

DEANA LAWSON

FAMILY RESOURCE GUIDE

November 4, 2021 – February 27, 2022

Please note that this exhibition includes photographs of models who are both clothed and unclothed as well as some images that depict death.



Deana Lawson, *Coulson Family*, 2008. Pigment print.
Courtesy the artist;
Sikkema Jenkins & Co.,
New York; and
David Kordansky Gallery,
Los Angeles.
© Deana Lawson

About the Artist

Deana Lawson was born in 1979 in Rochester, New York. She is an artist who makes photographs. She is interested in exploring different ways of representing Black identity to tell stories of family, love, and spirituality. Lawson travels all over the world and invites people she meets to pose for her photographs. They work together to create scenes that feel familiar to Lawson or scenes that she imagines.

Fun Fact:

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Deana Lawson has a twin  
named Dana.

## Discuss

As you explore the exhibition and Deana Lawson's artwork, use these questions and prompts as a guide. Share your reflections with the people you came with or have a conversation with our friendly Visitor Assistants in the galleries.

**1** Walk through the Deana Lawson exhibition and explore her photographs: What did you notice? What stood out?

**2** Deana Lawson purposefully places people, clothing, and objects in her photographs in order to tell a story. She carefully decides every detail. Choose one of her photographs and come up with a story that you think the photograph is telling.

**3** Do any of the people or settings in Deana Lawson's photographs remind you of people or places in your life? If so, which ones?

**4** Deana Lawson thinks about power and representation in Black life through her artwork. Find a photograph in the exhibition of someone looking powerful.

**5** Choose one of Deana Lawson's photographs. Describe the poses and expressions of the people in the image. How would you describe the mood of the photograph? If the photograph could talk, what do you think the people would say? If you could ask the photograph a question, what would you ask?

**6** Do you have objects in your life that bring you luck or comfort? A worry stone, a lucky coin, a favorite stuffed animal, etc. Can you find any objects in Deana Lawson's photographs that look like they might be special to someone?

**7** Deana Lawson often describes reaching back to childhood memories when making photographs. Think about a childhood memory and imagine how you would create a photograph to represent that memory.

### Fun Fact:

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Deana Lawson grew up in Rochester, New York, where Kodak, a major American photography company, is headquartered. (Her mother worked there for more than 30 years!)



Engage

We welcome you to visit us at the ICA, where admission for youth 18 and under is always free. Explore contemporary art through free monthly family events and activities created by artists & educators. Join us for Play Dates (last Saturday of every month EXCEPT December) and receive FREE admission for up to 2 adults per family when accompanied by children ages 12 and under. Play Date tickets must be reserved in advance and online. Find information and tickets for Play Dates and other programs at icaboston.org/calendar.

Fun Fact:



Deana Lawson went to Pennsylvania State University as a student to study international business but ultimately switched to photography.

Find

Crystals have been used for healing and balancing energies for centuries. It's believed that certain crystals can bring greater positivity, peace, and focus. Deana Lawson chose to place crystals in her exhibition near her photographs. Can you find them? Where in your life would you place crystals to bring good energy?

Holograms are a type of photograph that makes its images appear three-dimensional (3D). Photography creates images by capturing light; Holography records how the light scatters from an object and then presents it in a way that looks 3D. Some of Deana Lawson's photographs also contain holograms. Can you find them? How do the holograms change your experience of looking at the image?

Deana Lawson chose to use **Mirror Frames** for some of her photographs. Can you find them? As you look at her photographs, you also see a reflection of yourself. Why do you think the artist would want you to see yourself as you look at her artwork?

Create at Home

★PICTURE THAT ★

Deana Lawson thinks about every detail in her photographs: the setting, the objects, the people and how they are posed. Like how a painter creates a painting, she is very intentional about how she creates her photographs so that they tell a story. Be a creator and storyteller too! Choose a setting. Select and arrange objects. Invite your friends or family to be a part of the photo and give them direction on their pose and facial expression. Take a photo or create a drawing. What is the story in your image?

★FAMILY CONNECTION ★

Many of Deana Lawson's photographs show themes of love, intimacy, and family. Who is someone that you care about in your life? What is it about them that makes them special? Write them a letter. If you'd like, share it with them!

★POWER POSE ★

Deana Lawson describes her work as "a mirror of everyday life, but also a projection of what I want to happen. It's about setting a different standard of values and saying that everyday Black lives, everyday experiences, are beautiful, and powerful, and intelligent." What images from your everyday life make you feel beautiful, powerful, and intelligent? Collect images from photos, magazines, and other media that represent your everyday life. Create your own drawings to add to your collection. Arrange your images into a collage that inspires and uplifts you.

Fun Fact:



Deana Lawson received her MFA in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design.



Read

Take a Picture of Me, James Van Der Zee!

By Andrea J. Loney

The story of a photographer who captured the beauty and pride of the Harlem Renaissance.

Dorothea Lange: the Photographer

Who Found the Faces of the Depression

By Carole Boston Weatherford

A photographer's story of documenting the Great Depression.

Fun Fact:



Deana Lawson is the first major ICA exhibition in the Seaport to be entirely carpeted. (What do you think about the purple carpet?)

The Best Part of Me: Children Talk About Their Bodies in Pictures and Words

By Wendy Ewald

This collection shows the beauty in our differences through the eyes of children.

Seeing Things: A Kid's Guide to Looking at Photographs

By Joel Meyerowitz

Different ways we can look at photography using examples of work by various photographers.

Gordon Parks: How the Photographer Captured Black and White America

By Carole Boston Weatherford

A biography about the first Black Hollywood director, and how his photographs highlight racism in America.

Picture This: Fun Photography and Crafts

By Debra Friedman

Fun and creative photography projects for kids to express their creativity.

Learn more about visiting the ICA, including up-to-date visitor guidelines and safety protocols, at icaboston.org/visit.

Find creative activities to do at home at icaboston.org/artlab.

Questions? Comments? Contact us at familyprograms@icaboston.org.



This exhibition is co-organized by ICA/Boston and MoMA PS1. Organized by Eva Respini, Barbara Lee Chief Curator, ICA/Boston, and Peter Eleey, Curator-at-Large, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing and Shanghai, with Anni Pullagura, Curatorial Assistant, ICA/Boston.

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