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Latisha 'L' Renee Blount presents on her passion for outdoor photography

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Latisha 'L' Renee Blount presents on her passion for outdoor photography

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Growing up, it's common to hear people tell students to study something they are passionate about in order to do what they love later in life. Students are often told that when one's job encompasses what one loves, they will never work a day in their life. After attending photographer Latisha ("L" for short) Renee Blount's presentation, "Making Outdoor Spaces More Inclusive", it's safe to say that Blount is someone who has done just that. By combining her love of the outdoors, and her passion for photography, Blount was able to craft a career that enables her to capture the human element in the beauty of an outdoor setting.

During the Q and A portion of her virtual talk hosted by the MaineBound Adventure Center on campus, Blount recounted her experiences of first getting into climbing. Growing up in the South, she didn't always feel comfortable being outside. She was introduced to outdoor activities through a series of summer camps growing up. Because of this introduction, Blount ended up doing more camping throughout college and got involved at a climbing gym in Atlanta, Georgia. There, she was able to get a job and climb for free which was one of the many benefits of working there. She would have her first outdoor climbing experience at an area known as Boat Rock, a bouldering field located near Atlanta. Blount would eventually apply to graduate school at Harvard's School of Design after completing a Bachelor of Arts at Emory University in political science. Throughout her experience in graduate school she found a love for numbers and planning for the future.

After finishing up graduate school, Blount was able to devote more free time to hone her skills with the camera and looked for inspiration in nature. By combining that element with the range of emotion she is fascinated by in people, Blount has crafted a signature style that has caught the attention of several big companies. In 2018 companies such as North Face, Arc'Teryx and Patagonia used her work. Blount enjoys capturing the human experience while climbing and photographing moments of struggle, triumph and cooperation in the outdoors. Blount tries to keep the tone of her work lighthearted and focused on the outdoor lifestyle. She's always asking herself the question: "How can I make what I do look more fun?" Blount also believes in taking risks.

"If you really have a lot of conversations with a lot of different people, from there you can see where you're gonna land, and then you can find out what's possible," Blount said.

Her photos are about having fun, basking in the beauty in nature, reaching out to others and asking questions. But, according to Blount, it's not always an easy job. She spoke on how being a Black woman in the outdoor photography industry comes with a lot of challenges. She encourages everyone to have people in their corner for extra emotional support. Going forward, Blount hopes that there will be more diversity in the outdoor industry and that more people will discover the beauty and

freedom that comes with climbing and the outdoors. When the COVID-19 pandemic eventually comes to a close, she hopes that more people will explore what the outdoors has to offer, so that everyone can feel "beautiful" and powerful.



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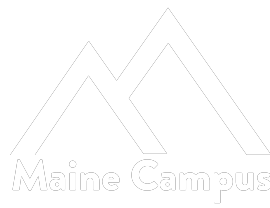


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