The Sprouting of Revolutionary Fists
Zoo Project
Mural, April 2011

In this mural by Zoo Project, a man plants seeds that grow into a row of revolutionary fists. The laborer symbolizes the public and workforce of Tunisia, which joined together to fight against the oppressive ruler Ben Ali. Here, growth and rejuvenation are symbolically aligned to revolution.

Photograph courtesy of Elissa Jobson.

This Way to Freedom
Zoo Project
Mural, April 2011

This mural by a Franco-Algerian street artist depicts Tunisians speeding toward freedom. One woman carries a sign declaring, “Long live the people” in French. The trilingual text is aimed at international viewership.

Photograph courtesy of Elissa Jobson.

Who is Next?
Mural, June 2013

This mural poignantly pleads for cooperation and peace between religious groups. The large figures are Mina Daniel, a Christian, and Sheikh Emad Effat, a Muslim, who were both murdered during demonstrations against the Egyptian military. They hold a banner asking, “Who is next?” The violent scene below implies that many deceased souls will follow.

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.

Martyrs and Gazelles
Alaa Awad and Ammar Abo Bakr
Mural, June 2013

This wall commemorates people who lost their lives fighting for the opposition. The sacrifice of these martyrs is sanctified through the inclusion of angelic wings. Reminiscent of art dating back to the time of the Pharaohs, the white gazelles connect the current struggle to Egypt’s rich and ancient culture.

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.

The Fighter-Painter
Omar Picasso
September 26, 2012

The artist’s fight is depicted in this mural near Cairo’s Tahrir Square. Regime forces bear the acronym ACAB meaning, “All cops are bastards.” They guard the combined image of former President Mubarak and his interim successor General Tantawi. Behind them is Mohammed Badie, former supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood. The poem reads,

You, a regime scared of a brush and a pen
You were unjust and crushed those who suffered injustice
If you were honest, you would have not been fearful of painting
The best you can do is conduct a war on walls, and exert your power over lines and colors
Inside, you are a coward who can never build what was destroyed

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.

Nefertiti in a Gas Mask
El Zeft
Poster, June 2013

One of the most iconic faces of ancient Egypt is Queen Nefertiti. Here she is representative of female protesters. She seems exhausted from long days of demonstrations, having dodged tear gas canisters and Molotov cocktails. But at the same time she remains defiant and determined – a tribute to the strong, tenacious women who played a central role in the Egyptian uprising.

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.

No, And A Thousand Times No
Bahia Shehab
Stencils and prints, 2013

Stenciled on walls throughout Cairo are forms of the Arabic word, la (no). They are artist Bahia Shehab’s response to government-sponsored atrocities. Here she emphatically states, “No!” to burning books, military rule and the stripping of women – as exemplified by the “Blue Bra Girl.” Shehab’s persistent catalog of demands inspires public action for change.

AANM Collection 2013.20.01-03
Artwork and photograph courtesy of Bahia Shehab.

Religions United in Revolution
Mural, April 2011

Invoking the stripes of the Egyptian flag, the imagery in this mural is a reminder that, despite the bloodshed, the protest movement that began with an uprising on January 25, 2011 is seeking peace and “7RYA” (freedom) for all Egyptians – Christian and Muslim alike.

Photograph courtesy of John Woodcock.

Social Media Power Freedom
Mural, April 2011

This work celebrates Egyptian multi-faith patriotism and the various outlets that facilitated free speech and communication. The operator on the left is possibly Google engineer and activist Wael Ghonim. These elements help illuminate “7RYA” or freedom.

Photograph courtesy of John Woodcock.

Wolverine Security Forces
Unknown artist
Mural, June 2013

Events documented by photographs were often visually reinterpreted in street murals. An incident involving a veiled Egyptian woman – known as the “Blue Bra Girl” – inspired this mural. The abusive policemen are transformed into monstrous beings encouraging an examination of savagery and evil. The tribute above the painting reads, “We will never forget, oh beloved young lady.”

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.

Blue Bra Girl
Still from video, December 17, 2011

This is a still from a widely distributed video of a woman being stripped and beaten in the street by Egypt’s armed security forces. The unidentified woman was dubbed the “Blue Bra Girl.” Her plight during this intensely brutal incident caused outrage worldwide, as well as a variety of creative responses.

Video still courtesy of The Associated Press.