

Social Justice Art

so·cial jus·tice

noun

1. justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
2. "individuality gives way to the struggle for social justice"



What is Social Justice? Social justice is the equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

A Brief History of Social Justice

Social Justice as a concept arose in the early 19th century during the Industrial Revolution and following civil revolutions throughout Europe, which aimed to create more egalitarian societies and stop the capitalistic exploitation of human labor. Because of the large gaps between wealthy and the poor during this time, early social justice advocates focused primarily on capital, property, and the distribution of wealth.

By the mid-20th century, social justice had expanded from being primarily concerned with economics to include other areas of social life to include the environment, race, gender, and other causes and manifestations of inequality. Concurrently, the measure of social justice expanded from being measured and enacted only by the nation-state (or government) to include a universal human dimension. For example, governments (still today) measure income inequality among people who share citizenship in common. But social justice can also be considered at the level of humanity as a whole. As the United States "Slaves, exploited workers and oppressed women are above all victimized human beings whose location matters less than their circumstances."

Find out how Social Justice and Environmental Justice are intrinsically interconnected.

Grade 12



Read the following article: [A Sudanese Refugee Crisis Photographed From The Ground UP](https://nyti.ms/2CbZY5p) [https://nyti.ms/2CbZY5p]
By James Estrin Jan. 27, 2014

Follow this link to see some of her pictures or search for them yourself. [Threadbare Shoes of Sudanese Refugees tell Stories of Long and Harrowing Journeys.](https://bit.ly/3agdi5m) [https://bit.ly/3agdi5m]

Your Assignment: Choose a social justice issue that matters to you and create an art piece from your point of view. Look at 3 other artists and compare how they have shown the same issue. Think about issues present in your own life, community, or maybe you have had an experience travelling that could inspire an idea.

Think back to the article. The photographer Shannon Jensen forced herself to think of a new way to present the refugee story to the press because they wouldn't run the story just because they didn't like her pictures. She cared about the crisis so much that she wouldn't give up and found a new way to present the refugee crisis (by photographing the shoes). How can you present your chosen issue in a way that will make people (your target audience) actually stop and care? **This is perhaps the biggest challenge faced by social justice artists.** If you are unhappy with your first attempt don't be afraid to try a new approach.

Decide what medium will get your message across the best and how you want your work displayed. For example, if you choose photography would you frame it or would you show a series of photographs in an album or online? You will be marked on your considerations. Try to get away from the cliché images we see all the time, just as the photographer in the article found a unique way to photograph the journey and hardships of refugees by photographing their shoes.

Reflection

/10

List three or more things you found interesting in the Sudanese refugee article. /3

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What made Ms. Jensen change the way she was photographing the refugees? /3

What social justice issue did you choose for your art piece? /1

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Which three artists did you find that were focusing on the same issue you chose? /3

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Tell me about your artwork, including any symbols you may have used, why you chose the materials you used and how you decided to display/present it. /5

What would you do differently or like to try next time you do a project like this? /5

Is there anything else you want me to know?
