

Art as Protest: Reflective Companion

Free download for workshop participants

How to use this document:

I'd first like to begin by expressing gratitude for your participation in "Art As Protest." We are all a part of something bigger than ourselves, and the way we tell our stories and listen to the stories of others matters. This Reflective Companion supports that work. Additionally, workshops will often "land" for us later. We continue to chew on perplexing questions, muse over new ideas, and integrate concepts into our worldview. You have permission to move through this document slowly and selectively. There are no "right" answers, except the ones that feel most authentic to you.

Rock on,
Sarah Wilson
Founder, Rock Your Story



Reflections

Suggested materials: sketchbook or journal, pen or pencil, markers or crayons, colored pencils or watercolors, a warm beverage of choice, a window with a view, and interesting music for ambiance. Chose what works best for you, but make this your own meaningful experience.

What moment or image from the workshop has stayed with you?

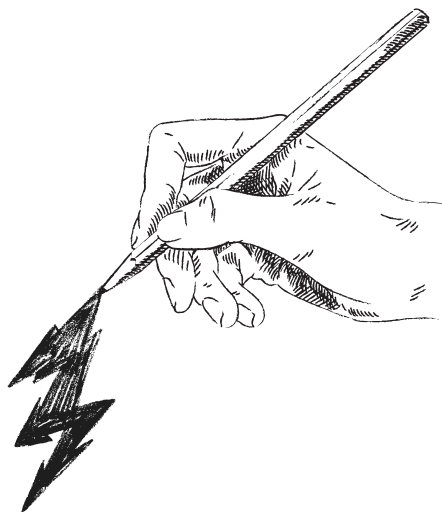
What did you find yourself agreeing with easily?

Where did you feel uncertainty, resistance, or tension?

Did you find it easy or difficult to express yourself during the hands-on portion of the workshop? Why?

What assumptions—about art, protest, or yourself—felt challenged?

What questions are you still carrying?



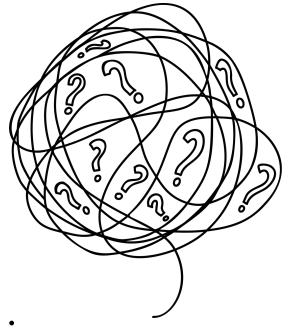
Journaling Prompts

It's time to explore what might be coming up after thinking about challenging art. You can choose one prompt to spend time with or think about all of them over a series of weeks. It's entirely up to you. There is no pressure to get through these quickly.

1. Write about a piece of protest art you encountered recently (intentionally or not).
2. Describe a moment when art made you pause, rethink, or feel unsettled.
3. What forms of protest feel accessible to you and which feel distant or risky?
4. How does your own location (work, family, community) shape how you engage with protest?



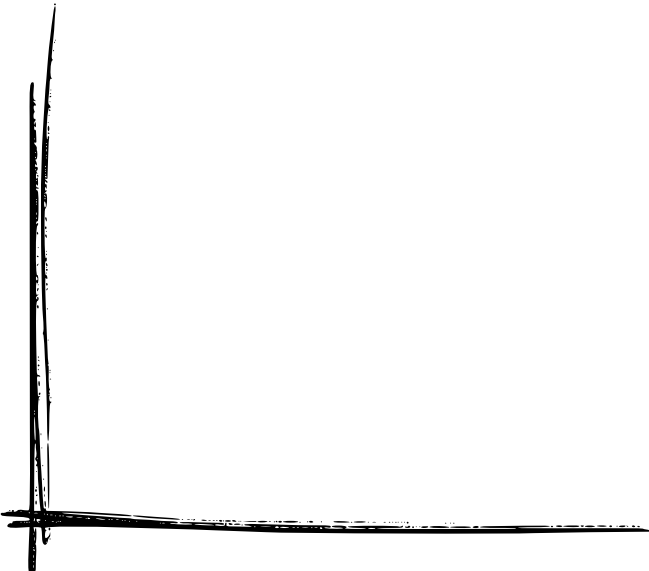
One Week Later...



What, if anything, has resurfaced since the workshop? Did any conversations, images, or news stories connect back to the workshop themes? What feels clearer? What feels more complicated?

Values Clarification

List 6-8 values related to art and protest. For example, it could be visibility, safety, solidarity, disruption, care, truth, or beauty - plus many more. After writing, ask: why these? What tensions do you notice between them? Where do you already live these values?



Personal Intention

Since you explored some personal values, its time to think about your personal intensions moving forward. Use the prompts below, but try to avoid grand statements. Its completely acceptable and worthwhile to keep it provisional and moldable.

“In the coming months, I want to stay attentive to...”

“I want to notice when...”

“I want to create space for...”

“I want to ask better questions about...”



Further Reading

Many social media accounts are available to tell the story of art as protest, and many exist as protest themselves. It is impossible to stay up-to-date on this information, so I suggest key word searches for those who are interested in pursuing this avenue. The list below reflects a few select texts that support the focus of this workshop.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books, 1989/2012.

Campbell, Andy. *Queer X Design: 50 Years of Signs, Symbols, Banners, Logos, and Graphic Art of LGBTQ*. Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2019.

Chicago, Judy. *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage*. Anchor Press, 1979.

Downey, Shannon. *Let's Move the Needle: An Activism Handbook for Artists, Crafters, Creatives, and Makers*. Storey Publishing, 2024.

Guerrilla Girls. *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*. Penguin Books, 1998.

Nichols, De. *Art of Protest: Creating, Discovering, and Activating Art for Your Revolution*. Big Picture Press, 2021.

Rottenberg, Catherine, editor. *This is Not a Feminism Textbook*. Goldsmiths Press, 2023.

Seigler, Bonnie. *Signs of Resistance: A Visual History of Protest in America*. Artisan/Workman Publishing Co, Inc., 2018.

Rock Your Story exists to support people who want to write, communicate, and live more authentically. I believe that creativity is an act of rebellion that can impact the world in positive ways. RYS champions diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing that our unique voices and experiences make us stronger, together. If you would like to learn more about the mission and offerings of RYS, please visit rockyourstory.one.

Rock on,
Sarah

