



For project week this year, I explored the process of creating a book, and reopened a past project that my mother and I had always meant to complete. The middle school I went to has all 8th graders choose an artist and create an art piece based off their particular style that incorporates a white shirt. I chose the artist Kara Walker who makes life sized silhouettes exploring themes such as race and violence. I decided to base my art piece off of a story my mother wrote called The White Shirt. It is a fictional piece but based off of my grandmothers experiences with the bombing of Hiroshima when she was just 13, the same age I was at the time. My mother and I had always talked about revisiting both pieces and combining them into a book as she had always hoped to have the story published. We decided to use my project week this year to finally begin that process.

I went into the week not knowing very much about creating a book so learning about the process was very interesting for me. We started by looking at my mom's story. She had two versions and after we decided which version to use I helped her go through it and edit it until we had a version she was happy with. The next step was to cut up the story into sections, until eventually it was divided into about 30 parts. I had already created images to go along with a couple scenes from the book but we needed more.

Now it was time to plan out the images. We went scene by scene and decided what each picture would look like and if we wanted to add anything to the picture we already had. We created a list of each specific image we needed to create each scene. My drawing abilities are not perfect and so the way that we

made the silhouettes back in 8th was to take pictures of me acting out the different scenes as my grandmother. I was 13 at this time just as my grandmother had been 13 when the bomb fell. For the new pictures we decided to have my sister, who had just turned 13, to act out the scenes as my grandmother while my mother and I acted as the other family members. This way I was able to use my skills as an actor to create the pictures we needed.

After taking hundreds of pictures, using various pieces of furniture and clothing from my house to act as different elements from each scene we had to go through all of the picture and decided which ones we actually wanted to use for the story. Now came the part I knew less about. How could we create the art in a way that we could transfer it to a pages of a book? We talked to a local artist in Gloucester who had illustrated picture books who taught us about the process. We were going to take high quality of the art when we had finished so it could be printed onto the pages. She explained how first we had to choose the dimensions of the pages of the book, there were a couple options that were easiest to publish, and then make each illustration on paper that was the same size or proportional to that size. We then went and bought supplies, choosing the different papers we needed. Most of the silhouettes were in black with the exception of lights and clothing which were either white or colorful. We printed out the pictures and traced their silhouettes, and drawing the other background elements of the images.

We are still working on finishing up this project but our eventual plan is to get a

printed version of the book completed and then look into different means of publishing. This multigenerational project was a fascinating and exciting way to learn more about my family history and the process that goes into creating a book like this one. Hopefully, I will also be able to learn about the publishing process.