



TITLE: **Digital Mirror**

ARTIST: **Kenneth Kerslake
(1930—2007)**

DATE: **2001**

SIZE: **24" x 18"**

MEDIUM: **Digital Transfer
& Siligraph**

ACQUISITION #: **2002.5.49**

Additional works in the collection by the artist?
Yes No



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"All art is biographical. It finds its source within the life of the artist."

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Kenneth Kerslake's artistic career began in the 1960s and his artwork showed his interest in the meaningfulness of life and existential philosophy. In the 1980s and the early 1990s Kenneth's artwork "celebrated life" with representations of his surroundings. The artwork entitled *Digital Mirror* is a good example of Kerslake's more recent interest in the influences and impact of new technologies. The art materials and media Kenneth used in *Digital Mirror*, for instance, combined older printmaking processes, like lithography, with newer processes like digital transfer.

Kerslake was born in Mt. Vernon, New York and studied art at Pratt Institute in New York City. He relocated to Florida to become a university art professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville. There he founded their well-known printmaking program. Kenneth Kerslake received numerous honors and awards. He even received the honor of being chosen for the Joseph Pennell Fund Selection Committee Purchase Award by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. His artwork is in many public collections including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the National Gallery in D.C.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Digital Mirror is part of Kerslake's series titled *Voyagers—Wayfarers—Tourists*. This series centers on the metaphorical possibilities of a tourist or voyager theme. Kerslake stated that "In these pieces the human figure is seen either isolated from the ... environment or in an ambiguous space. They are in fact figures searching for a connection, a sense of place, meaning and valid experience."

MEDIA DESCRIPTION

Siligraph: A siligraph is also known as a waterless lithograph. This type of print is made on a glass or aluminum plate. The image is created using water-soluble crayons, pencils or washes. Washes are made from tempera paint and water with a dash of liquid dish soap.

Digital Transfer: A digital transfer is also known as an ink jet transfer. To make a digital transfer start with an image printed with a digital printer onto special water-soluble film. When the film, containing the computer image, is placed face down against dampened acid-free paper and run through the printing press, the image is transferred completely to the paper. Digital transfer printing allows for the use of dozens of colors in a single application.

REFERENCES

www.artschools.com/interviews/ken-kerslake
www.kinderart.com/printmaking/print101
www.worldprintmakers.com/english/kerslake
www.uhh.hawaii.edu/~art/three_masters07/Kerslake.php

RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Digital Age — a name for our current era which conveys the global economy's shift in focus from the creation of physical goods (i.e. Industrial Age) toward the production of information.

Mirror Image — An exact replica of an image in reverse.

Fine Art Printmaking — the creation of a master plate from which multiple images are made.

Completed Summer 2009, Alison Schaeffler-Murphy



SELF-PORTRAITS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: K—5

Session Activity: In Kenneth Kerslake’s print, *Digital Mirror*, the possibility of the loss of individual self-identity in our fast-paced electronic age is represented. The binary numbers (0, 1) are the only two numbers that are required to satisfy modern machinery’s electrical need for the voltage to be on or off. Kerslake’s symbolic repetition of these two simple numbers, and the chance of them concealing our identities, provides the opportunity to explore students’ self-identities in a digital world. Key to this discussion is overuse of video games which hinders quiet time spent in self-discovery. In *Digital Mirror* Kerslake symbolically demonstrates this possibility by obscuring the individual on one side of his image with binary numbers.

Objectives

1. Student will create an interesting background using relief print processes.
2. Student will draw a pastel self-portrait to deepen the understanding of self-identity.

Vocabulary

Print - An original work of art that can be reproduced multiple times.

Self-Portrait - A drawing, painting, or sculpture that shows a likeness of the artist.

Materials: Printing stamps (binary numbers, 0 & 1), acrylic paint, 2 sheets of construction paper, pastel chalks, and mirrors for use by students during self-portrait drawing.

Activity Procedures: After choosing two colors for a symbolically meaningful background, students will repetitively print the binary numbers on construction paper with acrylic paint. The students will then use pastel chalks, while looking in mirrors, to create portraits of themselves. By drawing self-portraits from the waist up students can creatively design their articles of clothing to express the way they see themselves. For instance, if students like rainbows, unicorns, and music they can decorate their clothing with images of those favorite things. After the pastel self-portraits are completed the students will cut them out and glue them onto the top of the printed binary background papers. They will have symbolically represented the idea of maintaining self-identity within a technologically advanced digital world.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: K—5

Strand B: Creation & Communication

Standard: The student creates and communicates a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas using knowledge of structures and functions of visual arts.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 6—12

Strand D: Aesthetic & Critical Analysis

Standard: The student assesses, evaluates and responds to the characteristics of works of art.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS OF ALIENATION

ART HISTORY LESSON PLAN: 6—12

Session Activity & Objectives: Kenneth Kerslake admired many well-known artists. One of his favorites was painter Edward Hopper. It is important to note that both artists created their artwork during technologically changing timeframes within America’s history. Students, working in small groups, will develop a deeper understanding of the two artists’ works by reflecting upon the following questions. After break out sessions class discussion should ensue.

Discussion:

- Edward Hopper was born at the turn of the 19th century and experienced the heightening of the Industrial Age. The majority of his artwork represents America in the 1940’s. Kenneth Kerslake, born in 1930, experienced the dawning and the rapid development of the digitization of modern life. **Describe each artists’ use of color. How do their color choices represent their time periods? Why do you think they chose these colors? Describe each artists’ color selection for symbolic significance. Explain how the meaning of each artwork would be different if the color choices each artist used were exchanged? Discuss and list your answers.**
- Given that both artists were creatively active during technologically transitional time periods, it is interesting to note the similarities in the meaningfulness of their artwork. Kenneth Kerslake’s *Voyages—Wayfarers—Tourists* series places the human figure in isolated or ambiguous spaces. Looking at Edward Hopper’s paintings leads the viewer to recognize that his figures also have a mysterious feeling of forlorn solitude. The overarching philosophy emerging in the work of both artists deals with what it means to be a human being in a modern world. **Describe what each figure in the two artworks is doing. What type of interaction do you see between the individuals? Explain why the artists may have placed the figures as they did. What mood does each work evoke within you? What emotions are portrayed? Make a list of these emotions.**

Activity:

- After comparing and contrasting the two artworks and listening to the responses of the entire class, each student will decide which of the two artworks would make an interesting short story. **Writing Prompt: Imagine that you are one of the characters in the artworks. Write a two paragraph narrative of thoughts that are going through your head. The monologue should match at least one of the described moods or emotions revealed during class discussions.**



**Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*,
1947, oil on canvas**