

“Social Issues Silhouettes”



Objective: Create a silhouette piece that depicts or comments on a critical social issue.

Materials

- Pencils, Black Paper and White Paper
- X-ACTO Knives and Glue
- Alternatively, students can draw and then fill in their silhouettes with marker.

Motivation

- Introduce students to the work of Kara Walker and discuss as a class. **NOTE:** Many of her images have very mature subject matter, so do your research first. Use your professional judgment when selecting the images you will share.
- Ask your students: What role does an artist have in the social aspects of society? Does an artist have a responsibility to comment on society? If so, how can they do so responsibly? Do they have to do so responsibly?

Step 1: Social Issues Discussion

Begin by discussing, as a class, some of the issues facing our students, our communities, our country, and our world. It may help to look at specific categories like international issues (war, Middle East conflict, human rights), family issues (divorce, abuse, alcoholism), or discrimination (racism, gender bias, income inequality, etc...) and list ideas on the board.

Step 2: Brainstorm and Sketch

Students should select one issue that they feel strongly about or to which they have a strong reaction. From there, they can determine the specific images they will use to depict the issue--without using words--and create a sketch of the silhouettes that will make up their artwork.

Step 3: Cut, Compose, and Glue.

Students can then draw their silhouettes on black paper, cut with an X-ACTO knife, and arrange them on a white background. Make sure silhouettes are arranged in an interesting composition that fills the page, and ensure that enough detail is present that the silhouettes clearly depict the social issue. When everything is in order, the silhouettes can be glued down to complete the project.

Tip: Have students show their sketches to friends, family members, and classmates before they begin their final project. If the work can be understood without explanation, they are ready to begin. If the images are too vague or ambiguous, the sketch should be reworked.