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# Forbidden Activism: Feminist Art Activism and State Control

**Eiman Husain**

*University Of Portsmouth, United Kingdom*

## Abstract

Despite the expanding body of research on feminist activism, much of it neglects the lived experiences of feminists engaged in digital activism within the MENA region (Melki & Mallat, 2014; Khamis, 2011). This paper addresses this gap by focusing on the persistent lack of recognition for feminists and women's voices, specifically regarding their activities, motivations, and how they navigate political landscapes. To do so, I examine the evolving relationship between feminist art activism and politics, emphasising feminist participants' discourses and the complexities of their involvement in digital spaces.

While it is challenging to construct a comprehensive map of collective feminist genealogies, it is possible to identify key and parallel narratives of feminist activism in Kuwait. It centres on feminist activists' subjectivities, aiming to uncover their authentic experiences and to reveal the multifaceted nature of engaging in feminist digital activism. Such focus is essential for understanding the act of feminist activism itself and its interaction with Kuwait's political environment, offering a more nuanced perspective on women's struggles.

My goal is to reposition these voices from the margin to the centre of feminist data analysis, highlighting the intricate relationships between feminist activism and various political and social actors, such as politicians, MPS, religious activists, established women's organisations, and others involved in feminist performance. To capture this dynamic, I adopt a lively discursive approach that emphasises the lived experiences of feminists while considering the broader multi-discursive landscape in Kuwait. This approach underscores the agency of feminists and their interactions with diverse social and political actors engaged in feminist activism. Such a theoretical framework equally emphasises the agency of feminist activists, their social media discourse, and the tangible impact of their activism both online and offline.

**Keywords:** Digital activism, feminists digital activism, Kuwait, art activism