Sonic Insurrection:
The Auditory Politics of Bamboo Strikes and Vocalization "Hoo"

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Abstract: This study examines *Himmati Mai* (2022), a performance artwork by Bangladeshi artist Reetu Sattar, to interrogate the politics of sound, the construction of sisterhood, and the potential of artistic intervention in social transformation. The piece, featuring 70 women synchronously striking bamboo sticks and emitting the vocalization "hoo", creates a resistive auditory landscape that challenges the suppression of female voices in Bangladeshi society. The analysis reveals: (1) Sound operates as a medium of political expression, employing rhythm, acoustic resonance, and collective synchronization to metaphorically articulate gendered violence and acoustically reclaim public space; (2) The organizational process (participant selection, rehearsal dynamics) fosters cross-class and interreligious sisterhood, transmuting individual trauma into collective political agency; (3) A tension emerges between the ephemerality of performance art and the protracted nature of institutional change, yet the work's symbolic capital persists through media dissemination and social mobilization; (4) The practice expands Joseph Beuys' "social sculpture" theory by integrating indigenous cultural symbols (bamboo sticks, saris) with acoustic politics, forging a dynamic mode of social intervention. The study argues that *Himmati Mai* constitutes not merely an artistic protest but an innovative feminist praxis, offering a creative paradigm for nonviolent resistance in South Asian contexts.
Keywords: sound politics; auditory landscape; collective memory; sisterhood; nonviolent resistance; social sculpture

1. Introduction

On May 28, 2022, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, seventy women from diverse social backgrounds grasped bamboo sticks, striking the ground in rhythmic unison while vocalizing elongated and staccato utterances of "hoo". Through this performative act, the organizers and participants delivered a potent artistic response to the escalating violence against women in Bangladesh.

Shaped by the dual forces of Hindu caste hierarchy and extremist Islamism, women in Bangladesh have long been confined to the shadows of patriarchal oppression, with gender-based violence persisting as a pervasive crisis. In the first half of 2022 alone, 476 women were reported raped, yet most victims were denied judicial redress—a statistic representing only the tip of the iceberg.

To confront this deplorable social reality and provoke critical reflection on entrenched traditional norms and structures, Reetu Sattar, a Bangladeshi artist born in 1981, conceptualized, organized, and choreographed this performance art piece, titled *Himmati Mai* (Brave Mother). [1] In preparation, Sattar invested extensive effort in selecting and persuading the seventy female volunteers to participate. Once committed, the volunteers engaged in rigorous collective rehearsals during their spare time, culminating in a theatrically arresting performance on May 28, 2022.

2. The Political Poetics of Sound: Resistive Encoding of the Auditory Landscape

Sound is not merely a physical phenomenon but a carrier of social power relations. In the performance art *Himmati Mai*, the auditory landscape is meticulously designed as a language of

resistance, employing rhythm, sonic vibration, and collective vocalization to challenge the suppression of women's voices in Bangladeshi society.

2.1 The Metaphorical Rhythm of Bamboo Strikes

The synchronized striking of bamboo sticks against the ground by seventy women constructs an acoustic field laden with political signification. This carefully choreographed rhythm is not mere sound production but a semiotic practice of protest deeply rooted in cultural memory. Such acoustic intervention carries profound cultural metaphor.



Figure 1. *Himmati Mai* (2022), in Dhaka, Bangladesh, designed and organized by Reetu Sattar
Website Source: https://www.instituteforpublicart.org/case-studies/himmati-mai/

The bamboo stick, a commonplace agricultural tool in rural South Asia, produces a sound that mimics the archetypal act of the marginalized knocking at the gates of power. The intervals between each strike create a Derridean experience (Derrida, 1979) of *différance* [2], symbolizing the delayed and absent judicial response, thereby constructing an auditory narrative of "awaiting justice". This rhythmic design deconstructs the "myth of judicial efficiency" [3] (Rancière, 2010) perpetuated by official discourse, transforming procedural delays into a perceptible acoustic reality.

From the perspective of acoustic politics, the collective synchronization of rhythmic strikes holds critical resistive value. Through repetitive rhythmic training, seventy independent sound sources are synthesized into a singular sonic entity. As Turino (2008) argues in *Music as Social Life*, collective rhythmic synchronization dissolves individual differences, forging a potent group identity. [4]

2.2 The Polyphony of "Hoo": From Silence to Collective Manifesto

In *Himmati Mai*, the participants' synchronized utterance of the staccato "hoo" constitutes a delinguified collective declaration—a polyphony that simultaneously ruptures silence and actively reconstructs oppressive social soundscapes.



Figure 2. *Himmati Mai* (2022), in Dhaka, Bangladesh, designed and organized by Reetu Sattar
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The profound significance of this sonic strategy unfolds across three interrelated dimensions:

First, as a tactic of circumvention, the non-semantic plosive sound evades the disciplining of women's direct verbal expression in Bangladesh's public sphere. Within Islamic cultural contexts, women's political oration is often perceived as transgression against religious and social order. [5] (Mahmood, 2011) The "hoo" sound, as a wordless utterance, substitutes explicit slogans, enabling public vocalization while avoiding direct repression triggered by "improper speech". This strategy resonates trans-culturally with the symbolic resistance of Iran's "White Wednesdays" movement (ETtoday, 2017), where women wore white headscarves in lieu of vocal protest [6], collectively revealing the political potential of embodied sound in high-pressure contexts.

Second, the acoustic properties of "hoo" itself serve as a metaphorical representation of gendered violence. Its abrupt, repetitive plosives simulate sensations of suffocation and rupture. Acoustic analysis demonstrates that such discontinuous pulse waves readily trigger physiological tension in listeners [7] (Grimshaw, 2014), thereby externalizing the invisible trauma of individual victims into a collectively perceptible soundscape. This "trauma translation" mechanism aligns with Veit Erlmann's (2004) concept of the "auditory unconscious"—when language fails to articulate violence, non-verbal sounds become vessels of memory and pain. [8]

Finally, through rigorous rhythmic synchronization, dispersed individual "hoo" sounds coalesce into a polyphonic acoustic community. The leader's bamboo strikes establish a

foundational rhythm, which participants follow to calibrate their vocal intervals, creating a wave-like superimposition effect akin to religious chanting. This technical coordination not only intensifies the protest's ritualistic quality but also, through the physical resonance of sound waves (phase locking), produces a collective subjectivity wherein "one voice becomes all voices" [9] (Nancy, 2007). In this sense, "hoo" transcends mere protest instrumentality, materializing what Judith Butler (2015) terms "bodies in alliance"—individual vulnerability is transformed into political resilience [10] through acoustic aggregation.

2.3 The Militarization and De-violencing of Rhythm: Dialectical Unity in Protest Aesthetics

The rhythmic design of this performance art manifests a profound dialectical unity: through highly disciplined collective striking movements, the performers simultaneously appropriate the deterrence of military aesthetics while achieving an ethical reconstitution of political resistance through rigorous nonviolent constraints. This unique grammar of protest can be analyzed through the following dimensions:

First, from the perspective of visual politics in bodily discipline, the seventy women formed a precisely arranged rectangular formation. Through repeated rehearsals, they developed synchronized sonic and corporeal languages, creating a cohesive unity. This highly standardized bodily practice directly echoes the somatic techniques of military drills, generating visual impact comparable to parade formations. However, the crucial distinction lies in this: whereas weapons in military training (e.g., rifles) are ultimately directed at human bodies, the bamboo sticks here remain vertically oriented toward the ground. This "redirection of weaponry" accomplishes a formal retention yet substantive neutralization of violent potential.

The performance's creative transformation of traditional protest symbols warrants particular attention. Within South Asia's complex history, the bamboo stick (lathi) has long functioned as an actual weapon, with the British colonial-era "lathi charge" becoming emblematic of violent suppression. [11] (Arnold, 2024) This performance achieves a semantic recalibration of protest tools by redirecting their target from human bodies to the ground: the bamboo stick ceases to be an instrument of violence, instead becoming an "acoustic ruler" measuring justice's absence. Each strike marks a moment of judicial non-response, a transformation that substantiates Rancière's (2004) concept of "redistribution of the sensible" - challenging established political imagination through reconfiguring the perceptual frameworks of material symbols. [12]

From a performance anthropology perspective, this fusion of militarized form and nonviolent essence creates a novel mode of ritualized protest. Participants elevate actual conflict into symbolic spectacle through highly stylized movements. This ritual frame simultaneously maintains protest's solemnity while preventing violent escalation through aesthetic distance. As Turner's (1982) ritual theory demonstrates, such performances construct "liminal spaces" where social contradictions find symbolic resolution without precipitating actual destruction. [13]

The political efficacy of this protest strategy manifests in its counter-logic against state violence apparatuses. When confronting systemic violence, performers employ self-imposed discipline (maintaining precise formations, synchronized rhythms and movements) to deprive authorities of moral justification for suppression under the pretext of "maintaining order". This approach perfectly aligns with Sharp's (1973) theory of "political jiu-jitsu" in nonviolent resistance - absorbing oppressive energy and transforming it into moral advantage. [14]

From a cross-cultural comparative perspective, this "armed nonviolence" strategy engages in dialogue with innovative protests worldwide. Examples include Ukraine's "Femen" using naked bodies as "weapons" [15] (FEMEN, 2024), or Thai anti-coup demonstrators adopting the "three-

finger salute" (symbolizing peace, freedom, and fraternity) as an alternative to violent confrontation. [16] (Vision Thai, 2020) These cases similarly demonstrate the form/substance dialectic in protest aesthetics.

2.4 The Visual Dimension of Sonic Politics: Semiotic Tension Between Traditional Saris and Bamboo Sticks

In *Himmati Mai*, the performers' traditional saris juxtaposed with bamboo sticks construct a semiotic system charged with tension, whose deeper signification can be decoded through a Barthesian framework. The sari, as a quintessential signifier of Bangladeshi femininity, has long been encoded within Barthes' (1990) system of fashion semiotics [17] as symbolizing "docility", "domesticity" and "traditional virtue" through its flowing silk texture, muted color saturation, and draped wearing style.

Yet through its deliberate pairing with bamboo sticks, the performance radically reconfigures this garment's signified dimension - the sari's delicate fabric no longer indexes submissive corporeality, but rather, through its visual collision with rigid implements, generates a new mythology of "confrontational grace".



Figure 3. *Himmati Mai* (2022), in Dhaka, Bangladesh, designed and organized by Reetu Sattar
Website Source: https://www.instituteforpublicart.org/case-studies/himmati-mai/

This semiotic recombination operationalizes Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957) strategy of denaturalization: when bamboo and saris create stark visual dissonance, they symbolically rupture the "pliability" mask traditionally imposed on femininity, exposing the latent political energy beneath.

Barthes posited that when signs are dislocated from their original contexts into new systems of signification, they generate revolutionary connotative detonations. [18] (Barthes, 1977) This juxtaposition's subversive power manifests particularly in its temporal dimension: the sari's sartorial traditions engaging in dialectical dialogue with the bamboo strikes' instantaneous

soundwaves creates a "duration/instantaneity" paradox that precisely metaphors the dual necessities of women's resistance - cultural continuity and tactical immediacy. Through such material-semiotic reconfiguration, the performers not only challenge Islamicate societies' monolithic coding of femininity, but creatively expand Barthesian semiotics' explanatory scope for cross-cultural resistance studies. When Third World women transform indigenous objects' material properties (bamboo's acoustic parameters, saris' textile data) into political grammar, they are effectively waging profound "semiotic guerrilla warfare".

2.5 The Medial Dimension of Sonic Politics: The Continuity of Sound Archives

The performance art *Himmati Mai* was recorded and circulated through social media, transforming an ephemeral act into a repeatable "sonic monument". As an audio archive, this "sonic monument" possesses a distinctive temporal politics. Unlike the static permanence of traditional monuments, these digital sound documents continuously generate new meanings through users' repeated playback, remix creations (such as protest rhythm remixes produced by DJs), and contextualized usage (like collective listening in women's safe houses). This dynamic archival practice echoes Caswell's (2021) theory of "living archives", wherein sound functions simultaneously as historical evidence and an ongoing political catalyst, with continuity and variability constituting the essential characteristics of sound archives. [19]

2.6 An Alternative Political Praxis

In Bangladesh, where women's voices are often confined to domestic spheres, this performance art forcibly reconfigured the sonic ecology of outdoor public spaces through high-decibel collective sound-making. The sharp, high-frequency sounds produced by bamboo strikes and women's vocalizations of "hoo" penetrated the urban soundscape with remarkable efficacy, ensuring the protest's audibility would not be drowned out by ambient noise.

This artistic intervention effectively achieved an acoustic intrusion into male-dominated spaces, facilitating the transference of women's voices—whether mediated through external objects like bamboo sticks or emanating directly from their bodies through vocal cords—from private to public sonic domains. The performers induced in their oppressors a visceral experience of being surrounded and suffocated by women's voices, accomplishing this not through violence but via sound's inescapable physical presence.

Whereas traditional protests often rely on static assemblies (such as sit-ins), *Himmati Mai* created a dynamic acoustic field through mobile sound sources (participants could walk while performing, forming processional configurations). This innovative approach amplified the work's impact, extending its reach and fostering broader social resonance, thereby actualizing a form of mobile sonic resistance.

3. The Construction of Sisterhood: Affective Bonds and the Generation of Political Agency

Within patriarchal social structures, women are often confined to private spheres, their interpersonal connections systematically weakened. Yet Bangladeshi artist Reetu Sattar's performance project *Himmati Mai*, which organized seventy previously unacquainted women to collectively confront gender-based violence through artistic action, reveals the generative process through which sisterhood emerges as a form of political power. This phenomenon invites critical examination of how women transcend social barriers to forge bonds of solidarity rooted in shared trauma and collective resistance.

3.1 Selective Invitation: The Preliminary Formation of Sisterly Alliance

Reetu Sattar's meticulous selection of participants constituted in itself a nascent construction of sisterhood. The artist deliberately recruited women across social strata, encompassing diverse class backgrounds, professional occupations and religious affiliations.

This intentional heterogeneity disrupted Bangladesh's normative social divisions where women are typically segregated by both caste hierarchies and Islamic jurisprudence - where upper-class women rarely interact with slum-dwelling victims of violence, and Muslim and Hindu women seldom collaborate due to religious differences. By foregrounding "gender violence" as a universal experience, the artist transformed individual distinctions into foundations for collective identity. The persuasion process further intensified affective bonds.

Sattar had to directly confront participants' fears of public protest (potential retaliatory consequences) and their unfamiliarity with performance art (as an unconventional resistance format). Through painstaking effort, she enabled these strangers to recognize their suffering not as isolated incidents but as manifestations of structural gender oppression.

This dual process of selection and persuasion embodied emotional labor in its truest sense - labor that yielded significant returns as evidenced by the seventy volunteers who ultimately joined what became both a "collective healing ritual" and a "shoulder-to-shoulder resistance ceremony".

3.2 Rehearsal as Social Laboratory: From Technical Coordination to Affective Community

The rehearsal process emerged as a crucial incubator for sisterhood formation. Participants were required to synchronize two distinct actions: the physical rhythm of bamboo strikes against the ground and the unified vocalization of "hoo" sounds. This demand for precise coordination necessitated continuous interaction among the women - adjusting force intensity, calibrating temporal sequences, and mutually correcting imperfections. As sociologist Silvia Federici (2012) has observed, collective labor practices (such as traditional women's weaving or agricultural work) have historically fostered female solidarity. [20] In this context, the rehearsals functioned as metaphorical collective labor, reconstructing through bodily collaboration the feminine bonds systematically severed by patriarchal structures.

Of particular significance was the strategic utilization of leisure time during rehearsals. In Bangladeshi society, women's spare time is typically monopolized by domestic chores and childrearing obligations. The voluntary investment of this precious time into rehearsal constituted an act of rebellion against patriarchal temporal economies. By sacrificing personal time for collective creation, the participants' choice inherently carried the symbolic weight of pledging allegiance to their sisterly alliance.

3.3 The Performative Moment: Public Manifestation of Sisterhood

The May 28, 2022 performance marked the transformation of sisterhood from private bonds to public declaration. The synchronized striking of seventy bamboo sticks served dual symbolic functions: it simultaneously mimicked the gavel of courtroom justice (voicing protest against judicial failure) and recalled traditional Bengali women's collective defense postures when wielding sticks against wild animals. This semiotic duality encoded individual anger into a language of collective resistance. Meanwhile, the rhythmic variations in the "hoo" vocalizations preserved distinct individual voices within the chorus - demonstrating that sisterhood demands not homogenization but rather "unity in diversity" [21] (Ahmed, 2017). This cathartic moment signaled the emergence of a temporal sisterhood community.

Reetu Sattar's performance project substantiates that sisterhood is not naturally occurring but actively constructed through shared purpose, emotional labor, and physical collaboration. [22] (Ahmed, 2017) When the seventy women struck the ground with bamboo sticks, they were not merely knocking on the doors of the judicial system, but more profoundly, breaking down the walls between each other's hearts. Although initiated through an artistic project, this solidarity gained enduring significance through its confrontation with structural violence, offering South Asian feminist movements an innovative organizational paradigm of "art as catalytic medium and solidarity power" [23] (Kester, 2011).

4. The Paradox of Institutional Change: The Temporal Tension Between Performance Art's Ephemerality and Legal Reform's Longue Durée

Performance art as a form of political resistance inherently embodies a structural contradiction between "instantaneous impact" and "enduring transformation". In the case of *Himmati Mai*, seventy women created a potent theatrical event through highly ritualized bamboo-striking performance, whose acoustic force and visual spectacle momentarily ruptured the habitual perceptual frameworks of Bangladesh's public sphere.

Yet between this aesthetic politics' temporal intensity and the sustained momentum required for judicial reform lies an irreconcilable temporal disjuncture - performance art's "eventness" [24] (Badiou, 2007) is fundamentally non-cumulative and unrepeatable, whereas legal transformation demands continuous legislative lobbying, precedent accumulation, and enforcement monitoring. This paradox substantiates Rancière's (2010) fundamental conflict between "the political" and "the police": artistic action may temporarily tear the established distribution of the sensible, but institutional machinery possesses formidable self-reparative inertia. [25]

A more profound contradiction resides in performance art's dependence on immediate theatrical presence and subsequent media "spectacularization", while legal reform requires disenchanted technical negotiation. This ontological disparity causes significant dissipation of activist energy during its transition from streets to legislative chambers.

Yet this doesn't render artistic action futile. The "symbolic capital" generated by the performance may still bridge the ephemeral-institutional divide through multiple afterlife trajectories - for instance, local female political candidates adopting the performance's audio as campaign ringtones, thereby transforming artistic protest into political mobilization tools.

Mouffe's (2013) "agonistic democracy" strategy [26] proves viable here: when direct institutional breakthrough is obstructed, artistic action cultivates latent conditions for legal change by altering societal cognitive schemas. This dialectic suggests moving beyond binary "effective/ineffective" judgments to instead examine how protest art functions as an "affective catalyst" [27] in protracted institutional transformation - much like how each bamboo strike simultaneously dissipates while propagating vibrations through the ground, social change requires both instantaneous force and enduring reverberations.

5. Performance Art as Social Sculpture: Reconstructing and Expanding Beuysian Theory

Within Joseph Beuys' theoretical framework of *Soziale Plastik* (Social Sculpture) [28], the performance art piece *Himmati Mai* demonstrates new possibilities for socially engaged artistic practice in contemporary contexts. Beuys' proposition that *Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler* (Every human is an artist) [29] finds cross-cultural validation here - through highly organized collective striking, seventy non-professional performers transformed social protest itself into a creative

formative process with aesthetic dimensions. This artistic action transcends the material stasis of traditional sculpture, instead shaping what might be termed an "acoustic-social complex", thereby actualizing Beuys' concept of *Soziale Plastik*.

Particularly noteworthy is how the participants' rectangular formation constituted a temporary social sculpture space, engaging in transhistorical dialogue with Beuys' urban planning aesthetics in *7000 Oaks*. At this planetary antipode, the biological temporality of plant growth appears compressed into the immediate political efficacy of soundwave transmission.

Examined through the lens of material politics, this work significantly expands the conceptual boundaries of "social sculpture" as an artistic medium. While Beuys privileged organic materials like fat and felt for their spiritual symbolism, Reetu Sattar's selection of bamboo sticks - materials embodying both rigidity and flexibility - serves as a perfect material analogue for the lived realities of Third World women. When seventy bamboo sticks strike the ground in unison with seventy voices articulating the "hoo" sound, the resulting acoustic phenomenon constitutes not merely an auditory sculpture, but through its vibrational waves directly interfacing with spectators' physiological perception, materializes Beuys' ideal of sensory integration within his "expanded concept of art" (erweiterter Kunstbegriff) [30]. This transformation of acoustic energy into political potency powerfully validates the core proposition of social sculpture theory: that art should become the formative force (plastische Kraft) [31] capable of reshaping the social organism.

From an anthropological perspective, the work incorporates indigenous cultural symbols into the global discourse of "social sculpture". The juxtaposition of saris and bamboo sticks in the performance creatively transforms Beuys' fascination with European primitivism, replacing it with aesthetic resources from South Asian agrarian civilization. This distinctive configuration provides "social sculpture" with localized epistemological support, circumventing the pitfalls of Western-centric transplantation. Such localized practice offers a Global South corrective to "social sculpture" theory—when the acoustic phenomena generated by *Himmati Mai* confront both patriarchal discipline and urban noise pollution, the work not only shapes social relations but fundamentally restructures the auditory political ecology of postcolonial cities.

Ultimately, the work reveals the essential nature of "social sculpture" as an ongoing process. Through potential digital archiving (blockchain authentication) of the performance's acoustic records and annual commemorative reenactments, *Himmati Mai* could render intangible social transformation perceptible through artistic form. This suggests that contemporary "social sculpture" derives value not from momentary theatrical effects, but from its capacity to initiate self-replicating social formation mechanisms—true social sculpture remains perpetually in the present progressive tense.

6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

6.1 Methodological Constraints: Absence of Fieldwork and In-Depth Interviews

The analysis of *Himmati Mai* in this study primarily relies on publicly available materials, archival documentation, and theoretical extrapolation, lacking firsthand ethnographic fieldwork or in-depth interviews with organizer Reetu Sattar and participants. This limitation introduces several critical gaps:

Uncaptured Individual Experiences: The specific backgrounds of the seventy participants (age, occupation, religious affiliation), their motivations for joining, and personal transformations post-performance remain underexplored. For instance, did rehearsal processes foster mutual support networks? Did participation alter any woman’s understanding of or

response to gender-based violence? Such qualitative data are essential to deciphering the micro-level construction of sisterhood.

Invisible Emotional Labor: Reetu Sattar's strategies for persuasion and coordination—such as bridging religious divides or scheduling rehearsals—can only be inferred indirectly. Participant interviews might reveal how "trauma narrative exchanges" fortified collective identity—e.g., whether private conversations during breaks served as emotional outlets.

Uncharted Long-Term Impact: The "ripple effects" of performance art demand longitudinal observation. Have participants translated their experience into community initiatives (e.g., anti-violence advocacy groups)? Have local women's organizations adapted its protest aesthetics? These questions necessitate follow-up fieldwork.

6.2 Potential Oversimplifications in Theoretical Framework

Cross-Cultural Theoretical Adaptation: This study employs Western theoretical frameworks (e.g., Beuys' "social sculpture", Barthesian semiotics) to analyze artistic praxis in South Asian contexts, potentially overlooking the distinctiveness of indigenous cultural logics. For instance, do bamboo sticks carry uniform symbolic meanings across Bangladesh's rural and urban spheres? Does the semiotic tension of saris vary significantly along class lines? Future research must incorporate Bangladeshi aesthetic theories (e.g., resistance traditions in folk art) to address these gaps.

Under-Examined Complexities of Sisterhood: The analysis presupposes that "shared trauma" automatically fosters solidarity, yet material realities of class and religious differences may obstruct affective bonding. Ethnographic research might reveal concrete cases of conflict negotiation (e.g., how Hindu and Muslim participants mediated cultural differences), enabling a more dialectical examination of sisterhood's construction processes.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Tracing the "Social Life" of Performance Art: Subsequent studies should employ ethnographic methods including field observations, in-depth interviews, and participatory documentation to examine how the performance is memorialized, appropriated, or reconfigured within local communities.

Comparative Analyses: Systematic comparisons between *Himmati Mai* and other feminist artistic interventions in South Asia (e.g., Pakistan's "dance protests" or India's "Red Sari Movement") could elucidate region-specific aesthetics of resistance.

Digital Ethnographic Supplementation: Investigating the dissemination patterns and viewer commentaries of performance videos across social media platforms would reveal how global audiences interpret this localized protest, thereby facilitating critical examination of transnational feminist solidarity's possibilities and constraints.

6.4 Concluding Remarks: From Textual Analysis to Engaged Scholarship

The limitations of this study reveal a fundamental challenge in researching artistic activism: theoretical interpretation cannot substitute for grounded, localized experience. Future research must evolve toward "engaged scholarship", collaborating directly with local artists and participants to transform academic analysis into practical instruments for social change—such as co-creating archival projects documenting sonic protests or developing performance-based therapeutic workshops addressing gender violence. Only through such praxis-oriented approaches can academic inquiry truly resonate with the core ethos of *Himmati Mai*: that art

functions not merely as a weapon of critique, but more fundamentally as a formative force for societal reconstruction.

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