

Art and Activism

Resistance can take various forms; well-organised people's marches and sit-ins which sometimes sustain over a period of time and culminate into social movements, spontaneous acts of violence and cultural expressions of dissent. In this sessional, we will address the interface of politics and culture, identify the overlaps between the seemingly separate categories, by studying cultural and political aspects of acts of resistance.

Historically, some genres of music, art, theatre and literature have evolved in the context of ongoing social movements such as Jazz music, Dalit Literature, Situationist International and so on. Protest sites and social movements have been spaces where ordinary citizens have created protest art, street theatre and revolutionary music. Artist collectives have also taken up a particular cause, expressed their ideological positions through their artistic mediums, and have come forth to support social movements. The field of art and activism is indeed rich with various forms of expressions by artists, activists, and also those who claim to be artist-activists. Does 'art' matter politically, and if so, how? What kind of artistic expressions are considered to be political acts?

While artistic expressions have inspired resistance cultures, it is necessary to distinguish between the various forms of creative expressions which are associated with resistance, by historically mapping the emergence of particular genres of resistance art, music and performance, particularly focusing on how it is produced and consumed over a period of time.

In this sessional, students will be expected to write a term paper addressing the above questions, based on a particular case from the field of art, music, literature or performance.

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