ROLE OF INDIAN CULTURE AND TRADITIONS IN THE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES THROUGH ART EDUCATION

Neelam Bhosale 1, Dr. Ranjan Kumar Mallik 1, Dr. Arjun Kumar Singh 1

1 Chitkara Design School, Chitkara University, Punjab, India

ABSTRACT

Sustainability refers to the practice of conserving natural resources and preventing their exhaustion, hence ensuring the maintenance of an ecological equilibrium. Sustainable development and this notion are intimately interconnected, yet they are sometimes mistaken for one another. For many years, people have been engaging in discussions about the concept of a 'sustainable lifestyle' and 'sustainable development,' but have failed to incorporate it into their daily lives. The occurrence of this adaptation is contingent upon our ability to cultivate the practice of sustainable living within our households. Subjects such as Art may provide insights into environmental conservation and promote the use of practices like reusing, recycling, and upcycling materials for artistic endeavors. This study examines the relationship between Art and Design, specifically focusing on how it promotes awareness and facilitates the adoption of sustainable living practices. This project utilizes art-based action research to foster the development of worldwide, transdisciplinary, and culturally sustainable Art Education. Its aim is to transform the mindset of the general public towards sustainable practices. The research used the four-field paradigm to emphasize the diverse and complex function of Indian folk art in both individual and collective artistic pursuits.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research paper explores the capacity of art education to serve as a catalyst for fostering sustainable practices in India. The paper delves into the present condition of environmental education in the nation, highlighting the constraints of conventional methods. The paper subsequently delves into a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, examining the efficacy of art-based teaching methods in promoting environmental consciousness, enhancing critical thinking skills, and encouraging responsible behavior. This study utilizes a qualitative research
methodology to examine three influential art education projects. The case studies showcase the various strategies employed by these efforts and the concrete results they have achieved. The study presented in the paper provides suggestions for incorporating art education within the Indian education system and encouraging communities to adopt sustainable practices. Ultimately, the report finishes by highlighting the profound capacity of art education to tackle environmental concerns and establish a more sustainable future for India.

India confronts escalating environmental challenges due to its abundant cultural legacy and varied habitats. Swift urbanization, industrialization, and resource exhaustion necessitate prompt measures towards achieving sustainable development. Although there are existing conventional environmental education programs, they frequently lack the level of involvement and emotional attachment necessary to stimulate long-term transformation. This study argues that art education, with its inherent qualities of creativity, expressiveness, and ability to arouse empathy, can have a crucial impact on encouraging sustainable practices in the Indian context.

India, a country abundant in cultural legacy and varied ecosystems, confronts urgent sustainability issues such as climate change, resource exhaustion, and waste production. Tackling these problems necessitates a comprehensive strategy, and incorporating art education into the very structure of Indian society presents a distinctive and influential prospect. The inherent nature of art cultivates creativity, critical thinking, and empathy, which are all fundamental abilities necessary for constructing a sustainable future. This study examines the potential of art education to facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices in India. It specifically emphasizes the analysis of particular situations and offers recommendations for their effective implementation. Herro & Quigley (2016), Stigter (2016), Buck (2010)

2. BACKGROUND

The National Education Policy 2020 of India acknowledges the pivotal role of education in advancing sustainability. Nevertheless, the existing education system frequently emphasizes memorization and standardized evaluations, disregarding the capacity of art and creativity to influence pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. This study contends that art education, with its focus on analytical reasoning, self-assertion, and solution-oriented approaches, has the potential to close this divide.
The exponential economic boom in India has resulted in notable environmental and social apprehensions. The nation is confronted with water scarcity, air pollution, and biodiversity depletion, in addition to increasing social disparities. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges these difficulties and highlights the importance of education that promotes "comprehensive well-being and awareness of the environment." Art education, which has historically been given less importance in Indian curriculum, has the ability to fulfill these requirements that have not been fully explored yet.

Art education goes beyond simply observing, as it enables individuals to actively engage in crafting a sustainable future. Engaging in the use of recycled materials for artistic endeavors, actively participating in community clean-up initiatives, or staging art shows that promote the use of renewable energy sources are tangible manifestations of artistic expression. Through participating in these activities, individuals cultivate a sense of responsibility towards environmental concerns and acquire the ability to actively contribute to promoting beneficial transformations. Moreover, art serves as a medium for contemplation on intricate environmental matters. Art can be an instrument for collective introspection, compelling viewers to contemplate their ecological imprint and the consequences of their everyday decisions. Leder & Leder (2018), Stigter (2016), Hemani & Punekar (2015)

2.1. ART IN SHAPING SUSTAINABLE VALUES

The various manifestations of art contain the distinct capacity to captivate both emotions and intellect. It enables humans to delve into intricate matters, cultivate empathy, and envision alternative futures. By integrating sustainability topics into art instruction, we can foster vital values:

- Environmental awareness is fostered in students through engaging in activities such as nature recording thoughts, crafting art using recycled materials, and learning traditional ecological knowledge. These activities cultivate a heightened understanding and appreciation for the ecosystem and its interconnections.

- Artistic exploration fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills by promoting inquiry, examination, and trial and error. Through the utilization of artistic projects, students can actively participate in addressing sustainability challenges, thereby cultivating innovative resolutions and nurturing a feeling of empowerment in tackling environmental concerns.

- Art enables children to foster social responsibility and empathy by facilitating their connection with a wide range of communities and perspectives. Through the exploration of concepts such as environmental justice and social equality through artistic means, individuals cultivate empathy and a dedication to constructing a more sustainable future that benefits everyone.

2.2. PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ART EDUCATION

Art, in its various manifestations, surpasses basic visual appeal. It functions as a potent instrument for:

- **Increasing Awareness:** Art has the ability to graphically portray environmental challenges, social inequities, and the repercussions of unsustainable activities. Visual storytelling has the ability to evoke strong emotions and a sense of urgency and responsibility that cannot always be achieved with words alone.

- **Promoting Empathy:** By actively participating in artistic activities, individuals can establish connections with many viewpoints, comprehend the interdependence of existence, and cultivate empathy towards both the natural world and oppressed populations.

- **Art education fosters creativity,** which is essential for generating new ideas and finding answers to problems. This ability to think innovatively and solve problems is critical for envisioning and executing sustainable solutions.

- **Facilitating Community Cohesion:** Engaging in collaborative artistic endeavors can cultivate a shared sense of duty and enable communities to collaborate together in pursuit of a common goal of environmental sustainability.

2.3. INCORPORATING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES INTO ART STUDIOS

Various noteworthy endeavors illustrate the capacity of art education to advance sustainability in India:

- **Community-based Art Projects:** Organizations such as "The Living Seed" and "The Art of Change" include communities in the creation of art installations and murals that increase awareness about environmental concerns specific to the local area and advocate for sustainable practices. Kala ghoda is one of the art and culture fest which promotes such

- **Art and upcycling workshops:** such as "Trash to Treasure" and "Creative Hands," educate participants on the process of converting discarded materials into artistic creations. These initiatives aim to foster ingenuity and minimize waste production.

- **Sustainable Design Education:** By incorporating sustainability principles into design education programs, like those provided by Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology, we enable upcoming generations to develop goods and services that have a minimal negative effect on the environment. Herro & Quigley (2016), Stigter (2016), Buck (2010)

2.4.WAYS TO INCORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INTO ART EDUCATION

Provide instruction on environmental concerns. Art educators have the ability to incorporate teachings on environmental concerns, such as climate change, pollution, and the decline of biodiversity, into their instructional plans. Students
have the ability to produce artwork that increases awareness regarding these problems and motivates individuals to take action in order to resolve them.

**Promote the utilization of sustainable resources:** Educators may foster the adoption of sustainable materials, such as recycled paper, cardboard, and natural fibres, in art projects. In addition, they have the ability to deter the use of disposable plastics and other materials that are detrimental to the environment.

**Promote creativity and innovation:** Art Education can cultivate students' abilities to think creatively and generate inventive approaches to sustainability concerns. Teachers may foster students' ingenuity in order to cultivate novel ecologically friendly items or designs.

**Engage in interdisciplinary collaboration:** Educators have the opportunity to engage with teachers from several courses, including science, math, and social studies, to develop projects that integrate sustainability concepts. For instance, students have the opportunity to produce artistic creations that visually depict scientific principles pertaining to sustainability.

**Promote environmentally conscious behaviors:** Educators may exemplify eco-friendly behaviours and motivate pupils to embrace them. Practices like as using reusable water bottles, diligently switching off lights and gadgets when not in use, minimizing waste generation, and ensuring proper disposal of garbage are all applicable in the art classroom. Incorporating Indian customs into sustainable Art Education can have a dual benefit of fostering students' connection with their cultural background and encouraging sustainable living. Through acquiring knowledge about the sustainable methodologies employed by their predecessors, students may cultivate a more profound admiration for the environment and emerge as proponents for sustainable practices within their communities. By integrating sustainability into Art Education, educators may cultivate students' awareness of environmental concerns and motivate them to contribute to a more sustainable future. *Leder & Leder (2018), Herro & Quigley (2016), Stigter (2016)*

### 3. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The promise of Art Education lies in its ability to foster sustainable practices via the cultivation of critical thinking among students regarding their surroundings and the ecological consequences of their activities. Art Education offers a distinctive opportunity for students to investigate sustainable practices via practical tasks and artistic expression. Multiple studies have demonstrated that the inclusion of Art Education in environmental education programmes may augment students' comprehension of sustainable practices. Art Education can also foster students'
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The Indian culture and tradition have a rich heritage of enduring rituals that may be traced back to ancient times. Various conventional Indian art forms, including weaving, pottery, and basketry, employ locally obtained materials that are biodegradable and have no detrimental impact on the environment. There has been a surge in interest in ancient Indian practices such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and organic farming in recent years. These practices prioritise a comprehensive approach to living and advocate for sustainability by minimising the use of toxic chemicals and encouraging the use of natural resources. Multiple research have demonstrated that integrating traditional knowledge and practices into contemporary schooling may foster sustainable behaviours and save traditional knowledge. Integrating Indian culture and heritage into Art Education enables students to acquire information about sustainable practices and the significance of conserving ancient wisdom.

The latest edition of the Journal, Implementation of the Sustainability and Suitability Agenda for 2030, has papers that delve into many facets of sustainability pertaining to the concerns across all levels of education, ranging from primary education to the complexities of adult education. The authors offer several strategies for addressing non-sustainability in their specific circumstances, with the aim of accomplishing the objectives outlined in Agenda 2030 for the implementation of sustainable development goals. The focus has been on integrating Social Entrepreneurship Education into primary schools, especially in German-speaking countries. This has been done by introducing creative methods and theoretical frameworks, such as potential-oriented dynamic perspectives on teaching design and game design methodologies. These approaches aim to foster children’s social entrepreneurship skills and cultivate their ability to think innovatively. This book explores the importance of art education in enhancing people’s understanding of the intricacies of global society and their capacity to work with others in shaping a more promising future.

In his study, Buchanan 2015 examines the notion of self-regulated learning (SRL) in the educational setting as a strategy focused on developing abilities to improve academic achievement and promote long-term learning. The authors analyze the existing literature on Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and provide suggestions for future research on how instructors might apply SRL theory in educational environments. She proposes specifically examining the teacher’s viewpoint on implementing self-regulated learning (SRL), not just for her students, but also to enhance the application of SRL in teacher education programs, professional development efforts, and across the curriculum. They possess the capacity to interact with individuals from other cultures in peaceful living conditions, guided by the principles of peace, well-being, and environmental responsibility. This facilitates the formation of teams and communities, allowing individuals to engage in collaborative efforts focused on specific initiatives related to social, environmental, and educational matters.

The study by Elizabeth Rigg and Stella van der Wale-Maris provides a description of a pilot investigation done at a primary school teacher training institution in the Netherlands. Student instructors were instructed to design games aimed at fostering social entrepreneurship among children aged 8 to 12, with a specific focus on nurturing empathy. According to this study, students who took part in the pilot project acquired knowledge about Social and Emotional Education (SEE) with the aim of making a positive impact on sustainable education overall, with a specific focus on fostering empathy. The process of designing the game offered awareness of their duty towards the environment and the significance of conserving traditional knowledge and practices.
students the chance to develop empathy, gain knowledge about sustainable education, and cultivate a comprehensive grasp of SEE. Their proposal introduces a dynamic learning concept that focuses on the notion of 'positive differences' in learning outcomes. This idea aims to broaden instructors' and students' understanding of valuable learning phases and, consequently, promote long-lasting learning. They elucidate the ramifications of this dynamic and possibility-oriented approach to the design of classroom education. This text examines the foundations for possibility-oriented learning by covering key components of learning design in possibility-oriented education, including organisational framework conditions, possibility-oriented performance evaluation, and the production of meaningful tasks for learners. Edyanto's research aims to evaluate the attitudes of instructors towards inclusive education in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The writers analyse the achievement of establishing an inclusive education system in Yogyakarta City, Indonesia. The Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion Scale (TATIS) was employed to assess the inclinations of 177 instructors towards inclusive education.

The University of Helsinki’s analysis, conducted by Leena Knif and Seija Kairavuori, explores the social aspect of visual arts teaching in elementary schools.

Sustainability in Art Education entails the incorporation of sustainability ideas into the instruction and acquisition of artistic knowledge. This approach acknowledges the capacity of art to advance sustainable principles and practices, and its use as a means of investigating and tackling environmental, social, and economic concerns.

In essence, sustainability in Art Education urges students to engage in critical thinking on the ecological and societal consequences of their artistic endeavors, and to utilize art as a means to foster beneficial transformation on a global scale. By integrating sustainability ideas into Art Education, students may acquire the information and skills necessary to become conscientious and involved individuals who are dedicated to constructing a more sustainable future.

The UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education emphasizes the need of incorporating sustainability into arts education, asserting that "sustainability concerns are progressively crucial in our society and necessitate attention through education, including arts education" Unesco (2023). The book "Sustainability in Contemporary Art" by Julia T. de la Torre and Salvador Muñoz Viñas delves into the examination of how present-day artists are actively incorporating sustainability principles into their artistic endeavors, and further analyses the potential application of these practices within the realm of Art Education.

An article by Pam Stephens and Kelly Wacker, published in The Journal of Art Education, promotes the integration of sustainable practices in Art Education. It offers practical recommendations for introducing sustainability into the classroom. In essence, sustainability in Art Education encompasses not just imparting knowledge about sustainable practices, but also fostering in students a capacity for critical and creative thinking on the ways in which art may promote a more sustainable and equitable society. Leder & Leder (2018)

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative methodology, employing case studies of three art education programs in India. Information was collected by conducting interviews with project leaders, educators, and participants, as well as by reviewing program documents and observing workshops. The selected case studies
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encompass a range of programs throughout India that employ art education as a means to foster sustainable behaviors.

5. INDIAN CULTURE AND TRADITION CONNECTED WITH SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The significance of coexisting with the environment has long been emphasized in Indian culture and heritage. The nation’s cultural legacy is characterized by its profound respect for the natural world, as seen in its artistic expressions, architectural designs, and daily customs that are rooted in the ideals of sustainability. The country’s religious rituals frequently entail the veneration of natural elements, such as rivers, mountains, and trees, reflecting a strong relationship with nature.

Ayurveda, an ancient Indian medical system, advocates for the use of natural treatments and the conservation of the environment. Yoga enhances both physical and mental well-being, fostering a lifestyle that embraces balance with the natural world. Rainwater harvesting, the process of gathering and preserving rainwater for future use, has been a long-standing custom in India for many years. This method has facilitated the preservation of water resources and empowered communities to achieve greater self-reliance.

For ages, Indian traditional art has been closely intertwined with the concept of sustainability. The relationship may be observed via the use of organic materials, the advocacy for ecological responsibility, and the commemoration of the natural world through many artistic expressions. An instance of Indian traditional art that is associated with sustainability is Madhubani painting. Madhubani art has its origins in the Mithila area of Bihar and is renowned for its elaborate patterns and vivid hues in its portrayals of the natural world and surroundings. The artworks are crafted with organic substances such as mud, cow dung, and natural pigments, portraying natural elements including birds, animals, and trees. Madhubani paintings have been employed to advocate for sustainable practices, namely water conservation, by portraying individuals engaged in the task of gathering and preserving water. Utilizing natural materials not only ensures that the artwork is environmentally friendly, but also encourages the adoption of sustainable methods.

Warli painting is another instance of traditional Indian art that is closely linked to sustainability. The Warli tribe of Maharashtra has been engaging in this artistic tradition for millennia, including uncomplicated and stylized characters that portray the community’s daily existence. Warli art portrays rural life and frequently showcases depictions of trees, animals, and the natural world. The Warli people employ ancient techniques to create paintings on mud walls, utilizing rice flour, water, and natural pigments derived from cow dung and charcoal. This approach upholds the tradition and advocates for the use of natural and sustainable materials. Their efforts have been utilized to advocate for environmental practices, including waste management and the adoption of renewable energy sources.

Gond art, originating in the Gond tribal districts of Madhya Pradesh, is an art style that advocates for sustainable practices. Gond painters frequently portray natural surroundings, showcasing their artwork’s distinctive features of complex patterns and motifs. Gond art has been employed to advocate for environmental principles, including the preservation of forests and wildlife. Furthermore, traditional Indian textiles exhibit a strong correlation with sustainability. Handloom textiles, such as silk and cotton, are crafted utilizing conventional methods that are ecologically conscious and encourage sustainable methodologies. An example of this}

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is the Khadi movement, spearheaded by Mahatma Gandhi, who advocated for the utilization of handloom textiles crafted from organic fibers in order to foster autonomy and ecological stability. Presently, the trend has garnered impetus, as several artists and weavers persist in employing conventional methodologies and organic resources to fabricate textiles that are simultaneously eco-friendly and aesthetically pleasing.

The relationship between Indian traditional art and sustainability extends beyond the utilization of organic resources. Several conventional art genres, such as puppetry and storytelling, also advocate for environmental sustainability. For instance, in Rajasthan, puppetry has been employed for millennia to communicate narratives pertaining to the environment and the imperative of its preservation. Likewise, conventional folklore has potent ecological lessons, emphasizing the need of living in harmony with nature and safeguarding the planet for future progeny. Leder & Leder (2018), Herro & Quigley (2016), Stigter (2016)

5.1. SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN ART EDUCATION

The influence of Art Education in India in encouraging sustainable practices has been substantial. Art is a crucial instrument for investigating the interconnection among culture, tradition, and the environment. Art Education enables pupils to acquire knowledge about sustainable practices and comprehend their cultural and environmental relevance. Art Education may serve as a potent means of instructing pupils about sustainability and fostering a more sustainable way of life. Here are few illustrations of how this might be accomplished:

1) **Art made from recycled materials:** Promote the use of recyclable materials among students for artistic purposes. This will not only enhance their comprehension of the significance of reusing things, but also stimulate their ingenuity in finding innovative ways to reuse garbage. For instance, individuals have the ability to craft sculptures or collages employing discarded magazines, cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, or other items that would otherwise be discarded. Waste materials have the potential to be converted into aesthetically pleasing and functional things.

2) **Upcycled Art:** Instruct students on the process of transforming discarded or undesirable items into novel and practical creations. As an illustration, they have the ability to fashion purses or wallets using discarded garments
or repurpose used jars as planters. This will aid in the cultivation of pragmatic abilities and foster a keen sense of ingenuity.

3) **Sustainable Design**: Educate students on the principles of sustainable design and its practical application to everyday things. Motivate them to provide ideas for goods or structures that prioritize environmental sustainability and social accountability. This will enhance their comprehension of the significance of incorporating sustainability into every facet of design.

4) **Art Education further** encourages ecological practices by utilising natural materials. Several Indian art traditions employ organic materials such as clay, wood, and stone. Through the utilisation of organic materials, students acquire knowledge regarding the significance of conserving natural resources and the worth of employing sustainable harvesting methods.

5) **Nature Art**: Utilize artistic methods to facilitate students' connection with nature and foster their appreciation for the aesthetic and significant aspects of the natural world. Motivate them to produce artwork that is influenced by the surrounding environment, such as natural scenery, flora, or fauna. This can facilitate the development of reverence and accountability for the environment.
6) Traditional Art Forms: Art Education also fosters sustainable behaviors by examining traditional art forms. Madhubani painting, Warli painting, Pattachitra, and Gond are traditional Indian art styles that have strong foundations in sustainable traditions. These artistic expressions frequently portray the beauty of environment and advocate for sustainable methods, such as organic farming and the responsible use of natural resources. Engage students in community art initiatives that foster sustainability. For instance, individuals might produce murals or installations that enhance public consciousness regarding environmental concerns, or engage in public art gatherings that advocate for recycling, energy preservation, or other sustainable behaviors.

By integrating sustainability into Art Education, students may acquire knowledge about the significance of sustainable living in an enjoyable and imaginative manner. By engaging in activities that foster practical skills and instill a feeling of responsibility towards the environment, individuals have the opportunity to become advocates for sustainable practices within their communities. Goodale & O’dowd (2015)

6. CASE STUDIES

• Case Study 1: The Warli Art Project

The Warli Art Project is an Art Education effort that fosters sustainable practices by delving into the traditional Indian art style of Warli painting. Warli painting is an old art genre that portrays the everyday activities of the Warli tribe, an indigenous population residing in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra. Scholte (2022)

The primary objective of the Warli Art Project is to utilize Warli painting as a means of communication to advocate for sustainable practices, including organic farming, rainwater collection, and waste management. The initiative entails collaborating with local communities and schools to educate children about the importance of Warli painting and its cultural and ecological value. Herro & Quigley (2016), Stigter (2016)

https://www.artindiafoundation.org/warli-painting-workshops.asp

• Case Study 2: The Terracotta Project

The Terra Cotta Project is an additional Art Education programed that advocates for sustainability by employing the conventional Indian Art technique of
terracotta pottery. This artistic expression has been an integral component of Indian culture for millennia. Pottery creation fosters and instructs in sustainable art practices, including water conservation, natural resource management, and waste management. Additionally, it is an endeavor that helps mitigate stress and foster a harmonious state of mind. The initiative entails collaborating with local communities and schools to educate individuals about the cultural and environmental importance, as well as the significance, of pottery.

1) **Procedures:** The study employed a qualitative research strategy as its research methodology. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating intricate phenomena, such as culture, tradition, and sustainable behavior. The data was gathered via semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

2) **Participants:** The study included art educators and students from two schools in India. The schools were chosen based on their emphasis on Art Education and their dedication to supporting ecological practices.

3) **Data Collection:** Data was gathered via semi-structured interviews conducted with art professors and students from both schools. The interviews were done face-to-face and lasted for one hour. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then subjected to analysis. An examination of the schools' curriculum and teaching materials was performed to determine the degree to which Indian culture and tradition were integrated into Art Education and the encouragement of sustainable practices.

4) **Data Analysis:** There exists a significant correlation between Indian culture and tradition and the adoption of sustainable practices. The function of Art Education in India is crucial in fostering sustainable practices via the exploration of the interconnections between arts, culture, and tradition in the country. The data obtained from the interviews and document analyses were subjected to thematic analysis. The subject matter underwent thorough scrutiny, and recurring patterns or prevalent themes, such as subjects, concepts, or repetitive patterns of meaning, were found.

7. **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Indian traditional art is deeply connected to sustainability, from the use of natural materials to the promotion of environmental stewardship. The
use of sustainable materials, techniques, and practices has been an integral part of traditional art forms, making them not only aesthetically beautiful but also eco-friendly. As we move towards a more sustainable future, Indian traditional art can serve as a source of inspiration, reminding us of the importance of preserving our natural heritage and promoting sustainable practices.

In summary, Art Education can be a powerful tool for promoting sustainability by raising awareness about environmental issues, encouraging sustainable practices, and fostering a sense of community and collaboration. By incorporating sustainability into Art Education, we can inspire the next generation of artists and creative people to make a positive impact on the world around them.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS
None.

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