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AS-285
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Mafia Film Stills Artist Statement

Coming up with an idea for the creative photo project was not difficult for me. After a visit to the museum as a class, I wanted to do my own version of the "Untitled film stills" by Cindy Sherman, but make them more intense. After I saw Shermans photograph in person my mind started to race about what I could do with this concept. I decided to continue to research Cindy Sherman and get more inspiration. After continuing to look at her work, I figured out I wanted my film still theme to be Mafia movies. Some of my favorite movies like Scarface, The Godfather, GoodFellas inspired me. Looking up stills, rewatching scenes and just asking people what they think of when they think of mafia movies is how I created a storyboard. I drew out my ideas and then walked around downtown Lexington trying to find locations. I even asked restaurants if I could shoot inside trying to find locations that would not make my geographic location obvious. When looking for models, two friends of mine instantly came into mind. They fit the roles and were excited to represent these characters.

When shooting these photos, I was very nervous. The first 10 minutes I got some great shots and my confidence went up. I think my strengths in these photos are the settings, including colors and location, framing and space, and also subject matter. I worked hard to find locations that seemed almost timeless, like they could have been taken a while ago or today. I also worked really hard to have a consistent theme and integrate a loose narrative element. Something I need to work on is attention to detail. In my restaurant photos the tables are set with the glasses upside down and the folded napkins, not looking as realistic as it could. I cropped the photos to get rid of the glasses, changing my composition. I also need to work on my emphasis and value, making my restaurant shots lighter and have the reds pop more. Minor things like this I need to notice and fix.

Cindy Sherman was a big inspiration, and without seeing her work I do not think I would have come up with my idea. I have never thought about narrative photography in a way of telling a story until I imagine it as a movie scene. This helped me and pushed me to create something I was proud of and want to share. I picked up new skills on the way like taking portraits photographs, and hunting for spots to take the photos themselves.