



OGDEN MUSEUM  
OF SOUTHERN ART

## O-original Art Activities: Exploring Skin Tones Inspired by Kara Crowley



Kara Crowley, *Exertion*, Acrylic on wood

**Kara Crowley** is an artist who embraces black culture through social issues and positive representation through her own artistic interpretations. Kara's time with YAYA and at Xavier University of Louisiana molded her into the artist she is today and has also inspired her to become an arts educator. Kara currently teaches visual art at St. Augustine High School. In her studio practice, Crowley uses radiant warm colors and cool undertones to capture the essence of the subject matter while also using textured mediums, such as molding paste or dried acrylic from her palette.

**Celebrate diversity and learn about your own unique skin tone in this activity inspired by Kara Crowley.**

**SEE KARA CROWLEY'S EXERTION IN LOUISIANA CONTEMPORARY, PRESENTED BY THE HELIS FOUNDATION AT THE OGDEN MUSEUM. CHECK OUT [OGDEN MUSEUM ONLINE](#) FOR MORE RESOURCES!**

### Supplies

Paper, Color Pencils, Pencil, Eraser

### Instructions

**Step 1:** Look at Kara Crowley's painting, *Exertion*, what do you notice about it? How many different **skin tones** can you find? Look at the top of your hand. Which part of Crowley's painting is most close to your own skin tone?

**Step 2:** Pick out color pencils that are close to your skin tone. Use an extra piece of paper to test the colors. Color a square then compare it to your skin tone. What is missing? Does it need to be lighter or darker? Look closely at your hand, what other colors do you see; pink, orange, blue or is there another color present (**skin undertones**)? Try again. This time adjust the color by trying another color (lighter or darker) or mixing the original color with another color (undertone). You can do this by layering the colors, one on top of the other.

**Step 3:** Once you have gotten a color that is close enough to your skin tone, be sure to write down the color combinations and layering that you used so that you can recreate it. Decide what part of your body you want to draw. Use a mirror if you need to. Use a pencil to sketch your body part on a different piece of paper.

**Step 4:** When you are done sketching, look closely at your body part. Are there lighter (highlight) or darker (shadow) areas? Use a pencil to sketch in the highlights and shadows in your drawing. Go back to your test colors. Were there some lighter or darker colors you created?

**Step 5:** Use your notes and your color combinations to color your drawing. Remember to include the highlights and shadows.

**Step 6:** What's your favorite color? Color in the background using your favorite color.

### Vocabulary

**Skin tone** - is the surface skin color, whereas **skin undertone** is the subtle hue underneath the surface. **Skin tone** is determined by the amount of melanin (skin pigment) present in the uppermost layer of your skin. Differences in skin tone among individuals is caused by variation in pigmentation, which is the result of genetics, the exposure to the sun, or both.

**QUESTIONS? EMAIL**

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