The Aesthetics of Global Protest

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This book is an attempt to better understand how protest movements around the world express themselves, raise awareness, and communicate with diverse publics. The book began through research conducted on the ‘Aesthetics of Protest: Visual Culture and Communication in Turkey’ project, which was generously funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in the UK from 2016 to 2018. The project brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars to explore the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013, specifically how protestors engaged with digital media, visual culture, art, and aesthetics. We are grateful for the constructive input from our advisory board members: Gillian Rose, Guy Julier, Dan Mercea, and Clare Saunders.

As we presented our research in diverse places, including Lebanon, India, Colombia, the UK, Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, Turkey, Norway, Denmark, the USA and Spain, we saw parallels and overlaps with other protest movements around the world. The editors are incredibly grateful to those scholars, artists, and activists in this volume who joined us to examine how protestors perform and communicate their ideas and interests through aesthetics.

The key ideas and outline for the book was presented at a workshop at Cosmos (The Centre on Social Movement Studies) at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Florence, Italy, in December 2017. The introduction for this book was written at Cosmos, where Aidan McGarry was a visiting scholar in November 2017. We are very grateful to Donatella della Porta and Alice Mattoni for hosting us and providing the space for reflection and concentration. The editors presented the research for the book and several chapters at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) in December 2017 and received generous feedback from scholars and activists. Our thanks to them. Finally, sincere thanks to the wonderful staff and fellows at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) in Amsterdam where Aidan McGarry was a EURIAS/Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow in 2018/2019.

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The book would not be possible without the input of our research participants who engaged with us, sometimes at their own personal risk. The book is inspired by and dedicated to those scholars, activists, journalists,
and artists who live and work under repressive and authoritarian regimes but who courageously shed light on injustices and struggle to ensure that their voices are heard.

Aidan McGarry, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Olu Jenzen, and Umut Korkut
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