

The picture I chose shows my first trip to the LSU Block and Bridle Rodeo, when I went as a student to record video for my capstone project. The photograph seems straightforward at first glance: I am smiling at the audience while standing next to a tripod-mounted camera in an indoor rodeo arena. Behind me, rows of bright industrial lights illuminate the broad dirt arena beneath a tall metal canopy. Horses and riders are visible in the distance, and a metal barrier divides the audience from the performance area. Pens, papers, and a cup with the LSU symbol are on the table next to me. But beyond the surface, this picture serves more than just a casual snapshot. Participation in a long-standing Southern tradition, the blending of education and heritage, and the visible broadening of who is involved in agriculture and rodeo culture are all represented by this event. As a persuasive piece, the image creates a social meaning based on public memory, documentation, and public memory.

Cultural representation and continuity are at the heart of this image's social meaning. The LSU Block and Bridle Rodeo is an institution-wide tradition that links students to Louisiana's agricultural past; it is more than just an entertainment event. Regional identity is deeply rooted in rodeos, which are frequently linked to livestock management, rural values, and intergenerational community meetings. The image implies involvement in maintaining that legacy by presenting me as an active photographer rather than a passive viewer. The fact that the camera is mounted on a tripod highlights the fact that this is a memory that is being captured, edited, and preserved rather than a passing trend. In this sense, the picture becomes more than just my own accomplishment; it also refers to the use of media production to preserve cultural memory.



The image also makes traditional images of rodeo settings more difficult to understand. Historically, restricted visual frameworks that highlight manhood and rural ethnicity have been used to depict rodeo culture. Those assumptions are discreetly challenged by my presence in the picture as an African American woman with professional filming gear. By referencing traditional rural aesthetics, the camouflage jacket helps me blend in with the environment. But the camera also adds a new dimension: technical mediation and scholarly investigation. Instead of

portraying rodeo culture as static and exclusive, the image encourages viewers to perceive it as dynamic and inclusive. It conveys that customs remain by embracing new members and viewpoints rather than by opposing change.

This social significance is constructed in large part by the image's visual elements. I am positioned in the foreground of the picture at a slight inclination, and the tripod creates strong vertical lines that serve as the frame's anchor. The audience's eyes are directed outward into the performance space by the camera lens pointing toward the arena. As a result, the subject and setting have a visual conversation. The railing serves as a horizontal line of boundary, signifying the separation between the performer and the audience. I represent the function of mediator by being outside the arena yet close enough to record. I am the link that turns the action into a visual story; I am neither a rival nor an indifferent witness.

The image's argumentative power is additionally enhanced by lighting. The arena is uniformly illuminated by the strong overhead lights, giving it an air of transparency and openness. Instead of dark contrasts or dramatic shadows, the setting feels open and welcoming. The industrial ceiling structure highlights size and grandeur by fading into the background. The perception that the rodeo is an event for the public deserving of being documented is strengthened by this sense of expansiveness. As all of this is going on, my smile and easy stance personalize the industrial environment and invite spectators to join in.

The image's persuasive effects are further strengthened by color and texture. The cold turquoise of the tripod's legs and the white tables contrast with the earthy brown tones of the dirt arena. While the LSU-branded cup indicates institutional affiliation, the camouflage jacket physically fits with the rural setting, indicating cultural familiarity. Together, these components place the image at the nexus of academics and tradition. A tactile feeling of place is produced by the textures such as the polished metal fence, the rough mud, and the denim and camouflage fabric. They enhance the scene's claim as a significant public memory rather than an abstract idea by giving it a real, lived-in sense.

According to visual rhetoric researchers, memory is about influencing how societies see themselves rather than just conserving the past. Because it depicts a turning point about the survival of agricultural culture inside a modern academic setting, this picture merits a place in public memory. It demonstrates how organizations like LSU both increase involvement and preserve local traditions. This picture might stand for cultural pride, student involvement, and the combination of scholarship and real-world experience in my town. More generally, it adds to the changing story of who engages in and maintains Southern customs.

Importantly, the picture also refers to the documentation process itself. The camera is a tool that is both literal and symbolic. It implies that as events are documented and shared, they gain lasting effects. The picture emphasizes the memory-making process by placing the

equipment in the center of the frame. It serves as a reminder to the audience that public memory is controlled and created through purposeful aesthetic and technological decisions. As a result, the picture convinces us to appreciate the rodeo as well as the effort required to record and share its stories.

In conclusion, by visually connecting the identity, tradition, and memory of institutions, this image functions as a compelling piece. Its acceptance of media as a means of heritage preservation and its portrayal of being included within a culturally valuable space are what give it its social significance. With thoughtful lighting, color, composition, and symbolic aspects, the picture creates a sense of stewardship and belonging. Through visual and rhetorical analysis, what started out as my first trip to the LSU Block and Bridle Rodeo becomes a claim about who gets to take part in and influence public memory. I do more than just follow tradition when I record and occupy this space; I become a part of its continuous narrative.