



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2010 Volume II: The Art of Reading People: Character, Expression, Interpretation

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## **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Creating Expressive Character Portraits in Art Based on the Work of Hanoch Piven, Kara Walker, and Cindy Sherman**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.02.03  
by Melody S. Gallagher

Why do we teach? We teach in hope that students may become critical thinkers of the world.

This unit is designed for visual art students to utilize techniques of character analysis as the basis for creating their artworks while developing their ability to think critically about art. It has been designed for fourth-grade art students; however, it can easily be adapted for higher grade levels. Students will create three distinct characters in their own artworks by learning about the techniques used in the work of three contemporary artists: Hanoch Piven, Kara Walker, and Cindy Sherman. They will experiment with three forms of art: assemblage collage, silhouette paper cuttings, and photography. Within each lesson students will develop their skills of art criticism and character analysis in oral discussions and through written responses to strengthen their critical thinking skills.

(Developed for Art, grade 4; recommended for Art, Elementary grades 4-5, and Middle and High School grades)

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