



SUMMER JUNE 2020

# A SPONTANEOUS FAMILY PORTRAIT

FAM | SHAN Wallace



SHAN Wallace (American, born 1991). *FAM*. May 2018. Inkjet print (pigment-based). Framed: 18 × 22 1/2 in. (45.7 × 57.2 cm) Image: 17 × 21 1/2 in. (43.2 × 54.6 cm). Courtesy of the artist

In this black-and-white photograph, four very young children—wearing warm weather clothes—hold on to each other with unmistakable affection. The girl, looking up at something or someone, has her arm wrapped around the boy to her right, who is leaning forward to kiss her cheek. Her left hand touches the shoulder of the boy to her left, who is looking directly at the camera as he rests his head lightly on her shoulder. This boy's left arm is, in turn, draped around the youngest of the group, a small boy, perhaps looking at something in the distance, with his right hand pulling his shirt upwards. As it turns out, this is a close-knit group of siblings that photographer SHAN Wallace captured in her beloved home city of Baltimore.

Artist SHAN Wallace takes photographs that reflect the people, events, and places in Baltimore, representing memories, the beauties and challenges of everyday life, her own encounters with people, and people's connections to each other. In the following text, SHAN shared her memories of taking this particular photograph.

*FAM: Walking home from a vigil of one of my former students, I ran into these four—they're all siblings. The oldest brother told me about his dreams of being a rapper and having a Rolex watch while his two brothers co-signed for him. The sister, who's the only girl, was a little quiet and I was curious about how it feels being the only girl. She hadn't said much but when I pulled my camera out she instantly engaged. I first-handedly witnessed the unconditional love they have for one another, especially the sister. She was tough as her brothers, she kept up with them, too, but there was something so soft about how they handled her. These group of siblings really care for one another, they look out for each other, they protect each other.*

*I later returned with copies of the photographs and they were thrilled. It was rewarding to see their excitement once I surprised them with printed photographs. They hugged each other, and seemed just as excited to see the photographs of one another. They told me they made it "Big Time" and these images would be included in the album covers.*

To read SHAN's commentary about other photographs in the 410 exhibition, go to: [artbma.org/410](http://artbma.org/410)

## RELATED ACTIVITY

Photography can be a relatively simple and fun way of capturing the people and places around you. When you are taking pictures of people, you might consider—do they want their photograph taken? Do you have a relationship with them? Have you ever had a conversation with them? Based on what you know of them—or any conversations with them—how do you think it would be best to capture them in a photograph? Ask a family member if they are willing to have their photograph taken. Talk to them about what they are thinking and feeling. Ask if there is anything they would want included in the photograph or a particular place they want the photograph taken. Take a lot of photographs so that you can discuss which ones you and your family member like best and why.



To comment or register for Art-To-Go, email [lwilson@artbma.org](mailto:lwilson@artbma.org)

For visitor information, visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org)

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***FAM, 2018***

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