

Billy Murray

**KARA WALKER COLOR THEORY**

March 13th, 2019

List 2 or 3 *related* outcomes from the PA Arts and Humanities Standards:

[http://www3.kutztown.edu/arteducation/PDF/arts\\_standards.pdf](http://www3.kutztown.edu/arteducation/PDF/arts_standards.pdf)

*9.1.E. Delineate a unifying theme through the production of a work of art that reflects skills in media processes and techniques.*

*9.3.D. Analyze and interpret works in the arts and humanities from different societies using culturally specific vocabulary of critical response.*

AND 2 or 3 connections to the Common Core: <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

*6.P Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.*

*11.C Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.*

**GRADE LEVEL AND DEVELOPMENTAL RATIONALE:**

This lesson will take place in both 9th grade classes, following basic exercises related to figure drawing from a live model. The skills that they have, have been built upon in an ascending order in terms of difficulty and sophistication. This project represents the start of us introducing painting techniques as well as color theory into our figure drawing unit and will serve as the last figure drawing exercise as we move into our final figure drawing painting unit.

In terms of the “big ideas” of this lesson, it is broken up into three parts. This includes a lesson on color theory and how it relates to our lives today, which is largely outlined in the powerpoint.

This is followed by a brief introduction to painting techniques, including discussion and demonstration. The outlined methods will be: blend

This is followed by a small, “mini-project” related to the color theory lesson and contemporary artist Kara Walker. The skills that students have learned within the figure unit, as well as both the color theory presentation and painting demonstration today will be directly relevant to this project.

**BIG PICTURE RATIONALE:**

This project utilizes references to many different artists and cultures and their relevance to us today, emphasizing the importance of color. Color, or even lack thereof, is relevant to all types of art.

However, the main inspiration in terms of the product we are creating is Kara Walker. As an educator, it is crucial to present exemplar artists to students who look like them, talk like they do and have had

similar lives to them. Doing so right now adds seats to the table in terms of conversations of art and art education.

A big part of this lesson and the overall “point” is to equip students with both knowledge and skills of color theory and painting, building off of what we know from our extensive figure unit. Following this knowledge, students will create work that is more personal and interesting to them. They will reference and stay true to the knowledge of historical work and principles, but much more importantly use these tools to be true to themselves and to what they want to create, as that is what will make them stand out.

### **MENTOR ARTIST/S OR VISUAL CULTURE: (Contemporary and Historical)**

*For color theory/painting techniques:*

Historical:

Georgia O’Keefe - American painter, frequent user of intermediate colors

Georges Seurat - American painter, Pointillism, optical mixing

Keith Haring - American painter, expressive color and installation type figural work

Contemporary:

Odili Odita - Philadelphia artist, great use of color, teaches at Tyler and has had work on display at the PMA

Cultural:

Architecture of various locations around the world - Balat, Istanbul, Palmitos, Mexico

Festivals around the world - Holi, Basant Kite Festival

Clothing/Traditions:

*For specific project:*

Kara Walker - African American painter, “silhouette-ist” - main inspiration for project piece

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **SWBAT:**

*Painting techniques:*

-Demonstrate an effective understanding of painting techniques, by utilizing all three outlined painting techniques (described below)

*Mini-project:*

-Create a composition layering at least two different figures in active poses

-Utilize a major color theory (complimentary) that uses at least three tones

-Demonstrate three types of painting techniques

-Tell a story or create some sort of narrative between the figures, and be able to describe.

**LOGISTICS:**Full Supply list (DAY 1)

- 6x9 paper, one for each student
- 2 colors of paint, and white for each students
- Different size brushes (at least 3 different sizes for each student)
- Small plastic pallets
- Small jars for water

Full Supply list (DAY 2-3)

- 8x8 paper, one for each student
- pencils, erasers, sharpeners
- Full sets of acrylic paint. Students are encouraged to use at least 4-6 different colors and mix them
- Different size brushes (at least 3 different sizes for each student)
- Small plastic pallets
- Small jars for water

To prepare before

- powerpoint presentation
- "template" for painting demonstration
- outline of figures to paint during class
- palette of colors
- Partially completed exemplar of final piece at full size
- Clear area in front of windows to be able to create silhouetted images

**DAY 1 - SPARK/INTRODUCTION (Time: 20 minutes).**

I will ask students the things they know about color theory and color psychology, after which a brief discussion will follow.

After this, I will begin the powerpoint presentation, which will cover a wide variety of both the color theory as well as its application by artists historically, as well as in a contemporary sphere. (See powerpoint and speaker notes)

**DAY 1 - DEMONSTRATION - PAINTING TECHNIQUES (15 mins)**

Before beginning the demonstration on painting techniques, I will very briefly outline what the final product will be for the Kara Walker piece (outlined below) since I am giving a lot of info today I will keep this very brief, so as not to confuse them, but to keep this on the students' radar.

I will show the students round and flat brushes, as well as what one may use different ones for. I will also be sure to show them to leave the brushes face up so they don't dry up.

The painting techniques outlined/reviewed will be as follows:

- Blending - good, smooth value range "gradation" "feathering"
- Visible strokes - influenced by impressionism, both thin and thick strokes, thick being called "dabbing"
- Glazing/Washing - use of a lot of water and an "underpainting"

This is something I say a lot, but I think it is crucial to reiterate. We are teaching the students specific objective strategies for paintings, through which they will find ways to establish what works for them, as well as what is relevant and useful in their own creative work.

### **DAY 1 ACTIVITY (Until end of class period)**

Students will create their own "scales" outlining all of the above methods. During my demonstration, I will be completing a composition in a similar way that they would be. They will be completing these on watercolor paper, which will lend itself nicely especially to the glazing technique, which uses a lot of water. Whenever all students have completed this initial exercise, I will go on to demonstrate the next step in this assignment:

### **DAY 2 - DEMONSTRATION: MINI-PROJECT (10 mins) \*\* DAY 2**

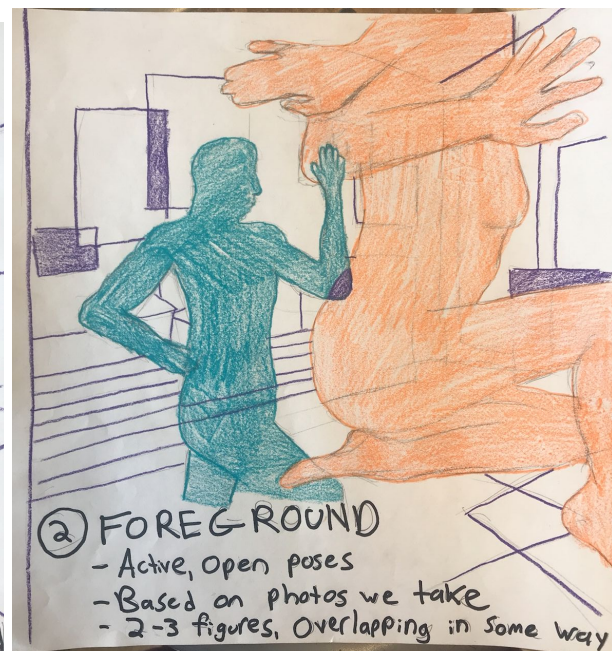
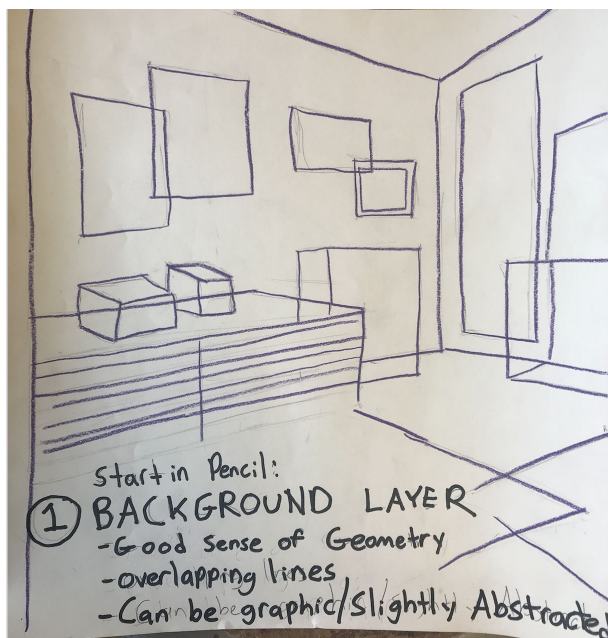
For our "mini-project," we will be creating silhouetted "dioramas" in the style of Kara Walker, with layered figures giving a sense of the background and overlapping between figures and shapes. They will also utilize the skills they developed relating to painting techniques (above.) I will demonstrate the process of creating the pieces based on what we learned through the powerpoint as well as our main inspiration artists for what we will produce: Kara Walker

I will have the layered, outlined figures already outlined in pencil (outlined in marker below) to show detail and relationship between background, middle ground and foreground:

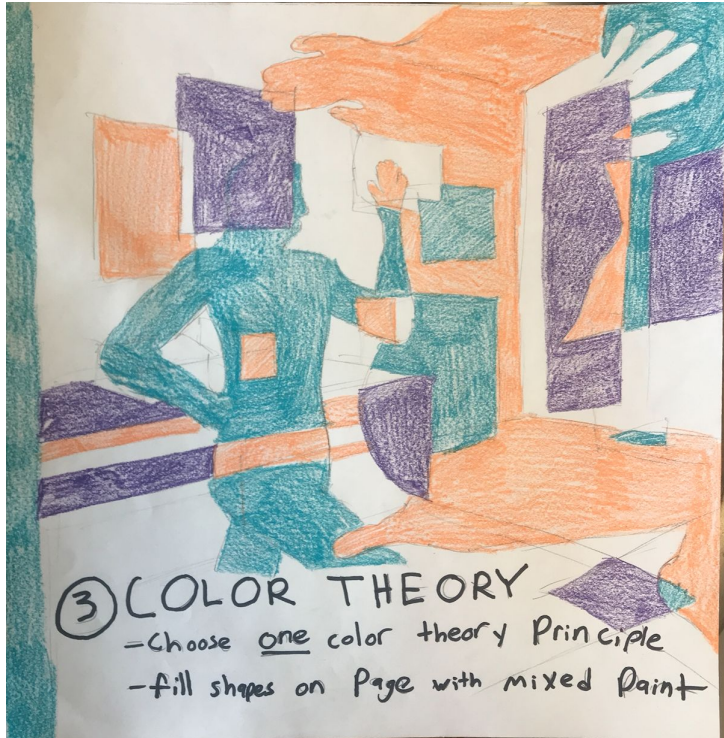


IMPORTANT TO NOTE: the above is not meant to represent the end result of this piece, just a good sense of the composition, relationship to figure and ground and a good sense of foreground, middle ground and background.

Below, a step by step process is shown for completing the piece, a more accurate representation of the final deliverable.







Example in paint: (different composition)



For the paint, students will be encouraged to use three different painting methods that we outlined on the first day of the lesson, which will be part of the assessment.

**DAY 2-3 ACTIVITY (Time 2 class periods):**

To begin, we will work from photos of figures on the back windowsill, which is lit well in the afternoon and will nicely lend itself to silhouetted figures. We are working from photos to allow for more active and interesting poses that don't need to be held for as long.

The students will then synthesize their drawings together into a composition, incorporating a very simple, loose sense of a shape or a few shapes within the background, paying homage to Walker's sense of figure/ground relationship, translating nicely to silhouettes.

Before painting, the students will be outlining their figures in pencil, in order to effectively plan for the painting procedure. They will pay close attention to proportions and correct anatomy, as well as the composition, before moving on to the painting. Students won't be able to get their painting supplies ready until they are done the initial planning of the piece.

In terms of color theory, they students will be using complimentary colors of their choice, as well as tints and shades of them. This will act as a "sampler" before we move into more complex color theory principles for the final figure projects, which directly follows this project. They will also be incorporating the various painting techniques we showed them.

**DAY 1-3 CLEAN-UP PROCEDURES (Time 5-10 minutes):**

The students' pieces are to be returned to their designated drawers at the end of class if they are dry, or on the drying rack if they are wet, or in the class folder if they are completed.

For cleaning up the painting, students will use both sinks in the backroom discarding all unused/dry paint, as well as making sure the paintbrushes are face up. As always, we will ask the students to clean off their tables as well as check the floors around them.

**CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP (Time 1 hour)**

We will critique the pieces in the usual fashion (outlined below), giving around 5 minutes per piece.

I will ask the following questions:

- Which elements of the piece are working successfully and which parts need improvement (don't say nothing needs improvement!)
- If this piece were to have a title, what would it be?
- Which piece had a lot of potential that could have been carried out a bit better? (be constructive!)

All pieces will be hung up and the students will receive a number that corresponds to an artwork. Each student will discuss the piece in detail and answer the above questions about it, with opportunities for anyone in the classroom, especially including the artist, to chime in.

#### **ADAPTATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:**

Compasses and rulers will be available to the students as they were in past figure drawing exercises, as needed. French curves may also come in handy for students.

#### **EXTENSION:**

As a part of our figure drawing unit, we are building up an extremely large bank of drawings in order to use for the final figure drawing project (This project is the second to last.) Students who finish early will be able to utilize old drawings on top of the composition. This may include (and most likely be most effective) continuous contour or blind contour line drawings. Since this project is very focused on shape, incorporating a sense of line would add visual contrast and create an even more interesting composition.

#### **ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES/RUBRICS:**

*Painting techniques:*

- Student demonstrates an understanding by completing all three painting techniques

*mini-project:*

- Student created a composition layering at least two different figures in active poses
- Utilize a major color theory (complimentary) that uses at least three tones
- Demonstrate three types of painting techniques
- Student creates a story or create some sort of narrative between the figures, and be able to describe.

#### **RESOURCES & IMAGES:**





Another exemplar for composition

*See attached powerpoint for all reference material*