



Impact Statement

Yuki Sui, Grade 9

Illuminating the Truth, 2026

Acrylic with newspaper cuttings on canvas board, 10 x 14 inches

Jessie Art Studio, San Diego, CA

Unsung Hero: Lewis Hine

My Unsung Hero is Lewis Hine. I chose him because I was curious how photography could make a difference and help people. Turns out, it can do a lot! I admire how hardworking he was. When his father died, Lewis did everything he could to support his family, working tirelessly for thirteen hours a day and being paid very little. Even more, I admire his dedication to exposing the truth, and his bravery for never giving up even when faced with backlash. Most people can see when something is unjust, but not everyone has the courage to do something about it. Lewis Hine did.

Lewis Hine investigated and photographed children's working conditions for the National Child Labor Committee, traveling all over America. He would talk with the children and write about their experiences. The photos played a part in passing child labor laws. Thanks to those regulations, children were safer in the workplace and could go to school. The photographs also spread awareness throughout the nation. His photos were in the newspaper, on posters, and widely spoken about. Lewis also took many photos of immigrants in Ellis Island, capturing the hopeful, tired families. It made people see their humanity and challenge the harmful stereotypes against immigrants.

For my artwork, I wanted to show Lewis Hine using a camera, with his photographs of the child workers shown. I painted him to show how serious and determined he was to expose the truth of the unethical labor children were forced into. I glued cut up pieces of newspaper around the pictures to convey the widespread impact Lewis's photos made, as they were published in many newspapers. I made the background a colorful yellow and glowing around Lewis Hine to demonstrate the hope of change and how he was "Illuminating the Truth," the title of my artwork. I decided to use acrylic paint for this piece because I can draw realism the best with acrylics, and it is also fun to work with. I would mix in a lot of water with the paint so it would go smooth and blend in well on the canvas. Painting in black and white was also nice. I generally have a light color, a medium tone, and a dark tone, blocking out the big shapes first and doing details with a tiny brush after.

After learning about Lewis Hine, I feel that I can also make a difference. I learned how important it is to do the right thing, even when it feels like a lot of work or is scary, because that is the only way unjust things can be changed. It also gave me an interest in photography. I think the photos that Lewis took were raw and beautiful. Before, I thought photography wasn't anything special,

but I was proven wrong. Photography is also a form of art. I have already shared my project with all of my family and close friends, and I will continue telling Lewis Hine's story.

References:

"Child Labor" U.S. Department of Labor, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/child-labor#:~:text=The%20federal%20child%20labor%20provisions,provisions%20also%20provide%20limited%20exemptions>

"Lewis W. Hine." Smithsonian American Art Museum, americanart.si.edu/artist/lewis-w-hine-2232.

"Lewis Wickes Hine." Lewis Wickes Hine | International Center of Photography, www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/lewis-wickes-hine

"National Child Labor Committee Collection." The Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/collections/national-child-labor-committee/about-this-collection.