagements with the communities and individuals she seeks to represent.
- In the film *America*, Bradley constructs a visual archive of early African American cinema in the form of 12 vignettes.
- *AKA* is a film about the relationships between mothers and daughters born into interracial families or families of varying skin tones. The film was developed out of hours-long conversations between Bradley and her female protagonists.
- *Alone* provides a glimpse into the life of Aloné Watts as she contemplates a recent marriage proposal from her incarcerated partner, Desmond Watts. In this film, Bradley considers the continued precariousness of black life through an intimate look into the ways in which love and loneliness remain intricately bound for the incarcerated and their families.



Alone (film still), 2017. Video: black and white, sound, 12:00 minutes. Image and work courtesy the artist.

Key Questions

- How do you research a topic that interests you?
- How does the story of one person help us understand a wider issue? What are some examples of this?
- How do Bradley's films explore the space between fact and fiction?
- How does a soundtrack impact your experience of viewing a film? What are some of your favorite soundtracks?

Curriculum Connections

Visual Art | Bradley's films explore the space between fact and fiction. Create a short film or work of art that also blurs this line.

History | In Bradley's film *America*, she was inspired by a 2013 survey published by the Library of Congress proposing that 70 percent of silent films made between 1912 and 1929 have been lost, as well as the discovery and restoration of what is believed to be the earliest surviving film to feature a black cast, *Lime Kiln Club Field Day* (1913). What other important documents, artworks, or stories can you imagine have been lost to history. Research a time in history and create a fictionalized account that you think could have been lost.

Writing | Bradley explores mother and daughter relationships in interracial families in her film *AKA*. What is a relationship or dynamic that interests you in your family? Interview these family members and find out more about their points of view.



AKA (film still), 2019. Video: color, sound, 8:00 minutes. Image and work courtesy the artist.