

Light and Dark-Life Goes On
Drawing inspired by Barbara Earl Thomas



Visual Art Concepts:

- Positive & Negative Space
- Line Variation
- Patterns
- Shape
- Contrast

Materials:

- White drawing paper - 2 pieces, 5" x 7"
- Black construction paper - 2 pieces, 5" x 7"
- Black ink pens - Sharpie, Flair, fine tip drawing pens
- Glue stick, scissors

Artist Inspiration:

Barbara Earl Thomas

"My initial way of thinking about art was that it was a gift—it was a gift that you gave to someone and it made them happy."

Artwork invites viewers to look, become a part of the story and become part of the artwork itself. Thomas's work is deeply rooted in mythology and the concepts of light and dark. Her work demonstrates how both positive and negative space are important to create emotional responses. Darkness allows the light to shine in contrast and holds viewers' attention. Barbara Earl Thomas is a Seattle-based artist and storyteller, who studied under Jacob Lawrence.



STEPS:

1. Decide on a meaningful subject for the main shape of your drawing.
Outline drawings of simple shapes will work best, similar to a silhouette. In the example, I chose to draw an orca to celebrate the birth of two baby orcas in Puget Sound in September 2020. Draw the shape on one of the pieces of white drawing paper.
2. Determine the layout for your drawing - horizontal or vertical.
Consider the nature of your subject for the layout. You may want to use a vertical format for a bird flying, or a horizontal format for a canoe.
3. Divide the space on the other white piece of drawing paper for designs.
Using a pencil, lightly draw lines to divide the paper into sections. Design each of the sections with patterns using line variations (thin, thick, curvey, spiral, diagonal, broken, etc.) similar to doodles. Draw freely using the black ink pens you've selected to experiment with lines and patterns within each section. Fill each section with your creative marks covering the entire space. A popular patterning technique is called Zentangle. <https://zentangle.com>
4. Design the inside of your shape.
Inside your shape on the other piece of white paper, continue drawing and designing patterns using line variations. Then cut out the shape.
5. Trace around the white cut shape on one of the black pieces of paper.
Use the white shape as a template to trace. Cut out the shape in black. You will now have - one solid piece of black paper, one white piece of paper full of designs, a cut-out of your shape in black and one in white with designs.
6. Assemble
Place the solid black cut-out on the designed white paper and glue. Place the designed shape cut-out on the black piece of paper and glue.
7. Attach both pieces by taping the separation on the back or gluing both pieces on a larger piece of backing paper. Share and display your artwork!

Resources:

- <http://thomas.site.seattleartmuseum.org>
- <https://www.historylink.org/File/9197>
- <https://www.treehouseforkids.org/renowned-artist-barbara-earl-thomas-mentors-3-treehouse-youth/>
- <https://barbaraearlthomas.com/the-story-house/>