

Silhouettes: Shapes and Shadows!

Look at
my strong
outline!

This week enjoy creating a silhouette from household objects or shadows found in nature and around your house!

Or simply create some cut-out miniature silhouette portraits (from real or imagined people!)

Take inspiration and creative ideas from some of the dynamic silhouettes in the Holburne Museum's collection.

Follow our step by step instructions and have fun!



Captain Francis Holburne, the brother of William Holburne.
Painted on glass, c.1810.



A Lady taking Tea
Charles Christian Rosenberg, Painted on glass, after 1795

It's all about the outline!

A **silhouette** is a solid shape of single colour, often black, with defined edges showing the outline of the subject.

The image is dependent on the outline which is why even the smallest detail is so important!

A silhouette usually sits on a white coloured background and can be created in any media.

Cut out or painted?

Silhouettes or 'shades' as they were known in the 18th century, were paper-cut portraits, generally the profile of a person, cut from black card.

These shades offered a cheap but effective alternative to the more pricey portrait miniatures. Skilled specialist artists could cut a high-quality bust portrait in a matter of minutes, working purely by eye!



Other silhouettes in the Holburne's collection show how profiles were painted on glass. The portrait had to be painted on the back of the glass for viewing from the front. The artist had to work in reverse, applying the details first. Once finished and backed with paper or silk, the opaque image casts its own shadow, giving a three-dimensional effect as though alive.

Master Snipper

Augustin Edouart (1789-1861) was a French artist who had a remarkable talent for freehand paper cutting! He came to work in fashionable Bath in 1825 and went on to produce more than 100,000 portraits in Britain and America. His paper-cuts were of famous actors, local worthies and a series of 'Bath Characters'.



OPTION 1



You will need...

- ♦ Found objects, a mixture of 3D and flat
- ♦ A pen or pencil
- ♦ Any papers you have
- ♦ Dark colours work best but you can use any!
- ♦ Scissors
- ♦ Glue
- ♦ Paint or colouring pens

ACTIVITY

Draw and cut out a silhouette shape.

Spent some time looking for objects in and around your home that you can use to draw around.

Collect things you think will make interesting and bold shapes – you may be surprised with the results!

- ♦ Place the objects one by one on top of a plain piece of paper. You can use dark paper if you wish but anything will work!
- ♦ If your paper is dark, use a light coloured pen or pencil to draw around your object. This will make it easier to see the lines.
- ♦ Start to build up an image on the paper. Try overlapping the objects and see what patterns starts to emerge.
- ♦ Once you are happy with your drawing, colour in (if using light coloured paper) OR cut the shape out (if using darker paper)
- ♦ Glue your cutout to a different coloured background to enhance your silhouette.

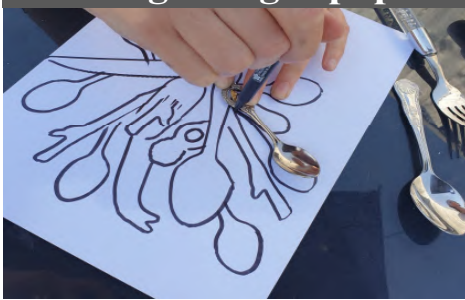
You have created a **SILHOUETTE!**

Why not make a few more! Try changing the background colour for a different effect.

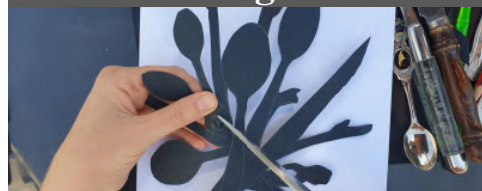
Drawing on dark paper



Drawing on light paper



Cutting Out



Outline Coloured In



Outline Cutout

Please share an image of what you've made ...We love to see your creations!

Email an image to e.blythe@holburne.org

We'll be featuring a selection on Instagram.

Follow [changing_lives_through_art](https://www.instagram.com/changing_lives_through_art) to see what everyone's been making!



OPTION 2

You will need...

- ◆ To find shadows outdoors or create your own inside with a lamp or torch. (you can use the torch on your phone)
- ◆ Pens, pencils or paint
- ◆ Any papers. Light colours work best but you can use any you have! Be creative, you can even use newspaper if you like!

ACTIVITY

Draw a shadow silhouette.

Once you start looking, you will notice lots of shadows around the home, on a walk or in your garden. Have fun playing with shadows and copying the outlines on a piece of paper!

- ◆ Find a shadow outside or create your own with a lamp or torch.
- ◆ Place a light piece of paper down under or near your object so that a shadow falls across it.
- ◆ Using a pen or pencil, follow the outline of the shadow and draw it on to the paper.
- ◆ Fill the drawing in with a dark coloured pen, pencil or paint.

You have created a shadow SILHOUETTE!

If you have a printer you can print a frame to surround your image. Otherwise you can use any card, paper, foil or even fabric!

Drawing a shadow on white paper



Coloured Shadow Silhouette

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