

# Editorial

# Music and Art in Political Campaigns

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Music and art have played important roles in political change throughout history and can be powerful tools for raising awareness about political issues. Music and art have long played a role in political campaigns, particularly in grassroots efforts. These creative forms of expression are influential tools that can help candidates connect with voters on an emotional level and convey their message in a memorable way. Through their works, musicians and artists can draw attention to social and political injustices, highlight the experiences of marginalized communities, and amplify the voices of those who are often silenced. Music and art can also mobilize people to act.

In terms of music, it can be a robust tool in political campaigns, serving to engage and energize supporters, convey messages, and create a sense of unity and community. For example, music can be used to rally supporters and create excitement and enthusiasm at political events such as rallies and speeches. Campaigns can use music to "pump up" the crowd and get people motivated and excited about the candidate and their message. Music can also be used to convey political messages and ideas and create a sense of unity and community among supporters. Campaigns can use songs with lyrics that align with their platform to communicate their message and values to voters which support a sense of unity by bringing people together and create a shared sense of purpose and identity. Using music during times of political change can help political campaigns to reach new audiences who may not otherwise be engaged by traditional political messaging and ads. For example, a campaign could create a catchy song or music video that goes viral on social media, thereby reaching a wider audience than traditional campaign ads. Music can also assist in building a brand around a candidate and/or campaign. A campaign could use a particular song or musical style to create a distinctive identity and brand that sets them apart from other candidates.

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Arts and music have long played a role in political campaigns, particularly in grassroots efforts. These creative forms of expression are strong tools that can help candidates connect with voters on an emotional level and convey their message in a memorable way. In America, campaign songs have been a staple of its politics since the 1800s and they continue to be an important way for candidates to rally supporters and create a sense of enthusiasm around their candidacy. For example, in the 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama used the song "Yes We Can" by will.i.am as his campaign's theme song, which helped to energize his supporters and create a sense of unity around his message of hope and change.

For the art aspects in campaigns, it can play a significant role in protests, serving as a powerful tool for communication and expression. Art can create a visual impact that draws attention to the cause. While protest art can take on many forms such as banners, signs, posters, murals, and graffiti, which all serve to convey robust messages and make a statement.



Figure 1. Shepard Fairey's HOPE (Barack Obama, 2008). Source: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/shepard-fairey-hope-barack-obama>.

Art can create a meaningful emotional connection with the viewer, evoking empathy and a sense of solidarity. This can serve to inspire people to take action and join the protest and can amplify the voices of marginalized communities and draw attention to their experiences. By depicting their struggles and highlighting their stories, art can help to give voice to those who are often silenced. Additionally, the act of creating art provides a creative outlet for people to express their feelings and frustrations. This can be particularly important in protests, where

emotions can run high and people may feel a need to express themselves in a meaningful way. Moreover, art can also serve as a record of the protest and the social and political issues it addresses. Photographs, videos, and other forms of art can capture these events and the messages conveyed by the participants.

For example, in Thailand, prior to election day, May 14, 2023, the Move Forward Party used augmented reality embedded in its campaign billboards, which could transform poster images into videos of the party leader describing his party's policies that were favored by large amount of people during the political campaigns. Moreover, the use an orange color as the symbol of the party and the candidates' attire has led to imitative fans and a noticeable trend in fashion both online and on the streets. Another example is Shepard Fairey's "Hope" Poster for Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign in America. Shepard Fairey, a street artist and graphic designer, created the now-famous "Hope" poster featuring Barack Obama's image during his 2008 presidential campaign. The poster, which features Obama's face in red, white, and blue, with the word "Hope" written in bold letters beneath it, became an iconic symbol of Obama's campaign and was widely reproduced and distributed by grassroots supporters. The poster was seen as a powerful piece of political art that captured the spirit of Obama's message of hope and change. It was displayed in galleries and museums around the world, and Fairey was invited to meet with Obama at the White House after he won the election.



Figure 2. A supporter of Thailand's Move Forward party (whose logo's color is orange) fashioned a large bow to wear as candidate Pita Limjaroenrat greets enthusiastic supporters from a campaign truck.



Figure 3. Thailand's Move Forward party greets supporters. Source for Fig 2 & 3 frame grabs was Tiktok, <https://www.tiktok.com/@evescenter1/video/7235122072500849926>.

In conclusion, the use of music and art is a powerful tool to support election campaigns. Through creative expression, political messages can be amplified and emotions can be evoked in voters. Music and art have the ability to connect with people on a deeper level and create a sense of unity and community. When used effectively, music and art can be a valuable asset in any election campaign strategy.

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