



BLOG, REFLECTIONS, YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS /// FRIDAY 19 MARCH 2021

Color Up Peace: Photos and Coloring Pages for Peace

By Lisa Glybchenko, PhD student in International Relations, founder of Color Up Peace

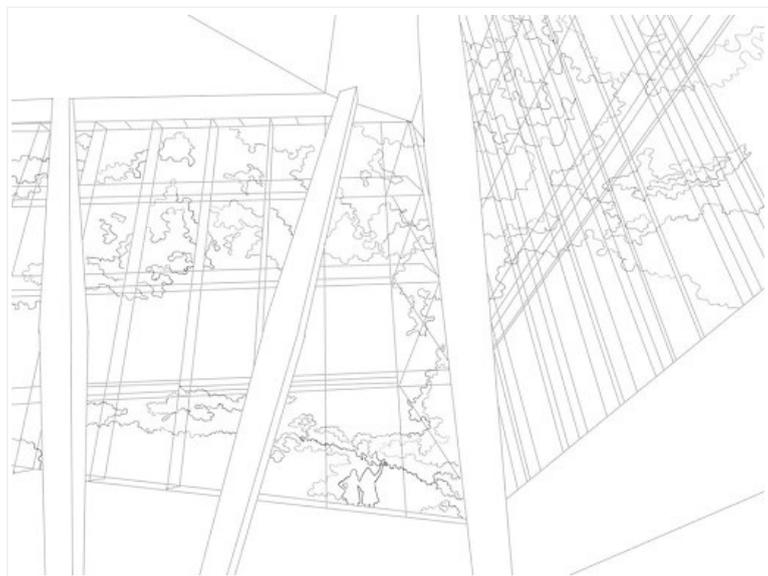
My recent engagement with Changing the Story's Youth Research Board made me once again, and slightly differently, reflect on the project I started as an undergraduate student at the American University in Bulgaria four and a half years ago. Helping to select the participants of the Youth Research Board and getting to know their stories of effort and impact made me think back to why I started Color Up Peace, how few things went according to plan and how much I learned through the unexpected. So much, that I am now building up on the lessons learned in my PhD research on visual peace technology.

Color Up Peace invites people from all over the world to submit photographs of what peace represents to them (some elements which inspire thoughts of peace, something which may symbolize peace, something potentially crucial for peace efforts based on the experiences of the photographers). I turn these photos into coloring pages and make them freely available on the Color Up Peace [website](#). Someone else (or the photographer, or me) colors the coloring page and so continues the transformation of the original vision of peace (see photos and the associated coloring pages on the [Facebook](#) page of Color Up Peace). The photographs are always posted together with the photographers' stories of why and how these photos relate to peace. Below, I include examples of such visual artistic transformations...

A photo I submitted myself, taken in Oslo, Norway. (I share my own vision first, out of ethical considerations: to support all the participants who showed their courage and vulnerability by sharing photographs and engaging with the project.) The interplay between the heavy architectural lines (from the inside of the Oslo Opera House) and the lightness of the sky and the people walking on the roof, to me, is a metaphor for the 'moral imagination'.



Original Photo by Lisa Glybchenko.



Lisa Glybchenko: I created the coloring page by drawing the outlines digitally.



Colored by one of the participants of the workshop for the FLEX CRs of Western Ukraine.

The concept and the practice of the moral imagination, articulated John Paul Lederach (2005), refers to the capacity to recognize the opportunities for constructive change within the conflict realities. Taking such an opportunity, one would create an arrangement for peace which, while rooted in the context and realities of the specific conflict, would also reach to what does not yet exist (peace). This arrangement would enable the stakeholders to build a network of relationships where all former sides of the conflict would live peacefully and be able to enjoy their life. I built the following parallels between Color Up Peace and the ideas of Lederach:

- *The original photograph can be considered a reality in which a vision of and for peace is rooted.* It is not necessarily the same as the conflict realities Lederach talked about, since the project from the start asks for photographs of what peace represents to the photographers. Yet, the parallels highlight how depicting peace is challenging and that any attempt to depict it, due to the process-like nature of peace, would reflect only one-step towards peace or an aspiration of it. Peace work is ongoing.
- *The coloring page then is a platform for the moral imagination to roam visually.* The outlines (manually drawn to be very similar, but purposefully never identical) represent the roots in the reality of the photograph and give the coloring artist plenty of opportunities to add visual features, delete some of the existing ones and transform the outline through the choice of colors.
- *The filled-in coloring page is a product of the moral imagination:* something that is rooted in what is and that reaches towards what is not there yet – expressing a collective aspiration for peace as a visual and social experience. If combining different visions, finding a common ground and expressing creativity is possible visually in Color Up Peace, it should be possible on the ground – in the communities where the participants find themselves. *The goal of Color Up Peace is to show that peaceful change is possible – and that it can be fun and rewarding to work on, just like with the coloring pages.*

Would you take part? The project is always open for new submissions.

For more about Color Up Peace and the original longer blog post, visit [Peace with Visual Qualities](#).

TAGS: PEACE PHOTOGRAPHY VISUAL ARTS YOUTH

