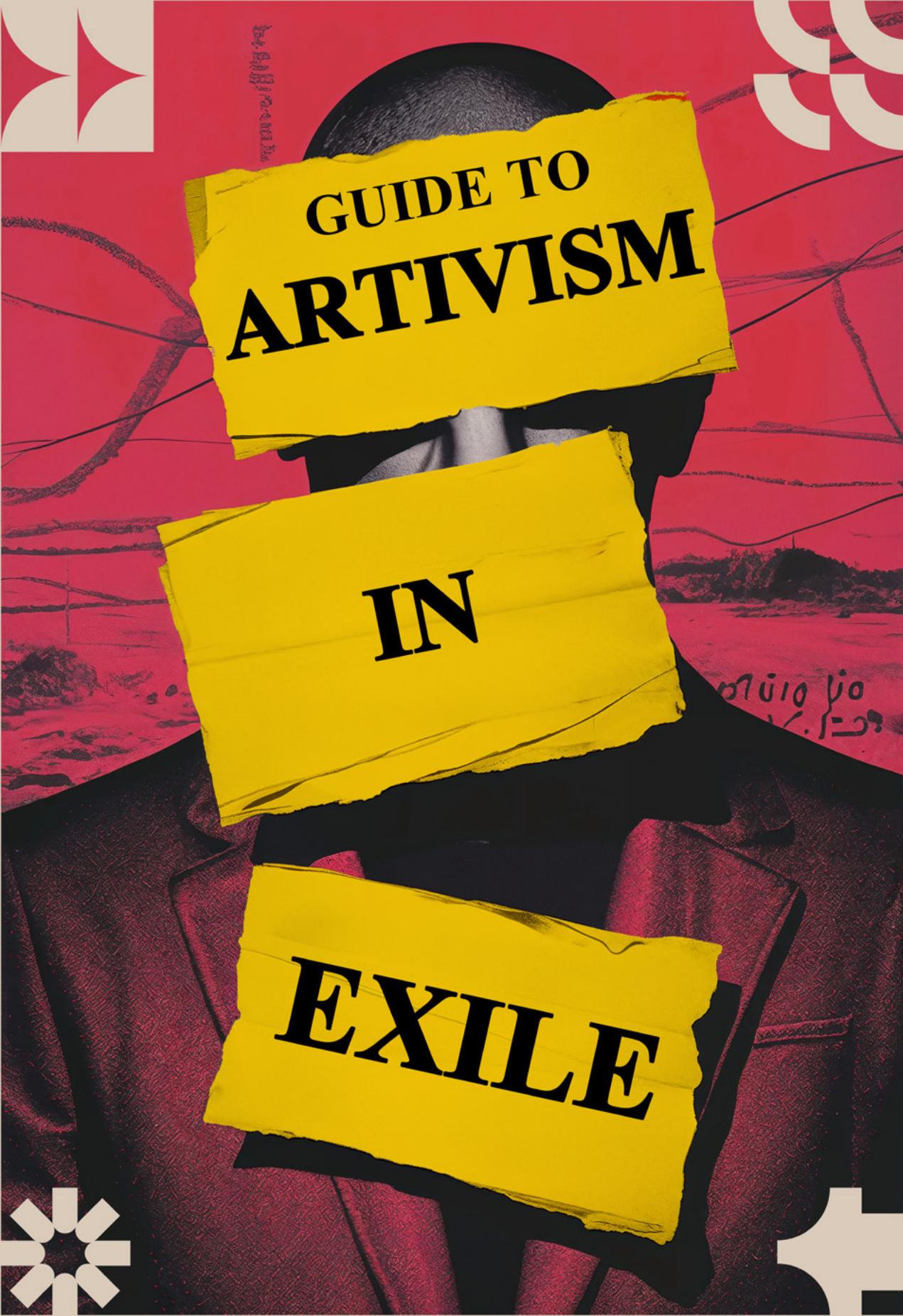




**GUIDE TO
ARTIVISM**

IN

EXILE

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HuMENA For Human Rights and Civic Engagement
HuMENA pour les Droits de l'Homme et l'Engagement Civique
هيومنينا لحقوق الإنسان والمشاركة المدنية

**Between Expression, Struggle,
and Societal Transformation**

GUIDE TO

ARTIVISM IN EXILE

Between Expression, Struggle, and Societal
Transformation

Anas Younes

on “Culture Tank Factory”

Anas Younes is a theatre practitioner and cultural researcher, and the founder of Culture Tank Factory. Through it, he leads work dedicated to rethinking the role of culture in politics and society — through think labs, the analysis and development of alternatives and policy tools, critical debate, and open tools for artistic and intellectual production. Culture Tank Factory is a research-based, grassroots, critical, and action-oriented collective working at the intersection of art, culture, activism, academia, and politics — conceived as a space for thought and practice at the same time.



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HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and expanding civic space in the Middle East and North Africa. With headquarters in Brussels and a regional office in Beirut, HuMENA supports human rights defenders and civil society actors, particularly those in exile and diaspora, through strategic advocacy, evidence-based research, and capacity-building initiatives.

Operating across the region, HuMENA works to uphold fundamental freedoms, including the rights to expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Its programs equip individuals and movements with the tools and networks needed to navigate repression, organize safely, and sustain their activism.

HuMENA places a strong emphasis on inclusive justice, working alongside women, refugees, LGBTQ+ individuals, and marginalized communities. By integrating social justice, gender equity, and climate justice into its work, HuMENA fosters resilient civic ecosystems and supports transformative change driven by people and movements.

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Introduction

On Need, Rupture, and Beyond/ Post Narratives

This toolkit did not emerge from an abstract academic idea, nor from an institutional project that seeks to arrange the tools of political art in exile in a neat index. Rather, it came from a personal rupture, from an existential question that repeats without answer: "Why am I here?" - a question that is thrown at the world without waiting (an answer), and always returns with the pain of exile, the worries and anxiety of belonging, and the futility of repetition.

During the years of diaspora, between attempts to acclimatize and survive, each narrative seemed to try to devour the other: Nationalism, religion, class, identity, liberation, gender... The individual finds themselves as a disjointed composite, a collection of threads that cannot be woven into a unified tapestry. It is not an identity, but fragments of opposing narratives.

In that context, writing about art and politics in exile was not just an epistemological exercise, but an attempt to preserve what was left of the non-ideological self - the one that seeks to produce meaning outside the established, outside the guardian institutions of discourse, outside the centralisation that confiscates any rebellion as deviance.

Like other diaspora people, I have read many studies on art, displacement and exile, all of which reveal a deep understanding of the contexts, yet they often remain suspended in the air of theory, far from the reality of displaced artists who are trying to recover their tools in an atmosphere that neither belongs to them nor them to it.

This is how this toolkit was created, not as an attempt to answer the question of identity, but as a practical accompaniment to the journey of questioning itself. It is a bridge between theoretical and experimental spaces, between the imagined and the realised, between art as an act and art as a necessity. I present it to artists who live in shadow zones, between the margin and the anonymous, to those whose tools are threatened, whose paths are interrupted, and whose dreams are trapped in a language that does not translate them.

It is intended for every artist, cultural worker, teacher, researcher, activist, or artistic group seeking tools to understand their position in this fractured world. It is an attempt to fill a knowledge and tool gap, and perhaps first and foremost, an attempt to create a potential horizon for a self that no longer finds itself in any given narrative..

It is an exercise in rupture, a space for productive deviance, and an invitation to practice our free alienation - one that is not built on self-hatred or rejection of the other, but on deconstructing authoritarian narratives one by one to forge new meaning... albeit fragile, temporary, or confusing.

For we do not need a final identity as much as we need tools to live within the rupture, to work from it, and to work on it.

On this Toolkit:

Artivism in Exile and Immigration

Why is this Toolkit?

The topic of Artivism in exile and immigration is not merely a theoretical or academic subject, but rather an attempt to engage with a complex reality experienced by artists and cultural actors in the diaspora who have been compelled to leave their countries due to political persecution, armed conflict, and restrictions on personal freedoms. These individuals subsequently find themselves in new environments that necessitate the restructuring of their artistic and social identities. This evidence signifies an urgent need to comprehend this reality, establishing a link between artistic practice and social and political struggle. Furthermore, it seeks to identify practical tools that enable artists, exiles and immigrants to transform their art into an instrument of influence, advocacy and change.

According to the teacher and Dr Hassan Abbas, the cultural and artistic act, especially the one that goes beyond the personal space to the realm of active citizenship, i.e. the one that seeks to influence public affairs, is itself a piece of storytelling. The story here is created by the artwork, and not necessarily told by it.

Art in Exile: Resistance and Identity

The role of art in social and political resistance has always been significant, as evidenced by its profound impact on major events such as the Arab movements/ uprisings as it has been instrumental in articulating popular demands and opposing tyranny, playing a crucial part in these movements. With the growing number of artists, exiles and immigrants now, it is important to understand how artistic praxis has become a means of pugnacity and resistance, both within the context of political movements in their home countries and in the face of exclusionary and marginalising policies in their new societies.

This Toolkit Raises Pivotal Questions:

- **How can an exiled artist maintain their artistic and cultural identity?**

- **What tools and strategies can be used to enhance the role of art in advocacy and social change?**
- **How do artists interact with their new host communities and how can they utilise available cultural and professional networks?**

Methodology of This Toolkit: Between Research and Praxis

This Toolkit is structured in an interactive approach that combines:

- A theoretical framework that explores the concept of artivism in exile and migration, and it also analyzes the political and social dynamics influencing exiled artists.
- A critical analysis of the Arab cultural reality in exile, exploring the challenges and opportunities available to artists in these new contexts.
- Practical tools to aid artists in developing their projects, building support circles and networks, leveraging funding and grants, and using art as a tool for advocacy and social change.

Why is This Toolkit Now?

In a world where political repression, shrinking civic spaces, and restrictions on freedom of expression are on the rise, art is becoming more than just a creative medium; it is an instrument of resistance, a space for expression, and a bridge to social and political change. In these contexts, art enables marginalised communities, human rights defenders, and activist artists to express their struggles in impactful ways that go beyond traditional activism.

In the context of increasing immigration and asylum waves, and the rise of right-wing parties to positions of government and decision-making, artists in exile face dual challenges. On the one hand, they seek to preserve their connection with their original countries and cultural identity. On the other hand, they work to interact with their new societies and find ways to influence and participate in them. In this context, the artistic activist in the diaspora becomes an interactive process that extends beyond national borders. Art becomes a means of documenting group and individual experiences, redrawing the features of

identity, belonging and citizenship, and creating a new space for dialogue and social and political change.

This toolkit aims to equip artists and cultural actors in diaspora and exile with tools and resources to reinforce their role as leaders of social and cultural change. It explores the theoretical framework of artistic activism and provides practical examples and applicable strategies for practising art as a tool for change. Additionally, it provides a guideline for creating workshops that will assist artists in developing their activist art projects, highlighting the experiences of both local and Arab artists in the diaspora, and offering lessons learnt from these experiences, making it a practical reference for anyone seeking to use creativity as a tool for empowerment and resistance.

As global issues and multiple cultural identities intertwine, art in the diaspora is no longer an individual practice, but a collective strategy aiming to reshape public space, rebuild ties with the homeland, and create a positive impact in new societies (host communities). Through this Toolkit, we seek to strengthen the role of artists in this process and support initiatives, collectives and artistic entities that take social and political responsibility at the core of their work and interventions.

It has been imperative to rethink the role of artists in exile, not only as producers of art, but also as cultural actors capable of creating real change. Art in exile is not just a means of cultural survival, but a militant tool that reshapes the relationship between art, politics and society, and opens up new horizons for cultural practice and activism in a changing world.

This toolkit is an effort to contextualise art, linking creativity to resistance and identity to struggle, as a tool for exiled and migrant artists to influence, participate, and rebuild their cultural identities in their new environments.

To whom do we Address this Book?

This guide is designed to be an open tool and cumulative process that can be adapted and used by a wide range of actors in the artistic, cultural, social and political spheres, regardless of their geographical locations, institutional identities or academic backgrounds. In particular, we address:

- **Artists from different artistic disciplines, whether they are amateurs in their beginnings or seasoned professionals, and whether their references are academic or subjective; cultural actors and cultural rights advocates looking for tools and tactics to activate their interventions in the public space.**
- **Cultural actors and cultural rights advocates who are looking for tools and tactics to activate their interventions in the public space.**
- **Artistic and cultural co-operatives and collectives working in alternative contexts and looking for resources to expand their social and political impact.**
- **Researchers in the fields of humanities, cultural studies, and art history who study the intersections of art, resistance, and social change.**
- **Teachers and educators who work in arts education and aspire to enhance the transformative dimension of the educational process.**
- **Civil and political activists and human rights defenders who see the arts as a means of expression, protest and justice.**
- **Cultural and artistic organisations and associations looking for ways to renew their roles and practices in their societies.**
- **Civil, political and legal organisations that integrate arts and culture into their human rights or awareness-raising work.**
- **Political parties, leftist blocs and liberal student groups that see cultural expression as a tool of mass struggle and a form of political organisation.**
- **Feminist and gendered organisations that use art as a platform for resistance against discrimination and structural violence and to promote feminist and queer presence in the public sphere.**

Objectives of this Toolkit

This toolkit is intended to empower artists and cultural actors in diaspora and exile through:

- 1. Design a theoretical framework to facilitate an understanding of artistic and cultural activism and link it/ in relation to various political and social contexts.**
- 2. Study and analyse activist art movements globally and in the Arab world to understand their mechanisms of action and strategies of influence.**
- 3. Acquire analytical and critical skills to study artistic activism, enabling artists to develop their own methods.**
- 4. Explore the tools and techniques used in art activism, including digital media, visual arts, interactive theatre and protest music.**
- 5. Promote critical thinking about the role of artists in diaspora and exile by connecting their personal experiences to public issues.**
- 6. Design and implement creative and participatory interventions that enable activist artists to create art projects with real impact.**

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS: UNDERSTANDING ARTIVISM

Theoretical frameworks:

Understanding Artivism

Into Defining Artivism:

In 2015, theorist and curator Peter Weibel wrote that 'artivism is perhaps the first new art form of the 21st century'. This statement reflects the significant momentum gained by this artistic practice, which combines artistic creation and activist work, in recent years as it has become a global phenomenon. Artistic activism opens up new and attractive possibilities in both art and traditional activism. In art, it recognises the political dimension of art and uses it as a tool for change. In conventional activism, it enriches, expands and diversifies strategies and interventions aimed at social and political change.

The term '**artistic activism**' is a neologism resulting from the combination of the words: '**art**' and '**activism**', which accurately reflects its hybrid nature. According to E. Aladro-Fico et al., it is defined as "Artivism is a hybrid form of art and activism which has a semantic mechanism to use art as a means towards change and social transformation ". While related to similar terms such as '**creative activism**', '**activist art**' and '**political art**', it differs in that it gives equal importance to artistic creation and socio-political action, highlighting the 'organic relationship between art and activism'. As the artist and activist John Jordan explains, artistic activism is 'a position and practice that exists on the fertile edges between art and activism'. It emerges when creativity merges with resistance, when our political actions become as beautiful as a poem and as effective as a well-designed tool.' "**an attitude, a practice which exists on the fertile edges between art and activism. It comes into being when creativity and resistance collapse into each other. It's what happens when our political actions become as beautiful as poems and as effective as a perfectly designed tool.**"

Though the term 'art activism' has only recently

emerged in the vocabulary of artists, activists and theorists, its roots can be traced back to the early 20th century. During this period, avant-garde movements such as Dadaism, the Russian avant-garde and Surrealism emerged, challenging the artistic and political establishments of the time. Initial forms of art activism emerged during the 1960s and 1970s in the form of art movements such as conceptual art, Situationism and performance art (interconnected art movements that share a focus on the idea, experience, and social context of art, rather than traditional art objects). These movements challenged the rules of institutional art and sought to integrate art with politics and everyday life. Artivism also manifested itself in radical theatre forms such as the Bread and Puppet Theatre and the Theatre of the Oppressed.

The term 'artivism' was first coined in 1997 in reference to the Chicano artists' collective and the Zapatista movement in Mexico. The Chicano art movement focused on the work of Mexican-American artists who, inspired by the Chicano movement of the 1960s, sought to establish a strong artistic identity. Their work took political and aesthetic forms, addressing cultural and social issues with the aim of resisting prevailing norms and challenging harmful patterns and stereotypes.

Linguistic Evolution: From Linguistic Sculpture to Critical Analysis

"Linguistic sculpture" refers to sculptures or artwork that incorporate language in their form, material, or meaning. It can be seen as a way of using language as a medium to create a three-dimensional artistic expression"

The utilisation of language as a powerful tool of articulation for social movements has historically been a potent instrument. The advent of the artistic activist has precipitated the necessity for the conceptualisation of a neologism, thereby underscoring the hybrid nature of contemporary social movements. The development of modern linguistic concepts, particularly the concept of linguistic sculptures that combined the words "art" and "activist", influenced this drafting. The term thus acquired a dual indication that reflects its role as both a cultural movement and a struggle.

However, the evolution of the term was not merely a straightforward linguistic development; rather, it was influenced by more profound linguistic and critical theories, with significant contributions from the Prague Forman group, Russian formalists, and Frankfurt's critical school.

Russian Formalists: The autonomy of Language and Art

The linguistic analysis of the term 'artivism' can be traced back to the theories presented at the beginning of the 20th century by Russian formalists such as Roman Jakobson and Victor Shklovsky. These scholars focused on the concept of **defamiliarisation — making the familiar strange** — to stimulate critical awareness and re-evaluate reality. This concept has become fundamental to our understanding of artistic activism, as activist art employs visual and performative techniques to challenge established patterns, compelling viewers to perceive social issues differently.

Furthermore, the Russian formalists emphasised the significance of artistic language structure, contending that language is not merely a means of conveying meaning; it possesses a unique structure that shapes perception and interaction. This aligns with the philosophy of artistic activism, which employs innovative forms of expression, (such as participatory performance and street art) to transcend traditional modes of communication and enhance the political and social impact of art.



El Lissitzky, Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge, 1919–1920. Lithographic Bolshevik propaganda poster.

Prague Circle*: The Communicative Function of Language and Art

*(aka The Prague school or Prague linguistic circle)

In the 1930s, the Prague Circle — led by Roman Jakobson and Jan Mukařovský — expanded the formalist view of language and art by emphasising the functional dimension of communication. This school of thought argued that art is not merely a system of signs, but also has a communicative function that can be either aesthetic or ideological. From this perspective, art activism is a natural extension of this idea, in which art transcends its aesthetic function to convey political and agitational messages that aim to provoke social change.

The Prague Circle's influence on art activism is evident in the use of symbols, metaphors and contextual manipulation to capture the audience's attention and encourage interaction. Street artists and visual protesters, for example, transformed iconic images into critical tools, reflecting Jakobson's concept of 'reframing reality'.



"Roman Jakobson (1896–1982): iconic scholar of structural linguistics and communication theory."

Frankfurt School: Critical Analysis of Language and Art

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Frankfurt School, under leading figures Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Walter Benjamin, advanced the social critique of art by focusing on the relationship between cultural production, ideological domination, and resistance. The Frankfurt School posited the notion that language is not an impartial entity; rather, it is a means of wielding power and exerting control. This perspective elucidates the potential of art to function as either a means of perpetuating the status quo or as a catalyst for liberation.

In this context, Walter Benjamin played a pivotal role in analysing the impact of art in modern societies, particularly through the concept of 'art reproduction'. He assured that modern technologies, including printing, photography and cinema, had played a pivotal role in the de-sacralisation of art, thereby creating a more receptive environment for art to engage with political issues on a broader scale. The aforementioned concepts are exemplified by contemporary art activism, which employs digital and social media to achieve a more extensive and profound impact.

Furthermore, Adorno advanced a critique of what he termed the 'cultural industry', emphasising that conventional art is frequently employed as a means of entertainment and commodification rather than as a liberating force. Conversely, art activism aims to challenge this consumerism by repurposing cultural and media symbols in protest contexts, thereby

serving as a practical extension of the Frankfurt School's critique.

This theoretical development enables an understanding of activism as a dynamic arena that interacts with linguistic, formalist, and critical transformations, thereby exceeding the confines of the mere combination of art and political activism. The influence of the Russian formalists is evident in strategies of Westernisation and reframing, the Prague Circle emphasises the communicative nature of art, and the Frankfurt School offers a critical framework for understanding the role of art in resisting cultural hegemony. This intermingling of ideas highlights how artistic activism is not only a visual or performative practice, but a redefinition of the relationship between art, language and power in the modern era.



Photograph of Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, and Jürgen Habermas (background), taken in Heidelberg, April 1964, by Jeremy J. Shapiro.

Artistic Evolution: Key Phases in the Prelude to the Emergence of Art Activism

The concept of art activism emerged as a result of a long path of aesthetic and political transformations that reshaped the role of art in society. Art went through four major phases before it reached its modern form as a tool of social and political struggle, moving from being an elitist practice within academic institutions to a protest force in the public sphere. These stages included the revolutionary avant-garde, the movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the new avant-garde, and digital protest, each of which contributed to the theoretical and practical foundations of artistic activism.

Phase I: The Revolutionary Vanguard and Art as Resistance

At the turn of the 20th century, avant-garde movements began to form as a response to major political and social transformations, such as the two world wars and socialist revolutions. In this era, art wasn't just a means of individual expression, it became part of the fight against the status quo. Movements such as Dadaism, which challenged all classical aesthetic standards through the use of irony and experimentation, emerged. Its artists, such as Tristan Tzara, believed that the prevailing system was responsible for the devastation brought about by the war and needed to be dismantled both artistically and politically.

On the other hand, Surrealism emerged as another backlash against rationalism, which was considered a source of social domination. André Breton, the surrealists' leader, believed that the unconscious and imagination could be tools for liberation from oppressive values.

Also, the Russian avant-garde played a pivotal role in establishing the idea of art as a tool for revolutionary change. The influence of the avant-garde was not limited to aesthetics, but extended to the production and distribution of art, with artists such as Kazimir Malevich and Alexander Rodchenko attempting to break down the barriers between art and everyday life.

Phase II: The Sixties and Seventies and the Politicisation of Art

After World War II, the art scene shifted radically following the emergence of major social movements, such as civil rights in the United States, student revolutions in France, and anti-Vietnam War protests (in the United States). Art was increasingly becoming more politically engaged, transcending traditional notions of artworks confined to galleries.

Conceptual art emerged, where artists considered the idea to be the most important element in a work of art, not necessarily the material or form. This transformation led to the emergence of protest art projects, such as the work of Hans Haacke, who exposed the collusion between art institutions and capitalism.

Situationism, founded by Guy-Ernest Debord, presented a different approach based on repurposing visual symbols and commercial advertisements into critical tools against consumerism and capitalism.

This period also witnessed the development of the political theater, as Augusto Boal presented Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is a type of theatrical performance that allows the audience to become part of the work, turning the theater into a live political dialogue square.

Phase III: The New Vanguard and Protest in Public Space

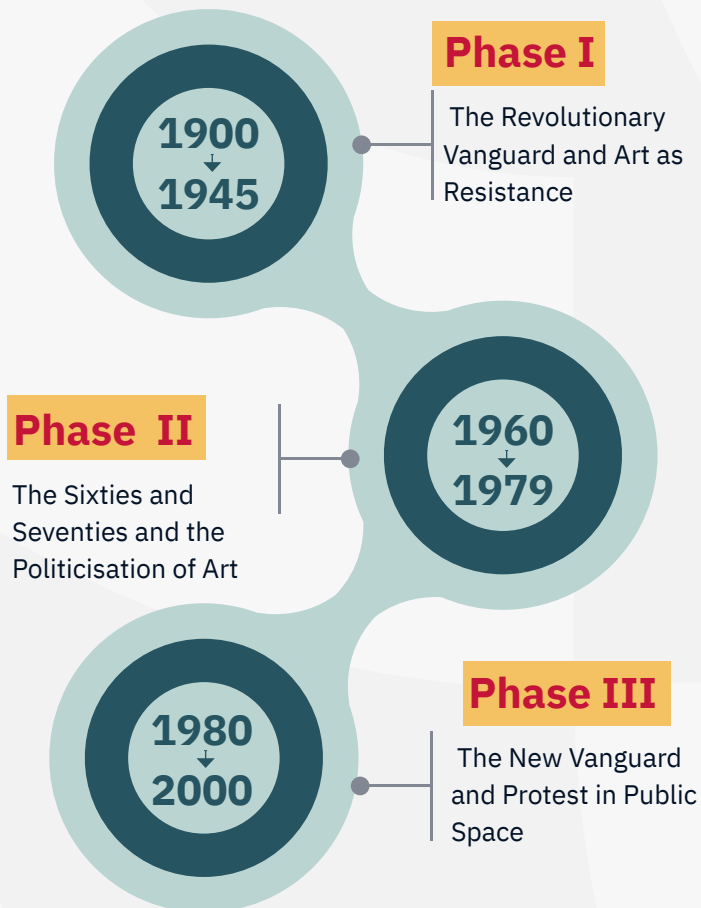
As protest culture developed in the last decades of the twentieth century, art started to take on a more radical character in dealing with the public sphere. Artists increasingly viewed urban spaces as zones of symbolic struggle, where they could intervene to destabilise the prevailing authority. This transformation had a major impact on the emergence of street art as one of the most widespread forms of artistic activism.

This phase emerged with the work of graffiti artists such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Banksy, where walls were used as open platforms to raise issues such as police violence, racial discrimination, and neo-colonialism.

Meanwhile, so-called 'art interventions' emerged,

where artists began to organise performance works and temporary street art installations with the aim of challenging authority and breaking the daily routine. Most notable were the actions of feminist groups such as the Gorilla Girls, who used art to expose discrimination against women in cultural institutions.

function. This idea has been supported by philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, who argued that beauty should be an 'end in itself', free from any utilitarian or functional considerations. The formalist school also supported this perception, arguing that aesthetic value lies in form and style, not in content or message.



- **Art for Society:** Conversely, a counter-ideology influenced by Marxist theories and critical thought asserts that art plays a vital role in engaging with social and political realities. This movement emphasises that art cannot be separated from its social context and must be used as a means of resisting oppression and bringing about social change. This idea was reinforced by thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci, who viewed art and culture as both tools of domination and resistance, and called for them to be used to shape mass consciousness.

Within this context, activism adopts a compromise position, as it seeks to employ aesthetic creativity in the service of social and political causes, while maintaining the autonomy of art as a means of free and creative expression. This orientation makes activism a special case that transcends the conventional conflict between aesthetics and functionality, merging deep artistic expression with effective activist practice.

Art as an Inevitable Force of Change

Before art reached its modern form as a tool for activism, it went through cumulative stages started from the revolutionary avant-garde that rejected the existing order, to the politicisation of art in the 1960s, then the new avant-garde that reclaimed the public sphere, then came the digital protest that utilised the internet as a space for activism.

Across these phases, art has remained fluid and multifaceted, while retaining its essential role as a driver of social transformation.

The Dialectic of Art for Art's Sake and Art for Society's Sake

In the context of activism evolution, we find it situated between two contradictory intellectual streams of thought: art for art's sake, which sees art as having an intrinsic value independent of any external purpose, and art for society, which sees art as having a functional role in achieving social and political change.

- **Art for Art's Sake:** This belief is rooted in modernist aesthetic thought and holds that the primary purpose of art is to provide aesthetic pleasure, regardless of any political or social

Philosophical Development: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Artivism in Contemporary Liberal Left Movement

Artivism has evolved amidst intertwined philosophical contexts, from Marxism, which viewed art as a tool of class resistance, to postmodernism, which rejected grand narratives and focused on deconstructing power through diverse cultural practices.

Between these two polarities, schools of thought such as the Frankfurt School, critical theory, and post-structuralism have shaped our understanding of modern art activism, especially within contemporary libertarian left movements, where artivism has become a central means of political protest and reimagining modes of social resistance.

Marxism of Arts: Art as a Tool for Class Liberation

With the prominence of Marxist ideas in the nineteenth century, art became perceived as an area of class struggle rather than an autonomous aesthetic praxis. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, while not focusing directly on art, provided a general vision of a 'superstructure' that included arts and culture as instruments that reflected and maintained class dominance.

Later, György Lukács (1885-1971) provided a more detailed interpretation, arguing that "social realism" is the art form most capable of exposing bourgeois ideology and exposing social inequalities through art.

Yet the most notable contribution came from Walter Benjamin (1892 - 1940), who has written about the reproduction of art in the industrial age, pointing out that technological shifts such as photography and cinema had removed the sacred aura from works of art, making them more democratic and accessible to the masses. Benjamin was one of the first theorists to recognise the potential of art to incite the masses, a perspective that is still reflected today in activist art practices that use digital and new media. *In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical

Reproduction," Walter Benjamin discusses the concept of "aura" as a sacred quality associated with the unique presence of an artwork in time and space. He argues that this aura is diminished by the rise of mechanical reproduction, leading to a loss of authenticity and ritualistic value.

The Frankfurt School: Cultural Criticism and Ideological Hegemony

In the 1930s, a new generation of Frankfurt School of thinkers, such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, offered critical analyses of the relationship between art, mass culture, and late capitalism (its later, industrialized forms). These thinkers saw the so-called 'culture industry' as a system that dominates artistic production and renders art a mere consumer commodity that reinforces hegemony rather than a means of liberation.

Although Adorno was sceptical of the potential of popular art to achieve political change, Herbert Marcuse focused on the potential of 'radical art', arguing that unconventional aesthetic forms have the potential to destabilise dominant ideologies and create a new space for revolutionary consciousness.

These insights laid the foundation for a new understanding of art as a field of social critique, which can be found today in activist art movements that challenge authoritarian structures through performance, street art, and participatory arts.

Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism: Deconstructing Power and Redefining Resistance

With the onset of postmodernism, cultural philosophy has begun to dismantle the grand narratives that classical Marxism was based on. Instead of seeing art as an instrument of a unified class struggle, thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard offered new insights that emphasised the multiplicity of power and resistance forms, arguing that activist art can operate at different levels within complex social and cultural networks.

- **Michel Foucault introduced the concept of 'diffuse power', which is not only held by or concentrated in a state or an economy, but**

extends across institutions, language, and everyday cultural practices. Accordingly, artistic activism has evolved to include works that focus on issues of gender, race, and the environment as new arenas of political struggle.

- **Jacques Derrida, on his part, emphasised the idea of 'deconstructing of the meaning', which inspired activist artists to use strategies such as repurposing cultural symbols to expose the internal contradictions of dominant discourses.**
- **Jean Baudrillard focused on the role of the media in creating a false reality, which led many activist artists to use digital art and new media to challenge official propaganda and spread their thoughts /messages online.**

The term activism has shifted from being an extension of arts Marxism to being a more complex and pluralistic practice as a result of developments in postmodernism and the libertarian left. While Marxism saw art as a tool for class liberation, contemporary philosophies see art activism as a means of creating new spaces for social struggle, not only against capitalism, but also against discrimination, colonialism, and digital domination.

These developments have placed art activism at the centre of liberation struggles, combining aesthetic critique, media manipulation, and direct political action, making it one of the most effective forms of resistance in the 21st century.

Artivism as an Integral Movement between Language, Art, and Philosophy

We have reviewed in this section, the development of artivism from various perspectives, examining the linguistic foundations that contributed to the formulation and meaning of the term, the artistic developments that expanded the potential of art as a tool for protest, and the philosophical frameworks that have deepened our understanding of art's role in social and political transformation. This historical and analytical overview makes it clear that artistic activism is not just a new trend in contemporary art, but rather a dynamic practice with deep roots in significant intellectual and cultural shifts.

Language and Artivism: Towards a New Protest Discourse

We have observed how the linguistic sculpture, which combined the words "art" and "activism", was not just a random linguistic construction, but an articulation of a new reality reflecting the integration of art and political action. This linguistic configuration was influenced by profound intellectual developments, from Russian Formalism, which viewed language as a tool to create a new aesthetic effect, to the Prague Circle, which focused on the communicative function of art, to the Frankfurt School, which analysed the role of language in shaping social consciousness. In this context, artistic activism has become a space where visual rhetoric and critical discourse intersect, making it an artistic medium capable of deconstructing cultural hegemony and reproducing meaning in unconventional ways.

From artistic point of view, artivism has evolved through four main stages, from the revolutionary avant-garde that sought to redefine the relationship between art and society, to the movements of the 1960s and 1970s that turned art into an arena of protest against power/authority, to the new avant-garde that reclaimed the public space as a space for symbolic resistance, and to digital art that utilised modern technology in the service of political activism. This trajectory shows how artistic activism was not just an aesthetic trend, but an expression of a growing need to transcend the boundaries of traditional art institutions and engage directly with social and political issues.

Artivism has benefited from major philosophical shifts, from Arts Marxism, which focused on the role of art in resisting class hegemony, to the Frankfurt School, which analysed the role of the "cultural industry" in adapting creativity to serve power, to postmodernism, which re-examined the concept of power and resistance, stressing the significance of deconstruction and reinterpretation. In this context, artivism has been the perfect vehicle for creating multidimensional resistance that goes beyond traditional class struggles to include issues of gender, identity, the environment, and digital rights, making it a central tool in contemporary libertarian left movements.

Towards a Comprehensive Definition of Artivism:

Based on the preceding, we can identify artivism as a hybrid practice that integrates artistic creation and activism, utilising linguistic, artistic, and philosophical developments to produce new types of cultural and political resistance. It is not simply a trend in contemporary art, but rather a dynamic strategy that seeks to reshape the public sphere, reframe political discourse, and extend the possibilities of artistic expression to new categories of audiences.

In the context of digital globalisation, environmental challenges, and political turmoil, artivism is no longer just a method of protest, but a tool to reimagine the future in creative ways that transcend the traditional boundaries between art and society. In this context, it can be seen as one of the most committed forms of art, as it is not content to offer a theoretical critique of reality, but rather seeks to change it through practice and creative protest.

Critical Analysis : Art, Migration, and Cultural Politics

Critical Analysis: Art, Migration, and Cultural Politics

In recent decades, there has been a marked shift in the relationship between art and immigration. Artistic production by migrants has become an integral part of broader discussions on identity, cultural policies, and the economic and social impacts of immigration. In the context of the increasing global migrations that have resulted from wars, economic crises, and political persecution, art has emerged as a vital medium for the articulation of experiences of exile, the renegotiation of identity, and the facilitation of interaction with host societies. In this section, the role of art in the process of building identity for migrants will be analysed, as will the impact of cultural systems and policies on immigrant art. The role of foreign funds/ financing and its relationships to artistic production will also be addressed, to explore links between immigrant artists and host communities.

Regarding the fundamental shifts in the relationship between art and exile, artivism has played a key role in reshaping identities and influencing the cultural and political landscape of migrants and exiled artists. After all, exile itself is not just a geographical move, but a state of mind /mental state that is reflected in artistic production, forcing the artist to rethink their position within the space of political and cultural exile.

Art as an identity tool and re-definition in exile:

Art has always been a key tool for cultural identity building and socialisation, but it takes on a more complex character when it is in the context of exile and diaspora. Migrant artists use their various mediums as a means to redefine themselves and

society, creating a state of dialogue between memory, belonging, and resettlement. Art in exile relies on multiple techniques such as conceptual art (which emphasizes the idea or concept behind an artwork more than the physical object itself), performance, and digital media to express issues such as alienation, belonging, and the search for identity amidst multiple cultures.

In this context, Edward Said states that the experience of exile creates a 'double consciousness', first articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois, where the artist is stuck between two cultures, leading them to produce works that are critical and serve as bridges between the past and the present. A notable example of this is the work of Shirin Neshat, (Iranian photographer and visual artist) who uses photography and videography to explore themes of Iranian identity in the diaspora, reflecting the shifting nature of identity experienced by artists in exile.

Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu proposes the concept of habitus to understand how migrant artists' cultural identities are formed in new environments. He argues that habitus is formed through the interaction between cultural practices and the social environment, which means that migrant artists not only reproduce their original cultures, but also adapt to new contexts in a creative way. Through this process, migration becomes a catalyst for reinventing artistic identity and reframing cultural values in a new context.

In his study on transnational art, Howard S. Becker examines how migrant artists reshape their cultural affiliations through "mobile identities" that transcend national borders. He points out that these artists are not completely disconnected from their home cultures, but create new art forms that blend local and global influences, making art in exile a dynamic field of knowledge production and political expression.

Moreover, Bourdieu sees migrants' artistic fields as influenced by the distribution of cultural capital within the host community, as artists in exile are challenged to reconfigure the 'symbolic position' they occupy within this new field/society. This leaves some migrant artists vulnerable to institutional discrimination, while others are assimilated into global art networks based on how well they conform to the tastes and cultural values of their host societies.

On the other hand, contemporary migrant artworks reflect a tension between nostalgia and engaging with the new cultural context. Whilst some artists seek to preserve their cultural roots, others attempt to transcend national identities and engage in a new global discourse, leading to the formation of hybrid identities. بيكر points out that these processes are not just individual transformations, but are part of broader social and political systems that determine how art is produced and received in contexts of cultural transience and migration.

Cultural Systems and Policies Affecting Migrant Art:

Migrant artists are influenced by a variety of cultural policies that determine their capacity to produce and integrate into the art scene in host societies. While in some countries, cultural policies are used as a tool to integrate migrants by supporting their artistic projects, in others, restrictions are imposed that limit their access to cultural opportunities.

Patterns of Cultural Policies and their Impact on Migrant Artists:

Countries take different strategies to manage cultural fields, which affects how migrant art is integrated. Cultural policies can be categorised into four main patterns:

- 1. The Architect State:** These states adopt the role of cultural architects, designing and managing the cultural landscape through strict policies and centralised programmes that support and set standards for national art. Migrant artists often struggle to access the institutionalised system in this context, as they are required to adapt to specific standards that align with the state's cultural vision.
- 2. The Engineer State:** These states direct arts through supporting policies that operate within specific ideological boundaries only. The state provides artists with material support, yet requires their work to align with its cultural and political goals. Migrant artists in these environments are often required to align their work with national frameworks, which can result in the loss of some of their original cultural characteristics.

- 3. The Patron State:** These countries provide significant financial support for the arts through government programmes and funding institutions, offering migrant artists more opportunities to express their identities. However, reliance on government funding can indirectly impact the quality of artistic content, as the focus is on themes that align with prevailing cultural policies.
- 4. The Facilitator State:** These states grant autonomy to cultural organisations and rely on the free market to manage the cultural landscape. While this model allows migrant artists to work freely, it also poses challenges relevant to funding and sustainability, as their success depends on their ability to adapt to market mechanisms and competition.

The artist's experience in exile is impacted by these policies in a number of ways. They can either foster their integration within the new cultural landscape or create a gap between the artist and state institutions. This forces the artist to adopt alternative strategies for survival and continued artistic production. In some cases, migrant artists may find themselves caught between fully engaging with the new cultural system and losing their connection to their culture of origin, and forces them to constantly reshape their artistic identity based on the opportunities and challenges posed by the new environment. Conversely, cultural policies that support migrants can create new spaces for cultural dialogue, enabling them to develop their work in contexts that facilitate interaction with the host society without abandoning their cultural heritage.

Migrants' contemporary artworks often reflect a tension between nostalgia and engagement with the new cultural context. While some artists endeavour to preserve their cultural roots, others attempt to transcend national identities and engage in a new global discourse, resulting in the formation of hybrid identities. بيكر highlights that these processes are not merely individual transformations, but are also influenced by broader social and political systems that shape the production and reception of art in contexts of cultural transience and migration.

- **Homeland-orientated Migrant Art: This form of art remains connected to the country of origin, revolving around political and cultural issues**

that are relevant to its original audience. It reflects the continuity of the artist's relationship with the culture of origin, and is often exhibited at diaspora events or cultural institutions of the country of origin.

- **Assimilated into the New Environment Migrant Art : Arts by artists who integrate into the local art scene of the host country and become part of the dominant cultural structure. Here, artists adopt new methods and practices that interact with the new artistic field, resulting in a more abstract and globalised artistic production.**

New Environment Impact on Migrant Art:

Berlin, Istanbul and Paris are among the cities that have witnessed a significant shift in the role of migrant artists, with their integration patterns varying according to the cultural and political environment of each city. In **Berlin**, for example, artists found an open space that allowed them to express themselves freely and engage in multiple cultural projects, supported by universities, cultural centres, and art institutions. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and independent initiatives helped to create a supportive environment for artistic activism, establishing Berlin as a centre for the production of critical discourse by Arab artists in exile. Cultural cooperation projects between Arab and German artists, such as residency programmes and joint exhibitions, have created a more open creative space where political critique and artistic experimentation overlap.



Notes from Camelid Country, "Willkommen Refugees – Berlin Street Art" (2020). Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

While in **Istanbul**, artivism faces political restrictions, as artists are allowed to work only if they do not oppose the political orientations of the Turkish government. Therefore, the sorting of artists based on their ideological affiliations limits the possibility of producing free and independent artworks. The general orientation of the cultural scene in Istanbul is closely related to internal political developments, where technical support is reshaped according to the political priorities of the state, which may lead some artists to adapt their works with the prevailing political discourse to ensure the continuation of their projects.



Istanbul street-art stencil, Gezi Park protest era. Author unknown

When it comes to the art of immigrants in **Paris**, the city's colonial heritage of cultural relations plays a key role. While the city does accommodate immigrant artists, it often directs them towards models that are appropriate to the Francophone framework. This creates a state of forced integration within the French artistic scene. This presents challenges for artists seeking to preserve their original identity, as they are faced with two options: engaging with French institutional frameworks and adapting to their requirements, or remaining in alternative cultural spaces primarily aimed at diaspora communities.

Furthermore, migrant artists in Paris encounter difficulties in reaching a broader audience, as their artistic creations remain limited to specific groups, thereby reinforcing the perception of 'migrant art' as a marginal element rather than an integral component of the broader French artistic landscape. These limitations render it challenging for artists to articulate their work without being constrained by predefined cultural frameworks, a circumstance that has the potential to engender a novel form of artistic Orientalism.

A comparative analysis of these three models reveals that the influence of the cultural and political environment on immigrant art is not merely a negative interaction, but rather a mutual reconstruction process. In this process, artists are influenced by the societies in which they reside, yet concurrently contribute to the enrichment of the cultural and political milieu of these cities through their artistic productions. Consequently, the function of art in exile cannot be confined to protest or nostalgia, but must also be recognised as a means to establish a novel discourse between cultures, thereby reflecting the reality of exile with all its contradictions and challenges.

Artivism vs. Political Challenges

While western exile provides artists with a wide range of spaces for artistic expression purpose, the challenges they face are no less severe than those they faced in their home countries. One major challenge is the politicization of migrant art, where migrant artists are often supported on the condition that their work reflects certain issues that are in line with the donor institutions. The notion of 'migrant art' is also used occasionally as a marketing tool to attract Western audiences, putting some artists at risk of neo-cultural Orientalism.

On the other hand, artists' participation in artistic activism makes them vulnerable to political surveillance and security pressures, especially by Arab embassies and intelligence services that seek to silence critical voices abroad. Artists are no longer merely creative, but have become political opponents by the very fact of their artistic production.



Across the see and across the barbed wire" (mural by Lask, Rue Ordener, Paris). Photo by Jeanne Menjoulet

Practical Tools: Artivism's 'Methodologies and Tools' Workshop

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Section I:

Preface to Activism, Artistic

and Cultural Activism

In a world full of social and political challenges, arts can be a transformative force that creates real change. Activism is the pursuit of change in society through the tools available to us, and when arts and culture become a tool for change, we enter the realm of artivism.

What is Artivism?

Artivism is the utilization of arts as a means of conveying social, political, or cultural messages, and influencing public consciousness, sparking dialogue, and stimulating change. It is located at the intersection between creativity and social and political action, where artistic tools and creative media become a means to critique and reimagine reality.

Providing some Definitions of Key Concepts of Social Change through Arts:

- **Social change through arts:** The utilization of different art forms (theatre, music, visual arts, literature, photography, design, dance) to raise societal issues and stimulate intellectual, political and economic shifts.
- **Creative Intervention:** The use of an artistic medium to create social interaction and change the audience's behaviour or awareness towards a particular issue.
- **Society/Community Art:** An artistic practice that originates from the community and for the

community, where the audience is a partner in the creative process and not just a recipient.

- **Activism:** Civic action undertaken by citizens individually or organised with others in unorganised movements or initiatives or in organised or poorly organised groups, with the aim of influencing public affairs (mobilisation) to achieve specific demands in order to promote democracy, freedom and human rights.
- **Culture:** Culture is all the spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a particular society and includes arts and literature, ways of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Main Principles:

This book is built on two core principles that are part of the key concepts of the **"Create Syria"** programme and are considered to be key in how this book is received and interacted with:

1. We are not seeking to prove the axiomatic, but rather to provide a parallel journey for artists seeking to be involved in cultural activism.

- We do not attempt to present arguments that prove that culture is an effective tool for social change, but rather take this belief as the basis for the trajectory of this toolkit. Our work seeks to accompany artists and provide them with spaces and methods that enable them to explore the possibilities of art in the public sphere..

2. We do not intend to bring art into a developmental or institutional framework, but rather examine the philosophical and intellectual roots of art as part of the political and social fabric since its establishment.

- Cultural and artistic work is not only a medium to generate social change, it is itself a political expression and a social act since time immemorial. Here, we focus on how to establish and boast this act instead of directing it to serve foreigners' agendas

Why 'Artivism in Exile'?

In exile contexts, art assumes additional roles beyond personal or aesthetic expression, becoming a means of maintaining/preserving identity, confronting alienation, and creating spaces of resistance. The potential roles of cultural and artistic work in exile can be summarised in the following categories:

Preserving and enhancing narratives: Using art to document history and collective memory, which would otherwise be excluded or forgotten.

Criticising and transforming: Transforming personal and communal experiences into critical reflections to help understand exile and belonging.

Engagement: Shining a light on burning political and social issues and creating artistic shocks that catalyse change.

Advocacy and lobbying: Using the arts to communicate the issues faced by exiled communities to a wider audience and mobilise support for them.

Critique Exercises and Guiding Questions:

-  What motivates you as an artist to interact with society's issues?
-  What is the difference between art as a means of expression and art as a means of change?
-  How can art be an act of resistance or liberation?
-  How can art be a space for memory and identity in contexts of exile?
-  How does your art reflect your connection to your home country and

the new environment? Do you tend to document or reshape (your?) memory?

-  How can art be a space to challenge rigid nationalist rhetoric and produce hybrid identities?
-  Do you consider that your art addresses a specific audience (diaspora, local audience, or global audience)? How does this affect the style and content of your work?
-  What challenges do you face in balancing/aligning traditional artistic practices with new modes of artistic expression?
-  Can art be a bridge between various cultures, or does it reinforce cultural gaps, and why?

Section II:

Examining the need and deconstructing its surrounding narratives

In order to fully understand the need for artistic intervention in a particular community, we cannot rely solely on our own perceptions; we must carry out an in-depth and comprehensive analysis in collaboration with community representatives.

An interactive exercise to analyse need using the PESTLE tool.

Steps To do:

- Form a group of artists and activists as well as members of your target community.
- Use the PESTLE tool to analyse the different factors that influence the community you are working with.
- Discuss the results and draw out the key issues that art can effectively intervene in.

PESTEL Analysis - Understanding Context and Circumstances

The PESTLE tool helps to analyse six key aspects/factors affecting/influencing the target community:



Apply the Exercise in Practice:



Expected Outcomes/Results:

- **A deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the target community.**
- **Prioritising technical intervention based on the most influential factors.**
- **Engaging the community from the beginning to ensure the sustainability and impact of the art project.**

Note:

This exercise should be conducted with representatives from the target community to ensure that the technical intervention is based on real needs and not just external assumptions.

Extra exercise: Analyse and Deconstruct Dominant Narratives

Objective: Understanding the dominant cultural, social and political narratives in the target community, and analysing how they are strengthened or resisted through artistic intervention.

The Required:



Forming working groups composed of artists and activists.



Identifying the dominant narratives related to the social and political issues you intend to address artistically.



Analysing how these narratives are shaped, who benefits from them, and how they influence societal consciousness.

Exercise Execution Steps:

1. Identifying Dominant Narratives:

- What are the prevailing ideas and values promoted through mainstream media, policies, and society?
- Are there stereotypes being reinforced about migrants, refugees or marginalised groups?
- How is cultural identity represented in the target community?

2. Analysing Supporting Factors of these Narratives:

- Who are the main actors/parties promoting these narratives (government, media, religious institutions, local community)?
- What are the tools used to disseminate these narratives (education, media, arts, politics)?
- How do these narratives affect individuals and artists in exile?

3. Deconstruction and Recontextualising Narratives:

- How can art be utilised to reinterpret and challenge these narratives?
- What artistic media are most influential in transforming social perceptions?
- How can we generate alternative narratives that capture/ and well represent artists' realities and experiences in exile?

Applying the Exercise in Practice:

- Gather participants in a brainstorming session to discuss and write down the dominant narratives.
- Divide the participants into small groups to analyse each narrative.
- As a group, discuss how the narrative can be reconfigured through different artistic mediums (theatre, music, photography, painting, drawing, literature).



Expected Outcomes/Results:

- A deeper awareness of dominant narratives and how they affect society and artists in exile.
- The ability to deconstruct and reframe these narratives in a critical and creative way.
- Development of initial ideas for artistic interventions that can contribute to changing public perceptions on issues of migration and exile.

Section III:

Who's with us, who's on us, and what's with us

To fully fathom how to achieve a socio-politically driven technical intervention, we must be aware of the resources at our disposal - internal skills and expertise, opportunities in the environment, and the social map of allies and enemies / opponents.

These exercises are essential to assist artists in constructing their projects in a calculated manner, based on an understanding of the social, political, and cultural forces surrounding them. By interactively analysing forces and resources, the effectiveness of artistic activism can be boosted and its actual impact on society can be ensured. In isolation and vulnerability conditions, an artist cannot build their world alone. Hence, solidarity is not an elitist choice or a transient humanitarian moment; it is the foundation of the new cultural ecosystem that may rise in exile and restore art as a force for change. Creating a artistic solidarity chain, from small initiatives to broad alliances, is what can ensure not only our survival, but our ability to influence and shape the future.

Exercise:

Understand how power works in society using the PowerTriangle

Objective: This exercise assists in analysing of how power in society functions between individuals, between institutions, and between us as artists and cultural activists. With this understanding, we can recognise how power is shaped, and how we can reshape it or resist it when necessary..

Steps

1. Preparation:

- Divide the participants into small groups.
- Explain the concept of power and its various forms according to the PowerTriangle.
- Discuss with the participants how power works in their societies.

2. Power Analysis:

Power Over:

- Identify actors with oppressive or centralised power in society.
- Discuss how this power is being used to control resources and influence cultural and artistic decisions.

Power With:

- Identify potential partners with whom you could collaborate to achieve common objectives.
- Reflect on how to build alliances based on solidarity and mutual interests.

Power To Change:

- Explore how individuals and groups can utilise art to generate new models of expression and change.
- Identify creative methods through which art can reshape societal relationships.

• Critical Analysis:

- Who holds the actual power in our societies? Are they state institutions, corporations, religious groups, or mass media?
- Are there oppressive dynamics that maintain power in the hands of a specific group? How can art expose or challenge them?
- What strategies can be deployed to challenge inequitable power relations?

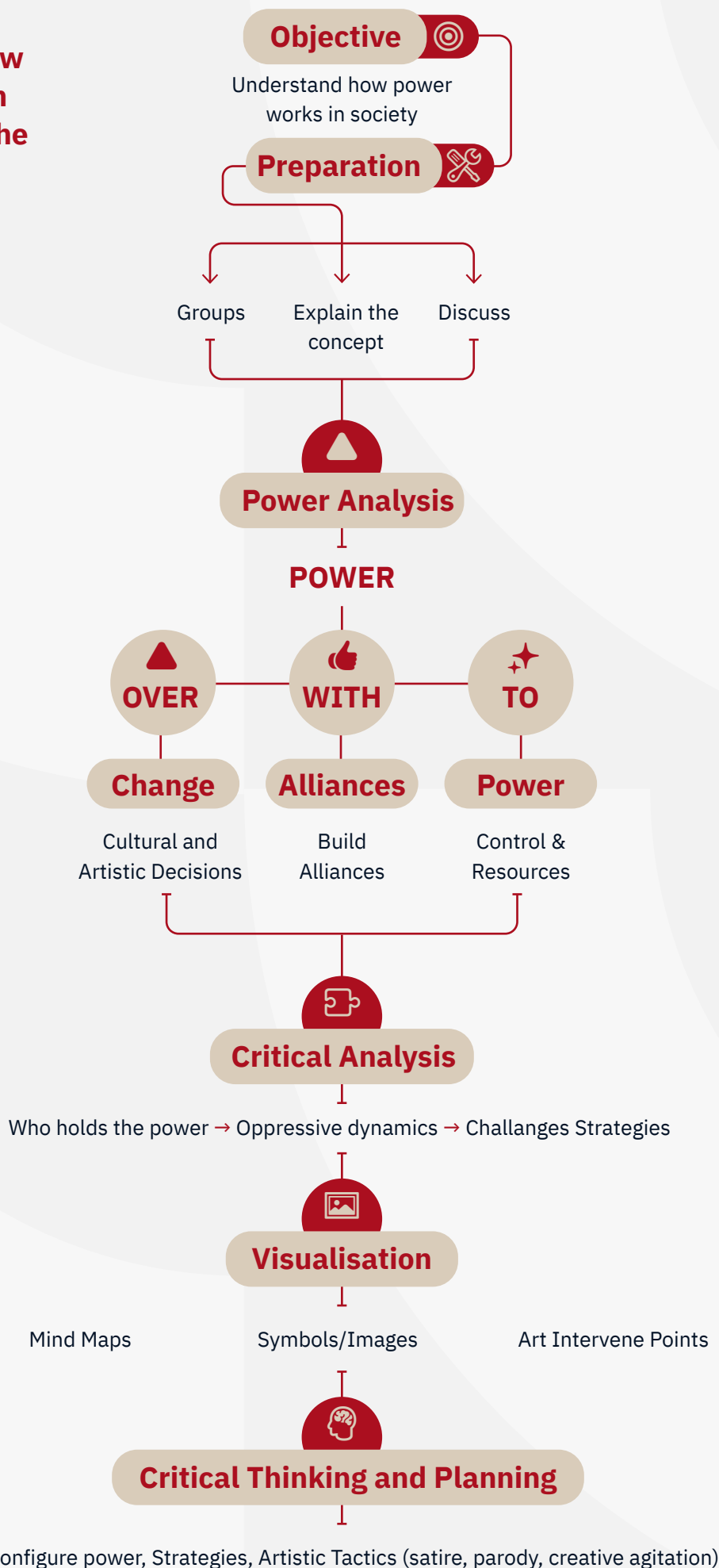
3. Visualisation/ Visual Representation:

- Use 'mind maps' to visualise the distribution of power in society, connecting together the active actors involved.
- Use symbols and images to illustrate where art can intervene, where it requires alliances, and where it may encounter resistance.

4. Critical Thinking and Planning:

- How can we reconfigure power to serve the community?
- What strategies can we employ to challenge cultural and political hegemony?
- Can artistic tactics such as satire, parody, and creative agitation be utilised to challenge prevailing /dominant narratives?

Exercise:
Understand how
power works in
society using the
PowerTriangle



Alternate Exercise: Allies and Opponents Map

1. **Identify government institutions, non-governmental organisations, media outlets, local communities, activist individuals, etc.**
2. Classify these parties as allies, neutrals, and opponents.
3. **Allies analysis:**
 - What are the common interests between us and potential allies?
 - How can we obtain their support and expand co-operation base?
4. **Opponents analysis :**
 - What is the essence of their power and how might they influence our project?
 - Are there means to deal with them or minimise their negative influence?

Reflections and Evaluation/ Assessment:

- Have you noticed that power is being allocated in unexpected ways?
- How can art be utilised to shift the balance of power?
- Are there historical or contemporary accounts of artists using effective strategies to confront power?

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- A clearer realisation of how power and authority work in different contexts.
- A deeper understanding of the dynamics of oppression and potential alliances.
- Identify artistic strategies to creatively resist and reshape oppressive structures.

This exercise is useful in gaining an understanding of how power works in different contexts:

(Power Over): Who are the individuals or organisations that hold and exercise power in

society?, How do these (power holders) affect arts and cultural practices?

(Power With): Who are the allies that we can collaborate with?, How can we build relationships (with these potential allies) based on solidarity and mutual interest?

(Power To Change): How can art be a tool for reshaping social relations?, What examples can we build on and inspire to create new alternatives?

The second exercise: What do we have?

Objective: This exercise is designed to help identify and utilise the resources available to us, and to escape the isolation of exile by identifying the surrounding environment and its opportunities and possibilities that can be employed in artistic work and cultural activism.

The Significance of this Exercise in the Context of Artivism in Exile

Living in exile is often associated with a state of isolation where artists find themselves far from their former networks and usual resources. This exercise enables them to redefine their map of possibilities in the new context, by recognising:

- The personal and collective resources they possess or may have access to.
- Potential networks and partnerships that can support their projects

Exercise Execution Steps:

1. Setting up the Participatory Environment:

- Form small groups of participants
- Provide visual aids such as large paper, coloured pens, sticky notes, cards, coloured string to draw the network.
- In the centre of the paper, draw a central circle representing the team or group.

2. Identify Available Resources and Skills

- Ask participants to identify the skills and resources they have by thinking about the

following:

- What am I good at?
- What can I bring to my new or old community?
- What tools, spaces or opportunities can I utilize?
- Divide the network into the following categories
*With filling in the cards for each group:

Artistic and Creative Resources:

- Visual arts (design, photography, sculpture, etc.)
- Performance (theatre, dance, music, music, poetry)
- Writing (screenplay, literature, cultural journalism)
- Multimedia technologies and digital arts

Non- creative Resources:

- Artistic Project Management
- Financial Planning and Crowdfunding
- Digital marketing and public relations
- Organisational and management skills

Opportunities and Assets:

- Exhibition spaces or co-working spaces
- Funding possibilities (supporting organisations, grants, crowdfunding)
- Local networks or supportive communities
- Potential partnerships with cultural or academic organisations
- Personal properties/ belongings they are able to utilise for the project

• **Building a Map of Resources and Partnerships**

After the resources have been categorised, ask participants to draw a network of connections between the different elements:

- How can different resources be combined to realise an arts activist project?
- What partnerships can be developed between individuals or organisations?
- What resources can be shared to support each other?

• **Gaps and Needs Analysis**

- After building the network, discuss with the group the following:
- What are the gaps to be filled? For example, there may be a lack of legal support or funding
- How can we fill these gaps? Finding partners, providing trainings, sharing skills
- What are the priorities to focus on to ensure the sustainability of art projects?

Final Results and Expected Outcomes

A wider understanding of the resources available within the team and the host community, strengthening a sense of belonging by building new collaborative networks. Explore opportunities that can contribute to the sustainability of activism in exile. Evolve strategies to use resources more effectively. Create new opportunities for collaboration, such as joint projects or platforms to support artists in exile.

This exercise will assist in identifying and utilising the resources we have at our disposal:

1. Draw a network of resources and skills available in both; your team and target community

Categorise the network into the following types:

- Technical and creative resources (design, photography, writing, theatre, etc.).
- Non-creative resources (project management, financial planning, public relations, etc.).
- Environmental and community opportunities (venues, funding, partnerships, local support).

2. Analyzing the Results:

- What gaps need to be filled?
- How can resources be strategically utilised to ensure the success of the technical project?

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- A better understanding of the power map in the target community.
- Strategically analyse allies and adversaries and their impact on the project.
- Identify available resources and how to exploit them to achieve the project's goals.
- Creating a strong support network that ensures the sustainability and impact of the project..

A discussion and reflection session related to this section: Towards a deeper understanding of the concept of solidarity in cultural work in exile

In the context of artistic and cultural work in exile, solidarity is far more than emotional support or technical collaboration. It is a strategic launching point for building an alternative cultural ecosystem that transcends isolation and opens up spaces for dialogue and integration between artists and activists who live in different circumstances, but are unified by the pursuit of freedom and change.

The Concept of the Artistic and Cultural Solidarity Chain

This section proposes to consider solidarity as more than just a resilience and survival mechanism, but as a fundamental value guiding the cultural ecosystem in exile. It is not just a situational response, but an ongoing pattern of reflection and action, based on mutual recognition, sharing skills and knowledge, and building support networks among artists and activists.

Cultural work in exile often originates in conditions of isolation, political pressure, legal hazards, and lack of stability, yet many artists persist in developing initiatives and projects that reflect their commitment to principles of justice, pluralism, and freedom. The solidarity chain is that link that converts individual efforts into a collective movement with a voice, impact, and viability power.

Components of Solidarity System:

- Collaboration between individuals and cross-border cultural institutions.

- Recognising each other's different experiences without denial or exclusion.
- Equitable distribution of resources and access to spaces and platforms.
- Joint advocacy for freedom of expression and the right to creativity.
- Documenting and circulating knowledge among independent networks.

Group Discussion Points:

- What does cultural solidarity mean to you as an artist?
- Have you felt in exile that there is a real artistic solidarity network? Why? Why not?
- What tools or relationships have supported you artistically, psychologically or practically during your journey?
- How can we transform solidarity from a human feeling into a sustainable work structure?
- What are the challenges of building solidarity between artists with different political or cultural backgrounds?
- How can we employ solidarity to create new alliances with communities and organisations outside our usual circles?

Session Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Develop a collective understanding of how solidarity can be used to inform cultural work in exile.
- Identify common ground and areas of intersection that can be built upon in collective projects.
- Identify existing tools, networks and initiatives that can be joined or revived.
- Recognise the obstacles to artistic solidarity and work to overcome them in a participatory context.

Section IV: Creative Intervention Design - From Resources to Community Action

Once we have analysed the need, explored the available resources and identified allies and opportunities in the environment, we can begin to design the creative intervention. This is a time for construction, but also for listening, reflection and collaboration.

The principle of this session:

There are no bad ideas — if an idea isn't shared, it can't be developed.

Generator Tool/ Exercise:

The Generator Tool is an exploratory design technique that aims to support artists and creatives in creating socially or politically driven art projects and initiatives. The tool has been developed to assist in the process of eschewing conventional thinking and embracing multiple possibilities prior to the formulation of a specific plan for the initiative.

Why using this tool :

- **Let's consider challenges from different perspectives.**
- **Let's explore artistic mediums and styles beyond what we already know.**
- **Let's give ourselves space to think outside our daily routine.**
- **Let's get closer to the real motivation behind what we want to change.**
- **Because if a project doesn't excite you, it won't inspire others to get involved..**

Participatory steps for generator use

☐ Preparation for the Session:

- Get your team together with representatives from the local community.
- Decide on a location that is open space and suitable for thinking, equipped with visual aids such as large sheets of paper, stickers and coloured pens.
- Agree on the purpose of the session: Generate creative intervention ideas to fill a gap or respond to a real need identified in the second section.

1. Cumulative Brainstorming: The idea is not rejected

- Kick things off with a quick round of ideas. Everyone mentions an idea without commenting on or analysing it.
- Write each idea on a separate piece of paper.
- After the first round, repeat the process, but this time you can build on the ideas.
- Collect similar ideas, categorise them by type of intervention, artistic medium and level of enthusiasm.

2. Identify the political or social driver of the intervention

- Ask yourself: What injustice, imbalance or absence that drives us?
- What do we want to change, and why is now the right time?
- Who is affected by this issue, and who needs to hear about it?
- This engine will guide the art project towards action rather than just expression.

3. A Critical Reflection on the Artistic Medium

- Discuss openly: Is our artistic medium (e.g. painting, theatre or dance) the most effective

way to address this issue?

- Do we need to partner with other specialists, such as educators, journalists and lawyers?
- Is the solution through collective action rather than a single artistic product?

This reflection helps us break free from the limitations of our tools and expand our range of options through collaboration.

3. 1 Reviewing Past Experiences

- Are there similar creative interventions that have been implemented in the past?
- What do we know about them? What was their nature? Who implemented them?
- What was their impact? Did they reach the intended audience?
- Were they successful or unsuccessful, and why?

This phase does not seek to imitate previous experiences, but rather to avoid repeated mistakes and build on what has already been achieved.

Group discussion:

- Share examples of well-known or local art interventions.
- Identify what can be learnt from them.
- What would you change about them if you were on their team?

The goal of this step:

- Building contextual awareness rather than starting from scratch.
- Deepening the understanding of the relationship between ideas and context.
- Foster a sense of continuity and the accumulation of knowledge in artistic activism.
- Hold open discussions: Is our artistic medium (e.g. painting, theatre or dance) the most effective way to address this issue?

- Do we need to partner with other specialists, such as educators, journalists and lawyers?
- Is the solution collective action rather than a single artistic product?

This reflection helps us to break free from the bias of our mediums and expand the spectrum of our tools through collaboration.

4. Formulating the intervention idea

- **Once you have collected ideas and discussed the possibilities, pick one or more that you think have real potential and are feasible and doable..**
- Formulate an initial conceptualisation of the intervention:
 - What is the art form of the initiative?
 - Who is involved and who is the audience?
 - How does the need we want to address manifest itself in this work?

5. Define intervention objectives

- Formulate 3 to 5 specific and measurable goals, such as:
- Increasing knowledge of a specific issue in the host community.
- Engaging a specific number of local partners.
- Learning with a specific group and supporting with technical media.

6. Create a slogan and message for the intervention

- Think of a short, concise phrase that captures the essence of the project.
- The logo should reflect the goal and the driver, and be easy to visualise and remember visually or linguistically.

7. Design a group handmade poster for the project (participatory collage)

- Once you have defined the idea, media, goals and logo, hold a group art session to design a handmade poster (collage) for the project.
- Use magazine clippings, images, keywords and visual symbols to express the spirit of the art intervention.
- All team members should participate, and you could even invite representatives from the local community to take part in the design process.
- The poster can later be used as a promotional tool or as part of the art exhibition.

◎ Objective of this exercise:

- Visualising the intervention in a sensory and visual terms.
- Translate abstract ideas into tangible images.
- Fostering collective ownership of the project through collaborating creatively.
- Developing a first concrete action step that can be used as a project document.

Section V: Constructing an Artistic and Creative Intervention Plan with Community Involvement

In the context of activism, particularly in exile, no art project can be implemented without seriously considering the local community's voice and point of view. The community is not a passive audience, but an active partner in shaping the artwork in terms of shape, content, and medium.

Once we have conceptualised the idea of creative intervention, we are now ready to start the practical planning and implementation of this intervention. In this section, we focus on transforming ideas into clear, implementable steps based on deep and

transparent community engagement.

◎ **The objective is to ensure that the intervention is not just a project to be implemented in the community, but one that originates from and returns to it..**

Principles of this section

- "Activism" does not imply a disregard for aesthetic principles. Conversely, it is the aesthetic power of an artwork that has the capacity to attract people and thereby open the door to influence.
- The artist does not relinquish their artistic perspective, but rather broadens it to encompass society as both an audience and a partner.
- Activism is a political and social project as well as artistic project.
- Obtaining grassroots legitimisation from the community is the cornerstone of success and sustainability.

 **Exercise:**
Artistic roadmap with demarcation of active actors
'Where are we coming from, to where are we going?'

A conceptual background::

This exercise is inspired by Dramaturgical Analysis tools, which are used in theatre to analyse texts, characters and actions. In this context, 'actors' are like characters in a theatre script, each having their own motivations, influences and roles which intersect and interact within a changing landscape. This perspective helps artists to understand the reciprocal relationships of influence between the elements of the social, political, and artistic landscapes in which they operate.

Exactly like in theatre, every actor in a social scene has a motivation, a conflict, and an impact; it is our job as artists to map this interaction to turn it into a clear and impactful artistic intervention narrative.

Bring your team together to design a visual roadmap

illustrating the project's implementation sequence, from political, social and cultural motivations to realising the desire for change, wholly or partially.

This exercise helps transform a mere 'implementation plan' into a dynamic visualisation of change.

The timeline should include:

- The starting point: The identified need or gap.
- Drive/motive: What political, social, cultural or economic forces or reasons are there for us to intervene?
- Actors: Who are the people or entities that will influence or be influenced by the project (community members, institutions, official bodies, opponents, supporters and the public)?
- Phased interventions: What will we do, when, how and with which technical tools?
- Turning points or interactions: When should feedback be collected, and how will the plan be reset?
- Desired final impact: What change do we want to achieve, and how will we measure it?

Working tools:

- Use a large sheet of paper or a wall that you can draw on.
- Draw the timeline as a wave or a road and use symbols to represent forces, influences and potential conflicts.
- Use different colours to represent the types of forces: Supportive, hindering, neutral and unpredictable.
- Add elements of dramaturgical analysis. What is each actor's goal? What is the conflict or tension? What role do they play in the overall scene?

Exercise Adjective:

- Creating a collective and comprehensive vision for the project.

- Clarifying the relationship between the influencing forces and the implementation phases.
- Understanding the interactions between different stakeholders as if they were characters in a live theatre performance.
- Developing a flexible plan that can adapt to changing circumstances.



Exercise:

Where are we? Where is the community?

– Participatory session to modify the technical model based on community feedback

This participatory session provides a vital opportunity to hear from and engage with people before the project is implemented. Collecting feedback and potential amendments is not just a luxury for the organisation; it gives the project social legitimacy by integrating it into reality rather than imposing it.

Involving the community at this stage prevents misunderstandings, encourages engagement and guarantees that the project is undertaken with, by and for the community.

 **Objective:** Gathering feedback from the target community on the proposed model, and building a shared understanding of where we as artists stand in relation to the community's place, vision and expectations

 **The Invitation:** Invite various representatives from the local community

 **Implementation:** Present your model in a simple and visual form (drawing, sketch, diagram, presentation, model, or poster from the previous section).

Start with an open discussion through questions such as:

- Do you feel that this project represents you?
Does it reflect your concerns/ cause?
- Do you see yourself in this project? Does it truly represent you?
- Is there something missing? Have we overlooked anything important?
- What could be improved?
- Do you have any alternative or additional suggestions?
- Do you feel threatened or overwhelmed by the project's messages or activities? If so, how could the wording of the messages or the presentation of the idea be changed to make them more positive and participatory?
- How can we present the project to make you feel like allies?
- What do you think of the artistic medium used?
Is it familiar to you? Familiar? Is it understandable?
- Do you see yourself in this project? Does it truly represent you?
- Is there something missing? Have we overlooked anything important?
- What could be improved?
- Do you have any alternative or additional suggestions?

Practical activity:

- Divide the audience into small groups.
- - Give them design tools: Paper, pens, pictures, symbols, journals, stickers.
- - Ask them to modify the model or represent it as they wish (visual collage, mind map, theatre sketch, etc.).

Group reflection point following the session:

- Where were we as an art collective and where was the community?
- What did we intersect and what did we disagree about?
- Did our perspective change after this session? How?
- Collect all notes and amendments.
- Evaluate the technical and logistical feasibility of integrating them.
- Modify the project model accordingly and share the modifications with the community in a second round of review if possible.

Expected result:

- **A more realistic art project that is more in tune with the voice of the community.**
- **Enhanced trust between the artistic team and the local community.**
- **Strengthening the collective belonging of the project before its launch.**

Marinating Artistic and Aesthetic Standards

A critical exercise: The Artist's Lens at the Heart of Social and Political Action

Collect images or examples of activist projects that have an effective political or social driver, but also possess a high aesthetic quality.

Discuss:

- **What makes these works artistically strong?**
- **How can we ensure that our project maintains professional standards without losing its content?**
- **What aesthetic expresses our cause?**
- **Use these points to review your project and develop your final design**

Section VI: Evaluating the Experience, Harvesting what Learnt, and Planning the Next Intervention

لقد You have reached the final milestone of your activist project, but the process doesn't end here. This phase is not just a moment of reckoning or documenting outcomes, but a moment of critical reflection and the rebirth of a future project that builds on today's lessons.

We invite you to ditch **the idea of "proving success"** and instead contemplate the experience's depth, its sincerity, its ability to create a tangible impact, and its willingness to thrive.

🔄 Rethinking in the Assessment: From Recognition to Reconstruction

In this section we suggest a different approach to evaluation. Rather than considering it as a tool to demonstrate success or numerical impact, we propose it as a critical, creative and participatory process that aims to:

- Review the original objectives and how they evolved during the project.
- Consider the values that shaped the experience.
- Reflect on the relationship built with the community.
- Evaluate the depth and maturity of the artistic medium.

🎯 **The primary objective:** To raise questions that initiate endless paths of learning..

⚙️ Tools for Measuring Change and Community Engagement

Use flexible tools to help you monitor change:

- Open-ended interviews with participants and the public.
- Focus groups and focus groups.
- Observation journals documenting key moments during implementation.
- Short photos and videos.
- Group review with the team.
- Unconventional surveys..

❓ Critical questions to re-examine the experience

Instead of asking: "**Have we succeeded?**", try questions such as:

- What has really changed? In us? In others?
- Who engaged with us, why did they do so, and who stayed away?
- Were new relationships formed? Were spaces of trust created?
- Has the project moved from expression to impact? How?
- To what extent did we succeed in achieving the project's intended outcome?
- What did we discover about ourselves as a team, and what do we need to develop?
- How have the values that guided the project interacted with reality? Have they remained valid, or changed?
- Were our language and media understandable and motivating, or did they need to be reworked?

- Who felt a sense of belonging to the project and who did not? Why?
- Is the experience replicable, scalable and transformative?

A participatory dialogue session with the community: What did you see? How did you feel?

Gather representatives from participants, the public, and local partners..

Discuss questions such as::

- What has remained in your memory of this project, and why?
- Did you feel that the project belonged to you? That you were part of it?
- What made you wish to participate or not to participate?
- What should be different next time?

Harvesting lessons learnt and planning ahead

After completing the meditation sessions, gather the following:

- What worked, and should we strengthen and improve?
- What has faltered or become complicated? And why?
- What had not we known that the project taught us?
- What new questions have arisen?

Based on this, design a blueprint for a new intervention that is based on the previous experience, not replicating it, but developing it.

Let the first experience be a transition, not a finale, and a learning station that illuminates the way to more solid and wide-ranging endeavours.

Expected Outcome of this Section

- **An in-depth understanding of the art-community experience**
- **Deconstructing real impact beyond ready-made metrics**
- **Identify strengths and gaps**
- **Building a solid knowledge base for the next intervention**
- **Activating the community as a source of feedback and joint planning.**

How can your art be a critical and activist act? Key points for individual artists in exile

Preface : Why this section?

In exile, an artist is often required to "represent" their respective community, homeland, or cause. However, how can an artist maintain artistic honesty and retain their own voice, without becoming a mere carrier of a stereotypical narrative? How can individual art be both a tool of resistance and a personal creativity at the same time?

This section is dedicated to any individual artist working in the context of exile or diaspora who desires to activate the political and social dimension of their artwork, without losing the balance between personal expression and public space.

Being an artist in exile... means to tell stories that the world doesn't want to hear, but you insist on being heard.

Art in exile is not a luxury. It is a form of existence. A form of survival. A form of resistance.

Make your art a free space, a place of dignity, a mirror of the unsaid.

Make yourself an open-ended project of the imagination, but rooted in a reality that does not endure silence.

I. When does art become a political game?

Every work of art has political potential. A work of art can be considered political when it: addresses issues such as social justice, rights, memory or exile:

- Intersects with issues of social justice, rights, memory or exile.
- Refuses to remain silent and speaks out against injustice, marginalisation or exclusion.

- Breaks taboos or challenges authoritarian structures and prevailing aesthetic norms.
- Is produced and exhibited in a context controlled by power ; either political, economic or cultural.
- Engages with the public sphere and mobilises for legislative change in public policies. العامة.



A short exercise:

Revisit your last piece of artwork and ask yourself:

- Does this work "want to say something"? What?
- Is it dealing with an existential, political, cultural question?
- What happens if this work is seen by someone "in power or decision-making"?

II: Practical steps to turn individual art into activism

1. Begin with your personal experience, but never stop there

- Don't be afraid to start with yourself: exile, identity, alienation and marginalisation are all personal experiences with universal relevance.
- Relate your experiences to the broader context. Who are your peers? What is your issue within a larger issue?

2. Define your motivations: What drives you?

Ask yourself:

- What are you angry about? What can't you tolerate?
- What do you wish to change?
- Who do you want to reach/address and why?
- Do you have a political or civic driver behind your artistic practice?

These motivations help you formulate an artistic intervention, rather than falling into the trap of "reproduction"

3. Choose your preferred medium with a political consciousness

Think: What is the medium that best serves my cause, not just my skill set?

An exercise: Take a political topic that concerns you (e.g. racism) and consider it from the perspective of different art forms. How does the expression differ? What message does each one convey?

4. Politically contextualise your work

Ask yourself:

- In what context will I present this work? Who will receive it? Where?
- Am I showing it in a free or censored space? Will the context of the performance distort its meaning?
- How can I talk about the political situation of the work without explaining everything?

Note: Political context does not mean blunt directness. Sometimes a gesture is more eloquent than a speech.

III: Critical Tools

1. The triangular analysis: I - Context – Audience

What is my personal position as an artist, refugee, woman, representative, activist, etc.?

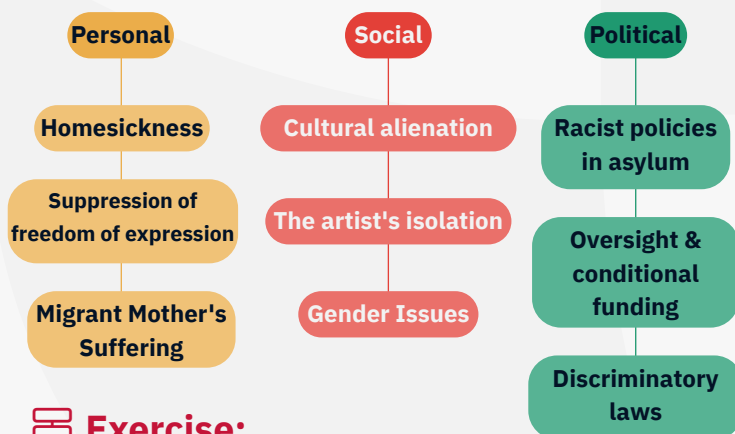
Context: What constraints and opportunities are there? Is there censorship? Is there support? Is there free space?

Audience: Who watches my work? What is their knowledge, prejudice and expectation?

Drawing this map helps you craft work that is "rooted" in reality, but "transcends" your individual experience.

2. Political Reframing Formulation

This is a simple technique that allows you to turn a "personal" art object into an activist artwork (artivistic work)



Exercise:
Choose a personal experience and try to view it differently. Then use this new perspective as a starting point for your next piece of work.

IV: The political positioning compass of the artwork

Objective: To analyse the political positioning of the artwork within the political compass (right-left/ authoritarian-liberal).

Reflect on how the work can be reoriented to align

with militant/liberal goals.

Exercise introduction

In exile or diaspora, art is often perceived as a means of personal expression or identity preservation by the artist. However, in turbulent political and social contexts, art does not remain neutral.

It is crucial to ask:

Where is our artwork positioned in the political landscape? Does it actually serve a liberatory trajectory or is it reproduced within authoritarian or conservative discourses?

Art in exile is often perceived as 'neutral' or 'merely expressive', but this exercise helps artists to uncover their implicit positions and determine where their work sits on the map of political and cultural forces.

One of the primary objectives of this exercise is to guarantee that our artistic interventions, despite being well-intentioned, do not become instruments of power or descend into right-wing conservative discourse, in either form or content.

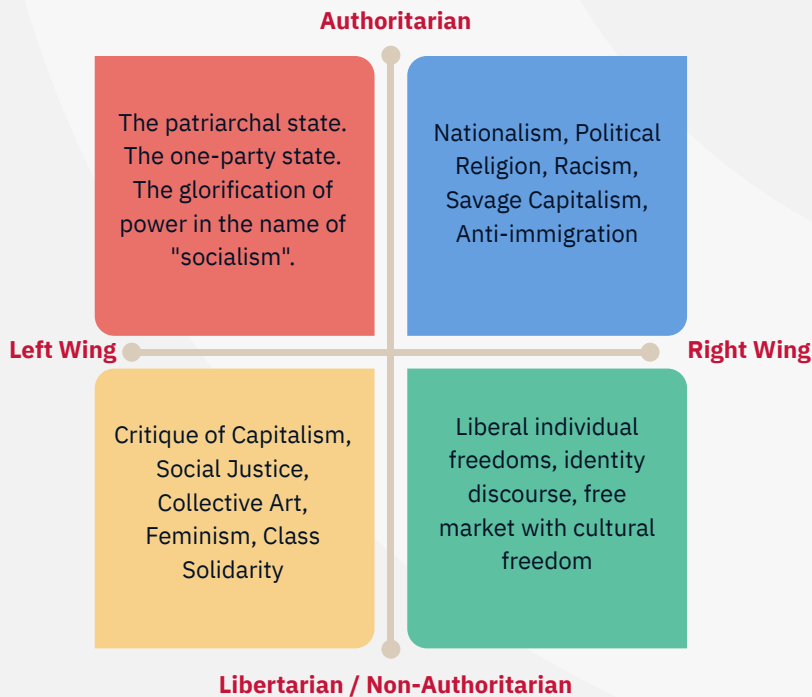
The arts are inherently liberating and revolutionary, acting as a space to challenge oppressive structures and inequalities. This is why it is important to stand in front of our artwork with an honest critical consciousness and ask ourselves: Does this work promote freedom, justice and diversity, or has it been co-opted by systems that perpetuate domination? Taking a critical distance from the current political positioning of our artwork is the first step in redirecting it towards its true purpose and drive: Change and liberation..

This exercise will help to:

- Understanding the implicit or explicit political dimension of a work of art.
- Deconstructing the relationship between form, content, and power.
- Reorienting projects or practices to serve clear emancipatory values. واضحة.

Exercise Tool: Political Compass

🕒 **The political compass is intersected by two axes:**



🕒 Exercise steps:

1. Self-reflection

- What is the last piece of artwork you have created, or are currently working on?
- What message does it convey? What values does it represent?
- Who is its primary audience? Who funded or supported it?

2. Locate your artwork within the political compass

On a large sheet of paper: Draw a compass chart, with four squares. Then, write down your artwork elements that you feel represent their current political orientation within the four squares.

Use these questions to guide you through:

- Does my work promote a culture of resistance? Or does it promote a culture of adaptation?

- Does it create space for others, or does it perpetuate stereotypes?
- Does it question or reassure authority?
- Is it used as a means of empowerment or beautification?
- Is it emancipatory, or does it indirectly justify oppression?

3. Critical Analysis

- What elements led you to position your work here? Was it the: Form? Language? Audience? Support?
- What contradictions did you discover?
- Is there a discrepancy between your political intentions and the work's reflection of them? Why?
- Do you see a need for repositioning? How and why?

4. Repositioning

- What elements are you able to modify or evolve to steer the work towards a more-liberated space?
- Can the artistic medium change? Can audience be expanded? And the message be altered?
- What kind of alliances or partnerships that might enhance this positioning?

📄 Expected Outcomes of the Exercise:

- **Visualisation of each artist's political compass**
- **A deeper critical awareness of the political discourse of art in the context of exile**
- **A suggested list for repositioning and future development**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND WARNINGS

for artists and activists in
designing artistic
interventions with a political
and social dimension in the
context of exile

Recommendations and warnings for artists and activists in designing artistic interventions with a political and social dimension in the context of exile

At the conclusion of this practical guide, we share with you a set of recommendations and observations gathered from exiled artists and cultural activists experiences.

These are not ready-made recipes, but rather points of to accompany you as you design and implement your artistic intervention, especially when it has a political or social dimension in a new and culturally different environment.

Firstly: Essential Recommendations for Artists in Exile

Aesthetics is not Incompatible with Artivism:

- Don't abandon your artistic standards when your cause has political or social dimensions.
- The artwork's quality empowers the message and gives it more credibility.
- Artivism is not just a tool of protest but also a creative language with aesthetic value..

Your Cultural Identity is an Advantage/Asset, not a Hindrance:

- Be aware of the difference between 'culturalisation' (healthy cultural exchange)

and 'cultural fusion' which may lead to identity dissolution or erosion. <https://fastercapital.com/topics/cultural-exchange-and-identity-transformation-in-the-globalized-world.html>

- Preserve your authentic expression and allow it to interact with the host culture without dissolving into it.
- Utilise and collaborate with the prevailing culture, but from your own position, not as a duplicate (version of it)

Be a Partner, not a Shocker/Confrontational:

- Respect the host community, don't approach it as an enemy or a battleground.
- Even if your intention is for positive change, be politically, socially and ethically sensitive.
- Embrace the "no harm" principle, and consider the consequences of the messages you deliver

Design Deliberately and don't Fall into the Following Traps:

1. Unintentionally reinforcing degrading narratives:

- Does your intervention reflect a genuinely humanistic vision?
- Does it contribute visually or linguistically to reproducing (the prevailing) stereotypes?

2. Beautifying and Gentrification Trap:

- Do not turn the art project into a means of beautifying a social reality without addressing
- Be careful not to let your work transform into a cover for processes of exclusion or marginalisation in the public space.

3. (Cultural Appropriation):

- Do not use cultural symbols of marginalised groups without permission or partnership.
- Be mindful of converting other people's tragedies into artistic material without

respecting the stories and contexts.

4. **Orientalism and Stereotypical Immigrant Images:**

- Avoid presenting yourself only through pain, impotence, or weirdness.
- Do not design to appease Western audiences or to confirm preconceived notions.
- Display your reality as it is: complex, diverse, full of power and contradictions.

Secondly: Recommendations for Interacting with the New Community

Respect the Local Context:

- Don't proceed from the assumption that the community needs to be 'educated' or 'woken up'.
- Instead, seek to understand its concerns, language and priorities, and explore the intersections

Listen with Sincerity:

- Dialogue is more important than a message. Don't assume you have 'the answer'.
- Communities are not a field of therapy or rescue, but partners in the vision. Even if your intention is for positive change, be politically, socially and ethically sensitive

Constant Assessment as an Ethical Responsibility:

- Review your speech tone, images used, assumptions on which you built the project.
- Keep the evaluation a continuous and open-

ended process, not a final stage.

Artivism in exile is a complex praxis, requiring courage, sensitivity, imagination, and constant awareness. A successful intervention is measured not only by its voice volume, but also by the depth of its impact, the authenticity of its language, and its respect for those it addresses.

Begin with your artistic medium, but don't stop there. Let your artistic project be a space of dignity and a platform for shared change.

(CASE) STUDIES, ANALYTICS, MODELS/ SAMPLES

Art and activism spaces
between exile and home

Some combine exiles and locals in the same S, and establish a collective learning journey through experience and living, reflecting the overlap of political and cultural spaces between home and exile.

This section features experiences from within the homeland, as well as from exile and diaspora. This overlap between spaces reflects the nature of the Palestinian, Syrian, and Arab diaspora in general, where the same experience is at times divided between those who remained in the homeland and those who found themselves in forced or voluntary exile. Thus, some models are considered "hybrid" in their geography and political contexts, reinforcing the idea that the practice of artistic activism is no longer confined to the borders of the nation-state but rather has become transnational, fueled by the flows of experience, exile and temporary repatriation.

(Case) Studies, Analytics, Models/ Samples

Art and activism spaces between exile and home

The case studies constitute an essential component of this toolkit, not only as illustrative examples, but also as an analytical structure for comprehending the possibilities of activism in the overlapping conditions of exile and homeland.

These experiences reflect artistic practices that are rooted in changing local contexts and simultaneously influenced by the diasporic experience, creating hybrid spaces of cultural activism that transcend geographical and political boundaries.

These case studies enable an understanding of the relationship between arts and politics, and how technical media can be used to produce a critical, emancipatory, and collective discourse at the same time.

These examples were selected for their geographical diversity, their variety of artistic forms (from theatre to design to digital art and fictional narratives), and their different locations in time and space:

Some are created in exile and others were born at home, but they all inhabit the shared spaces between art, community and resistance.



● The Urban Commons as a Tool for Cultural Resistance

"Mansion is an art and community project that was founded in 2012 in an abandoned nineteenth-century mansion in an area close to the Lebanese capital, downtown Beirut. A group of cultural producers, artists, and activists have borrowed the building from its owner through a non-profit and non-formal agreement, gradually transforming it into a co-working space, a residence and a living cultural centre, under the name Mansion.

In a short period of time, Mansion has evolved into a unique model of Urban Commons production in Beirut; a corrosive city that has been eroded by neoliberal policies and real estate violence. The project has gathered within it a network of artists, researchers, architects, cultural actors, and activist groups, who work out of individual and shared studios, while managing the space collectively in a participatory and non-hierarchical spirit. Since its founding, Mansion has always been threatened with eviction due to the fragile legal status of the relationship with the landlord, but the group has successfully negotiated repeated extensions of the right of use, allowing the space to continue over the years.

However, this very same fragility remains a condition of Mansion's survival as a counter-project to the neoliberal regime in the city, and a tool for exposing its contradictions.

Critical Analysis: The Artist Approach

The Mansion is a deeply rooted model of local, collective activism that utilises artistic and cultural practices to re-examine the meaning of property, the right to housing, and participation in public space. It does not only produce art, but transforms the

conditions of production itself - infrastructure, organisation, and relationship with the city - into a site of political and symbolic struggle.

1. Resisting Neoliberalism through Artistic Action:

Mansion resists the neoliberal real estate policies in Beirut that seek to transform public spaces into profitable capitalist properties. By converting an abandoned mansion into an open, non-profit, negotiable public commons, Mansion resists the neoliberal real estate policies in Beirut. This act itself is a political stance without direct confrontation with power, but rather the creation of alternative spaces in which a collective, participatory life is practised.

2. Art as a Medium for Social and Spatial Rootedness:

Mansion's artistic mediums ranged from visual arts, theatre, music, performance, exhibitions, and communal workshops, but more significantly, these media have always been rooted in the local socio-political context: Housing crises, urban governance, struggle for free spaces, and in criticising the dominance of money over culture. Art has been utilised not only for expression, but as a tool to generate alternative models of living and collective action.

3. Fragility as a Strategy:

Ironically, Mansion's legal fragility - being a temporary borrowed space, evictable at any moment - is not only a threat to its survival, it is also what renders its experience vital and exceptional. This has created a constant dynamic of negotiation with the real estate authority, revealing the extent to which independent cultural production in Beirut relies on trusting personal relationships, the absence of public policies, and a fragile but resilient structure.

4. Art and Internal Exile:

While Mansion is a local project in Beirut, the artists and activists involved are from multiple identities: Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinians, Saudis, and Europeans. Some live in internal or external exile, but they find in Mansion a space to belong, meet, and cultivate a form of "alternative city". This plurality has ensured that Mansion is a bridge between the local and the transnational.

5. Connection with the City

Being located in an area threatened by gentrification, Mansion constituted an actual resistance to processes of spatial class exclusion. The project attempted to reintegrate the space into the social fabric and make it accessible to those excluded from Beirut's cultural spaces, turning it into a political-architectural-artistic experiment against capitalist domination of the city.

Links and References:

"Commoning Mansion: Precarity as a Condition of Possibility", A Research Paper on Mansion, part of "The Right to the City" Programme - Arab Centre for Research in Beirut:

[ACSS - Urban Futures](#)

Mansion's Instagram Account (visual documentation and follow-up of their activities):

[Mansion Beirut Instagram](#) [Workers in Art & Culture](#)

Gathering of women and men working in culture and arts in Lebanon:

• Activism as a syndicated and structural action to liberate the cultural structure

The Assemblage of Art and Culture Workers in Lebanon emerged immediately following the 17 October 2019 uprising. This event marked a significant political and social turning point for the country, providing an opportunity to reconsider fundamental issues concerning the nature of the state, social justice, and culture. Emerging from a broader call for collective sectoral action launched by the Gathering of Professionals, the group quickly evolved into an independent entity, bringing together workers in various cultural and artistic fields: Theatre, music, cinema, visual arts, digital arts, writing, libraries, documentation, museums, publishing and more.

Adopting a clear political vision that is secular, just and participatory, the group excludes capitalist funders to ensure its independence and social positioning. Rather than seeking to produce art directly, the Collective functions as a trade union and political organisation that campaigns for a fair cultural infrastructure, rehabilitating art as a profession based on rights and justice rather than as an elitist luxury or advertising tool for the existing political or class system.

Critical Analysis: A Structural Activism Approach

This model embodies a unique form of activism, engaging with the structural conditions of cultural work at multiple levels: artistic expression, medium, politics, professional organisation, and the generation of political alternatives within the field itself.

1. Activism as Cultural Reconfiguration:

The assembly is dedicated to placing cultural workers at the heart of the process of change. It aims to develop a new framework for the profession, focusing on: This includes working conditions, wages, fair taxes, social protection and cultural cooperatives. By doing so, the assembly is performing a transformative act that links art and politics. It considers that improving the conditions of cultural labour is a prerequisite for liberating the artistic act itself.

2. Confronting the Neoliberal Sectarian System:

The assembly engages in a comprehensive critique of the Lebanese political structure, especially its sectarian and neoliberal articulations, which were based on marginalising culture and subjecting it to clientelism and quotas. It believes that the regime deliberately targeted the cultural space as a space for public and democratic exchange, destroying its infrastructure, drying up its resources, monopolising its ministry, and turning it into a sectarian quota. Activism here manifests itself as a counter-hegemonic practice, reclaiming culture as a collective right and a space for citizenship.

3. Art as a Tool for Building Equitable State:

The group presents art as both a creative medium and as part of a broader political project to establish a secular, democratic and civil state. The collective combines its cultural demands with issues such as universal health coverage, public education, tax justice and public sector reform. This broadens the role of the artist, transforming them from mere producers of symbols into political actors and critical citizens.

4. Activist Tools of Struggle:

The group engages in activism using advanced organisational tools: They issue political statements, prepare alternative policy papers, form specialised committees, organise protests and media campaigns, submit legislative proposals, establish cooperatives and document violations. These tools demonstrate the transition of the artwork from symbolic production to unionized (syndicated) political action

with a clear position in the public sphere.

5. Intersectionality with other struggles:

The group is characterised by an intersectional approach that encompasses supporting freedoms, women's rights and environmental justice; fighting censorship and repression; and engaging in educational and health initiatives. This makes it a prime example of cross-sectoral activism, viewing culture as an integral part of the political and social fabric.

6. Relevance to Internal and External Exile

Although it is based and it operates in Lebanon, many of its members live in internal exile due to marginalisation, censorship or a lack of opportunities. Following the economic collapse, some members moved abroad and continued to engage in the group's activities from exile. This reflects the overlap between the local and the diaspora and emphasises that dissident cultural work is not confined to one geographical area, but can build resistance networks across borders.

Links and Sources:

Official Facebook page (statements, campaigns, organisational documents)): Workers in Art & Culture - Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WorkersArtCulture/>



Syrian Theatre Collectives in Germany:

• Alternative Models and New Roles for Theatre in Activism

Syrian theatre clusters in Germany, most notably Collective Ma'louba, (<https://www.facebook.com/CollectiveMalouba>) emerged in the wake of the Syrian refugee waves after 2014 as a creative and cultural response to diaspora and exile. Supported by cultural institutions such as Theater an der Ruhr and the Goethe Institute, as well as independent foundations such as Barzakh, Syrian artists, graduates of the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts and others have been able to reshape their professional and artistic presence within the German theatre scene. Through such projects as Exile at the Maxim Gorky Theatre, Open Border in Munich, and Yalla Ensemble in Hanover, Syrians have become part of a structural shift in contemporary German theatre.

Activism Analysis:

1. Theatre as a Tool for Collective Self-Building Abroad:

Theatre experiences by Syrians in Germany go beyond the 'victim' discourse associated with asylum, establishing theatre that focuses on reclaiming agency and generating new forms of belonging and cultural citizenship. Theatre is used as a platform for reconfiguring identity and collective memory, and as a space for critical dialogue between artists and audiences about concepts such as: Otherness, belonging, integration and language.

2. Activism Based on Horizontal Production and Transnational Collaboration:

Projects such as Maqluba and Exile Ensemble are redefining theatre production through non-hierarchical, participatory models that challenge the classic model of national or commercial theatre. The productions are often multilingual, transnational, and based on direct personal and political experiences, but are crafted in new aesthetic forms that blend theatre and digital media

3. Hybrid Theatre: Experimentation in Performance, Technique and Time:

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, experiments have emerged to showcase live theatre through live streaming (online) or digitally recording the plays then presenting it. These shifts have forced a reconsideration of the conditions of theatre performances, the limits of the stage, and the impact of the absence of the audience. A "hybrid" form of theatre that combines theatre and video has also emerged, enabling new experiments in performance, translation, and interaction.

4. Exile as a Space of Production rather than an Identity Crisis:

These gatherings employ the exile experience not only as narrative subject matter but also as a space for reinventing theatre, where the refugee/exiled becomes not a temporary guest but a founding member of German theatre culture. These experiments produce a kind of post-nationalist theatre that not only presents the Other, but seeks to redefine the European self through multiplicity and diversity.

5. Access and Critical Inclusion Policies:

While Syrian experiences are celebrated, challenges remain: The classification as "exile" or "refugee" reproduces a symbolic hierarchy. However, some artists such as Ayham Agha, Kinda Hamidan, Mazen al-Jabba, and others have managed to access important institutional production spaces by resettling themselves within the European theatre

system, raising questions about strategies of continuity outside the refugee agency guardianship.

Syrian theatre collectives in Germany, particularly Maqluba and the Exile Ensemble, represent a complex model of artivism in exile. This model combines cultural resistance, artistic reimagining, and participation in the construction of new narratives of identity and belonging. Theatre here is not just a performance space, but a political and cognitive practice that is rooted in experience and aspires to change reality within the spaces of exile and within the European institution itself.

References:

<https://www.facebook.com/CollectiveMalouba/>

<https://reinventingthemargin.com/destin-allemand-theatre-syrien-ar/>

<https://aljumhuriya.net/ar/2020/08/13/الحياة-التي-ينفخها-الناس-في-المسرح>



VISUALIZING PALESTINE

● Canada/ Palestine

Visualising Palestine is a non-profit organisation founded in 2012, working at the intersections of data research, visual design, and political activism. It is legally based in Canada, but is the product of a cross-border collaboration involving Palestinian and diaspora researchers, artists, and designers from diverse backgrounds. The project 'Visualising Palestine' seeks to deconstruct dominant colonial narratives about Palestine through rigorous and data-driven design tools, infographics, educational tools, and interactive publications, all of which are freely available under Creative Commons license.

The project debuted in 2012 with the "Hunger Strikes" infographic that featured the story of Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan. The viral popularity of this work demonstrated the immense potential of using digital media as a tool of resistance, and contributed to highlighting Palestinian civil resistance in a universal visual language.

Today, the project is considered one of the most prominent initiatives that employs design as both a research and political practice, making it an integral part of a globalised artivism scene that derives its legitimacy from a rigorous knowledge base and solidarity networks rooted in issues of justice and liberation.

Analyse within the Framework of Artivism:

A. Art as a Tool of Deconstruction and Epistemological Resistance

Visualising Palestine is an example of Data Art in which colonial epistemological hegemony is deconstructed through narrative. The Israeli

occupation engages not only in physical violence, but also in producing an epistemological discourse that legitimises that violence. In contrast, VP seeks to redirect this discourse by providing alternative narratives and visual documentation tools that encourage reflection, evoke shock and promote political awareness.

Take, for instance, the infographics "Gaza in Numbers" or "Segregated Road Network". These don't just present numbers, but rather place them within a framework of liberating narratives that shift the viewer from a position of spectatorship to one of solidarity.

B. Artistic Media Used:

Visually-rich infographics (combining infographics, cultural symbols, and political narratives).

Educational tools intended for schools, universities and human rights organisations.

Short visual videos/clips that condense liberation messages in a short amount of time.

Collaborative cross-border partnerships with Palestinian and international organisations to produce shared narratives.

These media are not only communication tools, but political acts in their own right - because they redefine "who owns the narrative" and "who shapes knowledge".

C. Digitally-rooted Exilic Activism:

Operating from exile, Visualising Palestine represents one of the most mature forms of Digitally-rooted Exilic Activism:

- Utilises the digital space as an extension of the physically stolen Palestinian public space.
- Connects the diaspora to the interior through shared narrative tools.
- It reproduces a globalised Palestinian identity without abandoning local roots.

The project also shows how the diaspora can produce a knowledge and artistic infrastructure that not only

intersects with the Palestinian cause, but also opens up to the networks of global liberation movements, such as Black Lives Matter or anti-colonial movements in South America.

Creative Memory of the Syrian Revolution

• Syria/ Diaspora

"Creative Memory of the Syrian Revolution" is a digital platform launched in May of 2013 which seeks to document and archive free artistic and cultural creativity related to the Syrian revolution and its aftermath/consequences. It functions as a living archive under constant construction, and includes a variety of materials from graffiti, banners, plastic arts, music, film, theatre, creative texts, critical essays, photography, and more. The website contains more than 37,000 documents, spread across 25 categories, produced by more than 3,200 artists and initiatives.

The project's vision extends beyond preservation, to memory itself becoming a space of struggle/ battlefield, where artistic practice intersects with popular history, documentation with resistance to erasure, and storytelling with the advocacy of truth (truth about prisoners, detainees, and narratives). The initiative aspires to provide a free and multivocal narrative as an alternative to official authoritarian narratives.

Activism Analysis:

A. Art as a Resistant and Unforgettable Archive Art as anti forgettess archive

Creative Memory is a unique model of archival activism in which the archive itself becomes a work of

art and an act of activism. The project preserves and rehabilitates art as a social and political practice that reflects the features of the Syrian revolutionary movement. narrative, imagination and positioning.

It rejects the centrality of elites and celebrates the 'ordinary', popular, immediate, anonymous and often overlooked productions within grand narratives. Every 'sign', every 'wall', every 'caricature' is a testament to dreaming, abandonment, and defiance.

'Our memory is not a preserved past, but an act of resistance against denial and a continuous production of knowledge.' From Creative Memory of the Syrian Revolution website.

B. The post-platform model: Activating the archive as a living entity.

Creative Memory is not content with mere documentation; it seeks to activate the archive by:

- The Map Project: This involves linking more than 200 geographical locations with documented creative content to allow an understanding of the spatial extent of the peaceful movement.
- The 'Story of a Place, Story of a Person' project: A printed publication that retraces the beginnings of the revolution by chronicling 50 Syrian locations.
- The 'Detained and Disappeared project: Comprehensive artistic documentation of detainees as a shared consciousness.
- The Chronology Project: A visual narrative documenting political transitions through art between 2011 and 2019.
- Name Directory: An effort to collect, identify and link the names and producers of the documented works geographically and artistically.

In this way, the archive transforms from a 'memory' into a resistant knowledge structure and an arena for critical and educational reflection. The question it asks is: Who writes history? Who owns memory?

C. Activism through Alternative Narratives

This project directly responds to the Syrian regime's attempts to distort the narrative of the revolution through violence, erasure and falsification of the timeline, as well as by retelling events according to a logic of denial.

Every archived document, every recorded drawing, and every digitally restored piece of graffiti is a rewriting of history from the perspective of those who experienced it first-hand.

Rather than presenting a single truth, the project opens up the possibility of multiple truths. Rather than seeking to own 'memory', it aims to build a participatory space for the creation of free narratives.

Reference:

Official site of the project : <https://creativememory.org/ar/archive/>



Khalid Albaih and Satirical Caricature

● Sudan/Diaspora (Norway)

Khaled Albaih is a Sudanese political cartoonist whose work rose to fame during the Arab Spring and was popularised online under the name "Khartoon!", a play on words between "cartoon" and "Khartoon". He utilised his drawings as a visual weapon to confront authoritarian regimes and stand in solidarity with freedom issues in the Arab world, from Palestine to Syria, and from Sudan to Yemen.

In addition to his individual works, Khaled has launched a number of cultural initiatives such as:

- Khartoon Magazine: A digital platform that brings together Sudanese artists to document Sudanese reality through cartoons.
- Sudan Retold: a collective project to retell the history of Sudan through comics.
- Sudan Artist Fund: A fund to support Sudanese artists in times of revolution and war.
- Comics Library: The first comic book library in Africa.

Despite facing many obstacles to his initiatives, from coups to war, he persisted in devising alternative ways to support artists, including the Raksha 'mobile library' project, which was interrupted by the outbreak of war in April 2023. 2023.

Activism Analysis:

A. Caricature as an visual/ optical resistance act

In an Arab context laden with political repression, Khaled Albaih's cartoons have emerged as spaces of free expression that resist silence, deconstruct authority symbols, and reshape public discourse. Albaih's cartoons are not just a political commentary, but an instantly deployable symbolic weapon that inspires protesters, is used on walls and banners, and becomes revolutionary icons.

His direct and simple drawings, with high symbolic power, cross borders and languages, have been deployed in protests in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, as well as in Sudan's 2018 revolution.

B. Building the infrastructure of the activism

Khaled Albaih is an inspiring model of an activist who is not content with individual production, but works to establish platforms that empower other fellow artists. At a time when cultural institutions are being destroyed, Al Bayeh has worked to build alternative platforms:

- Its electronic magazine, Khartoon Magazine, offers artistic resencies to Sudanese artists both in and outside the country.
- The Sudanese Artists Fund provides symbolic funding to enable artists to continue their work despite pressure.
- It runs collective documentation projects on the history of Sudan that redefine the Sudanese relationship with their own identity, moving away from colonial accounts.

These efforts represent a structural and infrastructural approach, seeking to create a resistant cultural climate and question the conditions of production and creativity itself.

C. Owning the image and the national narrative

At a time when political and media discourse on Sudan has been hijacked, both internally and

externally, Albaih poses a radical question: 'Who owns the image of Sudan?'

Through its platforms and projects, the organisation aims to regain control of the narrative surrounding Sudan.

- rejecting distortion and Orientalism in the coverage of the revolution and war;
- enabling artists to express their own reality.
- Transforming art into a critical discourse that challenges official narratives.

He also said: 'Sudan is a colonial project. Now, we must redefine it through art or let it collapse.'

Reference:

Magazine Site: <https://khartoonmag.com/>

LITERALLY PEACE

● Syria/ Germany

Literally Peace is a bilingual Syrian-German writers' group, which utilises writing as a space for communication and exchange between two worlds torn apart by war and interconnected by migration. The project is based on blogging in three languages: Arabic, German, and English, accompanied by live literary and musical performances, occasionally featuring writers from Syria via livestream, as well as collaborations with artists from different fields in travelling exhibitions and short films.

Key initiatives:

- "Words of Hope": A bilingual (Arabic-German) creative writing competition that resulted in an anthology of stories about war, refugees and belonging.
- Literary and aesthetic activities travelling between

Syria and Germany, integrating texts, music and images.

Activism Analysis:

A. Writing as a Cultural and Aesthetic Bridge

Literally Peace is a paradigm of **cultural translation activism**, where writing is employed to challenge the division between 'resident' and 'refugee', 'East' and 'West', through a common humanitarian discourse that centres on hope and dignity.

Its strength is in making the literary text a medium for cross-border communication, rather than just a narrative document of suffering.

B. Hope as a Soft Discourse of Resistance

Despite the subdued political overtones, the project offers a quiet narrative resistance that counterbalances the public discourse on Syrians as (either only) victims or cultural threats. It does this by highlighting them (Syrians refugees) as active agents in the production of beauty, dialogue, and hope.

Hope is not merely a feeling, but an aesthetic writing stance against cruelty, and against the media's simplification of the image of war and refugees.

C. Multilingualism as a Form of Political Engagement

Publishing in three languages - especially through simultaneous translation - is a political act in itself:

It resists cultural isolation.

It opens the door to shared reception.

It contributes to rebuilding trust between different communities. Hope is not merely a feeling, but an aesthetic writing stance against cruelty, and against the media's simplification of the image of war and refugees

Reference:

Literally Peace on Instagram
https://www.instagram.com/literally_peace/



Palestine | Founded in 2014

"FilmLab: Palestine" is a cultural initiative founded in 2014 as an alternative cinema project that intends to provide an empowering space for Palestinian youth inside and outside Palestine. Inspired by the refugee experience, the project is based on the recognition that cinema is not only an artistic tool, but also a means of cultural and political resistance, and of telling history from a Palestinian perspective. FilmLab seeks to reinforce a cinematic infrastructure in Palestine through formation, production, screening, and audience engagement, especially through the Palestine Film Days and the Sunbird Award. It aspires to make cinema a part of daily life and localise it as a tool of expression and collective memory.

Activism Analysis:

1. From Marginalisation to Action: Cinema as a Means of Narrative Liberation

"FilmLab: Palestine" stems from an existential need to liberate the Palestinian narrative from the hegemony of Western narrative - both in its colonial forms and in its established cinematic models (Hollywood/Europe). In this context, cinema is not used as a means of "entertainment", but as a tool to reclaim the right to narrative, history, and collective memory. It is a battle against forgetting, against distorted representation, and against the political abstraction of the Palestinian person. From this perspective, FilmLab can be seen as a visual liberation project that deconstructs stereotypes and reconfigures the collective self through a local, sensitive, and belonging lens.

2. Revolution as an Existential and Historical Space

Even if it does not begin with a singular revolutionary moment, as was the case in Tunisia, for example, the

notion of revolution — in a symbolic and emotional sense — provides the backdrop to FilmLab's project. Here, the revolution is not a historical event, but an ongoing process of cultural and moral resistance which cinema seeks to represent, embrace and reproduce.

When the slogan reads: 'It's time to tell our stories', the intention is not only to share artistic narratives, but also to extend the scope of Palestinian action beyond the confines of politics to a cultural and aesthetic realm with the potential for global influence.

3. From Asylum to Cultural Action: Cinema as a Context of Life

This project has a special activist depth because it emerged from the experience of Palestinian refugees and fragmentation. In the Jordanian camps, for example, the need for storytelling became a driver for establishing an artistic/social project. FilmLab provides technical support and relocates the Palestinian as a narrative and cognitive actor.

Here, cinema is not just a craft or a technique, but an existential necessity for survival, preservation and claiming rights. In this way, artistic activism intersects with the cultural struggle for political survival.

4. Empowerment as a Resistance and Reproduction Strategy

In FilmLab, 'empowerment' is not a neutral developmental concept, but rather an act of resistance against triple marginalisation: geographical, cultural and productive. Rather than relying on external 'experts', the project deconstructs the centrality of the external 'expert' and instead focuses on developing the capacities of the new generation of filmmakers, from children to young people, both within Palestine and within the diaspora.

In this context, education and training are forms of liberation because they provide individuals with the tools to create images rather than just consume them. Every film produced is a blow to visual colonisation.

5. Cinema as a Social Movement: From the Screen to the Street

The organisation of Palestine Film Days also reflects activism. The festival is presented not only as a screening event, but also as a space for cultural and political organisation, and community networking. It provides a platform at the intersection of the local and the international, showcasing Palestine's role in world cinema as an active participant rather than a passive recipient.

The event is attended by children, young people, directors, critics, artists and institutions. In this way, film becomes integrated into daily Palestinian life, with the screen acting as an educational, inspirational and unifying tool.

6. Resisting Symbolic Hegemony: From the Margins to the Centre of Discourse

"FilmLab" also serves as a model for challenging global cultural hubs that have long excluded Palestine from their landscape or turned it into an abstract symbol. Through simple and alternative tools, the project reproduces a Palestinian centre of visual discourse, where Ramallah, Nablus or Jerusalem become centres of production, not just reception.

The objective is not just to screen films, but to build a network of Palestinian film actors capable of proposing alternative visions of the world, of freedom, and of history.

Reference:

<https://www.flp.ps/ar>



•(FRA) - Tunisia

"فني رغمًا عني" a Tunisian phrase, translates to "My art in spite of me/myself" or "An artist in spite of myself."

Emerging from the Tunisian revolution in 2011, it became an independent association in 2013. Initially launched in popular neighbourhoods as a creative response to political, social, and cultural marginalisation, its work focuses on reactivating public spaces as platforms for free artistic and political expression through live art, graffiti, performances, and participatory projects.

The group seeks to empower young people of both genders in marginalized areas and encourage them to produce performances in line with their local issues and personal experiences, while adopting a human rights approach based on a culture of participation, citizenship, and social justice.

Activism Analysis:

1. Revolution as a Founding Value for Artistic Action /Endeavour

The concept behind 'My Art Against Me' stems from a pivotal moment in Tunisia's political and social history: the 17 December/14 January revolution. This revolution not only toppled the head of the regime, but also broke the barrier of fear in public spaces, enabling a whole generation of young men and women to express their desires and rejections.

In this context, 'My Art Against Me' was not just another art project; it was a revolutionary act in itself. It is a reinvention of collective identity through art and an expansion of the revolution from sit-in squares to aesthetic expression. In this way, art becomes a natural extension of the revolution, not only celebrating it, but also, continuing its legacy and renewing its tools.

2. Art as a tool of liberation, not merely expression.

Rather than treating art as purely aesthetic or cultural production, Art Against Me considers it a tool for liberating and deconstructing systems of oppression and marginalisation. Here, the aesthetic act is politically charged in terms of both discourse and practice, as well as geographical location.

The project's approach to nationalizing art is multifaceted, ranging from graffiti mocking the symbols of tyranny to live street performances to training workshops in under-resourced areas. Ultimately, it aims to return art to its original owners: the people who initiated the revolution. The youth of working-class / popular neighbourhoods, marginalised people, the unemployed and women from the outskirts. Rather than portraying them as victims, the project empowers them as cultural actors.

3. Public space as a symbolic and tangible front of resistance.

Formerly a space of surveillance and prevention, public space is now the theatre of 'my art against my will' practices. Reclaiming the street as a place for art and protest dismantles the "nowhere" structure imposed by the previous regime, which stripped citizens of their right to presence and participation.

Every painted wall and every performance in the square is a reclamation of the right to exist, speak and act. Here, art is not just decoration. In the practical sense, it is a political practice that reorganises the relationships between the individual, society and the state.

4. New Actors and Collective Meaning-Making:

This activism is characterised by a focus on new actors: Young people who are not necessarily organised and who come from the margins of cities and historically marginalised areas. They are not only recipients of cultural development, but also partners in the creation of political and aesthetic meaning.

Through framing, training workshops and artistic support, the association redefines the roles of artists as activists and citizens as creators. This process challenges the traditional distinction between 'artist'

and 'audience', replacing it with a collaborative, participatory system based on human rights and the 'right to create'.

5. From Aesthetic to Humanism; Art as a Human Rights Action

The project is situated at the intersection of activism and a human rights approach. Every project, performance and initiative organised under the slogan 'It's My Right' is based on the logic of human rights activism as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This activism not only combats marginalisation, but also builds an alternative. A citizen-cultural model based on networking, framing and empowering marginalised individuals to become active participants and spokespersons. According to the organisation, this constitutes an important transition from 'empowerment' to 'emancipation'.

6. Repetition as a Tool to Root Alternative Culture

The activism depicted in "My Art Against Me" is not confined to specific events; rather, it aims to establish a sustainable cultural framework through a cyclical process of repetition, creation, geographical distribution, and the formation of "teams, factions, and cultural groups" across diverse regions of the Republic.

It's a strategy that entails the localisation of activist artistic practice in the context of everyday life, its transformation into a social habit, and its integration into the overarching process of comprehensive social change.

Reference:

Official Site of Fanni Raghman Anni

<https://fanniraghmananni.org/>



ADEF Foundation

● Egypt/ Arab World

The Arab Digital Expression Foundation (ADEF) is a not-for-profit foundation that has spent over a decade empowering young people by providing spaces for experimentation, discovery and learning. It also promotes free culture and open Arabic knowledge by offering free tools and participatory approaches.

It aims to enable teens and youth through fostering environments for education and learning, supporting free culture, developing capacity, and building knowledge tools in Arabic language.

ADEF relies on the intersection of technology and artistic and cultural expression, using a participatory wiki as a free space for documenting and sharing knowledge. ADEF works through various programmes, including summer workshops, digital productions and providing technical and artistic support for independent initiatives.

individual and group has the ability to create, hack, modify and participate without facing legal, technical or cultural constraints.

C. Open Participatory Structure

ADEF's projects, especially WikiAdd, are built collaboratively, with an open and modifiable collective effort, reflecting ADEF's philosophy that every knowledge product should be able to be shared, improved, and recycled.

Examples of Focal Projects:

WikiAdd: A crowdsourced digital platform for authoring and sharing of free knowledge in Arabic.

Summer Camps: Spaces for teens and young people to explore arts, technologies and self-expression skills.

Tools and training on free culture: Software, methodologies, open educational resources.

Reference:

WikiAdd – Main Page <https://adef.xyz/wiki/>

Activism Analysis::

A. Knowledge as a Liberating Tool

Add is guided by the philosophy that genuine empowerment does not happen without owning the tools and the knowledge associated with them. What they offer is not just teaching coding, design, or digital documentation, but deconstructing the knowledge structure of the tool itself to enable people to understand, develop, and share it freely.

B. From " Empowerment" to "Emancipation"

Adef rejects the prevalent concept of empowerment in development literature, instead advocating 'emancipation' as the ultimate form of empowerment. This concept envisages a world where every



Citizen Dancers South

● Tunisia

Citizen Dancers South is a politically-progressive youth movement that has transformed into an independent cultural association that is dedicated to empowering youth and women in popular neighbourhoods and marginalised areas, particularly in southern Tunisia, by integrating them into public life through arts and culture. The group focuses on performing arts as a tool for political and social expression and participation, and seeks to activate public spaces as spaces for free expression.

In 2020, the association launched its pilot cultural centre NO NAME in the city of Gabes, as the first alternative cultural incubator in the region, aiming to enshrine cultural decentralisation and provide a safe environment for artistic and creative experimentation.

Activism Analysis:

1. From Marginalisation to Expression: Arts as Reclaiming Spaces

The organisation is driven by the conviction that art is a means of resistance and a social right, not an elitist privilege. Marginalised groups, especially women and youth in southern Tunisia, are not only beneficiaries, but cultural actors who are repositioned as drivers of change. By integrating them into art projects in public spaces, doors of expression are opened for those whose voices have been absent or suppressed.

2. The Tunisian Revolution as an Ontological Background for Liberating the Space

Although years have passed since the 2011 uprising, the organisation still views the revolution as an ongoing event. Reactivating the Tunisian street as a cultural and political platform would be a way of completing the revolutionary process, particularly

given the political and social regressions affecting youth, women and migrants.

3. Out of the Centre towards the Margins: Decentralisation as a Cultural Act

As a conscious act of redistributing cultural weight, the association is positioned, in Gabès outside the Tunisian capital. Through the centre 'NO NAME', it produces local artistic and organisational knowledge that seeks to deconstruct the centralisation of cultural decision-making and resist the symbolic exclusion of the South.

4. Art as an Incubator for Peace and Gender Equality

The organisation has been focused on issues of gender equality, violence, and radicalisation, using the arts as a tool for peace education and a culture of non-violence. One of their strategies is to produce artworks in public spaces, to promote access to the arts and the symbolic and political participation of excluded groups.

5. From Art to Cultural Policy

Not limited to field work, the association strives to influence public and cultural policies through dialogue sessions with public institutions and municipal councils, to identify the cultural reality of local communities, and to construct an alternative economy for artists based on solidarity and participation.⁶ Regional Co-operation as a Struggle Perspective

6. Regional Co-operation as a Struggle Perspective

The association attempts to create cross-border partnerships with cultural active players in the Arab world in order to build safe and shared spaces in the face of geopolitical shifts, expanding the concept of cultural activism to a regional and solidarity dimension.

Reference:

<https://o-dcs.org/>



Fields: Blockchain, Decentralised Governance, Digital Culture, Economic Justice, Music, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Work

"Taksir is a civic initiative designed to facilitate the adoption of Blockchain technologies in the Arab region. Its vision is based on a dual perception of the technology: As a structural tool capable of reshaping the infrastructure of finance and culture, and as a social movement born out of financial crises and neoliberal policies.

The initiative integrates education, community building, research, and pilot projects, with the aim of integrating Arab youth into the Blockchain revolution, moving away from the dominant commercial/ investment narratives and towards using blockchain as a tool for justice, creativity, and self- and collective empowerment."

Activism Analysis:

1. From Digital Margin to Act of Sovereignty

Taksir stems from a deep awareness of the digital marginalisation of Arab societies, not only in terms of access to technology, but also in the absence of the owned tools to produce and adapt it politically and culturally. Blockchain is introduced as a means to liberate individuals from institutional, banking, and cultural mediation, and to redefine the relationship with the state, the market, and the platform.

2. Blockchain as a Social Revolution rather than a Technology

At the heart of Taksir's narrative is a political reclaiming of technology as an extension of resistance demands against monopoly, hegemony, and economic injustice. The initiative connects Blockchain with protest movements, participatory governance models, theories of labour and collective

ownership, reconnecting what has been severed by techno-capitalism.

3. From Rentier Economy to Productive Culture

The initiative breaks a frontier in culture with projects such as MousDAO, which aims to empower Arab music artists through training, experimentation, and the creation of virtual communities open to becoming DAOs (decentralised autonomous organisations). Culture, here, is not consumed, but collectively constructed, and becomes a source of income, a space of governance, and an arena of resistance.

4. Education as a Tool for Constructing Counter-Power

Taksir focuses on producing specialised Arabic educational content that transcends superficial general explanations to build a functional and critical understanding of technology, including topics such as participatory governance, participatory economy, political decentralisation, and community finance. This centrality to "critical knowledge" makes education itself an act of resistance.

5. Blockchain as a Tool for Redistributing Cultural Power

For example, through the BunaDAO project, Taksir seeks to decentralise traditional cultural institutions and redistribute the instruments of governance, funding, and cultural representation. Culture is not managed from funded bureaucracies, but from decentralised networks, where the "artist-user-citizen" is a participant in decision-making rather than a beneficiary.

6. Self-organisation as a Political Strategy

Taksir accumulates practical know-how through its organisational experiments, such as the Dynamic Partnership Protocol, a flexible governance protocol that documents its vision of decentralised governance. This practice is embedded in a broader context of thinking about alternatives to classical institutional models (NGOs, media, entrepreneurship) and positions blockchain governance as a political and organisational solution.

7. Shaping the Scene and Resisting the Prevailing Narrative

Through participating in conferences such as Bread & Net, Web3 Summit, and Culture 3.0, the initiative offers a well-balanced reading of technology that does not identify with NFT flipping, hype-driven investing, or conservative narratives about the "danger" of blockchain. Rather, it develops an alternative narrative that emphasises the societal, cultural and educational uses of the technology.

Reference:

<http1s://taxir.xyz/2099-ar/>

Ahmad Zeno and artivism during the Syrian time of revolution.

- Performing arts, political satire, non-violent activism, cultural resistance.

Amidst the Syrian regime's brutal repression of the popular uprising, in what Human Rights Watch described as a "torture archipelago," a small group of Syrian activists, including architect Ahmad Zeno, emerged with nonviolent resistance innovations that embodied popular intelligence, creativity, and the power to turn ashes into tools of symbolic defiance.

From 2011 to 2012, this group launched a series of

symbolic initiatives, such as painting Damascus fountains red, throwing ping-pong balls with the slogans "Freedom!" and "You and I, we are still brethren", or broadcasting audio messages from MP3 devices hidden in dumpsters, all with messages for both people and soldiers, hoping to divide split the regime with love, not bullets.

Activism Analysis:

1. From the street to imagination: Recoding the city

Through dyeing the Damascus fountains red, the group reclaimed the public space as a symbolic art platform. The water turned into blood, and the everyday scene turned into a poetic shock that forces people to see what the machine of oppression is trying to obliterate. The activists' takeover of the city's fountains is an implicit work of art, where politics and beauty, activism and dreaming, intersect.

2. Humour as an invincible weapon

Ahmed Zeno and his team have opted for what they call "another language" to communicate with society and the regime. The ping-pong balls forcing soldiers to run through the streets were like a living caricature - random chaos exposing the absurdity of the regime's iron fist. Resistance here transcends protest and enters the realm of guided theatre.

3. Nonviolence as a strategic and aesthetic choice

Zeno believes that resorting to violence will only multiply the casualties/ number of victims. Hence, their initiatives sought to produce a model of witful and decentralised popular resistance that delivers powerful messages without firing a single bullet. This option is not only ethical, but also practical and strategic given the imbalance of power.

4. Recurring Symbolism and Engaging the Public

Messages of freedom carried by small balls, or satirical images such as a lion's face on a cigarette packet warning of cancer, all carry symbols that can be easily replicated and shared, allowing for a

widespread and low-cost nonviolent movement. It is resistance that is recyclable, customisable, and solidarity-based.

5. Miniature Revolutionary Aesthetics

What is distinctive about Ahmed Zeno and his comrades works is that they are not "art" per se in the institutional sense, but rather micro-revolutionary practices, lightweight, high-impact, confusing the opponent and inspiring hope. Not only are they attempts to survive tyranny, but to build an alternative collective spirit, an identity of resistance.

Reference:

Everyday Rebellion – Ping Pong Balls for Assad

<https://everydayrebellion.net/ping-pong-balls-for-assad/syria-pingpong-1280x720/>

Reservoir Section

Protection and Support Systems

Reservoir

Section:

Protection and Support Systems

The significance of this section is attributed to being a nexus between activism and protection and support systems. It does not aim to provide information but to establish a cohesive network of individuals and organisations who espouse and advocate the principle of freedom of expression and notion of art power as a tool of resistance, change, and survival.

It contains hyperlinks and accurate descriptions for institutions and initiatives that provide a wide range of support: legal, financial, technical, theoretical, psychological, technical, and networking.

It also provides a roadmap that the artist can move through without feeling isolated. Because it creates bridges between individuals, gatherings and bodies that support freedom of expression and cultural justice.

The platform under discussion offers links and

profiles that are so imperative to acknowledge the significance of organisations and initiatives that facilitate diverse forms of support. A wide range of disciplines is implicated, including law, finance, technology, art, theory, psychology, and networking which cannot be overstated. يوفر روابط وتوصيفات دقيقة. المؤسسات ومبادرات تقدم أنواعًا مختلفة من الدعم: القانوني، المالي، الفني، النظري، النفسي، التقني، والتشبيكي.

يوفر خارطة يمكن للفنان/ة التنقل فيها دون أن يشعر بالعزلة. ولأنه يخلق جسرًا بين الأفراد والتجمعات والجهات الداعمة لحرية التعبير والعدالة الثقافية.

You will find in this section:

- Platforms and lists of examples, tools and samples/models on activism.
- Legal institutions that protect artists from repression.
- Financing sources for technical projects of a political or social nature.
- Tools and techniques to enhance digital and technical safety.
- Educational and critique platforms to deepen practice of activism.
- Opportunities for art residencies and international mobility.

1. A list of platforms that are specialised in archiving cultural and activism models

Everyday Rebellion

A multimedia platform documenting peaceful and creative forms of resistance around the world, including artistic tactics used by activists in revolutions and uprisings. It allows submitting artworks, symbols, and posters. It highlights the expressive power of art as a means of struggle.

What makes it special: A rich archive of visual, cinematic and narrative tactics, with special attention to the Arab revolutions.

Museum of Activism (MoA)

An open digital museum, documenting cultural and political history of protests and civil activism. It features images, artworks, posters and archival material from global campaigns.

What makes it special: It combines artistic document and social history, to form a living memory of global change movements.

Tactics4Change

An educational and documentary platform showcases hundreds of creative tactics used in social and legal campaigns. Provides tools for planning and evaluation, and the tactic is highlighted as a strategic tool.

What makes it special: Precise categories of tactics (artistic, symbolic, sarcastic, digital ...) with case studies.

Creative Memory of The Syrian Revolution

A digital archive documenting Syrian artistic and cultural creativity since the outbreak of the 2011 uprising, including drawings, songs, slogans, videos, and cultural initiatives.

What makes it special: A profound focus on the revolutionary Syrian context, and its presentation as a form of collective memory narrative and cultural resistance

Activist Handbook

An open-source handbook for activists, providing organisational tools, tactics, and collective action techniques. It includes chapters on art as a tool of resistance and visual impact techniques.

What makes it special: Practical content that can be instantly applied, targeting both beginners and professionals alike.

Center for Artistic Activism (C4AA)

A centre that blends art and politics through workshops, research and training resources. This place is dedicated to enhancing the political effectiveness of art campaigns through examples, studies and critical framing.

What makes it special: A theoretical and applied blending of "what is beautiful" and "what is effective", with a focus on impact and societal conversion.

*Click the  icon to be redirected directly to the source link.

All icons on this page are clickable and will redirect to links.

Includes an online knowledge library and summer academies

2. Resources & Support

Avant-Garde Lawyers

A pioneering legal initiative that defends the freedom of artists around the world. It develops innovative strategies to protect them from censorship, prosecution and abuse. Supported by international organisations, the initiative provides tailor-made legal resources for those working in the arts and activism. <https://avantgardelawyers.org>

Creative Visions

A worldwide organisation that fosters "creative activism" through programmes that aim to use impactful artistic narratives for justice, equality, and sustainability. It provides support and networking tools for creators using art for change in their production.

Moleskine Foundation – Creative Tools for Social

A programme of donations of creative material (documents, stationery...) to artists and non-profit organisations around the world, with a focus on marginalised communities. The programme aims to create a global creative network that promotes art as a medium for social change.

Arts Rights Justice Programme

An international training and research programme that promotes awareness of cultural and artistic rights and focuses on promoting creative freedom in public policy, education and institutional practice.

In Place of War

A global organisation that supports artists and activists in areas affected by conflict, violence and climate change. Provides capacity development, networking and artistic support programmes to create cultural alternatives in crisis zones

Ettijahat- Independent Culture.

A pioneering Arab institution that supports artists in exile through programmes of artistic production, research, legal support (such as Sanad programme), and training and knowledge platforms for independent artists and cultural researchers.

Artists at Risk (AR)

A global network that supports artists at risk by providing cultural asylum, legal protection, and solidarity networks. Working with international arts and human rights organisations since 2013.

Digital Rights Foundation

DRF A Pakistani organisation that defends digital rights, especially for women, journalists and artists. Provides awareness-raising content, technical and security support, and legal advocacy on issues of privacy and freedom of expression

DRF envisions a place where all people, and especially women, are able to exercise their right of expression without being threatened. We believe that a free internet with access to information and impeccable privacy policies can encourage such a healthy and productive environment that would eventually help not only women, but the world at large.

Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE)

An independent Egyptian organization works to enhance freedom of expression and freedom of creativity, and provides legal support, research reports and political advocacy in favor of freedom of information circulation and artists' rights.

SANAD (at Ettijahat-Independent Culture)

A Legal Support Programme for Artists and Cultural Practitioners

A comprehensive legal programme to support artists in exile, including legal advice, administrative expenses support, and information distribution, covering areas such as Lebanon and Germany. Working in partnership with Legal Agenda and Nawras Foundation.

Act 4 Hope

A cultural relief and development initiative that supports distressed communities through artistic training programmes, capacity building for cultural actors, creative platforms, and production grants. Believes in the power of art to heal and build community hope.

On the Move

The largest international platform providing funding resources and mobility opportunities for artists around the world. It includes a database of residencies, funding guides, legal tools, and research resources on environmental and professional justice in cultural mobility.

European Cultural Foundation (ECF)

A long-established European organisation that supports culture as a force for democratic change. It manages grant funds, exchange programmes and advocates for a cohesive Europe through art and cross-border collaboration.

Artists Without Borders

An international network of volunteers and artists who use art as a means of providing psychological relief and showing solidarity with victims of war, particularly through collective projects and entertainment programmes.

UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights

The United Nations mechanism concerned with defending cultural rights in the world, documenting violations of freedom of artistic expression, and providing periodic reports to the UN Human Rights Council on cultural challenges globally.

Culture Resource Mawred

An pan-Arab regional foundation that offers support to artists through production funding programmes, travel grants, management training, and cultural policy research. It focuses on freedom of expression, cultural exchange, and sustainability of the creative scene.

*Click the  icon to be redirected directly to the source link.

All icons on this page are clickable and will redirect to links.

The Ensemble

A global media network connecting artists, educators, and activists working in the field of art education for social change. Publishes reports, articles and news on community arts and participatory education.

TransArtists (DutchCulture)

A comprehensive platform on artistic residencies around the world, provides research tools, legal consultation /advice, experiences of artists, and sources that benefit artists who seek to work in international contexts or build residence networks.

Fanak Fund

An independent civil initiative that facilitates the movement of artists in the Arab world and Europe through financial support for mobility and residencies, and encourages the construction of peer-to-peer networks and cultural practices in solidarity.

ArteEast

A New York -based art institution that supports artists from West Asia, North Africa and Diaspora, through show programs, publishing platforms, and global networking that enhances the presence of Arab art in the global cultural scene.

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Guide to

Activism in Exile

Between Expression, Struggle, and
Societal Transformation