



# Visual Communication Strategies on Instagram: Analyzing the Slow Factory's Engagement with Social-Political Issues

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## Abstract

Social media has evolved into a strategic space for communicating socio-political issues to the younger generation. Visual communication design plays an important role in influencing audience engagement through the presentation of information that is concise, easy to understand, and aesthetically appealing. This study analyzed the effectiveness of visual communication strategies used by the Slow Factory Instagram account (@slowfactory) in raising issues such as the climate crisis, racial justice, colonialism, and sustainability. Using a qualitative approach through content analysis and visual observation, this study identifies that The Slow Factory can enhance the ability of young audiences to understand complex issues through structured and easily digestible visual narratives.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is an integral part of everyday human life. As social beings, humans constantly interact to exchange information, express ideas, and build social relationships (Ridha et al., 2025; Sahnan, 2024). In its development, communication is no longer limited to physical face-to-face interactions but has expanded into the digital space. Social reality is now integrated with social media, where platforms such as Instagram have become a new public space for the community, especially the younger generation, to consume the social and political realities that occur around them (Maulida et al., 2024; Noorikhsan et al., 2023; Pamungkas et al., 2024; Parnando & Hariatiningsih, 2025). This phenomenon shows that communication has transformed into a combination of physical interaction and visual interaction in the virtual world.

In the digital age, communication can now be defined as a process of human interaction that involves the understanding of information (Alamsyah et al., 2024; Fajriah, 2024; Prisgunanto, 2018). One form of communication that has filled the digital space is a collection of information containing facts about all events occurring around the world. With the entry of news into the digital realm, such as social media, information can be disseminated more quickly and widely. According to data from We are Social, 83.1% of the average population

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uses the internet to search for information, 57.1% of users use social media as a means of communication with family, and 58.9% use it only to fill their spare time. Various types of information delivery have circulated on the internet in various formats, such as short videos, long videos in the form of animations or podcasts, and static images in the form of text and pictures. With the existence of various social media applications, people can choose and enjoy the news they like (Hidayatullah & Winduwati, 2023).

Slow Factory (@theslowfactory) is an environmental and social justice nonprofit organization founded in 2012. According to [slowfactory.earth](https://slowfactory.earth), Slow Factory is an educational institution and organization focused on climate innovation that empowers communities. The organization uses a design-based approach to respond to the climate crisis through the lens of social equity and human rights. Their main strategy is called Theory of Change, which consists of three pillars: i) Open Education, which prioritizes the voices of marginalized groups and anti-colonial education, ii) Systems Design that is more human and earth-centered, and iii) Narrative Change, which aims to change public perception and behavior through more strategic communication. Through these three pillars, Slow Factory seeks to create systemic change for planetary sustainability and collective change.

## METHODS

The methods used were paper review and digital observation through articles and social media from The Slow Factory. Observations were made on The Slow Factory's content through its Instagram account, which focuses on the visual design of content in conveying socio-political issues in the world. Specifically, this study limited the scope of analysis to visual design aspects, rather than the substance of the journalism material presented. The main focus of observation in this study was how graphic elements such as typography, color, and layout were processed to package complex socio-political information into an accessible presentation. The analysis emphasizes the visual strategies applied to ensure ease of reading and legibility, so that the message can be easily received by the audience (Akyuni et al., 2025; Amanda & Nawawi, 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2024, 2025; Iskandar et al., 2023; Pramesthi & Dhia, 2021; Purwantoro et al., 2021; Resnawita & Veri, 2024; Sriwahyuni et al., 2025; Suhandi et al., 2023; Valahan & Islam, 2023).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Slow Factory is a social media-based organization and educational platform that actively raises global socio-political issues. It was founded by Céline Semaan, a researcher, designer, public speaker, and Lebanese-Canadian entrepreneur. The vision of Slow Factory is to connect the fields of art, science, and history through campaigns, digital media, and online education, with the aim of making complex and distant issues more accessible to the public.

Céline Semaan utilizes visual power and aesthetic narratives in Slow Factory's digital content, making their social media accounts aesthetically appealing and functional in explaining serious issues to the younger generation. This approach allows Slow Factory to serve as a bridge between academic complexity and a communication style that is relevant to the younger generation. Big ideas are packaged in such a way that audiences can read, understand, and engage with the issues without feeling overwhelmed by jargon or rigid research structures.

Therefore, Slow Factory demonstrates that the combination of strong visual design and a deep understanding of the socio-political context makes

social media platforms an effective educational medium for a generation that craves responsive, relevant, and aesthetic content. Their success lies not only in disseminating information, but also in creating a space for discussion and reflection with their audience.

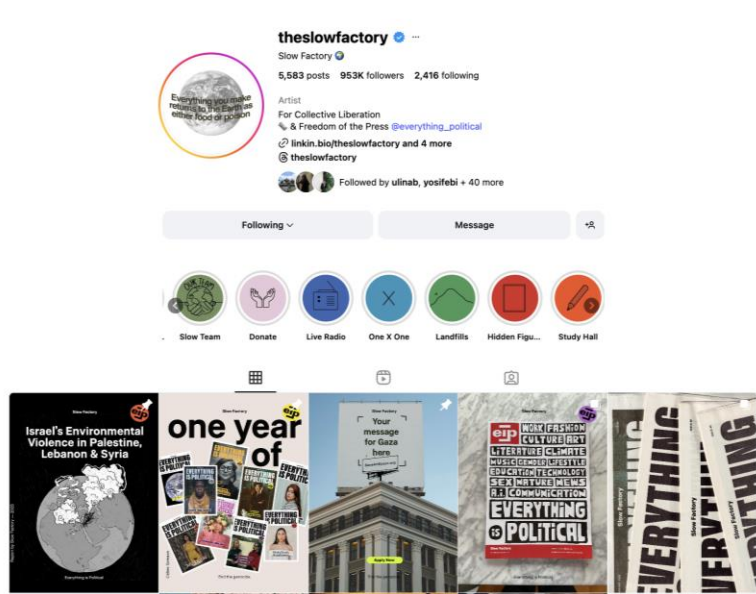


Fig 1. The Slow Factory Instagram account

Based on observations of the Instagram account @theslowfactory, it was found that the visual strategy applied was not merely pursuing aesthetics, but rather functioning as a cognitive bridge to simplify complex information. The following is an in-depth analysis based on the main visual element categories:

### Typography

Typography is a visual element that plays an important role in the visual hierarchy of the @theslowfactory account.



Fig 2. Examples of typography usage

**Typeface Usage:** The use of typefaces on @theslowfactory is consistent, especially when displaying text-heavy content. This account often uses bold, geometric sans-serif fonts, reminiscent of font families such as Helvetica or Grotesque. This choice is not only related to aesthetics, but also communication strategy. Sans-Serif gives a fresher, more straightforward, and accessible visual impression, making it more suitable for digital media than Serif fonts, which are often associated with a more formal and classic style.

**Effectiveness of reading:** In terms of readability, the title on the opening slide is usually made very large so that it becomes the most dominant visual element on the screen. This approach provides stopping power, which helps to halt the user's scrolling and quickly attract their attention. In addition, text is

generally presented in a high-contrast color combination, such as white letters on a dark background or vice versa. This strong contrast keeps the text clear and easy to read, both on small mobile screens and in less-than-ideal lighting conditions.

### Color Palette

The color approach applied by @theslowfactory shows an effort to break away from visual standards that are synonymous with environmental issues, such as the dominance of natural green and blue colors. Instead, they choose a more assertive and editorial palette with a combination of black, white, red, and beige/earth tones, as well as pop/neon color accents such as bright orange, yellow, and electric blue as accent elements. This color choice is not only aesthetic, but also strategic in building a bold and assertive communication character.

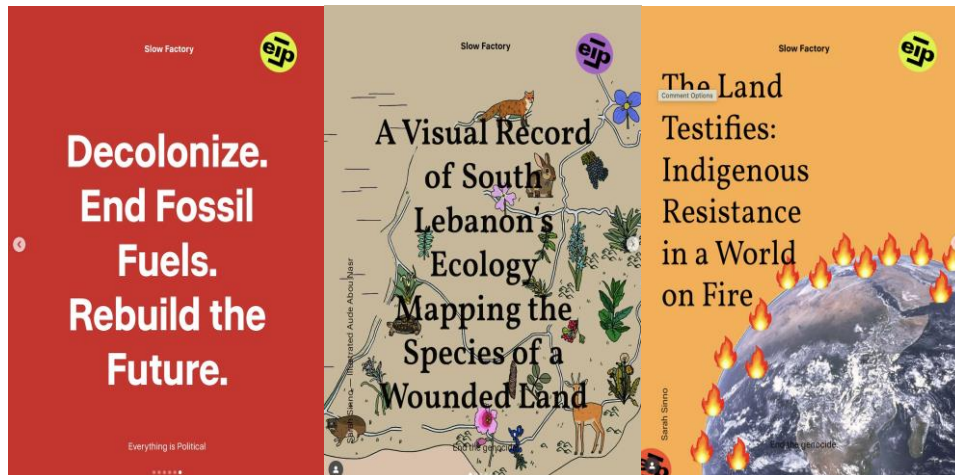


Fig 3. Example of color palette selection

Through this approach, @theslowfactory has successfully created bold visuals. The use of muted earth tones provides a warm contemporary aesthetic that is closely aligned with the visual trends of the younger generation. This color palette is commonly found in lifestyle media products, making the content feel more familiar and relevant to a younger audience that is highly sensitive to visual aesthetics. Psychologically, this strategy helps the message resonate emotionally, making complex issues feel more human, and ultimately increasing the audience's tendency to engage with and share the content.

Thus, color selection is not merely a design decision, but a visual strategy that plays an important role in creating message identity, emphasizing urgency, and aligning communication values and preferences with the characteristics of young audiences in the digital space.

### Layout



Fig 4. Hook, Body, CTA

The format used by the @theslowfactory account utilizes a micro-blogging approach through Instagram's Carousel feature. This format is a key element in the effectiveness of their communication, especially when discussing complex socio-political issues. Instead of presenting long texts in a single slide, the content is broken down into a series of more concise and structured information in 5-10 slides. The general structure of the presentation follows: i) Opening Slide (Hook): A provocative title combined with strong visuals to grab initial attention. ii) Main Slide (Body): Presentation of one main idea on each slide. iii) Closing Slide (CTA): Conclusion or call to action.

In the context of digital information, the Carousel format also supports scroll-based information consumption patterns, allowing substantial information to remain relevant, easily accessible, and shareable among online communities.

### Illustrations and Media

Topics such as humanitarian conflicts, genocide, cultural representation, and structural injustice often feel heavy and difficult to access when presented in the form of long texts. Therefore, the addition of media and illustrations serves as a medium that can attract initial attention, build empathy, and reduce the cognitive load for readers. As stated by Kress and van Leeuwen in 2006, visuals in modern media can function equally to textual language, making the selection of images a strategic and important part of the communication process (Lukitawati, 2020). Images that can convey meaning and life will be more easily accepted by the audience.



Fig 5. Media selection

@theslowfactory shows how image selection strategies can increase the effectiveness of conveying heavy narratives. By combining documentary photos, collage elements, handwriting, and graphic illustrations, their content creates a mixed media aesthetic that feels organic, non-corporate, and close to the visual aesthetics of young people. The collage aesthetic, reminiscent of zine culture in the tradition of resistance art, builds a sense of authenticity and emotional closeness. In addition, the use of documentary photography in humanitarian issues can produce affective visuality, which is the ability of visuals to trigger empathy and moral responses (Azoulay, 2021).

### Data Visualization (Infographics)

In presenting statistics and explanations about the socio-political system, the @theslowfactory account chooses a visual approach that is very minimalist and easy to understand. Instead of using complex numerical tables or technical graphs commonly found in formal research reports, their visual content utilizes simple iconography or even makes the data itself part of an easily grasped visual narrative. This approach to simplifying data is strategic for directly reaching non-academic audiences and effectively conveying key messages. This is in line with the principles of information design, which prioritize readability and clarity of

message, especially in the context of disseminating information through fast-paced and dense social media (Hutchings & Remesh, 2022).

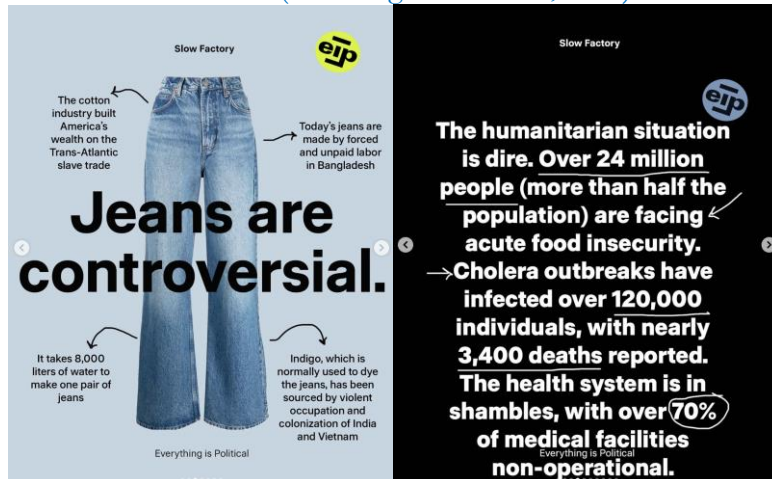


Fig 6. Data entry

A sleek and easy-to-read visual design enhances the effectiveness of visual communication in a digital environment, especially for the younger generation who are accustomed to fast and concise content (Rachmad et al., 2024; Safitri, 2025; Yaqin et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

Based on observations and visual analysis of the Instagram account @theslowfactory, it can be concluded that the visual design strategy applied plays a significant role in increasing the effectiveness of conveying socio-political information to digital audiences, especially the younger generation. Slow Factory utilizes a structured visual approach, ranging from bold typography, a contrasting color palette with contemporary accents, and a Carousel-based micro-blogging layout to break down complex issues into easily understandable pieces of information. The selection of visual media such as collages, illustrations, and documentary photography supports the creation of emotional closeness, while minimalist data visualization helps reduce the cognitive load on readers.

The strategy was implemented not only to improve readability and engagement, but also to strengthen Slow Factory's position in utilizing social media to build critical awareness. This shows that visual design is not merely an aesthetic element, but a strategic communication tool in digital activism. These findings reinforce that social media, when supported by strong design and focused narratives, can become an effective public learning space for global socio-political issues. Thus, Slow Factory serves as an example of practices that can be emulated by organizations elsewhere that are raising major issues for discussion among the younger generation.

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