

# Visual Expression Art as a Platform for the Proclamation of Women's Equal Rights

Ahmad Zaim Zarif Ahmad Zamri<sup>1</sup>, \*Zahir Alauddin Abd Hamid<sup>2</sup>, Andrialis Abdul Rahman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew St, Glasgow G3 6RQ, United Kingdom,

<sup>2,3</sup>Creative Photomedia, College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Kampus Puncak Alam, 42300, Puncak Alam, Malaysia

a.azamri1@student.gsa.ac.uk<sup>1</sup>, \*zahir\_alauddin@uitm.edu.my<sup>2</sup>, andrialis@uitm.edu.my<sup>3</sup>  
\*Corresponding author

Received: 7 February 2024, Accepted: 20 March 2024, Published: 1 April 2024

## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the efficacy of using creative visuals and their potential to legitimize and represent dynamic imagery in the fight against prejudice and discrimination against women. This study aims to understand more about how abused women feel. This study will demonstrate how groundbreaking it is to capture a woman's emotional speech, which manifests in any form where emotions are expressed, giving women who don't have one a voice and providing them with a secure opportunity to express their deepest thoughts and feelings through visual expression art.*

**Keywords:** *Creative Visuals, Women's Rights, Emotional Expression, Visual-Expression Art*



eISSN: 2550-214X © 2024. Published for Idealogy Journal by UiTM Press. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-No Commercial-No Derivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

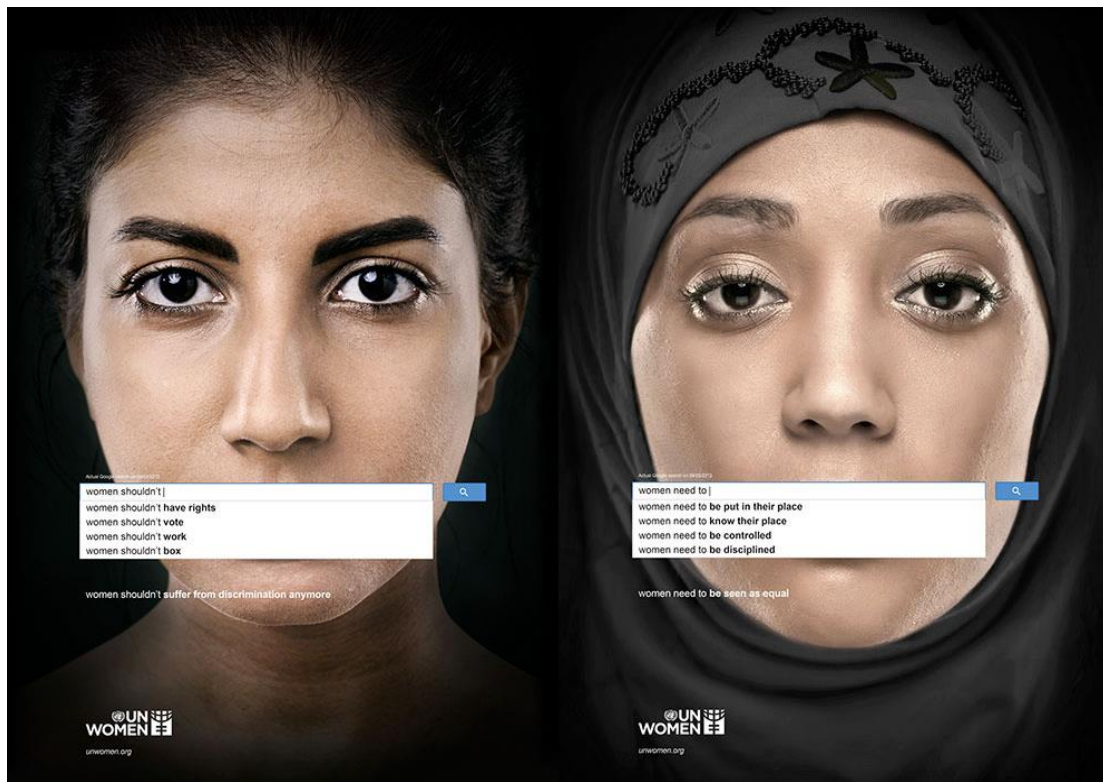
## 1 INTRODUCTION

Photography enables us to record and capture moments from our lives and the surrounding world. This captivating journey is swiftly descending into oblivion. Photography is highly effective at immersing us in the visual experience of familiar images. We opt to scrutinize our interactions with the individuals in our vicinity through the mediums of street photography, photojournalism, or portraiture. Photography is widely recognized for its capacity to capture and safeguard memories. The ability to empathize with and understand the viewpoint of others is inherent in the neural architecture of our brains. Photography uniquely stimulates the interconnected brain regions responsible for empathy.

Upon examining examples of advertising photography that exhibit a conscientious regard for women's rights, it becomes evident that a substantial amount of effort has been invested. However, this pertains specifically to advertising photography, particularly within the public service announcement genre (PSA), as depicted in Figure 1 below. It serves as a metaphor for the oppression of women in countries where women's rights are suppressed. The purpose is to raise awareness and advocate for a cause through advice and guidance. This long-standing practice has significantly influenced the public's receptiveness to any form of communication. Research and development in art photography or visual art are still necessary to explore the abstract and creative conveyance of messages. Explore unique and captivating images that effectively transmit meaning while serving as a medium of communication that deeply resonates with viewers. This location is an excellent starting point as it aligns with the title, which captures the emotions of oppressed women by providing them with a means to articulate their thoughts and feelings.

Photography is a distinctive form of meditation that can convey a message either immediately or through a more nuanced approach that deeply affects the soul. When we perceive the lyrics of a song, we infer that the singer or songwriter is endeavouring to convey a message. Through repeated listening, we finally get the intended message they are trying to express. It endeavours to articulate things in an aesthetically pleasing manner, and frequently conveying information in this manner is more effective and has a higher rate of success. This is a vast expanse where it is highly worthwhile to endeavour to convey a message regarding the deprivation of women's rights using the medium of visual art, wherein a message can be beautifully and distinctively conveyed in a manner that deviates from the norm.

Regarding the concept of women's rights, many individuals support the idea of equal rights but perceive the term feminism and its related movement as incongruous with their ideas and values. A dictionary encompasses various interpretations of feminism, one of which states that feminism is the advocacy for women's rights founded on the principle of gender equality. The international organization recognized women's rights as universal human rights more than seventy years ago, applicable to every individual on the planet. These rights encompass liberty from mistreatment, enslavement, and prejudice; the entitlement to receive an education; the prerogative to own property; the privilege to participate in voting; and the right to receive a just and impartial salary. According to the proverb "women's rights are human rights," women have the right to any or all of these rights. Nevertheless, women encounter pervasive discrimination in virtually all spheres, predominantly as a result of their gender. Advancing women's rights entails ensuring equal access to opportunities and improving the overall functioning of governments and societies. It entails changing laws and regulations, gaining public support, and participating in associations and initiatives run by strong women. The emotions are intricate. According to certain hypotheses, these emotional states give rise to physiological and psychological alterations that impact our actions.



**Figure 1 UN Women ad series**

(Source: Mamac Ogilvy & Mather Dubai 2013

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/10/women-should-ads>)

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Understanding Forms of Feelings and Ideas

Feelings can be categorized into different forms: emotions, which are intense and temporary; moods, which are more general and long-lasting; sensations, which are the physical experiences that accompany emotions and moods; and attitudes, which are our overall evaluations of people, things, and concepts. Ideas can manifest as concepts, which are mental frameworks employed to structure our understanding and encounters. They can also encompass beliefs, notions we deem as either accurate or erroneous, values, principles, or criteria that direct our choices and behaviours, and memories, and recollections of past events and experiences that can shape our emotions, beliefs, and actions in the present and future.

Emotions have a crucial role in a situation that is unclear, intricate, and puzzling (R. Plutchik & H. Kellerman, 1980). Gaining proficiency in identifying and handling them might be crucial for the advancement of your own and others' mental well-being. Paul Ekman, a well-known expert in the field of emotions and psychology, examined and incorporated data from 100 other professionals to create the Atlas of Emotions. Ekman's classification of five fundamental emotions (anger, fear, sorrow, disgust, and delight) serves as a valuable foundation for delving into the intricacies of all emotional experiences (Cherry, K. 2020). According to Health Line, people have a preference for experiencing pleasure, comfort, and good health.

Smiling, laughing, or practising self-care are examples of actions that can convey these emotions. If you experience emotional intimacy and connection with loved ones, feel safe and secure, and engage in a sensory-pleasing and calming activity, you can experience tranquillity while experiencing pleasure (Cherry, K. 2020). Occasionally, every individual encounters melancholy. Specific emotions, such as grief or fury, may arise in certain conditions. Alternatively, there are situations where you could struggle to articulate your sorrow. Overcoming grief can be challenging, but you must make a concerted effort to cope with your emotions (Department of Health & Human Services, 2017).

Mourning is a typical response to experiencing a loss. Embracing and moving past a breakup, a lack of personal growth, or an inability to accomplish a goal will help you recognize and come to terms with your loss (Kubler-Ross, 2005). Each individual distinctly manifests grief; thus, how you display your sadness holds no significance. Engaging in dialogue about one's intense suffering might provide relief, but it may also be beneficial to spend extended periods introspecting or exploring alternative creative outlets to convey these emotions. Assisting others or reintegrating into society might enhance one's sense of connection with others (Burr, J. A., Mutchler, J. E., & Han, S. H.) (2021). Engaging in a project or supporting a cause that your deceased loved one was enthusiastic about might provide you with comfort during this difficult time. Terror arises from the perception of imminent danger. The level of terror you experience can vary from mild to extreme, depending on the extent to which you see this threat as significant (Cherry, K. 2020). Keep in mind that your apprehension may not precisely correspond to the real danger. If you experience anxiety, you may have a sense of apprehension in situations that do not pose a significant danger. However, this does not lessen the seriousness of your worry. Fear is an innate human feeling that served as a safeguard for our ancestors against being consumed.

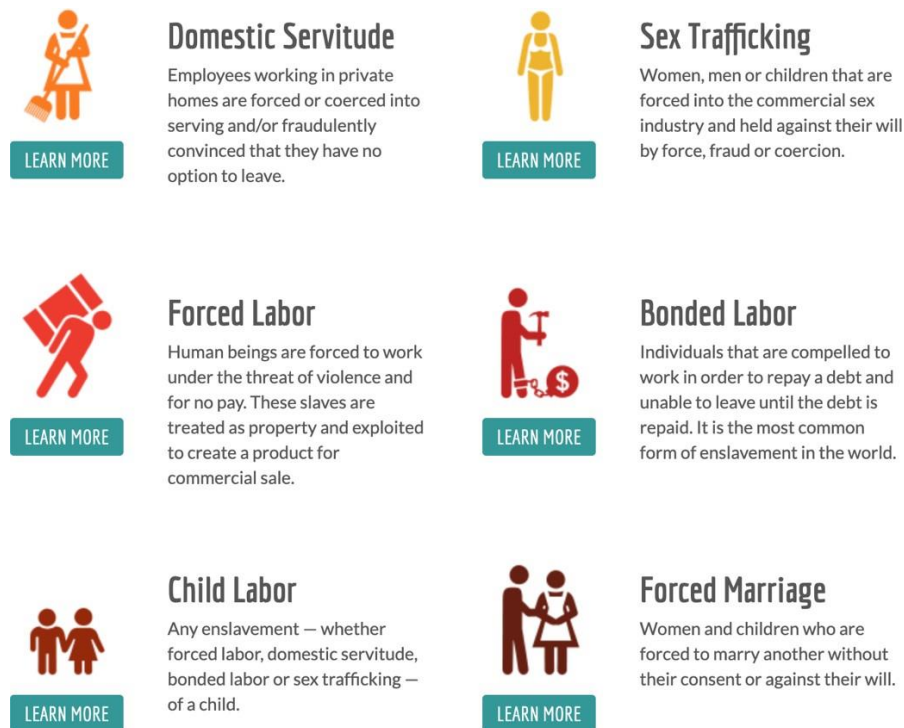
Observing abuse often elicits a prevalent response of anger. This situation may evoke feelings of insecurity, powerlessness, and susceptibility. Anger is often perceived in a negative light, yet it is a natural feeling that can be beneficial in a hazardous situation, as it can facilitate a quicker exit from it (Cherry, K. 2020). To mitigate conflict, it is advisable to restrain your displeasure rather than openly expressing it. Although it may seem advantageous initially, repressing one's emotions ultimately results in heightened stress levels and may foster animosity. It has the potential to impact your emotional well-being, social interactions, and mental health. Instead, express your emotions in a composed and appropriate manner once you have regained your composure. Cherry (2020) states that disgust is a frequent response to events that are unpleasant or undesirable. Disgust can serve as a hindrance, acting

as a barrier that separates you from others or things that are considered unwanted, much like an irritation.

Moreover, it can incite you to harbour feelings of resentment towards things or others that pose no harm to you. The instinctive response to unpleasant stimuli is to recoil in a state of repulsion. Occasionally, it is crucial to comprehend the solution or overcome an aversion. If the actions of the person receiving care elicit feelings of annoyance or repulsion inside you, your instinctive response will likely be to withdraw your focus, distance yourself from them, or experience irritation. Alternatively, contemplate rectifying the individual's conduct. Attaining a gratifying resolution can prove to be arduous when navigating through one's emotions. Certain individuals may exhibit considerable strength, while others may display a more modest demeanour. Emotional fluctuations can occur spontaneously. Contrary to popular belief, negative emotions can sometimes be useful (Department of Health and Human Services, 2017). Instead of attempting to alter your emotions, contemplate your reaction to them. Typically, it is the reactions to emotions that cause difficulties, rather than the emotions themselves.

## 2.2 Women and their rights

Women's rights appear to be violated in various ways, and numerous instances of human rights abuses are linked to the female gender. Women's rights are still disproportionately violated and ignored worldwide due to societal norms, discrimination, violence, and income inequality. While the transition to a human rights framework has occurred very recently, the topic of violence against women often arises in discussions on women's rights due to the inherent connection between these two concepts. Females have a higher probability of experiencing recurrent instances of several forms of domestic abuse compared to males. In some countries, women are restricted from participating in political gatherings or development projects without the risk of physical harm or incarceration by their male guardians (Reanda, L., 1981).



**Figure 2** Six Modern Slavery today  
(Source: 2023 End Slavery Now 2022)

The core problem has consistently revolved around the institution of slavery. An estimated 21 to 45 million individuals are believed to be subjected to modern slavery. It is referred to by several terms, such as "human trafficking" and "modern-day slavery." Currently, there are six distinct manifestations of slavery in the modern world. These include indentured servitude inside households, sex trafficking, coerced labour, bonded labour, child labour, and forced marriages (End Slavery Now 2023). The curtailment of women's autonomy in personal matters has a detrimental effect on their civil liberties as well. Despite being prohibited in most nations, slavery is prevalent, with an estimated 40.3 million individuals enslaved. Among these, 71% are women and girls. The participation of numerous women in cultural events is hindered due to factors such as conflict, family responsibilities, and cultural norms, which frequently contribute to their exclusion. In certain nations, such as Afghanistan, there is a customary practice called Baad, which entails the transfer of adolescent girls as a means to settle familial disputes. Due to these cultural standards, women are devalued and objectified. Meghan Ott (2017). Women are effectively excluded from land ownership in many countries due to inheritance and dowry traditions. Women own fewer than 20% of the world's land. This poses a challenge, as land ownership can play a substantial role in fostering social and economic empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2017).

### 3 METHODOLOGY

**Table 1: Research Design Framework**  
**Quantitative Method**

(1) Primary Data	(2) Secondary Data
(1.1) Survey (1.2) Observations (1.3) Interview (1.4) Questionnaire	(2.1) Website, Books, Journal, Article
(3) Extract analysis	
(4) Conclusion & Recommendations	

#### 3.1 Qualitative Study

The primary aim of the study is to enhance the understanding of young individuals and the general public regarding women's viewpoints on discrimination. The study's authors focused specifically on the extent to which today's youth and popular culture accurately perceive and interpret women's facial emotions. Furthermore, the researcher conveys the entirety of the information through a sequence of images illustrating a woman's facial emotions. These photographs will serve to showcase the responses of both the younger generation and society as a whole to different artistic creations. An effective research methodology was essential for the successful completion of the investigation. For any study to be done, it is vital to have a strategy in place for gathering and combining data. This analysis utilizes primary data, with the subsequent collection of secondary data following the investigation. The major data for this study was gathered via observations, surveys, an online questionnaire, and interviews. Interviews and secondary data were acquired via various sources, such as books, articles, journals, and websites. The entirety of the study's knowledge will be consolidated and integrated during the review process.

#### 3.2 Primary Data collection

Original information refers to the knowledge acquired by the researcher from first-hand experience or by utilizing sources. Multiple primary sources are collected and organized to gather evidence. Examples of primary data include face-to-face interviews and online surveys. The researcher aims to promote self-expression among individuals who may be hesitant to verbalize their emotions by utilizing art photography as a medium of communication.

An important factor leading to depression among Malaysian women is their inclination to internalize their concerns throughout the observation period. The researcher will create a collection of images that portray the various emotions women experience in response to bias. These photographs will be sourced from photographers who specialize in capturing emotions through their work.

Currently, a novel methodology will be employed to gather data. Data on the sentiments of Malaysian women will be collected through online polls using a basic questionnaire produced by Twitter. The emphasis will be on a select few individuals who are chosen at random from diverse demographic groups. This approach would provide reliable insights into individuals' emotions and how to incorporate artistic photographic representations of emotions into their everyday existence. This methodology is based on extensive resources, as it accurately reflects the authentic answers of individuals.

### **3.3 Secondary Data Collection**

During this time frame, a novel methodology will be employed to gather data. Data on the sentiments of Malaysian women will be collected using online surveys utilizing basic questions generated with internet applications. The emphasis will be on the quantity of people selected at random from different demographic groups. This approach would generate reliable data regarding individuals' emotional states and how to include artistic photographic representations of emotions in their everyday experiences. This methodology is based on extensive resources, as it accurately reflects the authentic answers of individuals.

Books, journals, and the internet are valuable resources for researchers to gain in-depth knowledge about a certain subject. The strategy planning of this report will be enhanced by including vocabulary from books, journals, and online sources. The significance of the study will increase as a result of integrating the various fields of knowledge that other researchers possess, and this will also encourage productive communication between them.

## **4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study aims to employ emotional reading by analyzing data obtained from images displaying a range of facial expressions, including wrath, disdain, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. The emotional state of the model and the visual effects will be documented in the columns of the data extraction table. This is the place where the emotions depicted in an image can be carefully evaluated and documented to produce artworks that align with the research. Table 2 demonstrates that visual factors, including lighting, camera position, model personality, and color mode, will be carefully examined to guarantee that all evaluated images possess consistent and reliable data.

Furthermore, these elements can be utilized to produce photographs that effectively depict the emotions of marginalized women. The visual characteristics and emotions will be utilized to assess the six additional photographs featuring different facial expressions mentioned before. The collected information will be employed as a reference to generate ideas and choose the appropriate components, guaranteeing that the resulting work effectively communicates the intended message.





**Figure 3** Facial Expression (Sadness)  
(Source: Wang Rong, 2018)

**Table 2** Visual Elements and Emotion

Visual Elements		Emotion
Camera Angle	Eye-Level	Sadness
Lighting	Top 45 Degree	
Colour Mood	Greyscale	
Talent's Character	Tear-Falls Straight Eyebrows	

Figure 3 illustrates a monochromatic picture of a woman, employing intense lighting at a 45-degree angle and the woman's emotive countenance to communicate the profound emotional state of emptiness, anxiety, and sorrow. This photo employs a direct focus on the subject's eyes to illustrate the equal validity of the grieving person's perspective in comparison to others. The model's face expression and portrayal of the role amplify the effectiveness of the intended message, as does the genuine and emotionally charged delivery, which resonates with the viewer.

The resultant image is expected to exhibit a high degree of individuality and abstraction. This session involves the expression of sensuality, which arises from the hearts of women who are denied their rights both privately and publicly. It serves as a means of conveying heartfelt words through an artistic and gentle approach without resorting to any form of violent action or language. However, it may still lack effectiveness. However, it possesses the capacity to assist in alleviating the incessant mental distractions. Employing the technique of visual expression in art will introduce the public to a novel and distinct realm of comprehension. This technique employs rigorous and intricate cognitive processes instead of haphazardly capturing images.

The results will be exceptional if the data from the aforementioned analysis extract is merged with ingenuity in generating work. Visual expression art enables greater freedom and unconstrained movement in its production. Unlike advertising and photojournalism, which aim to convey information and document events, fine art originates from the artist's imagination, thoughts, and ideas. The conclusion of the work will take into account the artist's emotions and artistic perspective rather than relying exclusively on the capabilities of the camera; it surpasses that limitation. The major objective is to ensure that the voices of oppressed women are heard by utilizing visually captivating and attention-grabbing art.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author expresses gratitude to the Research & Innovation Office, CCA, and ReNeU UiTM for their assistance in organizing the writing and publication workshop. Additionally, the author acknowledges the help of the faculty, college, and UiTM Campus Shah Alam and Puncak Alam Selangor in conducting this research.

## ARTICLE CONTRIBUTION TO RELATED FIELD OF STUDY

The objective of this study is to enhance prior studies on women's rights to provide advocates with valuable insights that may be utilized to advance their cause more successfully. Fine art photography is a method that can yield more unified and diverse results while also acknowledging the importance of creativity in addressing global issues.

## FUNDING

This research is not funded by any organization it is individual expenses.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors shared the same responsibilities towards the production of this paper.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest declared for this paper.

## REFERENCES

- Bate, D. (2015). *Art Photography*. Tate Publishing.
- Burr, J. A., Mutchler, J. E., & Han, S. H. (2021). Volunteering and health in later life. In *Handbook of ageing and the social sciences* (pp. 303-319). Academic Press.
- End Slavery (2023). What Is Fine Art Photography: <https://www.eden-gallery.com/news/what-is-fine-art-photography>
- Eden Gallery (2021). Photography, Art Blog, S.N. <https://www.eden-gallery.com/news/what-is-fine-art-photography>.
- Kübler-Ross, E., & Kessler, D. (2005). *On grief and grieving: Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*. Simon and Schuster.
- Megan Ott December (2017) Freedom from Slavery: <https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/four-human-rights-women-are-still-deprived-disproportionately>.
- Ogilvy & Mather Dubai (2013). U.N. Women ad series reveals widespread sexism: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/10/women-should-ads>.
- Plutchik, R. (1980). A general psychoevolutionary theory of emotion. In *Theories of emotion* (pp. 3-33).
- Cherry, K. E. (2020). *The other side of suffering: Finding a path to peace after the tragedy*. Oxford University Press. Academic Press.
- Reanda, L. (1981). Human Rights and Women's Rights: The United Nations Approach. *Hum. Rs. Q.*, 3, 11.
- Soutter, L. (2018). *Why art photography?* Routledge.
- World Economic Forum (2017) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/women-own-less-than-20-of-the-worlds-land-its-time-to-give-them-equal-property-rights/>