

FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE

Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights

VISUAL CULTURE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: A THREE-PART UNIT FOR GRADES 9-12

For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights is the first exhibition, website, and book to examine the role that visual culture played in the civil rights movement. Most students and teachers have an appreciation for the documentary value of images from this period, but this is an opportunity to view images

as agents of persuasion and inspiration that were used both in support of and in opposition to the civil rights movement.

This unit accompanies the project and examines the evolution of the visual depiction of African Americans before, during, and after the civil rights movement. The unit unfolds in three parts:

Part I. Visual Culture before the Civil Rights Movement

Part II. A New Language: Visual Materials and the Civil Rights Movement

About this Guide

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



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.

<http://www.foralltheworldtosee.org>

Part III. The Visual Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement

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.

DURATION

3-5 Class Periods

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to analyze issues of identity and consider who determines identity as they explore the changing portrayals of African Americans over the decades.

Students will be equipped to discuss issues of their own identity based upon images in the exhibition and to cite who might have been influential in creating that identity.

MATERIALS

Access to the *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 the classroom.)

A flip chart or write board

A stack of popular magazines with pictorial content

Image and Object Analysis Worksheet

http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/education/fatwts_k12_image_analysis.pdf

Compare and Contrast Worksheet

http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/education/fatwts_k12_image_comp.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE EDUCATOR AND STUDENTS

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/>

If your students are not familiar with Jim Crow, you may use these sites as background reading:

Jim Crow History Gateway: <http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/>

Jim Crow in America Primary Source Set (Library of Congress):

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights/>

Remembering Jim Crow:

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/remembering/>

PART I. VISUAL CULTURE BEFORE THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Before and during the period of the civil rights movement, representations of African Americans in film as well as on everyday objects and products often portrayed them through stereotypes. This lesson explores objects and images from the early part of the twentieth century that perpetuated these stereotypes and reinforced racial prejudice.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do images and objects perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice?

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

How do positive and negative images of people shape identity?

Before the civil rights movement, how were African Americans portrayed in film, images and everyday objects?

What particular stereotypes were created or reinforced by these images and objects?

What words would you use to describe these stereotypes?

WARM-UP EXERCISE

Have on hand several popular magazines rich in visual material. Ask the students kinds of pictures do you see in the magazines? Do you see candid

pictures, staged portraits, or illustrations? How do the images make you feel as an individual? What impact do these portraits have on us as a group? What are the magazine editors trying to tell us with these images? What attributes are they giving to the people in the images? Use the answers to create a web of ideas—expressed in two- or three-word phrases—on a flip chart or write board.

WORKING WITH IMAGES AND OBJECTS

Representations of People

Representations of African Americans were often created for white audiences. These images were conveyed through television, film, advertisements, posters, magazines, toys, greeting cards, and household products.

As a class, use the Image Analysis Worksheet To examine:

The Beula Show

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/mainstream.php>

The “Grow White Corn for Extra Profits” lithograph

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/nostalgia.php>

The Birthday Card

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/jimcrow.php>

Discussion

What do these images have in common?

How are they different?

What kind of audience do you think that they were intended for?

If you had to describe the people in these images, what words would you use?

Are they smart or simple? Aggressive or passive? Childlike or adult? What other descriptions can you assign to these pictures?

How old are these signs? How were they made?

Imagine where they originally hung. Describe the setting.

Segregation Signs

Now examine the Segregation Signs:

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/segregation.php>.

Ask students to recall what they know about Jim Crow laws. How would the signs have been used to explicitly and implicitly reinforce segregation and Jim Crow practices?

Advertisements and Household Products

As a group, observe:

Old Virginia Yessuh, 1954,

Aunt Jemima Syrup Dispenser, and

The Aunt Jemima and Uncle Mose Salt and Pepper shakers.

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/mainstream.php>

When do you think these objects were created?

Who created them and why?

Who used them? Where were they used?

How do you feel about the way they represent African Americans?

WRAP-UP EXERCISE

As a class, describe and document how, before and during the civil rights movement, visual culture portrayed African Americans. Again, create a web of ideas that emerge from the discussion.

PART II. A NEW LANGUAGE; VISUAL MATERIALS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did images support the civil rights movement?

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

How did the representation of African Americans change during the civil rights movement?

Describe the black pictorial magazine. What were its contents? Who was the audience?

What impact did black-owned media have on the civil rights movement?

WARM-UP EXERCISE

Review the notes taken by students in Part II. Have concepts that were recorded in two- or three- word phrases where the entire class can read. If the world of racism and segregation had a language, how would you describe it? If the civil rights movement had to develop a new set of visual symbols, what would it need to contain? Record the concepts in short phrases.

WORKING WITH IMAGES AND OBJECTS

I. Comparing and Contrasting

Have students breakout into small groups. Assign each group a set of images. Each group will then have images from the last section of this unit, and this section. Use the Compare and Contrast Worksheet.

Image Set A	Aunt Jemima Syrup Dispenser, the Aunt Jemima Salt and Uncle Mose Salt and Pepper shakers	"Julia" Lunchbox and Thermos
Image Set B	"Grow White Corn for Extra Profits" lithograph	Our World, August 1954 and Sepia, November 1959
Image Set C	Segregation Signs	Jackie Robinson's First Game in the Major Leagues, Boston and Brooklyn, Ebbets Field, April 15, 1947
Image Set D	Birthday Card	Emory Douglas, We Shall Survive without a Doubt, 1971
Image Set E	Old Virginia Yessuh, 1954	The Autobiography of Malcolm X . 1966
Image Set F	Hot Mikado, 1939.	Elizabeth Catlett, Negro es Bello.

Image Set A

Aunt Jemima Syrup Dispenser, the Aunt Jemima Salt and Uncle Mose Salt and Pepper shakers

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/mainstream.php>

"Julia" Lunchbox and Thermos

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section4/julia.php>

Image Set B

The "Grow White Corn for Extra Profits" lithograph

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/nostalgia.php>

Our World, August 1954 and Sepia, November 1959

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section2/pictorial.php>

Image Set C

Segregation Signs

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/segregation.php>

Jackie Robinson's First Game in the Major Leagues, Boston and Brooklyn, Ebbets Field, April 15, 1947

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section2/sports.php>

Image Set D

The Birthday Card

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/jimcrow.php>

Emory Douglas, We Shall Survive without a Doubt, 1971

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section5/panther.php>

Image Set E

Old Virginia Yessuh, 1954

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/mainstream.php>

The Autobiography of Malcolm X . 1966

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section5/malcolmx.php>

Image Set F

Hot Mikado, 1939.

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section1/nostalgia.php>

Elizabeth Catlett, Negro es Bello.

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section5/index.php>

2. Civil Rights and the News Media

As a group, examine and discuss the following images and videos. Allow the conversation to evolve, giving participants an opportunity to react and respond.

CBS News, KKK: The Invisible Empire, 1965

[website: film still only; exhibition contains clip from program; book contains extended description]

CBS News, Breakthrough in Birmingham, 1963

(The website contains the film still only; the exhibition contains clip from the program; and the book contains extended description)

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section3/tvnews.php>

“Nation Horrified by Murder of Kidnapped Chicago Youth,” Jet, September 15, 1955. [Website]: Emmett Till in Casket, 1955 Courtesy Chicago Defender (Optional)

<http://www.umbc.edu/cadvc/foralltheworld/section3/till.php>

Norman Rockwell’s “The Problem We All Live With,” Look, January 14, 1964. (Available only in the exhibition)

Ask each student to study one image from the book or site using the Image and Object Analysis Worksheet.

WRAP-UP EXERCISE

As a class, describe and document how, during the civil rights movement, African Americans were portrayed. Once again create a web of ideas—expressed in two- or three-word phrases—that emerge from the discussion. Compare this list with the webs created earlier.

PART IV. DISCUSSING THE VISUAL LEGACY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Have on hand the images and webs created in the previous sections. Invite students to discuss the visual legacy of the civil rights movement with any of the following questions. Encourage them to talk about specific examples from the exhibition.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What has changed and what remains the same since the beginning of the civil rights movement?

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

How have representations of African Americans changed in the last one hundred years?

What impact did this change have on our culture?

How did we move from the Aunt Jemima syrup dispenser to the “Julia” lunchbox and thermos?

How can certain images change a culture?

Who controls media today? How does that ownership influence our concepts of race and identity?

How can visual images of all kinds change hearts and minds? How do they inspire, persuade and move people to action?

How do visual images shape our ideas about identity, history, race and civil rights?

How has American visual culture changed or remained the same, since the beginning of the struggle for civil rights?

How can images reveal/portray the harsher reality of the civil rights movement?

How did powerful images—especially in magazines and on TV news—allow the nation to see and understand a problem it had either ignored or did not want to see?



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.



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For All the World to See was designated a "We the People" project by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The goal of the "We the People" initiative is to "encourage and strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture through the support of projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation's history and culture and that advance knowledge of the principles that define America."



Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



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