

# The Evocative Role of Arts in Social Movements: A Digital Illustration of Visual Imageries Emblematising Nigerian Endsars Protests

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Afeez Babatunde Siyanbola, Ph.D

Festus O. Uzzi, Ph.D

Olayinka Adedola Adeyemi, Ph.D

Department of Fine and Applied Arts,  
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State

## Abstract

This paper enunciates the ideals that inspired the Endsars campaign movement. The paper delved into circumstances that lead to the social revolution which is aimed at ending the incessant police brutality that pervade the Nigerian nation. The importance of social change as a reflection of a dynamic society was discussed in the study. Correction of faulty and dysfunction social structures are midwifed through social actions. The paper articulates the role of arts in galvanizing and historicizing social movements across societies to construct an image of social change. Hence, digital illustration of iconic visual imageries of the of the Nigerian endsars movement were created. The research design of the study was experimental and narrative. Five (5) images were selected and transformed into digital illustration. Findings revealed that digital illustration creates a different visual rendition of the photographic images, the digital transformation does not erode the symbolic role of the visuals. Digital imageries set an evocative emotional tone for the social cause and preserve the spirit.

**Keywords:** Endsars, Social change, Illustration, Protests, Artworks

## Introduction

Civil protests are organized to show public discontentment with perceived anomalies in the society. Protests raises public awareness thereby bringing the attention of the concerned authorities to issues affecting the populace. The Endsars protest across Nigeria was a grass-root online youth movement which transformed into series of nationwide protests across Nigeria. Endsars is a slogan demanding the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the infamous Unit of the Nigerian Police Force by government. The protest was informed by government long-term insensitivity to the plight of the youths who were being brutalized, maimed and killed by the dreaded police unit. Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) officers habitually profile youths mostly males, who are subjected to harassment based on their appearance and lifestyles. This arm of the police is also synonymous with indiscriminate mounting of illegal roadblocks to extort motorists and other road users. Nigerians are arrested without any official warrant, brutalized in detention and the relatives of the arrested individuals are extorted while seeking the release of their loved ones. The “#ENDSARS” Hashtag emanated from a 2017 Twitter campaign (Salaudeen 2017, online) when a petition was submitted to the Nigeria National Assembly requesting the outlawing of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad Unit by the Government. However, the Nigerian government did not yield to the clamour of her citizens on this issue while the systemic entrenched injustices continue unabated. However, the government could not turn a blind eye to the recent endsars protests because it was mobilized and coordinated by activists, celebrities and influencers with large followers. The protests gained international attention, foreign celebrities endorsed the movement, Nigerians based abroad also organized protests identifying with the protesters at home. Apparently, there were semblance of similarities between the endsars protests and Black Lives Matters Movement in the United States. Both protests were triggered by police impunity and excessive use of force on civilians. Endsars protests was also a metaphor for mass discontent to bad governance and endemic corruption evident in the different strata of the Nigerian society. Therefore, it is necessary to historicize actions emblemize the endsars protests to keep memories of social resistance alive in the minds people.

## Social Change

Change is an essential aspect of human lives, evident in the different stages of human physical development and social system. Social systems across societies are reformed through social change. Correction of faulty and dysfunction social structures are midwifed through social change.

Dunfee T. S (Dunfee 2019) posited that sociologists defined social change as an alteration in human interactions and relationships aimed at transforming socio-cultural institutions. According to Anele (Anele 1999, 22) ‘social change is the alterations in the pattern of social organization of specific groups within a society or even of the society itself’. Social change occurs when societal problems are identified and brought to the limelight. Social actions are mobilized to facilitate an improvement in the quality of life of groups or communities and to understand how the world as perceived in the broader context to build confidence through collective actions. Often times, public attempts at promoting new narratives and challenge negative social representations are met by indifference or resentment by those in positions of power and influence (Murray 2012, 1-19). Sandra Jovchelovitch (Jovchelovitch 2007, 35) posited that there is an emancipatory potential embedded in the task of recognizing the validity of a community’s knowledge and engaging in critical dialogue on the issue. The process of social change starts with understanding the cause, the impact of prevailing situation on the society and ways of addressing the social challenges. Freire, P. (Freire 1972, 3) philosophy emphasized that “to surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity”. The essence of social actions is to trigger a social transformation anchored on salvaging humanity from different forms of indignations which are often ignored.

### **Social Media and Social Movements**

Social media platforms are viable tool of effective communication in the public sphere. Social media has birthed the era of digital activism. The digital platforms are essential communication media equipped with the ability to advance ideas, promote views and shape opinions that connect people to their society. Social media networks have displaced conventional mobilization structures, it is the new organizing tool for social movements across the world. (Obaid Hassan 2020, Online) posited that social media has two major influence on social movements; it quickens the recruitment, mobilization, communication and dissemination of information as well as to expand spaces of mobilization which were not present in traditional mobilization techniques (Eltantawy & Wiest 2011, 1209-1210), it also enables the process of organizing virtual meetings and interaction amongst members which were hitherto conveyed physically. Such characteristics required social movements to spend more time and exert more effort to organize, while their impact was restricted by limited mobility across physical spaces (Earl & Kimport, 2013).

Communication on social platforms are devoid of influence from the hierarchical authorities. The revolutionary impact of modern communication technologies influenced the social movements across the globe, such as “Arab Spring”, “Occupy Wall Street”, “Shahbag movement” and the “Endsars Campaign”. These social movements were catalyzed by the photographic images of social events and happenings posted online.

### Art appreciation and visual thinking

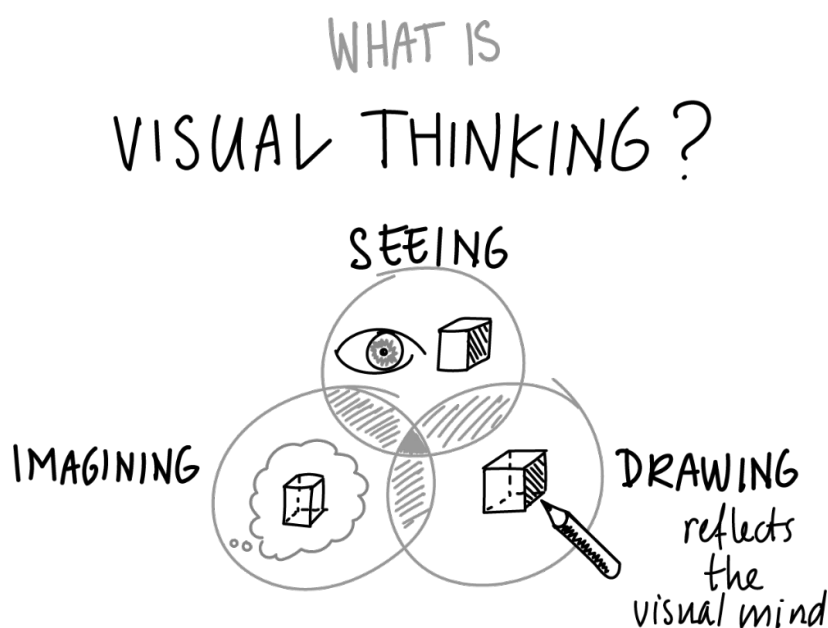


Figure 1: Visual Thinking (source: kimsvandenberg, Online)

Art appreciation explores visual art forms and their cultural connections. It involves a brief study of art history and in-depth studies of the elements, media, and methods used in creative processes and thought (Canvas Network 2017, Online). Appreciating art requires a degree of skill and an inherent interest towards artwork (Denisesanger 2017, Online). The flair to recognize the intricacies gives a vantage position to judge artwork and acknowledge the finer points that do not meet the eyes. Art has a subtle language one that is more felt rather than seen or heard (Denisesanger 2017, Online). Appreciating art involves developing detail sensibilities when assessing artworks by understanding its distinctiveness. This entails acknowledging the artwork style, techniques, media used and the essence or depiction. Art appreciation sharpens the mind probing art works beyond the impenetrable. Hardt M, (Hard 2005, Online) posited that Aristotle tried to define the relation between the artist, the artwork and the art consumer. He understood sensual perception as the interaction between order, balance and limitation. Appreciation of modern art is enshrined in the ideology of “Natural Synthesis”. Ndubuisi C.

(Ndubuisi 2017, 6) noted that the ideology preaches the adoption of experiences in modernity. Visual thinking is the phenomenon of thinking through visual processing (Deza & Deza 2009, 2). Visual thinking is closely related to concepts like non-linear thinking and holistic thinking, and must be seen in contrast with written text, which is mainly linear, just like our stream of consciousness/mind chatter is one endless linear stream (Jakobsen 2016, Online). Visual thinking encapsulates the thoughts and idea behind the creation of an artwork. Rudolf Arheim in his book titled “Visual Thinking” clarifies the essence of visual thinking in the following:

*“The productive or generative idea was that the meaning of life and the world could be perceived in the patterns, shapes, and colours of the world. Therefore, we have to study those patterns and discover what they mean. Artwork is visual thinking and a means of expression, not just putting shapes and colours together that look appealing. Art is a way to help people understand the world, and a way to see how the world changes through their mind.”* (Rudolf 1969, 5)

Visual thinking in the context of Nigerian arts and crafts is the perception, cultural and visual interpretation of the works. For instance, the choice of colour in the Nigerian fashion attires and accessories across cultures are mostly informed by the prevailing situations. In the southern part of Nigeria, black colour is associated with mourning although in recent times mourners prefer to wear white outfits. An understanding of art from the perspective of artist visual thinking assists in appreciating the value of artworks as an artistic vision and reality. The artist seeks to initiate social change when he applies visual artistic thinking to community’s political, economic and moral life. Such influences are unquantifiable and impactful when translated into an artistic work. Apparently, the manifestation of artistic thinking draw attention to the need for change can be a purposeful medium of raising consciousness of a society’s challenges which are damaging to social well-being. Although there are artists who are focus solely on creating art works for aesthetic sake, while voluntary or involuntarily to reinforce existing social order. For instance, the massivel sculptures, temples and tomb in ancient Egypt depicts the rulling Pharaohs. These sculptural and architectural works represent permanence, stability, values thought to be necessary in sustenance of Egyptian.

### **Digital Illustration**

Illustrations are visual interpretation of an idea or concept. They are picturesque element or aesthetic property of visual designs that are easily processed and interpreted (Unuigbo 2002, 20)

Digital illustration involves the utilization of digital tools to create visual concepts using design software's with interfaces enabled by pointing devices such as mouse or graphics tablet. (Brower & Everett 2010, 13) posited that digital illustration uses a combination of illustration software and image editing software to create computer art. The minimalistic rendering of Digital illustrations sparks imaginations with endless possibilities which is a fundamental ingredient that stimulates social change as compared to photographs. Simplicity and expressiveness of digital illustration make it a potent tool of galvanizing social movements. Digital illustration is the creation of new art with digital tools. Digital illustration is quite different from computer generated arts that are produced with the aid of mathematical models embedded in the computer. Digital images are created from scratch or manipulated from an original construction. Artists either transfer drawings that are created on paper to the computer through scanning or created directly on digital canvas or pad. The visual idea is captured digitally and transferred into the digital illustration application. Illustration has some advantages over photography. Illustrators can create a person or character who never existed, bring a dead person back to life or invent a fictional character. Digital manipulation of photographs makes the image more fascinating and add more fun to audience perception of the image. Digital images are simple and easy to understand. Digital illustrations are rendered in in different conceptual styles. (Hoare 2020, Online) highlights the different styles of digital in the following:

#### Realism

This is a form of digital illustration that creatively blends traditional realism seamlessly into digital art works relying on the skillful interplay between light and shades. Realism is realistic artwork precisely illustrates characters, perspectives and detail It creates a convincing representation of reality in digital expression. Contemporary digital realism depicts people, landscape, geography, still life that shows the artist experiences. Realist illustrations are canvas. However, canvas have been replaced digitally with the workspace of the design applications.

#### Vector

Vector illustrations are computer graphics that are defined by points, lines, curves, and shapes that are based on mathematical values. The illustrations are created with geometric constructs which form the building blocks of the digital artworks. Vector illustration typically have flat designs and colours.

## Bitmap

Bitmap illustrations are created from rows of different coloured pixels that combines to form an image. Photographic images are basically in bitmap form. Images are either scanned or transferred from an image capturing device and stylized or reworked on image editing computer application to create an illustration.

## Anime

Anime is a style of illustration used for animation that emanated from Japan. Creators of Anime illustration utilize colourful images, diverse art styles, weird hair and hyped visual effects. Anime comic books are called manga. Anime is based on video games and manga.

## Caricatures

Caricatures illustration style are rendered image in a simplified or exaggerated form. The images can either be large in or possess an over bloated sized head. In literature, a caricature is a description of a person using exaggeration of some characteristics and oversimplification of others.

## Cartoon

Cartoons convey a sense of fun and enjoyment to the audience. Cartoons drawings are typically popular with children's books and picture books. There are hundreds of different non-realistic cartoon styles. Children's books are a great way to bring ideas to life with pictures. Some children's books consist of nothing but pictures. The visual images help children learn and understand the words of the story.

## Comics

Comics are illustrations that expresses narrative which are created in series. The series are designed with brief narrative and dialogue basically enveloped in speech balloons. Comics can be funny, dark or even weird.

## Commercial Art

Commercial arts are utilized in promoting products, services and ideas. The primary objective is to enhance sales and awareness. Artists design commercial art for logos, packaging, billboards and magazines. Illustrators design images for mass-production to promote product sale and improve visibility.

## Fantasy

Fantasy art is primarily used in fantasy books, book covers, games and movies. Fantasy art can portray gods, dragons, demons and magic. Fantasy artwork is often realistic and painterly.

## Fashion

Fashion illustration involves the communication of fashion ideas in a visual form. It entails the drawing of clothes and accessories for commercial use in the fashion industry. It is mainly used by fashion designers to preview and visualize their ideas. Fashion illustration is also used for advertising and in fashion magazines as part of an editorial feature.

## Fine art

Fine art is primarily created to express yourself rather than for commercial or practical purposes. Fine art involves creative expression and it may not have broad appeal or traditional beauty. It might convey an idea or an emotion.

## Line art

Line art is typically a black and white drawing with little or no solid areas, colour or background. Line art can be used by itself or in combination with other coloured images. You can find examples of line art in comic books and literature. Here are some examples:



## Literature Review

### Protest Art

Art awakens the consciousness of the public to issues affecting the society. Artistic techniques and forms often respond to socio-political events and situations across cultures and epochs. Art provides a subtle medium that facilitate a convergence of ideas from people with diverse mindsets. Historically, arts have been influential in enabling and downplaying social action and change. (Murray 2012, 1 - 19) classified the social role of arts into being anesthetic or aesthetics. He further argued that by anesthetics, art can sedate reasoning and weaken the urge to question social order. Conversely, the aesthetic nature of art elicits concerns with increasing awareness. Art attracts attention to issues often ignored in encouraging a conscious and sub-conscious assessment. The function of arts in social movement includes: encouraging social change, empowering and deepening commitment, informing the larger society about social issues, harmonizing social activists within movement, inform internally to express or reinforce values and ideas, inform externally as a more effective way of communicating movement ideals to the populace (Milbrandt Melody 2010, 1-10). Pinochet's Chile explained that art is central to social movements in attracting resources, communicating information about the movements and serve as a symbol of coherent identities for members of a social movement (Adams Jacqueline 2002, 21-56)

The human mind is intensely vulnerable to the persuasive power of images. The mind is intensely influenced by what it sees and, if the eye is trained from the days of childhood to the contemplation and understanding of beauty, harmony and just arrangement in line and color, the tastes, habits and character will be insensibly trained to follow a similar law of beauty, harmony and just arrangement in the life of the adult." (Aurobindo 2005). In other words, if you understand how to see beauty in your physical surroundings, then you are also likely to know how to detect the more beautiful decisions in life situations.

History has shown that the early empires were conquered and sustained through specifically crafted visual communication strategies. (Spivey 2005, 7) explained how first empire in the world Persepolis was actualized and sustained under the influence of art in the following:

*"Darius, the emperor, used pictures to communicate with the people who lived in the lands he conquered. Even if they did not speak the same language, they were impressed with the*

*idea of Darius's power by the narratives that ornately decorated Persepolis, which included pictures of diverse peoples giving Darius tribute. Coins were also utilized, for their surfaces could transmit an icon of Darius which was thereby carried throughout the empire to ensure that all subjects were exposed to the logo that symbolized his unified power."*

Successive empires were built with the effective control and subvert the human mind in whipping support for the government. The government create visuals that transmitting ideas which are targeted at the populace to achieve a social order. In the USSR, artists were strictly delegated to produce work in specific styles and with specific subject matter, all of which was to the unfaltering glorification of the state (Wicox 2009, 1-91). Nazism in Germany was galvanized by massive propaganda campaign in which visual images were employed to spread political related misinformation. Fascist regimes strive to influence the work of artists living in their domain to achieve socio-political stabilization in the society.

Historically arts had functioned as a means immortalizing people, places, and events. Artists create a visual record of life experiences commemorating the memorable and challenging social injustices, such as slavery and abuses, in time (Freche). Art is a tool for social change that raises consciousness. In contemporary time arts played a key role in social movements across the globe, addressing issues such as bad governance, terrorism, immigration, sexism, human trafficking and gun violence. Oakland-based dancers Jenay Anolin and Samara Atkins infuse their love for street dance with a social mission: to challenge what they see as the objectification of women in the genre. Art communicate the underbellies of social issues and political situations to instigate a paradigm shift that nurtures social change. Artists strive to interrogate and confront prevailing social order through expressly their works. Harrington, M., a writer and activist published a compelling book in 1962 that explicitly revealed the extreme poverty prevailing in some parts of United states oblivious to Americans inclusive of government. The book titled "The other America" was epochal, it caught the attention of the whole country including President John Kennedy. Often, arts critique and conflict politics (Isserman 2020). Artists invent, tell, and retell histories, autobiographical, that attempt to portray historic stereotypes or assumptions shaping collective memory and identity (Desai & Hamlin 2010). Social protest art emerged from the period surrounding the French Revolution. Curtis Carter (Curtis 2009, 1-21) in the following explained the role of some notable artists whose works crystallized the French Revolution in the following:

*“Among the artists active during the period used art to advance social change was the Neo-classical artist Jacques Louis David (1748-1825). His paintings, The Oath of Horati, 1785 (Paris, The Louvre) and The Oath of the Tennis Court, 1791 (Paris, The Louvre) complement the writings of philosophers such as Denis Diderot in advancing the cause of revolution. Diderot’s art was an important force in stirring the revolutionary fervor of patriotism in support of fighting for change from monarchy to a people-centered nation.”*

Brukova (Brukova 2012, 8) posited that the European Union member states were miffed by the Czech government commissioned sculptural work of Czech sculptor David Černý’s Entropa, for the stereotypical representation of European countries. Czech Republic received several backlashes for the artwork, her ambassador was summoned by the Bulgaria because the sculptural work depicted Bulgaria as a collection of squat toilets (Brukova 2012, 8). “[Art] can be created as a bridge among people, communities and countries. Art changes the society, it influences thinking, impacting values and illustrate experiences of a particular period in time. Arts often respond to protests conceptually. Protest arts are creative works produced by artists and activists to symbolize a movement. It is a traditional means of communication, utilized by a cross section of collectives and the state to inform and persuade citizens. Protest arts entails theater performance, graffiti, site installation, graffiti and other visual arts genres. Some professionally trained artists specialize in protest art, they have extensive knowledge. Activist art signifies and comprises aesthetic, sociopolitical, and technological developments that consistently challenge and confound traditional boundaries and hierarchies of culture as represented by those in power. Self-expression is inherent, but in effect it is often experienced as a privilege, because not everyone can access the resources that are needed to use their voice in their chosen way. Artists do work as community organizers in providing access to visual creation as a medium of expression and self-representation for the oppressed and under-represented. When this takes the form of a group project, it also assists in transforming communities by inviting people into dialogue and helping people develop the skills that are needed to work together. Art supports social movements to communicate with the larger society and immediate environment. For instance, religious songs in the Civil Rights Movement was a medium of communications that bridges the gap between the students and the other, less-educated blacks, and with outsiders (Eyerman and Jamison 1998). Art can be the venue of oppositional voice and convey meanings and values which imperceptibly lead to the erosion of the regime (Wicke 1992).

Sociologist Jacqueline Adams argued that protest art aid the communication of coherent identity and reinforce commitment to the cause (Jacqueline 2009). Arts triggers social consciousness and creates emotional attachment to a social cause. American artist Keith Haring's created representative characters in sexualized circumstances in the 1980s to raise grassroots' awareness on safe sex and AIDS awareness being a response to government slow response to the AIDS crisis in American. The artist created a graffiti-esque pop art memorial Quilt on New York city's subway displaying the victims' names (Campbell 2020, Online). Mexican artist Teresa Margolles brought the perceived complicity of the West in the war against the Drug cartels in South America that led to violent deaths of young victims to the public glare through her artworks (Power 2016, Online). Teresa Margolles utilized materials saturated with blood and drugs sourced from cartel related execution sites in Northern Mexico to create flags displayed alongside European Union Flag and Venice city flag in display at the Mexican Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. During social unrest, arts provides a medium of instilling confidence, calmness and steely determination that encourage people to sustain the movement. (Power 2016, Online) argued that Egyptian protesters in 2011 sustained the Arab Spring protest by placing empty hooded top, running shoes, protective glasses, a saucepan lid and a rose to symbolize peace. Artistic expressions can be a subtle medium of challenging punitive and constraining government policies. Ai Weiwei's photographic and sculptural works rebelled against the Chinese government censorship that disregard the citizen's freedom of expression (Campbell 2020, Online). Ai Weiwei photograph himself flipping off iconic monuments of power in his study of perspective series, he also mounted massive sculptural installations that elicit conversations on issues of power abuses and other societal restrictions prevalent in China. Protest arts galvanize people to deepening social interconnectedness and interrogate social conditions to construct an image of social change and belongingness. Artists created an anti-alcoholism mural at the Indian reservation in northern Cheyenne (Ferrer 2009, 8). Viewers were emotionally provoked to consider a change in their habits of excessive consumption of alcohol. Art educates and create empathy that result into social change. Baltimore community activists create a large cardboard recreational center as part of their protest of the city's closure of the center; although police disposed of the cardboard prop into a dump trucks, photos of this process demonstrated the city's policies being protested and were used to rally future protesters (New Tactics 2012, online). Art documents and reflect the society. Kara Walker created images that documented the untold and oppressed stories of slaves in the United States which challenged the popularly held narratives (Mattson 2010, 47-65). In a recent book on the art of protest, critic T.V. Reed (Reed, 2005) noted that "the essence of [protest] movements entail [what political theorist

Charles Tilly calls] ‘repeated public displays’ of alternative political and cultural values by a collection of people acting together outside officially sanctioned channels.” Aesthetics inferences in societal beliefs and moral inclinations are often deployed in movement art to entice prospective followers.

Olcese Christiana (Olcese 2009, 1-31) asserted that the “normal practice” of movement leaders (dating back to biblical times!) of using aesthetic tools in order to seduce potential followers. Although the sentence “moral values are inescapably aesthetics” suggests a philosophical relationship between moral values and aesthetics, the nature of art involvement in contention is seen by Doctorow as an instrumental one: protest leaders know by experience that they have to use artistic tools in order to pursue their political and moral agenda.

However, this paper is focused on digitally recreating and documenting some selected iconic images taken during the endsars protest in Nigeria to emblemize the ideological emotions of this social action. Digital manipulation of photographic images makes more simple, fascinating and easy to comprehend as compared to photographic images. The simplicity of digital images makes to convey emotion or mood. Most of the protest movements, past and present, social realist or avant-garde, shows that art is a powerful tool of social influence—the vehicle through which alternative values are broadcast. A notable American example, one among many, is Clifford Odets’ 1934 play about taxi drivers, *Waiting for Lefty*, which ends with a collective call to “STRIKE!” This is also the goal in Sergei Eisenstein’s Soviet era films *Strike* (1924) and *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) (Dittmar & Entin 2012, 1-7) J. Howard Miller in 1943 created a poster that strengthened the women narrative in the iconic *Rose the Riveter*. The poster serves as an inspirational image to boost employee morale. Remarkably, enough the poster for decades was only seen by employees and then it disappeared for 40 years. The image was created in 1982 and it’s been used as a representation of women’s empowerment. This poster can be viewed as an early feminist poster showing women as strong and capable (Owens 2020, 1-24). This image of Rosie the Riveter will resurface time and time again.

### Nigerian Social Arts

The Nigerian creative community satirize socio-political events in some of their artistic expression Artists in Nigeria. Nigeria artist often confront social injustice with their arts. Julius Agbajes image titled “Jokes on You” shows president Buhari with a red nose, white makeup and a frightening smile was the symbol of demonstration during the endsars campaign. Nigeria artists experiment

new medium and artistic styles to communicate social messages depicting the social uncertainties and instabilities beleaguering Nigeria and other African countries. Jelili Atiku is frontline Nigerian and human right defender whose body of works focuses on commitment humanism and crimes being committed against human life using any forms of art. Nkwocha Ernest, a Nigerian artist who makes stunning sculptures from discarded tyres, repurposing these non-biodegradable materials littering Nigerian streets was recently featured on BBC News Africa. African artists like their contemporaries in other parts of the world critique social issues in some of their works. (Akaro, online) in the following identifies some of the contemporary African artists that engage social issues with their works:

*“Kristina Bekenova talks about how contemporary artists increasingly make use of installations, combining techniques and performances and relying on metaphorical analogies in their art. British-Nigerian Artist, Yinka Shonibare’s installations use Dutch wax to make statements about empire and human relations with the environment. Ghanaian Artist, El Anatsui, repurposes milk tins, wood and aluminium plates into carvings and sculptures to critique modern consumerist tendencies. Tunisian artist, Meriem Bouderbala, explores femininity and gender in her paintings; while Kenyan, Peterson Kamwathi, investigates Africa’s cultural backgrounds in his sculptures. In the works of these artists and many others, we see again the conscious use of art as a tool to reflect upon the human experience and examine human spatial relations.”*

The endsars campaign enables Nigerian art community to rally support for artist amongst its fold creating art works to strengthen the spirit of the movement. Creatives including painters, sculptors, photographers and others created works to sustain the movement. These socially inclined art works put Nigeria on the global map and facilitate collaborations by creative across borders.

### Art and Democracy

Despite the advancement of different political inclinations, art reinforces democracy and social change to a very large extent. Art has the capability to excite minds and feelings as compared to everyday human experiences, it is a provocation, an incentive to mental and emotional alertness. Its creation of new realities means that it can intrude upon passive acceptance of conventional ideas and banal responses to political clichés. For that reason, art can help foster a reflective public that is less inclined to think and act in a herd spirit or according to the cues and dictates provided by a privileged oligarchy”. In a democratic society, art enables citizens

participation that transcends the division that might greet public perception of democratic governance. The artistic community fosters collective endeavours that enhance the restoration of societal ideals.

### Methodology

The research design adopted by this study is experimental and narrative. Selected iconic images of endsars protesters were digitally manipulated using Adobe Photoshop software to create an illustration of the photographic images. The images were exported into the installed Photoshop package, duplicated and converted to smart object. The cutout function in the filter gallery on Photoshop interface navigation bar was utilized to create a cartoonish illustration effect on the image. The cutout slider controls compartmentalized into; number of levels, edge simplicity and edge fidelity were accordingly adjusted to values of 7, 7 and 1 respectively to create the first level of details. The first level of detail was duplicated severally and the value of the edged simplicity slider in the filter cutout function was reduced on each duplication while other two slider values remained fixed to achieve a more detailed illustration.

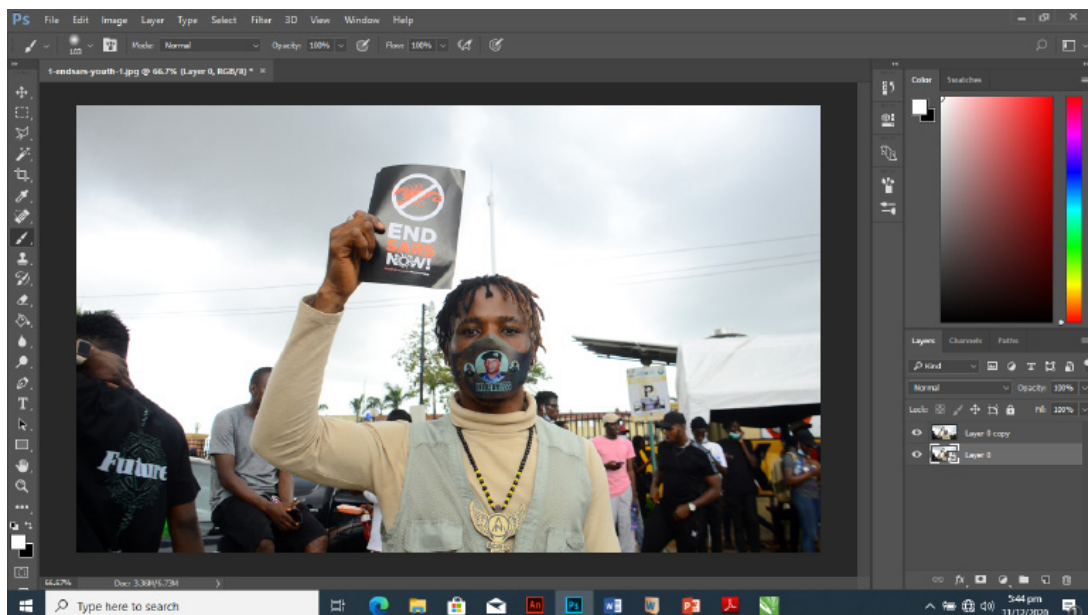
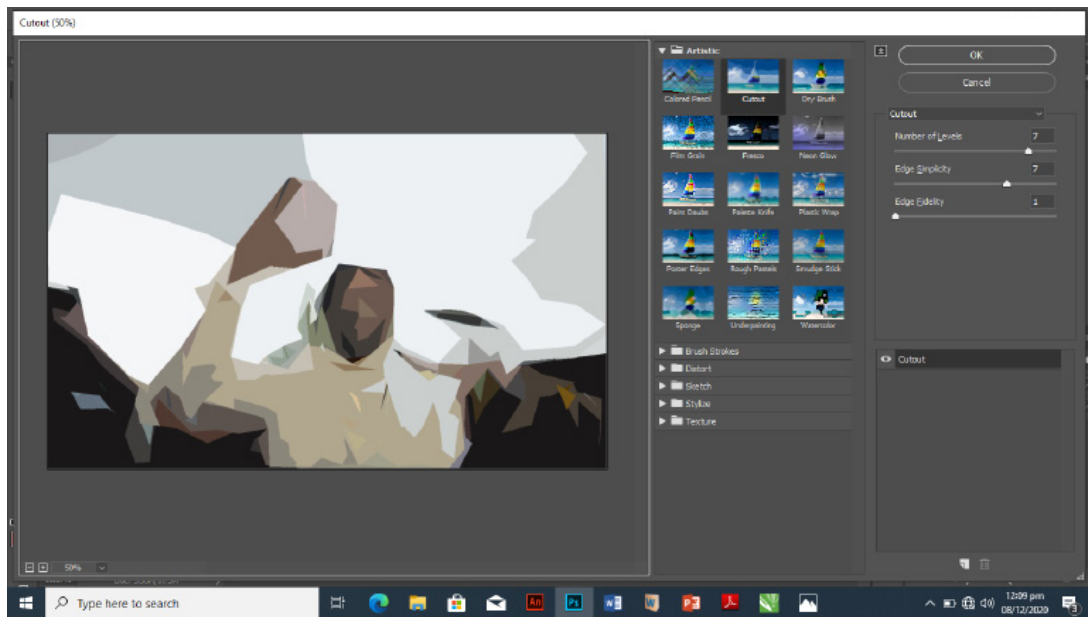
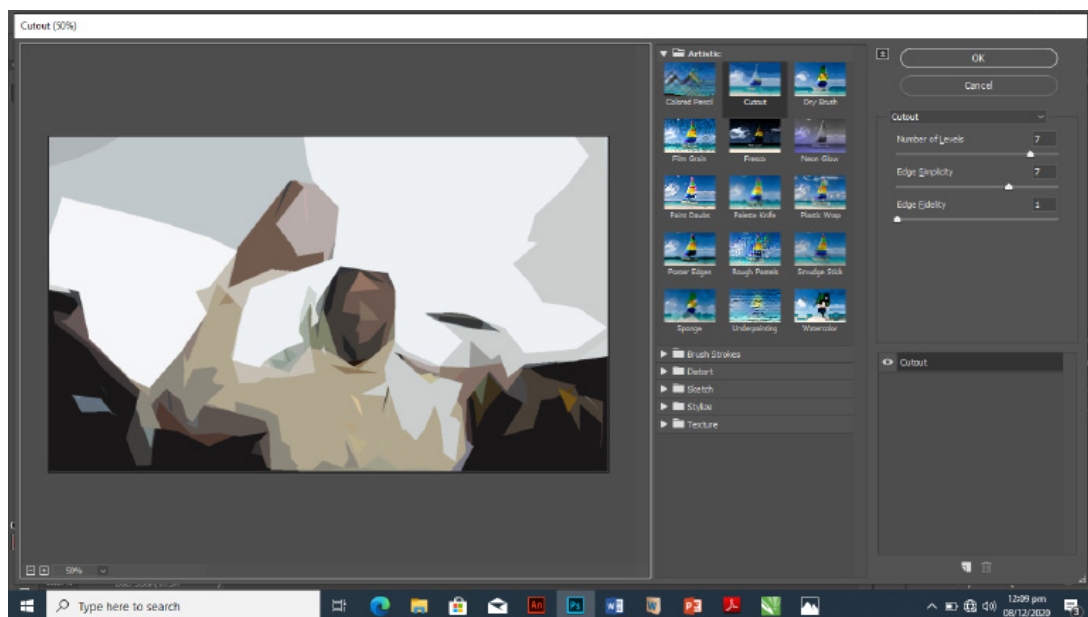


Figure 2: Unedited Photograph of Endsars Protesters  
(© Kayode Jayeola 03/10/2020)





**Figure 3:** The first level of filter cut-out effect  
(© Siyanbola Afeez 16/11/2020)



**Figure 4:** Fourth level of filter cut-out effect  
(© Siyanbola Afeez 16/11/2020)



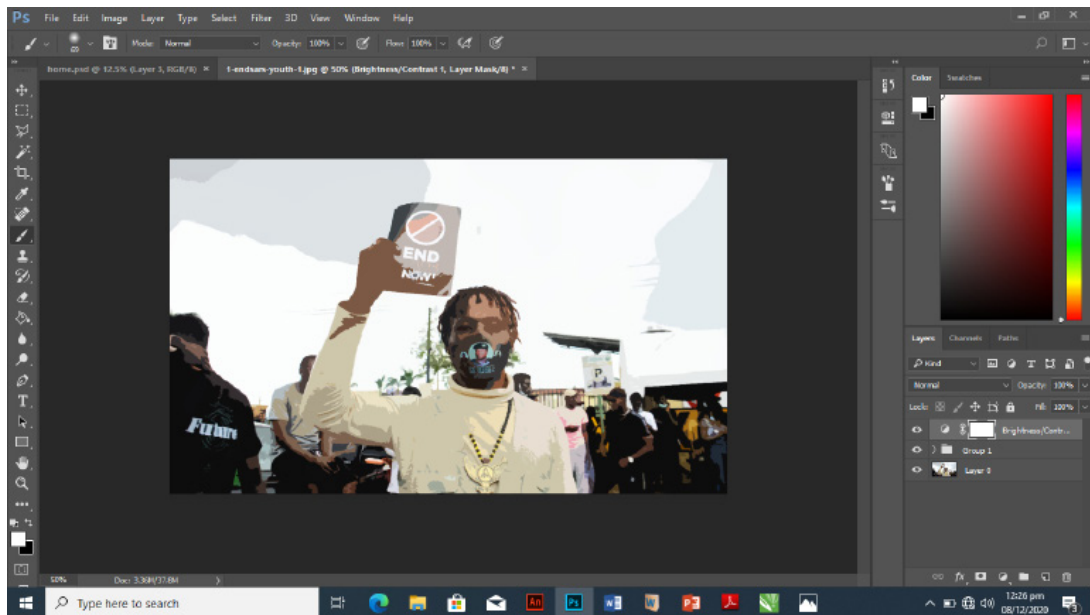


Figure 5: Final level of digitalized detailed filter cut-out effect  
(© Siyanbola Afeez 16/11/2020)



Figure 6: Laycon participating in the endsars campaign  
(© Kayode Jayeola 03/10/2020)

## Discussions

The winner of the 2020 Big Brother reality show is shown in this visual participating in the endsars protest. Laycon is a youth ambassador and an influential figure amongst youths in Nigeria. His participation in the endsars campaign stimulates other protesters to sustain the social action and also communicate a strong message to the authorities concerned.



**Figure 7:** A female endsars campaigner

(Source: Kazeem 2020, Online)

This female endsars protester in figure 7 holds a public address system in her right hand and on the left hand is a placard conveying information that reflects the spirit of the protest which is power belong to people and this must be respected by the government in power. The public address system enables this protester to communicate issues driving the social actions and motivate other people around her whom are either participating in the protest or indifferent to the struggle.



**Figure 8:** Endsars Protesters holding the Nigerian Flag  
(Source: Eckardt 2020, Online)

This image in figure 8 shows protesters standing on a bus shelter who are waving the Nigeria flag with an inscription “ENDSARS NOW”. The location of these protesters as indicated on the bus shelter is symbolic, that is where the seat of power in Lagos state is situated. So, the demonstrators simply chose that particular place as point of convergence to attract the attention of state authorities and the Nigerian Federal government. Also, the inscription of “ENDSARS NOW” on the Nigerian Flag underscore the need for Nigeria to end police brutality.



**Figure 9:** A group of Endsars Protesters  
(Source: Eckardt 2020, online)

The collective spirit of the endsars movement is portrayed in this image (figure 8). Demonstrators are united in this visual demanding for an end to incessant killings of people by the police. The protesters hold different placards conveying information which are not really visible. However, the visible placard communicates a message that calls for a stop to police brutality.



**Figure 10:** Aisha Yesuf leading a group of Endsars Protesters  
(Source: Eno-Abasi 2020, Online)

The posture of these protesters in (figure 10) depict social defiance which is a replica of the black life matters movement in the United States. This particular endsars protest was led by popular activist Aisha Yesufu. The social activist played a critical role in the success of the endsars campaign. She participated actively in mobilization and leading of protesters during the period of the movement.

#### Findings

- i. Digital illustration creates a different visual rendition of the photographic images
- ii. The digital transformation does not erode the symbolic role of the visuals.
- iii. The character representation in digital illustration are simple and appealing.
- iv. The digital imageries set an evocative emotional tone for the social cause and preserve the spirit.
- v. Digital concept relishes the values of the protest movement.

## Conclusion

Social actions are the harbingers of social change. Social movements elicit public awareness on social injustices and societal ills. Social action provides an opportunity of bringing the attention of authorities concern to issues bedeviling societies. It also catalyzes the process of addressing the raised issues. The endsars mass protests succeeded in revealing the agonizing misdemeanor of a unit of the Nigerian Police Force. Victims of police brutality were enabled with emboldened to narrate their experiences in there encountering officials of the notorious police unit. However, in contemporary societies, arts function as a medium of sustaining social culture with focus on social justice, identity and freedom. Arts plays a critical in oiling the wheels of social movement. Specifically, arts can facilitate contemporary social transformations through works that addresses the issues. Digital recreation of iconic images photographed during the Nigerian endsars campaign sustains and refreshes the spirit of this social movement. It also documents and memorialize the indomitable spirits of the youthful protesters. Thus, arts contribute immensely to contemporary social reformation.

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