In such battles over truth, the photograph crafts an aesthetic of what is real—and therefore legitimate and worth fighting for. Images captured by snapshot photography serve as documentary evidence, made all the more “real” by their rough-and-tumble aesthetic. Citizen journalism became an act of rebellion against the state since it aims to document state-imposed limits on speech and expression. Ordinary people overcome censorship by creating their own forms of knowledge. They acted as both producers and disseminators of images that triggered emotional responses, which in turn prompted public action.

**SLOGANS AND SONGS**

Alongside visual imagery, a variety of slogans have been vocalized aloud in the recent uprisings. The repeated demand “the people want the downfall of the regime” has been chanted in Arabic, countless times. Along with its verbal rendition, this vocal utterance is a persistent performance of discontent. With every repetition the demand gains volume and power.

With every beat the slogan unites people toward a common goal. When the chanting reaches a crescendo the beat often changes to keep the collective momentum growing, while a new demand is exclaimed: “Freedom!” (Gill Out). During the past few years, this simple imperative has been repeated with vigor and determination across the Arab World.

Like artists, musicians have addressed political and social issues more explicitly in their work. In many countries of the Arab World, releasing songs containing overtly oppositional messages is itself an act of rebellion bearing serious consequences. For example, Tunisian rapper El General was detained and questioned after releasing two anti-government songs and Syrian singer Ibrahim Kashoush was found murdered.

A more amicable example is the Egyptian rock band “Mastaba,” whose music video for the song “Sout al-Horeya” (Sound of Freedom,) which was one of the first songs produced during the Egyptian uprising, became an anthem of the revolution. A music video of the song including scenes filmed in Tahrir Square was uploaded to YouTube and seen by more than two million viewers. The video captures the anarchy felt at the time but leaves the viewer feeling immense optimism. Most importantly, it invites people to sing along, declaring: “in every street in my country, the voice of freedom is calling.”

**PHOTOGRAPHIC TRUTH CLAIMS**

With every new struggle in the Arab World, new forms of creative resistance flourish. Among the many art forms, visual imagery is consistently harnessed to educate, ridicule, and make demands. Most importantly, it motivates and gives hope in the face of pain and loss. In the midst of it all, hope can sometimes burn brighter than the drive and energy to carry on. Hope fuels an urge toward creative expression, which promises to thrive as the upheavals continue to unfold over the months and years to come.
Images are often used as communicative devices to present politicized messages. During the recent Arab World uprisings, demonstrators created images to express opposition to incumbent governments and members of the ruling elite. Over and again, activists, protesters, artists, and other individuals adopted the expressive media - including videos, photographs, painted and digital images, as well as slogans, music, and even puppets - to create visualized and performed modes of dissent within public space, both in the streets and online.

From 2011 until today, the many images of torture, violence, anger, frustration, hope, and elation have captured the joys and fears of revolutions whose future courses remain uncertain. These uprisings have been shaped by visual imagery, slogans, and music. These expressive media have helped individuals unite, communicate, and make demands while also enabling them to ridicule, attack, and symbolically destroy perceived opponents. Images are particularly powerful because they can function as documentary evidence by actors wishing to make claims to truth and authenticity, while also helping to anchor community presence and collective memory within both real and virtual space.