

Current Issues

in North American Studies and Cultural Studies

NORTH
AMERICAN
STUDIES
PROGRAM

Prof. Vivien Green Fryd

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tn.



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Kara Walker's *About the Title* Reenacting the Trauma of Colonialism and Slavery

Thursday, May 12, 2016 | 2:00–4:00 pm
Room A, IAAK, Regina-Pacis-Weg 5

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In her complex, mural-sized drawing *About the Title*, renowned and controversial African-American artist Kara Walker addresses the hopeless and helpless repetition of trauma among individuals, generations, and cultures which existed for both enslaved and Native peoples as a result of colonial imperialism: the exploitation of labor, sexual violence, forced severing of historical connections to ancestral grounds, loss of cultural continuity, and breaking up of families. As a unique embodiment of anti-colonial discourse, *About the Title* extends and complicates Walker's better-known anti-racist discourse. In her talk, Prof. Fryd looks at historical precedents and specific referents evoked by the work, and engages in a close visual analysis which also considers the work's title and its material facture.

Vivien Fryd is a professor in the History of Art Department at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the U.S. Capitol, 1815–1860*, as well as *Art and the Crisis of Marriage: Georgia O'Keeffe and Edward Hopper*. In 2002 she was a Visiting Professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. She recently completed a book manuscript entitled “‘Against Our Will’: Representing Sexual Trauma in American Art, 1970–2006.”