

Erin Latham | Session 2:

Kara Walker: Silhouette Stories

List of Required Supplies: Paper, black cardstock or construction paper, pencil, white colored pencil, scissors, glue.

Space/Facility Requirements: Table space, chair, running water.

Student Time Required: 60 minutes



Information on the Artist:

Kara Walker is an American contemporary painter, silhouettist, printmaker, installation artist, and filmmaker who explores race and identity in her work. She is best known for her room-size tableaux of black cut-paper silhouettes. Her work considers the history of the people of color in America and allows us to explore the challenges of our troubled past. Through her silhouettes, she confronts the viewer with hard truths about American history but asks us to engage in understanding and to strive for tolerance and kindness for the future. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kara_Walker).

Additional Links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kara_Walker (wiki)

<https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Kara-Walker/625428> (article)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhByMffG9IA> (videos)

Note:

Although her subject matter can be difficult to teach to children, this project focuses on storytelling, who tells the story, and how the stories change. This project encourages students to engage in one another's stories.

Step-by-step Instructions:

1. Think of a story you'd like to tell about your life.
2. Using a pencil sketch out the images of your story. For example, yourself, your home, what's in your backyard, what you like. Try to create at least five images. (Keep in mind these will be silhouettes, so not much detail on the inside).
3. Cut out each image creating a silhouette, take your time.
4. Trace the outside of the images onto black paper using a white colored pencil and cut these images out.
5. Carefully arrange the black pieces of paper on a white background and glue them down to tell your story.
6. Now use the original images, the ones on white paper to create different stories by allowing a friend to place them on a black piece of paper.
7. Optional: Teachers can hold a class critique and prompt students to ask questions of the work: How do the stories differ? Why are they different?

