



Photographer Kira Derryberry is posting free and easy projects for parents to complete with their children using their smart phone cameras.
KIRA DERRYBERRY

FACE TIME

Photographer launches creative project for families at home

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Amidst the societal upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic and "safer-at-home" orders, photographer Kira Derryberry asked herself how she could be helpful to the community. Her business has come to a standstill as the owner of Kira Derryberry Photography.

Derryberry says it was while searching for something fun to do with her daughter that the Stay at Home Photography Series was created. Every week, Derryberry is posting free and easy projects for parents to complete with their children using their smart-phone cameras. She is asking everyone to share the results to social media with the hashtag #kdpstayathome.

"Social media is so inundated right now with negativity, that when I see smiling pictures from children at home, it brightens up the newsfeed a little bit," says Derryberry. "I am trying to put good out there. Anything we can do to help the community get through this time."

Derryberry serves as the director of the Professional Photographers of America, a nonprofit that provides its members with tools and resources for their businesses.

In the past two weeks, she has led virtual panels and discussed ideas for



Adieren Narro shot this photo as part of the Stay at Home Photography Series created by Kira Derryberry. Every week, Derryberry is posting free and easy projects for parents to complete with their children using their smart phone cameras. She is asking everyone to share the results to social media with the hashtag #kdpstayathome. ADIEREN NARRO

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Derryberry

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photographers and businesses coping with the pandemic across the country.

She has been heartened by many professionals who are turning to social media to create similar projects. Her first assignment, "Make Faces" directed parents to have their children stand against a neutral wall near a window and make as many silly faces as they could conjure. Then, using different accessible phone applications and editing tools, Derryberry instructed them on how to create an image collage.

"We have this gift of time with our family we didn't expect to have, which is actually a great thing," says Derryberry. "I think we are taking for granted some of those little moments to remember. Every person has a camera in their hand, and I just wanted to give people ideas on how to document those moments."

Derryberry fell in love with portrait photography from the moment her father gifted her a film camera. She spent most of her high school in the dark room and majored in fine art at the University of Alabama. She says her father remains the artist she most admires and he has given her unconditional support over the years.

She was delighted to photograph him recently in a fully styled shoot to capture his distinguished essence. Her brother also found himself in front of her lens and wound up as the cover photo of "Professional Photographer Magazine" — something Derryberry counts among her greatest accomplishments as an admirer of character and celebrity portrait photographers like Mark Seliger and Annie Leibovitz.

"A character portrait makes you feel like you know the person better through the image," explains Derryberry. "Sometimes it is completely mocked up and sometimes it is a genuine portrait of that person by way of lighting, scene or clothing choice. You get a feel for their personality and demeanor."

Portraits tell stories for Derryberry. She most enjoys capturing families and artists, and has photographed musicians Avis Berry and Mary Ann Hoffman.

"Those are always fun because artists know how to perform in front of the camera, and I get to focus on creating



Photographer Kira Derryberry shoots a portrait. When her business slowed because of the coronavirus, Derryberry created the Stay at Home Photography Series. KIRA DERRYBERRY

the image while they give me the emotion," adds Derryberry.

Derryberry's portraits use clean, neutral backgrounds, usually in white or shades of gray. She prefers this minimalist style as it provides a modern look and allows the person to shine through the photograph. She will take 60 to 80 images in any given session and enjoys sitting with clients and guiding them through the selection and editing processes.

One of her biggest challenges is capturing the right light in her studio while balancing the positions of the body. Derryberry will often mirror poses and go through a specific series of shots in order to arrive at the place where her subjects look their best. She enjoys working one-on-one and building trust to get to a place where the client feels comfortable.

While she doesn't consider herself a historian, she hopes people in the community will take up their cameras to document the historic nature of this time, and all the moments that are happening right now in our homes.

"We will have documentarians out

How to see it

What: Stay at Home Photography Series with Kira Derryberry Photography

Cost: Free

Contact: For more information please call 850-583-1644. To access the series, please visit kiraderryberryphotography.com.

there doing the hard hitting work that we need for history, but I think for our own purposes we also need to remember how it was for those of us that were staying at home and trying to make the best of it," says Derryberry.

"People are missing graduations, weddings and major parts of their life that usually get documented by professionals. We should be documenting this time because it is an important part of history that we'll never forget."

Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).



Kira Derryberry's brother "The Skeptic" also found himself in front of her lens and wound up as the cover photo of "Professional Photographer Magazine." KIRA DERRYBERRY