

I was an artist just like Dad

Kara Elizabeth Walker (born November 26, 1969) is an American contemporary painter, silhouettist, print-maker, installation artist, and filmmaker who explores race, gender, sexuality, violence, and identity in her work. She is best known for her room-size tableaux of black cut-paper silhouettes. Walker lives in New York City and has taught extensively at Columbia University. She is serving a five-year term as Tepper Chair in Visual Arts at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. She was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 2018.

Walker received her BFA from the Atlanta College of Art in 1991 and her MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994. Walker found herself uncomfortable and afraid to address race within her art during her early college years. However, she found her voice on this topic while attending Rhode Island School of Design for her Master's, where she began introducing race into her art. She had a distinct worry that having race as the nucleus of her content would be received as "typical" or "obvious."

Early life

Walker was born in Stockton, California, in 1969. She lived with her father, Larry Walker (b. 1935), who worked as a painter and professor. Kara's mom Gwendolyn worked as an administrative assistant. Reflecting on her father's influence, Walker recalls: "One of my earliest memories involves sitting on my dad's lap in his studio in the garage of our house and watching him draw. I remember thinking: 'I want to do that, too,' and I pretty much decided then and there at age 2½ or 3 that I was an artist just like Dad."

Work and career

Walker is best known for her panoramic friezes of cut-paper silhouettes, usually black figures against a white wall, which address the history of American slavery and racism through violent and unsettling imagery. The black and white silhouettes confront the realities of history, while also using the stereotypes from the era of slavery to relate to persistent modern-day concerns. Her exploration of American racism can be applied to other countries and cultures regarding relations between race and gender, and reminds us of the power of art to defy conventions.

At the age of 27, she became the second youngest recipient of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's "genius" grant, second only to renowned Mayanist, David Stuart. In 2007, the Walker Art Center exhibition Kara Walker: My Complement, My Oppressor, My Enemy, My Love was the artist's first full-scale U.S. museum survey.

Bruce Jacobs



Kara Walker's silhouette displayed at the Met in New York City.

Lee Miller

by Angela Prague

Elizabeth Lee Miller, Lady Penrose (April 23, 1907– July 21, 1977), was an American photographer and photojournalist. She was a fashion model in New York City in the 1920s before going to Paris, where she became a fashion and fine art photographer. During the Second World War, she was a war correspondent for *Vogue*, covering events such as the London Blitz, the liberation of Paris, and the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dachau.



A photo of Lee Miller during WWII.

Miller was born on April 23, 1907, in Poughkeepsie, New York. Her parents were Theodore and Florence Miller. Her father was of German descent, and her mother of Scottish and Irish descent. She had a younger brother named Erik and her older brother was the aviator Johnny Miller. Theodore always favored Lee, and he often used her as a model for his amateur photography. When she was seven years old, Lee was raped while staying with a family friend in Brooklyn and infected with gonorrhoea. In her childhood, Miller experienced issues in her formal education, being expelled from almost every school she attended whilst living in the Poughkeepsie area. In 1925, at the age of eighteen, Miller moved to Paris where she studied lighting, costume and design at the Ladislas Medgyes School of Stagecraft. She returned to New York in 1926 and joined an experimental drama program at Vassar College, taught by Hallie Flanagan, a pioneer of experimental theatre. Soon after, Miller left home at the age of 19 to enroll in the Art Students League of New York in Manhattan to study life drawing and painting.

Miller's father introduced her and her brothers to photography at an early age. She was his model“ he took many stereoscopic photographs of his teenage daughter“ and he also showed her technical aspects of the art. Aged 19 she nearly stepped in front of a car on a Manhattan street but was prevented by Cond© Nast, the

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publisher of *Vogue*. This incident helped launch her modeling career; she appeared in a blue hat and pearls in a drawing by George Lepape on the cover of *Vogue* on March 15, 1927. Miller's look was exactly what *Vogue's* then editor-in-chief Edna Woolman Chase was looking for to represent the emerging idea of the modern girl.

Lester Beall



Lester Beall's poster on marginalized communities.

Alex Romero

Lester Thomas Beall was born in Kansas City, Missouri. His family soon moved to St. Louis, Missouri, and later to Chicago, Illinois. Beall studied at the University of Chicago, in particular history of art, and was active on the varsity track team coached by Amos Alonzo Stagg. Beall also took classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. After a short period of experimentation and professional work in Chicago, Beall moved to New York in 1935. The following year he established his home/office in Wilton, Connecticut.

According to his online AIGA biography by R. Roger Remington: Through the 1930s and 1940s Beall produced innovative and highly regarded work for clients including the Chicago Tribune, Sterling Engraving, The Art Directors Club of New York, Hiram Walker, Abbott Laboratories and Time magazine. Of particular interest was his work for the Crowell Publishing Company which produced Colliers magazine. The promotional covers "Will There Be War?" and "Hitler's Nightmare" are powerful designs which distill messages of the time. In these works he utilizes angled elements, iconic arrows, silhouetted photographs and dynamic shapes, all of which captures the essence of his personal style of the late 1930s.

His clear and concise use of typography was highly praised both in the United States and abroad. Throughout his career he used bold primary colors and illustrative arrows and lines in a graphic style that became easily recognizable as his own. He eventually moved to rural

New York and set up an office, and home, at a premises that he and his family called Dumbarton Farm. He remained at the farm until his death in 1969.

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In May 2007 Swann Galleries in New York set an auction record price for Beall's 1939 photomontage poster promoting the Rural Electrification Administration's campaign to bring electricity to rural America. The image at right"considered one of the greatest American posters of all time" features a young boy and girl smiling and looking to the future as they lean against the wood fence bordering their farm. It sold for \$38,400.