CREATIVE DISSENT: ARTS OF THE ARAB WORLD UPRISINGS

The Arab World uprisings inspired a wide range of creative expression. Activists, protesters and artists repeatedly adopted art forms to express opposition to incumbent governments and members of the ruling elite. Visual and performed methods of dissent appeared in the streets, where protests and sit-ins were held, and online, for both local and international viewership.

Many images of torture, violence, anger, frustration, hope and elation captured the joys and fears of revolutions whose future courses remain uncertain still today. The mediums of artistic and activist expression—including videos, photographs, painted and digital images, as well as slogans, music, and even puppets—helped mobilize individuals 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.