

The Place of Visual Art in Peace and Conflict Resolution in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

Visual art as one of the fundamental approaches to peace and reconciliation has the capacity to offer a creative and non-violent avenue to engage communities in projects of peace and reconciliation. Peace building cuts across disciplines; however, the field of visual art often receives less attention. Given the complexities of conflict and the mounting crises in the society, there is need to adopt diverse tactics that meet the challenges posed during peace building. There is little documentation of how art creates social and personal change. This paper highlights the significant role visual art plays in the arena of peace building and sustenance to improve socio-cultural community life in Nairobi, Kenya. Therefore, the place of visual art in social exposition, its ability to act as a non-threatening path for dialogue and its power in propagating peace issues in the society cannot be overemphasized. The paper provides a review of literature that deals with peace and conflict resolution in the interdisciplinary approach to peace building. In this paper, an attempt is made at reviewing some artworks that deal with peace and conflict resolution, and commentaries by some of the artists to advance art in the interdisciplinary approach to peace building. Descriptive method was used to explain the interaction between visual art and peace resolution. The main finding of this paper is that visual art can be used as a tool to raise awareness and prevent disasters, and can be implemented during conflict situations to make great impact on intervention processes. The paper concludes by calling on the relevant bodies and agencies to encourage more artworks in public spaces for better understanding on the role of visual arts as the mediator for understanding and nurturing peace.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, Exhibits, Intervention, Peace building, Peace, Visual arts.

INTRODUCTION

In conflict zones, the arts tell and interpret people's stories, heal trauma victims, mend communities, give voice to women and other marginalized groups, protest injustice, provide livelihoods, educate populations, express heritage, define identity, engage youths with alternatives to violence, and humanize the "other" (Wood, 2015).

Onoja (2016), eludes that the concept of peace is a universal quest in the hearts of many people. Individuals, corporate organizations and the world as a whole tend to strive for peaceful co-existence among each other in the face of mounting crises in the society, hence, the place of arts in social commentary cannot be overemphasized. Artists have created works which serve as statements on certain crises situations, such as wars, ravaging famine, conflicts (ethnic and

religious), and outrage against social, economic or political manipulations. The path to peace can be laced with turbulence and storms. However, in between the turmoil, peace can reign through the instrumentality of a few, and that is where art and the artists, through their work, come to play their role. They do this by drawing attention to peace issues and conflict resolution efforts in the society. Visual arts therefore have the ability to nurture people who are able to develop ethical skills, compassion, sympathy and peace in society. Although Onajo's study highlighted the role of visual art towards peace, comprehensive knowledge on the role of art in peace is lacking for reference purposes.

Halliday (2017), noted that a number of authors have argued that the arts can be used in peace building due to their therapeutic role; arts are a tool for healing, expressing and describing fears, anxieties, and other

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feelings when talking or when words fail or seem unsafe. Additionally, it has been claimed that the arts can be used to raise public awareness and to create 'safe spaces' (if only temporary) for a physical, emotional or psychological break in the cycle of violence. Such approaches can provide a 'transformative learning' experience and lead one to see, or imagine, the world through another person's perspective. The use of visual art forms can also be used to present incomplete or indirect narratives, enabling people to draw their own conclusions. In doing so, this may come across as less patronizing compared with more formal approaches to peace building. However, while the arts are asserted as powerful tools in peace building, their destructive potential – due to their ability to open underlying memories, emotions and trauma, or inspire hatred and division – must not go unnoticed. As much as a number of authors have reported on the use of arts in peace building, none of the studies are clear on the role of visual art in peace building, hence there is a lack of proper documentation from which reference can be made.

Art, with its various forms, has been recognized in facilitating peace building processes. Although art forms have been indorsed as producing results and decreasing conflicts with respect to the efforts of artists and members of the community worldwide, studies show that insignificant amount of researches acknowledge these efforts (Roam, 2015; Shank and Schirch, 2008). The intersected area between art and conflict resolution is understudied and has suffered from the lack of establishment. There is a scarcity of information regarding the number of artists and organizations that work side by side with conflict resolution activists and organizations. This scarcity is not only limited to the measure of numbers, but it extends to the modality in which these artists and peace builders work together. The literature review shows that there is little investigation regarding the role of visual art in conflict resolution. From this standpoint arises the necessity to conduct a study on the place of visual art in peace reconciliation and how the relationship can be used to benefit society.

Visual arts in conflict transformation is not only an interesting field for academic reasons, it is also an important space for the development of relationships beyond the art event itself. These relationships are an

important part of ensuring that violent conflicts are avoided in the future (Bergh and Sloboda, 2015). It should, therefore, be investigated and not merely assumed to contribute towards sustainable peace and development. This will enable researchers and practitioners to understand the various techniques and styles that can be employed on the ground and their success rate. Government and other supporters, such as international organizations and development partners, could also get more insight into the importance of visual art in peace and conflict resolution. This study will go a long way in understanding the place of art in conflict and post-conflict situations and propel various stakeholders to utilize this tool and support artists in various fields. It will also deepen the realization of the need to increase efforts in bridging community lines and increasing dialogue and cohesion among Kenyan communities. The study explores the place and role of visual art in peace and conflict resolution in Nairobi, Kenya. The sources used in the paper have traceable sources that ensure maintenance of ethical standards, and also allow for replication and follow up studies.

THEORY

In this paper, objectivism and functionalism as social theories are used to help enhance the understanding of the place of visual art in the society and in peacemaking. The theories formed the foundation for building a base of understanding the place of visual art in peace and conflict resolution.

Best (2003), notes that,

“Social theorists are people who step back and attempt to identify, outline and explain what ‘the social’ is and how it works. They invent theories about the nature of ‘the social’ and attempt to discover how people endeavor to recreate the social in their everyday lives.”

Society is subject to change in one way or the other, depending on ways in which people engage and react to each other, which explains the need for social theory and why they vary. In this paper, objectivism and functionalism, as social theories, are used to help enhance the understanding of the role of art in the society in peace and conflict resolution. The intent of this paper is therefore to understand the role that

artists play in peace and conflict resolution through the creation of a socially transformative work of art.

Objectivism Theory

The objectivist theory of knowledge recognizes the essential elements of perceiving information, which are differentiation and integration. These processes are contingent on receiving the information from a sensory factor in order to recognize the existence of that element or concept. After the information has been received, it is then governed perceptually, which is an important foundation of knowledge base on the objectivist perspective. The last stage is the conceptual, in which the information is recognized and perceived based on the individual's reflection of knowledge and experiences (Rand and Binswanger, 1990). With respect to the arts, objectivism forms the essential aspects in the perception of knowledge. Objectivism perceives the art as an indication of the level of the person's understanding as well as his contribution to the society.

The contribution to knowledge is consisted of the art effect on the person's perceptual factor in which he or she can examine their reality; especially the abstracted elements of it. Rand (1971), further mentioned that art brings man's concepts to the perceptual level of his consciousness and allows him to grasp them directly, as if they were percepts. The art facilitates the person's understanding of his surroundings; especially in terms of the metaphysical aspects. Even concepts like freedom, liberty, and coexistence that are very reciprocal and relevant to people, nonetheless, are very difficult to grasp because of their abstraction. Kumail (2017), affirms that artistic products, such as statues and paintings, help in creating a perceptual reflection to abstracted concepts and contribute to acknowledging them. Kumail (2017), argues that the development of art spontaneously affects the society and closes the gap between the efforts made in the physical science with the intention of serving humanity. Art can speak to and validate stories of pain and violence in ways that legal processes cannot. Through sensually, emotionally and cognitively transporting participants from their standard conflict embedded state, arts-based approaches stimulate participants to shift negative emotions.

Artworks offer different perspectives of looking at issues; which lead to having different feelings and emotions gained due to wars and conflicts such as fear, anxiety, depression and hopelessness. Artists, through their artworks, are able to tease these feelings and thoughts, which are meant to spread hope and lead people to see a bright future through objectivism perspective. The artworks promote a peace process and a source of resilience needed in the society.

Functionalism Theory

The functionalist theory sees society as an organism with different parts that are needed to carry out necessary functions. Though these parts are distinct, they however cannot function alone without the other parts. Thus, a malfunctioning in any of the parts will invariably affect the smooth functioning (Durkheim, 1897). The underlying assumption of this theoretical perspective is that the society is made up of different but interconnected units that function together in order to have stability, which is needed for the survival of the society.

Another thinker who was known to assist functionalism is Talcott Parsons. Parsons was interested in understanding the social system, so he categorized the functional requirements of the system, as well as its classification. Parsons thought of individuals within the society as actors who engage with each other based on social and cultural constructed values (Best, 2003).

The art fits with this theory in terms of its role in peace and reconciliation that bring stability to the society. Based on the literature suggestion, the art forms a necessary gear within this system which helps in assisting and assessing the function of the society. It brings a social, economic, and political stability to the society. Functionalism is interested in studying the elements that add to the society's strength and support. In the case of art, it is not only a factor that forms a huge part in the culture and tradition of the society, it is also a contribution factor for education, science and overall development of the society.

Among all diverse cultures of the world, art has always sought spiritual and mental affairs, and has opened up

highways in these fields. Peace and seeking peace are two ways to seek the truth opened up by human art for humankind. Thus, the concept of peace has always needed art for staying on the road to the truth. In fact, several techniques are utilized for teaching and promoting peace, one of which is visual art whose aim is to transmit peace or violence in different ways. Art plays a role in healing the effects of violence on the individual and unifying divisions and building peace in a greater community. The practice of art rewires the brain to move from “difference as danger” to “difference as richness”. As the world increases in complexity, art has an increasingly vital role to play to set the stage where peace is possible and violence is prevented.

Baily (2017), observes that, in Mexico, public murals have long been used as a non-violent means of protest. The review found that arts have a particular ability to engage people in a way that resonates with their local society. Arts interventions have broad appeal and can be applied flexibly, so they are ‘well placed to engage people through the development of a stronger sense of place, increasing individual confidence, and facilitating understanding’. Art is therefore a precious resource for peace and must be recognized as such. However, the ability of the arts to transform conflict in and of themselves must not be overstated. Indeed, they can even be exploited to pursue violent and exclusionary agendas.

Marshall (2014), in an article on ‘Art as Peace Building’ shows that art educators can “critique” senseless violent mistreatment, exclusion, intimidation, bullying, violation, abuse, corruption, murder and war by unleashing the power of students’ creativity. Marshall (2014), discusses how art is preventative medicine with the power to transform the cycle of violence. The author focuses on three realms: (i) art healing the effects of violence on the individual; (ii) art unifying divisions within a school; and (iii) art for building peace in a greater community. The practice of art actually rewires the brain to move from “difference as danger” to “difference as richness”. As the world increases in complexity, the arts have an increasingly vital role to play to set the stage where peace is possible and violence is prevented. It can therefore be said that artistic productivity is a core area in peace and conflict resolution. Similarly, Shbeta, Ghaleb,

Milikovski and Indyke (2015), state that art and dialogue are powerful mediums that can transform hearts and minds, even those of supposed enemies. The potency of art-based peace building and conflict resolution in transforming the thought pattern of individuals is propagated in this statement. Schilling (2012), observes that the history of humankind has been significantly shaped by love and conflicts, both of which regulate human experiences in a cycle of compassion and bitterness. Artists who produce and exhibit artworks have to ensure that their work is relevant in the society for the public to appreciate and interact with, either as an object of worship (as seen in some societies) or provoking emotional responses.

Hunter and Page (2014), focused on art-based peace building approaches by emphasizing on the creativity aspects that intended to change the course of violence and conflicts. Their study was conducted to identify how the arts are valued and evaluated and whether they are appropriate and benefiting the society. Their findings pointed out that there is a gap between policy and practice when it comes to understanding and valuing the complexity and potential of the arts in international development and peace building. This study emphasized the underestimation of the arts and their influence in peacemaking and ability in growing globally. Art has been known for its functionality in terms of being a medium of social exchange and interaction. Moreover, it has numerous possibilities that can be implemented as a practice and measure of peace building (Hunter and Page, 2014). Kumail (2017), affirms that the literature review shows that there is a lack of investigation regarding the relationship between conflict resolution and visual art. Shank and Schirch (2008), state clearly that there is very little solid theory, research, or evaluation of arts-based peace building. Moreover, art-based peace building has a great potential in facilitating conflict resolution.

Marshall (2014), mentions that art is in essence healing: it can turn sadness into a shared experience. Creative art transforms the destructive forces into constructive creativity. Pain, grief, loss, alienation and confusion get handled, shaped, painted, sculpted, released, communicated and transformed into beauty. For the artists, creativity is a powerful way for the community to speak out. Simic (2016),

corroborates by arguing that while art cannot replace formal judicial mechanisms or material reparation, grassroots artistic initiatives may offer significant and distinctive reparative contributions to transitional justice processes. Simic (2016), believes that art leaves space for the “other” – the witness of the art – to listen, learn, reflect and acknowledge. Simic (2016), asserts that art can speak to, and validate stories of pain and violence in ways that legal processes, with their specialized legal terms and uncommon language, cannot. Art can be the space for the healing that legal processes are unable to provide.

Kumail (2017), argues that artworks give reason to look at things from a different perspective; which leads to having different feelings and emotions. The emotions gained due to wars and conflicts are fear, anxiety, depression and hopelessness. Under these conflicts, artist use artworks to tease these feelings and thoughts, which are different depending on people’s perspectives on the artworks, which are not meant to lead viewers to accept wars and conflicts, but are intended to; spread hope, see a bright future and discuss the war in comic and sarcastic ways sometimes. Onoja (2016), affirms that visual art is a great and indispensable tool in peace and conflict resolution parlance. The works displayed in exhibitions, public spaces (murals and installations arts), park sculptures and other forms of visual arts expressions have and are helping in peace building in Nigeria (Onoja, 2016). Interactions with exhibits and artists can also aid in the understanding of visual symbols, icons and insignias of peace and conflict resolution.

Kibera Walls for Peace provided an opportunity for young people and the community to experience forms of art that may rarely be afforded to them, and as such it generated an element of excitement and intrigue, which helped spread the messages of the murals. These approaches contributed to generating public awareness, sympathy or consciousness to an array of issues chosen by the participants. By engaging in a joint painting, art offers the artists an opportunity to explore, celebrate, and leverage differences through a creatively and artistically collaborative exercise, where issues such as the color scheme of a joint painting can provide a positive experience, which has the potential to create trust and empathy. The creation of a joint piece of art illustrates the possibility of cooperation

on larger issues.

Based on the examples provided in the literature, arts help in resolving conflicts and also assist community members to overcome their problems and recover from past experiences. Art can be the space for healing and has the ability to target conflicts in society before they escalate. It can therefore be said that visual art is a great and indispensable tool in peace and conflict resolution parlance. Visual art is able to fundamentally change the discourse around conflict and peace.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a qualitative research that involved locating and identifying sources that provide factual information or personal opinion on the research question. The artworks studied in this paper show how artists use art in spreading peaceful messages, and for maintaining peace and creating social change. A case study research design was employed for an in-depth study of the research problem since there are limited academic studies on the phenomenon. The aim of the study was to investigate art and its humanistic position and place in peace building in society in the presence of conflict. Creswell (2009), identified that qualitative is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Content analysis was applied in data analysis. Visual analysis of artworks was applied to give overview to the role of visual art and its relationship to peace in Nairobi. The analytic approach makes it possible to collect detailed information from visual artworks, whose method provides a framework to compare, analyze and review, in a systematic way, large quantities of data from visual productions. Applying this analytic approach to visual art created in museums and informal learning settings can yield insights into artworks, their creators, and nuanced changes in creative production over time (Banks, 2001). In his investigations, Banks (2001), considered subject matter and specific content in data analysis used to inform social and anthropological research.

The geographical focus for this study is Nairobi, Kenya. Nairobi is estimated to makeup close to 9%

of Kenya's population – with those aged under 35 constituting 78% of citizens (NCPD, 2017). The city's growth is set to continue and by around 2030, Nairobi can be expected to contain more than 6 million people (World Bank, 2016). The city's significant size is partly why it was chosen as the site of this study. Nairobi is three times larger than Mombasa, and considerably bigger than the smaller cities of Nakuru, Kisumu and Eldoret. Nairobi is also the focal point of politics in the country (Maupeu, 2010). A lot of political unrest was reported in Nairobi, especially among the youth in slum dwelling communities. Hence, the specific focus of Kibera, a major informal slum settlement in Nairobi.

Nairobi is the epicentre for contemporary art in Kenya (and to a large extent the region), offering artists great opportunities (Jaroljmek, 2015). This is because Nairobi's numerous art spaces and agents involved in enabling art's production, distribution and reception, are considerably more established than anywhere else in the country. Nairobi is socially, ethnically, racially, and culturally cosmopolitan (Charton-Bigot and Rodriguez-Torres, 2010). Evidently then, together these characteristics point to a distinctiveness of Nairobi, which makes it a compelling area for studying the role of art in peace building and reconciliation across various groups of people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the characteristics dominating artistic activities is its interactive nature. This is a vital element in promotion of peace. People can be made to reach a new outlook about visual art and also find themselves responsible agents for changing and reconstructing the world around them. Visual art provides different methods for revolutionizing the mind. Visual art acts as the mediator for nurturing peace and understanding.

Artists create a true reflection of the society through graphics, realistic and abstract drawings, sculptures and paintings. Artists express their feelings on certain matters in their works, and relate the same through their various exhibits. One such artist is Picasso. Picasso's *Guernica* painting of the devastation of war is a good example of artist's feelings and reaction to conflict situations, and how such can be addressed

through artistic media (**Figure 1**) to create a voice on the need for peace and reconciliation through dialogue in order to avoid the horrid and devastating consequences of conflicts and wars. Pablo Picasso used his skills to express his fears of the destructive power of war long before there was conflict resolution studies. This observation concurs with Shbeta, Ghaleb, Milikovski and Indyke (2015), who stated that art and dialogue are powerful mediums that can transform hearts and minds, even those of supposed enemies. Artists are able to tease these feelings and thoughts which are meant to spread hope and to see a bright future through objectivism perspective. From the findings, it emerges that visual art has always been used as a tool to bring peace even before conflict resolution studies was introduced, an indication of the important role art plays in peace reconciliation.

Figure 2 depicts the devastations of war in the battle at Medina del Rio Seco in Spain. (The painting is allegorical and symbolic of peace in the face of war). The white shirt of the figure with upraised "V" shaped arms, which is the most important figure in the composition, is also symbolic of peace, which was the artist's unique style of driving home the message of peace. The use of repeated shapes and axis lines create a sense of movement. The price of peace is however costly; even in death, the figure in the painting still maintained the same pose, drenched in blood.

Along with Picasso's *Guernica*, Goya's *Third of May* remains one of the most chilling images ever created of the atrocities of war, and it is difficult to imagine how much more powerful it must have been in the pre-photographic era, before people were bombarded with images of warfare in the media. A powerful anti-war statement, Goya is not only criticizing the nations that wage war on one another, but is also admonishing the viewers for being complicit in acts of violence, which occur not between abstract entities like "countries," but between human beings standing a few feet away from one another (Zappella, 2015).

Figure 3 is an artwork by Artist-Activist Judy Baca. The artist generated political figurative art in the form of the world's longest mural, *Great Wall of Los Angeles* (Arnason, 2003). The picture depicts a mother and children in distress, walking in a bare, dusty field. The



FIGURE 1
Guernica, Pablo Picasso's oil on canvas (1937)
Source: Shabi 2013



FIGURE 2
Third of May, Francisco Goya's oil on canvas (1808)
Source: Zappella 2015

facial expressions vividly captured a somber mood of fear and anxiety. Lines of hanging wash form a visual connection between the two sections. Simic (2016), reported that the photo exhibitions revealed wartime sexual violence, and argued that art cannot replace formal judicial mechanisms or material reparation; grassroots artistic initiatives may offer significant and distinctive reparative contributions to transitional justice processes. Art leaves space for the “other” – the witness of the art – to listen, learn, reflect and acknowledge. Artists instill in their paintings a unique aura of expressiveness, in this case, lines are used for effective portrayal of the scene. This expressiveness is what resonates back and forth with the observers.

Figure 4 shows artwork done by Kenyan local artists, namely - Bankslave, Swift 9 and Uhuru B. The graffiti artists jointly painted a train and ten carriages which run through Kibera, Kenya. The graffiti carried phrases, such as *Amani*, which is a Swahili word meaning peace, ‘down with tribalism, down with prejudice, up with peace’, as well as images of people such as Wangari Maathai (one of Kenya’s peace advocates), and Martin Luther King Jr. Bankslave, a graffiti artist from Kibera, believed that graffiti was an important medium to use as it has the power to resonate and ‘speak’ with youth from Kibera and the rest of Nairobi (Halliday, 2017). One of the most important roles of art in post-conflict societies is its ability to restore victims’ capacities to

participate in reconciliation processes, access their emotions and begin their individual healing processes (Naidu-Silverman, 2015). Involving youth artists in the project sent a strong message of reconciliation to other youth to desist from violence and embrace peace.

Maasai Mbili is a group of artists based in Kibera, Kenya. The 2007 general elections that resulted to violence in Kibera, and other parts of the country, left many parts in ruins. The artists decided to make a temporary museum out of the ruins in Kibera in order to bring back harmony to the area, but also to offer a space where children could come and express themselves and their emotions through painting (**Figure 5**). Children were given art materials and encouraged to draw what was on their mind. The project used the process of creating paintings as a form of healing; an observation shared by Marshall (2014), that art is in essence healing; it can turn sadness into a shared experience. People can heal and be reconciled after a certain aspect of conflict. Artists are making efforts in all aspects of conflict resolution by finding a suitable place for the art to take place.

Election violence of 2007-2008 in Kenya became the source of motivation for Solo 7’s peace activism in the slums of Kibera in Nairobi. Solo’s works were depicted on roads, walls, gates, electricity poles, buildings and



FIGURE 3
Great Wall of Los Angeles, 1976-83 of Dustbowl refugees by Judy Baca
Source: Arnason 2003



FIGURE 4
Kibera Walls for Peace by Bankslove, Swift 9 and Uhuru B
 Source: Halliday 2017



FIGURE 5
 Painting the Ruins, Kibera, Maasai Mbili, Kenya
 Source: Halliday 2017

fences (**Figure 6**). Hundreds of, if not more, messages filled Kibera's 'public spaces' and created a discourse of peace during a period when political negotiations in Kenya during elections of 2007-2008 had ended in failure. According to the artist, the use of short and clear visual slogans were powerful because they "speak louder than our voices" and have a persuasive quality, in that, they force people to stop and think before acting. The work of Solo 7 shows that with minimal resources, the activism of an individual can have considerable effects in creating a peace

dialogue through peace slogans (<http://africanah.org/peacebuilding-through-art/>). The need for peace is essential for human being's existence. The moment an artist witnesses a difficulty in their society, they start to search for answers to solve the issue. It comes from the nature that the artist is an observer and has a high ability to examine social patterns. The obligation to engage in artistic production comes from the understanding that the individual is the community he belongs to, the artist works are extensions of his being.

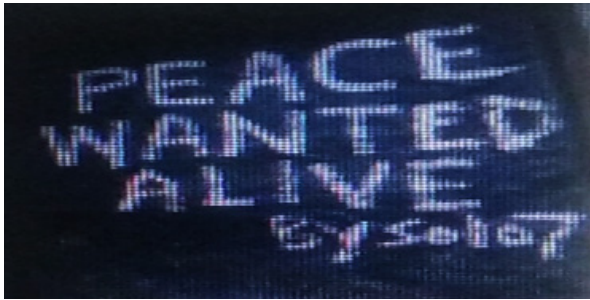


FIGURE 6

Peace Wanted Alive by Solo 7

Source: Halliday 2017

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed how artists used their skills to express their fears of the destructive power of war, long before conflict resolution studies was put in place. The artworks reviewed show how the artists produce works that seek not only to memorialize, but also to provoke and to heal, thus the healing nature of art in the midst of violence and devastation cannot be underestimated. Visual arts contribute to the healing of trauma on an individual level, and also aid the reconstruction of society through providing a medium of reconciliation. The study revealed that visual arts also enable concrete envisioning of a better future, and have the ability to target a conflict before it escalates.

Analysis revealed that the use of artworks as peace building tools can successfully promote an increased tolerance and appreciation of others. The study revealed the use of short, clear but powerful visual slogans which “speak louder than voices” and have a persuasive quality, in that they force people to stop and think before acting. With minimal resources, artists can still have considerable effects in creating a peace dialogue through peace slogans; making art a suitable medium of reconciliation, without incurring much expenses. These initiatives taken by artists in the pursuit of social change and peace should be encouraged and improved with communication and greater support across the field. Although artists are showing a great effort in creating social change, their work will be more effective if combined with other practitioners for sufficient outcomes. Effort needs to be concentrated in merging artists and

conflict resolution practitioners, especially in difficult cases, in order to have satisfactory outcomes. This body of research might be interesting to artists and humanitarians who are working in crisis field, conflict resolution developers, explorers in alternative peace-building approaches, human rights activists and organizations, and experts who are interested in maintaining peace and restoring historical reserves and cultural values, as well as art-based researchers.

There is a gap between policy and practice when it comes to understanding and valuing the complexity and potential of visual art in peace building. This study emphasized the underestimation of visual art and its influence in peacemaking. While the existence of art works demonstrates the use of creativity for peace building, there is little documentation about how art actively creates peaceful environments. The literature on visual art as a tool to peace making and evidence of artists’ efforts in the society is inadequate. There is, therefore, the need for researchers and conflict resolution practitioners to further look into visual art as a tool to peace building and harness its full potential. Artists should be encouraged to continue to spread peaceful coexistence through their work, and artists should not be engaged only when there is conflict.

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