

# CURRIER MUSEUM<sup>of</sup>ART

The Currier Museum is pleased to present *Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*, a touring exhibition that showcases Walker's art alongside the Winslow Homer illustrations that inspired it.

**Exhibition title:** *Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*

**Exhibition dates:** February 29 – May 27, 2024

This exhibition was organized by the New Britain Museum of American Art and The Museum Box



Kara Walker, *Confederate Prisoners Being Conducted from Jonesborough to Atlanta*. From *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*, 2005, offset lithography and silkscreen on paper ©Kara Walker, courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co. and Sprüth Magers.

**January 23, 2024 – Manchester, New Hampshire** – The Currier Museum of Art is delighted to announce that *Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)* will open to the public on February 29, 2024.

The series of 15 works on paper by Walker will be presented alongside a selection of prints by Winslow Homer (American, 1836–1910) that inspired them. The direct comparison between the original images by Homer and Walker’s reinterpretation of the same material was first undertaken by the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2017. Since then, the same exhibition format has traveled to several museums across the country to great critical acclaim. This comparative exhibition constitutes an important opportunity to revisit the history of the antebellum South and the ensuing Civil War through the contemporary lenses of race, slavery, gender, and politics.

As a young artist, Homer served as a war correspondent for *Harper’s Magazine*. His compelling drawings of soldiers on the front lines of battle and civilians caught up in the war’s horrors became a visual history of the Civil War, and were published after the war in the magazine’s 1866 two-volume anthology.

These historic prints represent a starting point for Walker, who revisits them utilizing her signature silhouettes to introduce new elements that complicate their initial, seemingly objective narrative. She surfaces race and gender-based biases, highlights profound sociopolitical inequalities, and brings to the fore a silenced history of violence. Walker’s overlaying of images invites viewers to confront a traumatic past, as well as a contested national history that reverberates more strongly than ever today.

Throughout the exhibition’s run, museum curators and educators will lead a variety of conversations inspired by questions that Walker’s provocative work raises. The details of the public and educational programming will be shared via the Currier’s website and social media platforms.

*This exhibition is generously supported by Emily Leff in memory of James L. Davis, III. Additional support by Benjamin and Karina Kelley.*

**Kara Walker** (American, b. 1969) is one of the most prominent American artists working today, emerging in the mid-1990s with provocative works that critically revisited a history that until then had mostly been told from male and white points of view. She is best known for her black cut-paper silhouettes, which depict historical narratives of the antebellum South marked by subjugation, sexuality, and violence. In addition to the *Harper’s Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)* series, the Currier Museum of Art is also showing two recent artworks by Walker in its Contemporary Gallery: *A Burial at the Artist’s Country Estate* (2022), a monumental ink work templated on Gustave Courbet’s seminal 1894–95 painting, *A Burial at Ornans*; and *Goliath vs. David* (2022), a large work on paper addressing power relations and violence between races and sexes. Visit [karawalkerstudio.com](http://karawalkerstudio.com) to learn more.

**Winslow Homer** (American, 1836–1910) was an American landscape painter and illustrator best known for his coastal scenes. Largely self-taught, Homer began his career as an illustrator for magazines such as *Ballou’s Pictorial* and *Harper’s Weekly*, mainly contributing scenes of life in Boston as well as in rural New England. He spent

the middle part of his career working out of a studio base in New York, during which time he moved beyond illustration into painting. Homer spent his later years in Maine, and today he is mainly recognized for the maritime paintings and watercolors he created there, capturing man's relationship with nature and wildlife. He is considered one of the foremost American artists of the 19th century.

### **About the Currier Museum of Art**

The Currier Museum is an internationally renowned art museum located in Manchester, New Hampshire. The museum features paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and photographs, including works by Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Georgia O'Keeffe, Edward Hopper, and Andrew Wyeth. It presents exhibitions, tours, art classes, and special programs year-round. The museum also owns two houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

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