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New Kara Walker art exhibits on display for first time in DC

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Kara Walker, "The Ballad of How We Got Here," 2021. Flashe, ink, and cut paper on paper. 124 ½ x 139 ¾ inches. (Images courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; Sprüth Magers, Berlin)
Images courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; Sprüth Magers, Berlin

She's known for her famous silhouettes — depictions of Black people in Antebellum dress (<https://walkerart.org/collections/artists/kara-walker>) — but two new shows now running at Georgetown University's Art Galleries, mark a departure for contemporary artist Kara Walker.

"They're works on paper, mostly watercolors and these drawings that Walker has done that are really taking her work in a new direction," said Emma McMorran, Exhibitions & Public Programs manager at Georgetown University Art Galleries (<https://art.georgetown.edu/exhibitions/>).
"She's incorporating colors. She's incorporating more text. She's really incorporating these loose and beautiful brush strokes."

McMorran told WTOP that despite Walker's new artistic direction, the theme of her work, done during the pandemic, remains the same — forcing viewers to reexamine the legacy of slavery in America.



“Kara Walker: Back of Hand” is now on view at [Georgetown’s de la Cruz gallery](https://www.delacruzgallery.org/); (<https://www.delacruzgallery.org/>) it features dozens of new drawings and paintings and prints.

A second show, called “McVeigh and the Turner Blasphemies,” at the [Spagnuolo Art Gallery](https://www.delacruzgallery.org/spagnuolo) (<https://www.delacruzgallery.org/spagnuolo>), features a 12-minute stop motion animation by Walker. In the film, cut paper silhouettes reenact more recent political violence, including the Oklahoma City bombing, the 1998 murder of James Byrd Jr. and the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol.

The two exhibits were first organized for the University of Georgia; Walker is from Atlanta. It’s the first time Walker’s work is being displayed at Georgetown University.

“The only alteration that we made to the show when it traveled from the University of Georgia to Georgetown was adding something to the wall text to address Georgetown’s own history of enslavement,” McMorran said. “We want people to ponder the legacy of slavery in D.C. and how it affects their viewing experience.”

Admission to both exhibits is free. Walker’s work will be on display until Dec. 3.



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Shayna Estulin joined WTOP in 2021 as an anchor/reporter covering breaking news in the D.C. region. She has loved radio since she was a child and is thrilled to now be part of Washington’s top radio news station.

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