

THE AMERICAN TEENAGER PROJECT an Art-to-Action Program

THE ART *It's Complicated: The American Teenager* is a collection of portraits and interviews with largest generation of adolescents since the baby boomers, discovered in full truth by award-winning documentary photographer Robin Bowman, through the lens of her old format Polaroid camera and an analogue recorder. Robin traveled 21,731 miles between 2001 and 2005 through most regions of the United States, taking pictures of and interviewing 419 teenagers from diverse social and economic groups. The subjects range from the grandchildren of a U.S. president to teenage gang members in New York City; from prodigal teens born to talent to unwed mothers living on public assistance; from Miss Teenage America to a teen preacher in West Virginia. The ethnic, religious and cultural diversity that emerges is breathtaking and challenge us to see the public personae of young people in new ways, as the delicate truths that make us all human begin to emerge. There is no shortage of absent parents, irrelevant schools, drugs both legal and illicit, violence, and early sexual experiences. But the collection of images and personal stories is not despairing. Rather, it finds hope in the strength and courage displayed by these remarkable young people as they struggle to define themselves in an all too hostile world.

THE ACTION *The American Teenager Project* is an educational program co-founded by Robin Bowman and veteran educator and diversity leader Julia Hollinger that reaches young people through school-based courses, after-school programs, and community organizations. Facilitators use *It's Complicated: The American Teenager* as the foundational text to explore with young people the complex, controversial, and deeply human issues that they navigate on a daily basis and which mirror the challenges we face in society at large. We teach young people to use the camera and the recorder to have intimate and truthful face-to-face conversations with each other about their experiences, their ideas, and their future dreams. We give young people access to cameras and train them to document their own community through authentic portraiture and personal storytelling. We model for young people how to share these stories with each other and the public in a manner that promotes community building and action on the issues that matter most.

THE IMPACT Our programs create a space that “Unlocks-the-Talk” among people, across difference, about a wide range of personal and societal issues. The workshops cultivate enduring community among youth from different backgrounds that serves as a significant bolster against the bullying, anxiety, isolation, and stress facing so many young people in schools and families today. The true impact is felt in the profound change within each participant as they recognize the shared humanity among them, that everyone has “a story”, and that they are not “the only one”. These youth choose to walk differently in the future - to be open to others, stand up for each other in the face of injustice, and remind all youth in need that they are not alone.

MATERIALS/PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOLS, CBOS, CONFERENCES, FESTIVALS

BOOK: *It's Complicated: The American Teenager* by Robin Bowman (Umbrage, 2007.) **Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults 2009** - The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). **Silver Medal Winner 2009** - Nautilus Awards. **Gold Medal Winner 2008 - Best Photography Book** - Independent Publisher's Book Awards.

TRAVELING EXHIBITION: IC Gallery sponsored by the **Open Society Foundations Documentary Photography Project**. 64 images and interview texts from the original collection; 36 audio clips through free mobile download; Discussion guidelines, workshops for youth and adults. Available March 15, 2014.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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The American Teenager Project

Unlock the Talk Workshop

Overview of the Unlock the Talk Workshop

During the **Unlock the Talk Workshop** participants collaborate to take photographic portraits and oral histories of each other and edit, present, and analyze their work. This collaboration increases social awareness, builds community, and develops listening and public speaking skills. Our curriculum is rooted in the portraits and histories in Robin Bowman's photography and oral history collection *IT'S COMPLICATED: The American Teenager*. We utilize the diversity of experience expressed by the teenagers in her collection to introduce challenging and relevant topics and push the boundaries of understanding for youth towards a place of increased curiosity, empathy, acceptance, and advocacy. The workshop is designed for groups of 10 - 30 high school age youth and we recommend sophomore level or higher.

Overview of Teacher Training by The American Teenager Project

2013-2014 is our first year of training teachers to run **Unlock the Talk Workshops** in their schools in the format they see fits best their student body and community needs.

The teacher training takes the form of immersive participation in the same process that teachers will be asking their students to participate in. This process is shortened for the purpose of training and enriched by discussion of the experiences and how to tweak as necessary for each teacher's particular context. The training also includes introduction to all of the supplemental materials for running the **Unlock the Talk Workshop** AND publishing the work through books, exhibitions, and audio programming. The teacher will leave training with experience, questions answered, and an overview with guidelines of how to run in their class, but as with all professional development, each educator should expect to have to do additional preparation with the materials before leading the workshops.

The American Teenager Project has created **Unlock the Talk Workshop** curriculum to fit a 3 - 8 week course in a school or to be run through after-school programs. The description listed on the other side provides the minimum time that is required to do certain aspects of the program. Examples of how the workshop has been run are: a 6 week unit in a ninth grade leadership course, as part of a semester long elective yearbook course, as a stand-alone unit in a 12th grade English class, as a three week 45-hour summer program, as a year long photojournalist program.

The American Teenager Project
Unlock the Talk Workshop

UNLOCK THE TALK WORKSHOP VARIATIONS	
3 day workshop –(20 hours) Public presentation INCLUDING Framed Prints And Printed Books	This is our Signature Workshop leading to a public presentation of work along with a printed, framed, exhibition ready collection of photographs and interviews and a published book. This workshop can be broken into several pieces, but must include at least 20 session hours with participants. Public presentation can be designed to be immediately after workshop or at a later date. Workshops can be designed around after-school program hours as long as each session is a minimum of 3 hours for 4 – 5 sessions.
2 ½ day workshop – (15 hours) Public presentation	This is the same as our Signature Workshop (see above) but the public presentation is digitally projected during a single event designed to be immediately after workshop or at a later date – less time is required of students as they are not finalizing materials for publication.
2 day workshop –12 hours No public presentation	This is the same as our Signature Workshop (see above) but there is no public presentation of material and therefore fewer session hours are necessary.
3-Hour Mini-Workshops	This is an alternative to the full workshops. These workshops can include up to 30 participants and provide lots of discussion, community building, and a bit of experimenting with photographing and interviewing. There is no published outcome or presentation possible with this workshop

These describe the foundational **Unlock the Talk Workshop** – many classroom teachers choose to extend to course to engage their students in presentations, research projects, and larger scale exhibitions.

THE AMERICAN TEENAGER PROJECT

TEACHER TRAINING REGISTRATION FORM

Thank you for interest in training with The American Teenager Project. We are excited you will join us in our efforts to provide meaningful, course-embedded diversity learning and community building opportunities to students.

DETAILS OF TRAINING:

When: Friday February 7th 10 – 5

Where: The Richmond Art Center

When: Saturday February 8th 9 – 12:30

Where: Location TBD

PLEASE PROVIDE FOLLOWING FOR EACH TEACHER ATTENDING THE TRAINING:

TEACHER NAME	SCHOOL	PHONE	EMAIL

Training Costs (includes digital curriculum and images and equipment rental for training)
(please circle)

One Teacher \$400

Two Teachers \$700

TOTAL: _____

Material Costs

Physical Text *It's Complicated: The American Teenager* by Robin Bowman (Umbrage, 2007)

of Books: _____ @ \$40.00 each

TOTAL: _____

TOTAL OVERALL: _____

Please make checks payable to The American Teenager Project and send to address below.