



Expressions of Ombuds in a Changing World

NASHIRA ABRAHAMS

ARTIST STATEMENT

My submission is a small collection of poetry I have written, mostly in the spoken word format, which aims to explore the deeply personal and human dimensions of ombuds practice. Through this work, I seek to highlight the nuanced and often untold aspects of our work that resonate on an emotional and human level, especially in the context of a rapidly changing world.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: SEEING AND BEING SEEN

The eye is more than a vessel of sight — it is a symbol of awareness, perception, and accountability. In the role of Ombud, seeing carries a deeper meaning: it is the practice of observing with neutrality, of holding space for multiple truths, and of perceiving beyond what is immediately visible. To see is to notice patterns, silences, and the quiet threads that weave the lived experiences of a community.

Yet, being seen is equally vital. It speaks to the human need for recognition, fairness, and dignity. The Ombud's work ensures that voices — often overlooked, silenced, or marginalised — are not only heard but acknowledged in their complexity. The act of being seen restores balance, builds trust, and affirms the value of each member within the institution.

This artwork captures that dual purpose: the vibrant iris reflects diversity and complexity, while the gaze itself reminds us that justice, fairness, and truth require both the courage to look deeply and the openness to be looked upon. Seeing and Being Seen is a meditation on impartial presence, a reminder that fairness emerges in the delicate balance between observation and recognition.





BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

Neutrality, a luxury we can't afford
A stance that's often touted, yet rarely explored
In the midst of conflict, where do we stand?
Do we watch from the sidelines, or take a hand?

Justice, a concept that's subjective and grand
One man's justice, is another's demand
We're torn between empathy and
outrage, compassion and might
Trying to make sense of the chaos, day and night

Humanity, a thread that's fragile and thin
Connecting us all, yet often ripped and worn within
We're complex creatures, with hearts that beat and break
Capable of love, yet also of hate's dark ache

In the midst of conflict, where do we find our way?
Through the noise and the fire,
through the darkness and gray?
Do we cling to our biases, or strive to understand?
Can we find common ground, hand in hand?

Perhaps the answer lies not in taking a side
But in seeing the humanity, that we all can't hide
Perhaps the key is empathy, and compassion so true
To understand the complexities, and the stories anew

So let's not be fooled by the simplicity of sound
Let's dive into the depths, where complexity is found
Let's seek to understand, to listen and to see
The humanity in each other, and the complexity in me.

In the end, it's not about winning or losing the fight
It's about finding our shared humanity, shining with all its might
Let's strive to be bridges, not walls or divides
To build understanding, and let love be our guide.



THE GUARDIAN OF FAIRNESS

In the midst of conflict, where voices clash and rise
There's a figure standing firm, with a different guise
The Ombud, a guardian of fairness and right
Independent, impartial, a beacon in the night

Informal, yet powerful, a listener and a guide
Confidential, a safe space, where hearts can reside
No agenda, no bias, just a quest for the truth
A neutral ground, where conflicts can find their youth

Independence is key, a cornerstone strong and free
No allegiance to power, just a commitment to see
The facts, the feelings, the fears, and the pain
A fair and just resolution, the goal to obtain

Impartiality is the creed, no favourites or foes
Every voice is heard, every story unfolds
No judgment, no prejudice, just a willingness to explore
The complexities of conflict, and the paths that we adore

Informal, yet effective, an approach that's unique
No formalities, just a conversation that's meek
A safe space to speak, to share and to be heard
A chance to find resolution, and to let go of the word

Confidentiality is the trust, that's built and maintained
A promise to protect, the stories that are gained
A safe haven, where hearts can open up and share
A space to find healing, and to show we care

The Ombud's role is crucial, a facilitator of peace
A bridge between parties, a path to release
The burden of conflict, the weight of the past
A chance to move forward, and to find a new path at last

In a world of conflicts, the Ombud stands tall
A symbol of fairness, a champion of them all
Independent, impartial, informal, and confidential too
A guardian of justice, and a keeper of truth anew.



BEHIND THE MASK OF NEUTRALITY

Impartiality, a myth or a goal?
A state of being that's often sought, yet hard to hold
We're human, after all, with hearts that beat and sway
Can we truly remain unbiased, come what may?

We wear the cloak of neutrality,
a mask of calm
But beneath the surface, emotions churn and form
A pull towards a side, a tug on the heart
A whispered opinion, that we'd rather not impart

We're shaped by our experiences, our lives and our past
Our perspectives filtered, through the lens that will last
Can we peel away the layers, and reveal the truth within?
Or are we forever bound, by the biases that spin?

The ideal of impartiality, a guiding light
A beacon in the darkness, that shines so bright
But in the trenches of reality, it's hard to maintain
The line between observer and participant, blurs and wanes

We're human, with flaws and fears, with hopes and desires
Can we transcend our nature, and rise above the fires?
Or do we acknowledge our biases, and own our part?
And strive to be aware, of the lenses that shape our heart

Perhaps impartiality's not about being neutral and gray
But about recognizing our own biases, and holding them at bay
A constant awareness, a willingness to see
The complexity of issues, and the humanity in you and me

So let's not pretend,
that we're above the fray
Let's acknowledge our humanity, and strive to find a way
To be aware of our biases, and to hold them lightly too
And in the pursuit of truth, let's find a balance that's true.



MY IKIGAI'S GENTLE FLAME

In the space between, I found my way
A path that winds, yet brings me to stay
As an Ombud, I listen and guide
A bridge between, where hearts
can reside

The fire that burns, a passion so bright
To find the truth, and bring forth the light
In conflicts' darkness, I shine a beam
A neutral heart, a peaceful dream

With every voice, a story unfolds
A chance to heal, to mend the holds
That bind and hurt, that cause us pain
And find a way, to love and sustain

In this role, I find my Ikigai
A reason to be, a purpose to stay
A sense of flow, a harmony so true
A life that's meaningful, and a heart that's new

My Ikigai's gentle flame, that burns so bright
Guides me each day, through the dark of night
And in the silence, I find my voice
A whisper of peace, a heartfelt choice.



BEHIND THE FAÇADE

Flesh and blood sway hearts
Neutral masks hides inner tides
Human flaws abide



Seeing and Being Seen