

# “Drawing the Line”: A Media Analysis of the Relationship between Art and Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution in Colombia

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## INTRODUCTION

Art has been used as a tool in the fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding all over the world and throughout different cultures. This is also true in Colombia, where structural and physical violence has remained alarmingly and stubbornly high throughout the country, yet art still thrives. This study examines the role of artists and art-based initiatives in conflict resolution efforts and sustainable peace practices in Colombia.

### Main objectives

- ❖ to garner better understanding of how and why art is used to promote healing in communities
- ❖ examined how art is incorporated into formal and informal conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes

## Lasswell’s Method

Framework for critiquing and deconstructing elements involved in mass communication.

Model asks 5 questions:

- 1) *Who?*- person sending message
- 2) *Says What?*- message being communicated
- 3) *In Which Channel?*- means by which information is transmitted from sender to receiver
- 4) *To Whom?*- audience receiving message
- 5) *With what effect?*- Effects of message being communicated

## METHODS

Objective achieved by using a **Media Analysis** applying 3 of 5 questions from **Lasswell's Method** on 6 sources from 3 types of mass media. **Qualitative Research Method** used to observe how media portrays art/artmaking in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Colombia. Analysis done by examining the presence, meanings, concepts, and words in media examples.

### Chosen Questions

- ❖ *Who?*
- ❖ *Says What?*
- ❖ *In What Channel?*

### Media Types

- ❖ Online Videos
- ❖ Online Articles
- ❖ Online Magazines

## RESULTS

### Summary of Results

Question	Part 1: Sources 1-3	Part 2: Sources 4-6
Who?	<p><b>Work Background-</b> 1: freelance journalist/editor 2: news reporter/ correspondent 3: development impact analyst</p> <p><b>Education- Undergraduate degree</b></p> <p>1: Secondary Education and Teaching + History 2: Anthropology 3: Politics, Philosophy and Economics + Political Science and Government <b>Masters Degree</b> 1: History + Anthropology 2: None 3: Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies, Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution <b>Specialist Degree</b> 1: None 2: Cultural Studies 3: None</p>	<p><b>Work Background-</b> 4: ethnographer/ program manager/adjunct professor 5: researcher/ practitioner 6: Chinese Sponsored Cable TV news service</p> <p><b>Education- Undergraduate Degree-</b> 4: Cultural Anthropology + Philosophy 5: Not available 6: Not Applicable <b>Masters-</b> 4: Not specified 5: Not Available 6: Not Applicable <b>PHD-</b> 4: None 5: Social and Cultural Anthropology 6: Not Applicable</p>
Says What?	<p><b>Overall Messages:</b> art initiatives raise awareness, serve as therapeutic outlet for victims, and enables individuals to participate in preservation of memory and peacebuilding efforts in Colombia</p> <p><b>Language Used-</b> 1: "thought provoking", "raw and intimate", "striking" 2: "healing", "united", "transform sorrow into power", "we want to play a part in peace through art" 3: "neuroscience", "pedagogy", "communication", "problem-solving", "empathy"</p>	<p><b>Overall Message:</b> art and art initiatives serve as a way to give voice to the voiceless and address most pressing issues that affect individuals and community. Government and formal processes need to incorporate art and artists for successful social transformation and peace.</p> <p><b>Language Used-</b> 4: "transformative", "exuberant", "social transformation" "de-escalation" "reconstructed", "resilience" 5: "drive out the spectres of insecurity and violence", "Let's be realistic: we cannot save anyone through art", "peacebuilding can benefit from the arts", "our voices must not fall silent" 6: "magical", "full of life and hope", "trauma"</p>
In What Channel?	<p><b>Medium-</b> 1: Online Magazine (Medium Traffic), Right/Center bias, rated overall HIGH reliability by Media Bias/Fact Check 2: Online Video (traffic info not available), rated MIXED on factual reporting due to being questionable source with extreme bias by Media Bias/ Fact Check 3: Online Article (no information about traffic) overall score of 93/100 on Charity Navigator</p>	<p><b>Medium-</b> 4: Online magazine (Medium Traffic) rated HIGH for factual reporting by Media Bias/Fact Check Left-Center bias 5: Print and online Magazine (traffic info not available), information not available about reliability or bias 6: Online Video (low traffic) posted by channel with high subscriber count- 2.72 million- rated Questionable by Media Bias/Fact Check, Left/Centered bias and seen as propaganda</p>

- 🇨🇴 1/3 communicators native Colombians
- 🌐 6/6 reported on art initiatives in Colombia created by Colombians
- 🎓 5/6 of communicators qualified by education and experience to share their message
- 🗣️ Art reported to preserve memory/history, help social and individual healing, transform trauma into power for victims, and enables Colombians to participate in peacebuilding
- 🔥 Initiatives mostly based in communities with extreme violence and trauma, resulting in community healing and social rehabilitation through art and artmaking
- 📰 Online Magazines and Online Articles most common and trustworthy media mediums used to transmit information about art in Colombia
- 📺 Online Videos posted/created by least reliable sources
- 👤 6/6 sources included interviews of artists, community members, activists, and other individuals knowledgeable about art/artmaking and impact on peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts

## DISCUSSION

Art and artmaking in Colombia’s past and present have and continue to play a vital role in peacebuilding efforts and sustainable conflict resolution because of, but not limited to, the following:

- ❖ It allows citizens from all walks of life to participate in peacebuilding efforts,
- ❖ Serves as a therapeutic means for victims to express themselves, develop coping mechanisms and resilience, and share their trauma
- ❖ Repurposes blank spaces such as walls, buildings, and other infrastructure into beautiful spaces with art that retains memory, demonstrates that peace is possible, and keeps morals high for the future, and
- ❖ Serves as an accessible and impactful means of peaceful activism to critique government or draw attention to pressing social issues.

Mural in San Carlos, Colombia, depicting scene of extreme violence which represents town’s tragic history of being a battleground for territorial control between guerrilla g and paramilitary groups.

