FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE
Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights

Goals

This activity will establish a dialog for any group of adults attending the exhibition together, either online or in person. Guiding questions will support participants as they explore and analyze:

The way visual images can inspire, persuade, or change minds; and

The particular roles played by visual images in inspiring, persuading, and changing minds in the civil rights movement.

Audience

This activity is intended for adult learners in community groups, continuing education, or other similar organizations.
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ADULT LEARNING ACTIVITY

EXPLORING THE CULTURE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

For All the World to See is the first exhibition to explore the role of visual images and cultural objects as *agents of persuasion or inspiration* in the civil rights movement. In this activity, participants will interpret objects from the civil rights era to evaluate their impact during this vital period in American history.

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VISUAL CULTURE
AND THE
STRUGGLE FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS

ONLINE EXHIBITION | THE BOOK | ONLINE FILM FESTIVAL | NEWS + EVENTS | EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES | CREDITS

For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights is organized by the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County in partnership with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Through a host of media—including photographs, television and film, magazines, newspapers, posters, books, and pamphlets—the project explores the historic role of visual culture in shaping, influencing, and transforming the fight for racial equality and justice in the United States from the late-1940s to the mid-1970s. For All The World To See includes a traveling exhibition, a website, online film festival, and a richly illustrated companion book.

This guide is an accompaniment to the online exhibition, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*:

http://www.foralltheworldtosee.org

DURATION

Approximately forty-five minutes before visiting the exhibition, and another forty-five minutes after the visit.

MATERIALS

Access to *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights,* either online or at a physical venue. (You may also use printouts from the site if Internet access is not available in your meeting place.)

Pen and paper for each participant.

A dry-erase or chalkboard with markers or chalk.

RESOURCE FOR THE MODERATOR AND/OR PARTICIPANTS:

Berger, Maurice. *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/book/

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

This is a writing and discussion activity. Arrange participants in a way that promotes conversation and partner discussion, ideally in a circle or horseshoe.

WARM-UP WRITING EXERCISE

Invite participants to reflect about a famous or iconic image of any subject in any visual media, one that changed their lives or helped them to see the world in a new way. Media may include photography, painting, film, television, posters, magazines, and newspapers. The image may or may not relate to the civil rights movement. Ask participants to do the flowing:

Create a sketch and short description of the image.

Write down the title or subject of the image.

Remember where they first saw the image.

Describe how this image changed their ideas about the world.

SHARING

Break up the group into pairs. Each participant will interview a partner, with the interviewer taking notes.

What was the image that came to your mind?

Would you show me your sketch or describe the image to me?

Where do you remember seeing this image?

How did this image change your ideas about the world?

Bring the group together as a whole. Ask the participants to report on their partner's image.

WRAP-UP

As a group, consider the following questions:

How do visual images affect the way we see and understand the world?

How do images communicate meaning, points of view, or ideas?

How do images alter our beliefs?

How can visual culture stimulate a call to action?

VISITING THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition is straightforward; visitors will not need a guide as the objects and numerous wall texts speak for themselves. As a way of facilitating a later conversation about the exhibition, bring a small notebook and pencil for each participant so that each may:

Sketch the exhibit image they find most compelling.

Record any key details about the image and describe it as objectively as possible.

Record notes about individual responses to the images.

Reflect on how the image perpetuated racism or negative views of African Americans or helped the civil rights movement to achieve its goals.

You will use these sketches and notes when you discuss the exhibition as a group. Have each participant return with a sketch and notes from at least one object.

A NOTE ABOUT GRAPHIC IMAGES

Some of the images in *For All the World to See* are graphic in nature. They are included because of the vital role they played in the modern civil rights movement.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY

Have the dry-erase or chalkboard and markers ready.

WARM-UP EXERCISE

As participants enter the room, invite them to display their sketches and notes so that everyone can see. Encourage participants to browse the sketches and engage in one-on-one conversation.

ESTABLISHING THE VOCABULARY

Divide the chalkboard in two and write the following headings at the top of each section:

List one or two "words" describing the visual culture that perpetuated **negative or racist views** of African Americans.	List one or two "words" describing the visual culture that **helped achieve the goals** of the civil rights movement.

Invite participants to write on the board. You may "seed" the board with your own ideas, or the following sample responses:

Sample responses: Nostalgic Negative Stereotype	Sample responses: Persuasive Positive Inspirational

DISCUSSION

Ask the group to talk about the "words" they listed.

Why did you choose that word?

What object in the exhibition gave you that insight?

Did this exhibition change the way you understand images and their power to change ideas, attitudes, and actions?

For All The World To See was organized by the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County in partnership with the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution.

FORALLTHEWORLDTOSEE.ORG