

## CREATING SPACES FOR FREEDOM

### Aesthetic Line of Inquiry:

*How do these artworks address issues of leadership and our notions of freedom in context of different cultures and time-frames?*

### Pedagogical Line of Inquiry:

- How can works of visual art give us a public forum for gaining insight and understanding of controversial public issues?
- How does the process of the arts (Visual: *symbols, scale, posture/gesture, composition and point-of-view*; dance: *embodying, making gestures*) allow students to explore multiple possibilities on behalf of their own personal freedom.
- *How do these artworks address issues of leadership and freedom in context to multiple cultures?*

### Other Guiding Questions:

What is Freedom? What are the Four Freedoms of Roosevelt?

1. Freedom of **Speech & Expression**, 2. Freedom of **Want**, 3. Freedom to **Worship**, 4. Freedom from **Fear**

How do art works use **symbols, scale, posture/gesture, composition and POV** to tell a particular *narrative* of historical events?

What's *essential* and what is *decorative*?

How do we find meaning through *asking questions*?

What do we need/want *to know/wonder* about these particular works of art?

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## The Palace at Nimrod

**Brainstorm:** (5 min) *establish vocabulary, expand imagination (HF)*

- What is your understanding of freedom?
- Group share-

### **Warm up:** (5 min) *Draw symbols (JT)*

- What does "body language" and "facial expression" suggest? Share
- What do **symbols** suggest? What are some symbols that represent Leadership? Freedom? Roles? Share



- What is real? What in the artwork is exaggerated? Why?

- **Activity:** Draw a rough sketch of two people, Draw your own symbols in place of the symbols in the sculpture to comment on the 4 Freedoms.

"The palace rooms at Nimrud were decorated with large stone slabs

carved in low relief, with brightly painted walls and ceilings and sculptural figures guarding the doorways. The throne room contained narrative scenes commemorating the military victories of Ashurnasirpal, while in other areas of the palace were protective figures and images of the king and his retinue performing ritual acts.

On this relief slab the king Ashurnasirpal II wears the royal crown, a conical cap with a small peak and a long diadem. He holds a bow, a symbol of his authority, and a ceremonial bowl. Facing him, a eunuch, a "beardless one," carries a fly whisk and a ladle for replenishing the royal vessel. The peaceful, perhaps religious character of the scene is reflected in the dignified composure of the figures." Wikipedia

**THE PALACE OF ASHURNASIRPAL II**

*I, Ashurnasirpal, the king whose glory is mighty . . . took Kalhu and changed its ancient mound . . . A palace of boxwood, mulberry, cedar, cypress, pistachio, tamarisk, and poplar . . . for my royal dwelling and for my lordly pleasure I founded therein, I adorned and made glorious.*

In these words, the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 B.C.) described the foundation of his new capital city, Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), and the construction of his palace. The citadel of the ancient city was contained within a massive wall, which had a circuit of five miles and enclosed approximately 900 acres.

In the palace, the official state apartments were decorated in a fashion not found in earlier Mesopotamian royal buildings. Huge stone slabs carved with scenes of figures in relief and inscribed with the record of important events in the king's reign lined the mud-brick walls. Color was used in the dimly lit chambers to enliven the images carved on the stone reliefs, as well as the plastered mud-brick walls above them, which were painted with floral, geometric, and figural designs.

The reliefs in The Metropolitan Museum of Art depict the king and his attendants taking part in ritual activities with supernatural beings acting as guardians of the king and his palace. Most of these reliefs were excavated by Austen Henry Layard, who worked at Nimrud from 1845 to 1852. The gallery of relief sculpture re-creates an audience hall of an Assyrian palace. The ceiling beams, arched doorway, floor tiles, and proportions of the room itself are all based on information from excavations in the capital cities of the Assyrian empire.



Reconstruction of the throne room of the Northern Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud. The king is seated on a throne, surrounded by attendants and supernatural beings. The room is decorated with reliefs and inscriptions. The reconstruction is based on the excavations of the site by Austen Henry Layard in the 1840s and 1850s. The king is shown wearing a conical crown and holding a bow and a ceremonial bowl. The room is decorated with reliefs and inscriptions. The reconstruction is based on the excavations of the site by Austen Henry Layard in the 1840s and 1850s.

Reconstruction of an Assyrian palace room based on the excavations of the site by Austen Henry Layard in the 1840s and 1850s. The room is decorated with reliefs and inscriptions. The reconstruction is based on the excavations of the site by Austen Henry Layard in the 1840s and 1850s.

**Foundation:**

"The Assyrian king Shalmaneser I (1274 BC–1245 BC) built up Kalhu (Nimrod) into a major city during the Middle Assyrian Empire (1365-1050 BC). However, the ancient city of Assur remained the capital of Assyria, as it had been since c. 3500 BC.

A number of historians, such as Julian Jaynes, believe that the Biblical figure Nimrod (of whom the far later Syriac and Arab name for the city was derived) was inspired by the deeds of the real king of Assyria Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244–1207 BC), the son of Shalmaneser I, and a powerful conqueror. Others believe the name derived from the Assyrian god Ninurta, who had a major cultic centre at Nimrud.<sup>[12]</sup> - Wikipedia

**Symbolism and purpose:**

"Among these relief images occurred a certain amount of **standardization**. Carved into each of the stone slabs, including the ones lacking relief, was what is referred to as the Standard Inscription. This text gave the various names and titles of the king, **spoke of his relationship with the gods** and summarized his **military conquests**. The text also goes on to describe the founding of Kalhu and speaks of the palace itself.<sup>[3]</sup> The slabs, which contain relief, consist of depictions of **Assurnasirpal's** royal ideology."

"This ideology can be categorized into **four main ideas**, the **military success** of the king, **his service to the gods**, which provided **divine protection** and Assyrian **prosperity**.<sup>[3]</sup> There is a particular **interest in the anatomy** of both humans and animals within the depictions.<sup>[4]</sup> **Royal hunting scenes are some of the most well known of the Nimrud reliefs particularly those showing Assurnasirpal II hunting lions**. There is also a distinct interest in the **relationship between man and animal** in many of the scenes. In several depictions **the king is shown with supernatural creatures of animal and human combination**. All of the **apotropaic** portrayals, which would have decorated the doorways of the palace, were of these human and animal hybrids. Within the context of these apotropaic figures were three main types, a winged figure wearing the horned crown which symbolized divinity, a winged figure wearing a headband of rosettes and a winged human figure with the head of a bird.<sup>[5]</sup> Wikipedia

## The Death of Socrates

### Questions

1. What does "body language" and "facial expression" suggest?"
2. What does "light and shadow" suggest?
3. How does the use of color suggest meaning?
4. What do symbols suggest?
5. What does the artist convey about social justice?
6. Where is truth?

- What do you notice first by writing in words a few elements that stand out-share with group
- **Activity 1:** Take turns taking a posture or gesture of one of the characters in painting. What meaning made alone and in context of whole drama/narrative?
- **Activity 2:** Draw 1-2 symbols that you see in the painting.
- **Activity 3:** Place yourself as one of the characters in the painting and write a short paragraph about what you say to Socrates. In groups of two, ask each other to interpret your pose. Then discuss how you came to your conclusions.



Artist:  
 Jacques Louis David (French, Paris  
 1748–1825 Brussels)  
 Date: 1787  
 Medium: Oil on canvas  
 Dimensions:  
 51 x 77 1/4 in. (129.5 x 196.2 cm)  
 Classification: Paintings  
 Credit Line:  
 Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection,  
 Wolfe Fund, 1931  
 Accession Number: 31.45

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in  
[Gallery 614](#)

Accused by the Athenian government of denying the gods and corrupting the young through his teachings, Socrates (469–399 B.C.) was offered the choice

of renouncing his beliefs or dying by drinking a cup of hemlock. David shows him prepared to die and discoursing on the immortality of the soul with his grief-stricken disciples.

Painted in 1787 the picture, with its stoic theme, is perhaps David's most perfect Neoclassical statement. The printmaker and publisher John Boydell wrote to Sir Joshua Reynolds that it was "the greatest effort of art since the Sistine Chapel and the stanze of Raphael."

Although he consulted Father Adry, a scholar on the subject, David's depiction of Socrates death contains **many historical inaccuracies**. For simplicity, he removed many characters originally described in the dialogues of Plato. However, he included Apollodorus, the man leaning against the wall just within the arch, even though he is said to have been sent away by Socrates for displaying too much grief. David also misrepresented the ages of many of the pupils of Socrates, including Plato. Plato would have been a young man at the time of Socrates's death, but in this painting he is the old man sitting at the foot of the bed. Even the face of Socrates is much more idealized than the classical bust that is typically used as a reference portrait of Socrates.<sup>[1]</sup>

"Most of what is known of Apollodorus' life comes from [Plato](#), and particularly the [Symposium](#). Here, Apollodorus describes himself as being of the same age as Plato's brother [Glaucou](#),<sup>[2]</sup> placing his birth date around 429 BCE. A resident of the Athenian port of [Phaleron](#), he enjoyed financial success before coming to follow Socrates along with his brother Aiantodorus<sup>[1]</sup> in the years before the philosopher's death.<sup>[2]</sup> As depicted in Plato's [Phaedo](#), he was present at Socrates' execution and thereafter remained aggressively loyal to his master's teachings. Plato and other ancient authors depict him as an emotionally volatile and simple-minded individual<sup>[3]</sup> who nonetheless contributed significantly by popularizing Socrates' " Wikipedia:

Rather than upholding a status quo and accepting the development of what he perceived as immorality within his region, Socrates questioned the collective notion of "might makes right" that he felt was common in Greece during this period. Plato refers to Socrates as the "[gadfly](#)" of the state (as the gadfly stings the horse into action, so Socrates stung various Athenians), insofar as he irritated some people with considerations of justice and the pursuit of goodness.<sup>[49]</sup> His attempts to improve the Athenians' sense of justice may have been the cause of his execution.

"The role of [dialectic](#) in Plato's thought is contested but there are **two** main interpretations: **a type of reasoning and a method of intuition**.<sup>[81]</sup> Simon Blackburn adopts the first, saying that Plato's dialectic is **"the process of eliciting the truth by means of questions aimed at opening out what is already implicitly known, or at exposing the contradictions and muddles of an opponent's position."**<sup>[81]</sup> A similar interpretation has been put forth by Louis Hartz, who suggests that elements of the dialectic are borrowed from [Hegel](#).<sup>[82]</sup> According to this view, opposing arguments improve upon each other, and prevailing opinion is shaped by the synthesis of many conflicting ideas over time."<sup>[82]</sup> Wikipedia



**POEM-Washington Crossing the Delaware** is a [sonnet](#) that was written in 1936 by [David Shulman](#). The title and subject of the poem refer to the scene in the painting [Washington Crossing the Delaware](#) by [Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze](#). The poem is noted for being an [anagrammatic poem](#) – in this case, a 14-line rhyming sonnet in which every line is an [anagram](#) of the title.

### The Sonnet

A hard, howling, tossing water scene.  
Strong tide was washing hero clean.  
"How cold!" Weather stings as in anger.  
O Silent night shows war ace danger!

The cold waters swashing on in rage.  
Redcoats warn slow his hint engage.  
When star general's action wish'd "Go!"  
He saw his ragged continentals row.

Ah, he stands – sailor crew went going.  
And so this general watches rowing.  
He hastens – winter again grows cold.  
A wet crew gain Hessian stronghold.

George can't lose war with's hands in;  
He's astern – so go alight, crew, and **win!**

John Toth 1/16/2017 7:49 PM

#### Comment [1]:

This is a good place to add an activity { participants will write a "tweet", text, letter, email, etc. from the perspective of our times... Participants will be asked to write, draw, enact from the perspective Luetz's o Washington's's crossing.

## Reflection Activity

This is a good place to add an activity { participants will write a "tweet" , text, letter , email, etc. from the perspective of our times... Participants will be asked to write , draw, enact from the perspective Leutz' Washington's Crossing.

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## Where is Freedom?

### How do we create spaces for freedom?

1. What does "body language" and "facial expression" suggest?
2. What does "light and shadow" suggest?
3. How does the use of color suggest meaning?
4. What do symbols suggest?
5. What does the artist convey about social justice?
6. Where is truth?

### Materials:

- Pencils (60)
  - Pastels- 6-7 boxes
  - Cards (5x10 for gallery work)

### Readings:

#### **Maxine Greene quotes & Artist's information, etc.**

Cut out quotes and pass them out after we have viewed the artwork in the museum. Ask participants to read a quote and talk in pairs... then report back how the quote effects their own change in perception of their own interpretation.

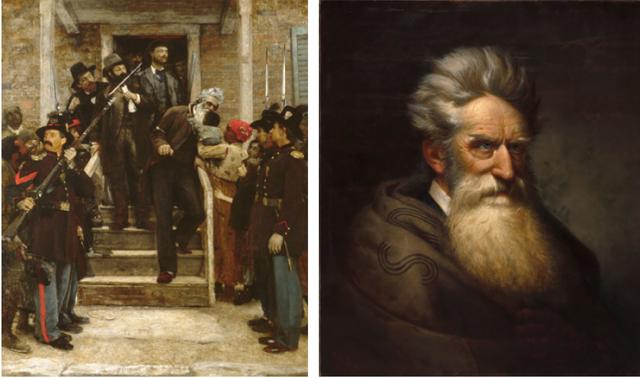
The **Four Freedoms** were goals articulated by [United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) on January 6, 1941. In an address known as the [Four Freedoms speech](#) (technically the **1941 State of the Union address**), he proposed four fundamental freedoms that people "everywhere in the world" ought to enjoy:

1. [Freedom of speech](#)
2. [Freedom of worship](#)
3. [Freedom from want](#)
4. [Freedom from fear](#)

Roosevelt delivered his speech 11 months before the [United States declared war on Japan](#), December 8, 1941. The State of the Union speech before Congress was largely about the [national security of the United States](#) and the threat to other democracies from [world war](#) that was being waged across the continents in the eastern hemisphere. In the speech, he made a break with the tradition of [United States non-interventionism](#) that had long been held in the United States. He outlined the U.S. role in helping allies already engaged in warfare. In that context, he summarized the values of democracy behind the bipartisan consensus on international involvement that existed at the time. A famous quote from the speech prefaces those values: "As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone." In the second half of the speech, he lists the benefits of democracy, which include economic opportunity, employment, social security, and the promise of "adequate health care". The first two freedoms, of speech and [religion](#), are protected by the [First Amendment](#) in the [United States Constitution](#). His inclusion of the latter two freedoms went beyond the traditional Constitutional values protected by the [U.S. Bill of Rights](#). Roosevelt endorsed a broader human [right to economic security](#) and anticipated what would become known decades later as the "[human security](#)" paradigm in [social science](#) and [economic development](#). He also included the "[freedom from fear](#)" against national aggression and took it to the new [United Nations](#) he was setting up.

# The Last Moments of John Brown

Artist: Thomas Hovenden (American (born Ireland), Dunmanway 1840–1895 Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania) Date: 82–84 Medium: Oil on canvas Dimensions: 77 3/8 x 66 1/4 in. (196.5 x 168.3 cm) Classification: Paintings Credit



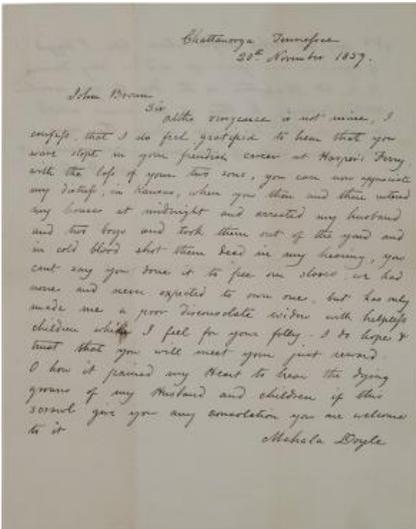
Line: Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Stoeckel, 189797.5 On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 762](#)

1. Why is John Brown trying to kiss the baby?

**Activity:** (based on body language) Create a short one paragraph short story that John Brown might have said to the woman's young baby on the subject of freedom. Or write a short paragraph about what the baby is thinking about John Brown.

In 1859 John Brown, the controversial abolitionist, led a raid on a federal armory in Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), intending to arm enslaved African Americans. Brown had come to believe that the only way to end slavery in America was through bloodshed. Captured and convicted of treason against the Commonwealth of Virginia, Brown was sentenced to die by hanging. His hasty trial electrified the nation, and a sensational newspaper account reported how he paused on his way to the scaffold to kiss a baby. At the request of a patron two decades later, Hovenden, also an abolitionist, made it the subject of this sympathetic work.

The raid on Harpers Ferry was not Brown's first foray into slavery-related violence. After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, supporters of both slavery and free labor flooded into the territory of Kansas, where violence soon erupted. Rival governments of anti-slavery settlers and pro-slavery Missouri transplants battled it out to claim popular sovereignty in favor of their side. In retaliation for the sack of the free-state town of Lawrence on May 21, 1856, the abolitionist John Brown led a brutal attack on a pro-slavery settlement at Pottawatomie Creek. The violence alienated many anti-slavery backers.



Mahala Doyle to John Brown, November 20, 1859 (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Brown and six followers killed five men, hacking at them with broadswords and cutting their throats before shooting them. Mahala Doyle, the wife and mother of three of Brown's victims, expressed her bitterness and pain in [this letter to John Brown](#). She sent it to him in November 1859 as he awaited execution after the Harpers Ferry raid. Below is a transcript of her letter.

