

Model for Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Portland, Maine, 2019 (in progress), by Robert Katz

art selection and comment by [Aaron Rosen](#) in the [January 29, 2020](#) issue



The poetic language of Martin Luther King Jr. gave form and direction to the civil rights movement, and it has also given shape to many memorials erected in his memory. The national monument to King in Washington, D.C., erected in 2011, appears to be sliced from a granite peak, evoking King's famous words spoken at the the nearby Lincoln Memorial: "With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope." Recently, the City of Portland, Maine, announced a competition to design its own memorial to King. Among the finalists is the sculptor Robert Katz. Katz took inspiration from another memorable line in King's 1963 speech: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood." With his team, Katz imagined the table of brotherhood as a pyramid, inviting passersby to gather in fellowship around it, with its stepped form leading their eyes upward in hope. The center splits open, reminding us of the work still to be done to complete King's vision.