

## Exploring and Striking a Pose!

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Difficulty level:** Low

**Messy level:** Low



Dawoud Bey, *Brooklyn, NY*, 1988, gelatin silver print, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of John S. Parsley and Nancy Nolan Parsley, 2017.142. © Dawoud Bey

Dawoud Bey, *Sag Harbor, Long Island, NY*, 1983, gelatin silver print, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of John S. Parsley and Nancy Nolan Parsley, 2017.148. © Dawoud Bey

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To view a hi-res images of these works, visit the MFAH Collection online database [here](#) and [here](#).

Inspired by the street photography of Dawoud Bey, this activity will guide you in exploring modern and contemporary portraits and the art of posing in portraits.

### Investigate the Work of Art!

1. How would the tone of both of these photographs change if the subjects were posed differently? What if the subjects had been sitting rather than standing?
2. Why would a photographer capture life as it happens and not only have people sit for portraits?
3. Do you take photographs of the world around you and your community? What do you like to take pictures of?

### Let's Make Some Art! Gather These Art Materials

- Sidewalk chalk
- Smartphone or camera  
if you want to document your work of art!



### Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

**A silhouette is the outline of a person or object. For this project, your partner (the "sitter") will strike a pose for you (the "photographer") and you will capture their pose by outlining their silhouette using chalk.**

1. First, find an area of concrete outdoors, such as a sidewalk or driveway. This project works best on sunny days, especially during "golden hour," the period of daytime shortly after sunrise or before sunset, during which daylight is softer than when the sun is higher in the sky.
2. Ask a partner to "sit" for a shadow portrait. You can direct them to pose with a command (for example: "Pose confidently!"), or let your partner decide on their own pose.
3. Use your chalk to outline their posed silhouette on the concrete. Make the outline thick so you can see the shape of their pose clearly.
4. When happy with the outline, your partner can release the pose.
5. Fill in the outlined portrait with your second color of chalk. You have now captured their shadow portrait!
6. You can make as many of these chalk portraits as you like, as long as the sun is out. You can even make your silhouette shapes interact with each other by having your partner pose for you again next to their last shape (see the example above).
7. Once your work is complete, you can document your chalk artwork by taking a photograph.