



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2011 Volume III: The Idea of America

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## **American Ideas in Three Artist Collectives**

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by Emily Faxon

This research and unit of instruction connect art history and art-making to American cultural history and citizenship; the lessons are intended for a high school photography class. By providing historical background and classroom experiences of artistic collaboration and participation in an artist collective, I hope to instill a sense of their challenges and rewards, and to generate student thinking and dialogue about the influence of democracy and the importance of participation in the making of American culture. The unit of instruction addresses key issues of the research—the idea of an artistic revolution; the exercise of democracy in an artist collective; the problems of unequal status of the individual members of a collective and how social inequality influences the story of culture. Each of the three collectives in the research produced photographic work—as pure aesthetic study (in the case of Group f. 64), as documentation of performance art (Fluxus), or incidentally, as part of the graphic design of posters and billboards (Guerrilla Girls). Students will produce and critique photographs that reflect these expressive and functional possibilities of photography.

(Developed for Photography/Art, High School grades; recommended for Photography/Art, High School grades)

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