

# Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum is an art museum located on Fifth Avenue and East 92nd Street in New York City. Our exhibitions and programs explore the intersection of art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. The Museum's collection spans 4,000 years and includes nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, media, and antiquities from around the world.

This lesson plan can be used to support discussion and exploration of civil rights and other social justice issues. Expand on this lesson by exploring related works of art in the Museum's collection listed at the end of the lesson.

# Marcelo Brodsky, *I pray with my feet*, 2014

Find this work of art on the Jewish Museum's website [here](#)

Triptych of gelatin silver prints, a: 44 1/8 × 55 1/8 in. (112 × 140 cm) b: 44 1/8 × 35 13/16 in. (112 × 91 cm) c: 44 1/8 × 63 in. (112 × 160 cm)



## About the Artwork and Artist

Marcelo Brodsky is an artist and human rights activist who lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In this work of art, Brodsky has combined three historical images. On the left is an image of the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery in Alabama, part of a series of protests for civil rights that occurred that year. The march was an effort to advocate in support of Black voters who were regularly deprived of their voting rights through suppression and intimidation. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called upon hundreds of clergy to join the effort. In this image, alongside Dr. King, you will find notable community and civil rights leaders, among them Rabbi Abraham Heschel and Congressman John Lewis. The center image features Rabbi Heschel and Rabbi Marshall Meyer. Rabbi Heschel was a Jewish theologian and philosopher, an active participant in the civil rights movement, and a mentor to Rabbi Marshall Meyer. An activist in his own right, Meyer went on to fight for human rights in Argentina during the civic-military dictatorship, which lasted from 1976 to 1983. In the final panel, Meyer is pictured hosting a public event organized by the Jewish Movement for Human Rights in downtown Buenos Aires in 1984. For more information about this work, visit the artist's [website](#).

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice in this work of art? What materials and methods has the artist used? Do you see any familiar figures or imagery?
2. A work of art composed of three parts or sections is called a triptych. Can you identify any connections among the three panels of this triptych? Why do you think Brodsky might have chosen this format?
3. Why do you think the artist chose to center Rabbi Meyer in this work of art? How do you think the center picture of Meyer learning at Heshel's side builds connections among the three pictures?
4. The many figures in these photographs are participating in various forms of civic engagement. Can you think of an example of civic engagement? What are some barriers to engagement in a community or government? What are some ways that you have helped or could support your community?

# Activities

1. Who is someone, from your community or from the world at large, you consider to be a leader? Create a picture of the leader by printing an image from the internet, cutting out an image from a magazine or newspaper, or drawing a picture of that person. Next, annotate your image by writing comments or messages on the image like Marcelo Brodsky did with his photographic triptych. What text would you add to the image of your selected figure? Can you think of a meaningful title for your work?
2. In addition to civil rights, Marcelo Brodsky created works about immigration, refugees, and the fight for freedom around the world. Choose a current social or political issue that is important to you and create your own triptych by combining three images related to your topic. Take a piece of paper and fold or divide it into 3 sections, or take 3 pieces of paper and tape or glue them together. On one panel, create a collage by cutting and pasting images related to the issue you chose. On the center panel, use text only and write a slogan or find lines from a song or poem that connect with the issue you chose. On the third panel, design a symbol to represent your issue.
3. Dr. King, Rabbi Heschel, and Congressman Lewis were marching for the right to vote and for civil rights for Black Americans. What are some important issues that people march about today? Find some images of people marching or protesting about important social issues this year.

Take a piece of paper and either fold it in half or draw a line down the middle to make 2 columns. On one side write the word “Same” and on the other side write the word “Different.” Compare Brodsky’s work to pictures of present-day marches and protests. Record your observations on your paper by making a list of what is the same and what is different.

Take a picture of your creation(s) and share them with the Jewish Museum [here](#).

## Related Works of Art in the Jewish Museum's Collection

- Ben Shahn: Human Relations Portfolio
  - [\*James Cheney\*](#), 1965, screenprint on paper, 22 1/8 × 16 7/8 in.
  - [\*Andrew Goodman\*](#), 1965, screenprint on paper, 21 7/8 × 16 7/8 in.
  - [\*Michael Schwerner\*](#), 1965, screenprint on paper, 21 15/16 × 16 3/4 in.
- N. Jay Jaffee, [\*Fight for Peace, May Day, New York City\*](#), 1948, Gelatin silver print, 9 1/8 × 7 1/8 in.
- Arthur Siegel: [\*Right of Assembly\*](#), 1939, Ferrotyped gelatin silver print, 14 × 11 1/8 in.
- Fred Wilson: [\*Queen Esther/Harriet Tubman\*](#), 1992, ink on acetate, 14 3/8 x 10 3/4 in.
- Adrian Piper: [\*Xenophobia I: Anti-Semitism\*](#), 1987, wood; masonite; cracked mirror; acrylic paint; photocopied photographs, 40 1/2 x 29 1/8 x 2 in.