

Art and Environment – From Waste to Best

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Abstract – This article tries to reflect on perceptions of the term ‘Environment’ in relation to Art practices in India. It tries to find a connection between visual Art and material environment. My explorations would be through monumental sculptures and murals in public domain. At this time of Global warming and ecological crisis, we no longer think of Art in isolation. Hence it is a challenge for a visual artist to negotiate of ‘how to use materials in a way that is creative as well as environment friendly’ or ‘to create Art out of waste’. This means, using things that are thrown away to create awareness among the people that nothing in nature is waste. In this article, I will highlight some public sculptures made out of industrial waste which were laying in the corporation scrapyards for so many years and how artist community took it as a challenge and created beautiful pieces of Art out of them. Through these artworks, they also tried to create an awareness about conservation of energy, conservation of our cultural heritage and awareness about art in general and at the same time giving the cities an individuality and unique character. It also explores the street art of Dharavi where Art has transformed the place from gloomy to happiness and Delhi’s Lodhi Street Art where art is used as a powerful tool of mass communication.

Key Words – Industrial waste, best out of waste, public Art, monumental sculptures, street art/murals and environment, bio-degradable materials.

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AIM:

The aim of this article is to highlight the role of Art in our society. How it helps to change the perception of people, influencing their thought regarding Social, Cultural and Environmental issues in a creative, light, playful and aesthetically appealing manner. It also aims to create awareness among artist to use materials judiciously so that we ourselves are not creating more pollution while trying to create awareness about it.

INTRODUCTION

When we travel through a city and see a huge monumental sculpture, it mesmerizes us, captivates us but what is the need of them in our society? You may say that it binds us together, it makes us believe in love, to cherish an idea, to appreciate beauty and it gives us a sense of joy. The development of culture or civilization of a place is gauged by their artistic achievement. You may also argue that creating a sculpture out of stone, wood, fiberglass, plaster, cement or metal, creates a lot of pollution. Eventually, the artwork might send a powerful message to our society, but at what cost? Hence, it is a challenge for an Artist to negotiate with the present situation of Global warming and how to use your materials in a way that is creative as well as environment friendly or to create art out of waste.

An organization named St+Art India Foundation which is a nonprofit organization, had invited renowned artists from all over the world and did graffiti, murals and street art, making Art accessible to a wider audience. It creates an alternative space to appreciate Art far from the gallery spaces and rich interior décor and embedding it within the heart of cities. Thus Art became accessible to wider audience, be it rich or poor, create awareness, generates livelihood. This is a win a win situation for the artist community, who can showcase their works 24/7 and get wider publicity but also for the benefactors, and in this case, the slum dwellers of Dharavi. Till November 2014, this place was tourist destination as the largest slum of the world. It was famous for its slum tourism, but now tourist comes with more expectations. Their wall Art Mural became a source of their pride. Tourism has increased and it also generates other possibilities of livelihood like becoming volunteers, tour guides etc. Thus without any such pollution impact, the Artist had brought about a social change and improved the local economy and created positive impression about the slum dwellers. The local people feel proud of these artworks and also take responsibility for maintaining the cleanliness and protect the works.

Each artwork has different style and technique and express different concerns of the society. It is important that the resident feel comfortable with these artworks or they are able to connect themselves to these artworks. Many of the murals

talk about mundane things and portray local people like the “amma” selling vegetables two streets down the line or the local *chai wala*. It is important to establish this connection with the local people and not depict some alien subject matter, rather stick to the mundane affairs.

According to one of the organizers, Julia “Street art is a mechanism to work with locals and develop the local economy, to bring art out of the four walls of the gallery and made accessible to everyone and what better place for this than the local streets,” She also confirms that the street where they paint, normally do not have street name, so they act as a landmark.



The Lodhi Art District

Lodhi Colony was the last housing estate build by the British, which bears a rich history in Delhi's timeline for its iconic architecture. Since 2015, 50 renowned street artists from across the world have been invited by St+Art India Foundation to create the Lodhi Art District making it India's first art district now visited by the everyday individual to foreign tourists and international dignitaries.

7 'Waste to Wonder' theme park project

Delhi is famous for its many monuments, beautiful gardens, but recently one more name is added to this list-7 'Waste to Wonder' theme park near Sarai Kale Khan Inter-State Bus Terminus and Outer Ring Road. People can experience the 7 wonders of the world like the replicas of Taj Mahal, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower of Paris, Christ the Redeemer Statue of Rio De Janeiro, the Statue of Liberty of the United States of America and Rome's Colosseum.



Rome's Colosseum



Eiffel Tower of Paris



Statue of Liberty of the USA

Source:

www.trtworld.com

Waste material used: approx 7-8 tonnes

Height: approx 35 feet



Leaning Tower of Pisa

Source: www.surfacesreporter.com

Waste material used: approx 10.5 tonnes

Height: approx 25 feet

These are all made up of industrial waste materials like scrap metal, discarded auto parts, cycle chains, car engines, truck springs, petrol tank and many others procured from landfills of the city. In this way, the waste materials are brought into good use. To create these beautiful pieces, around 150 tons of scraps were used. 5 artists, 7 supporting artists, 70 welders and helpers completed this project in six months' time. It provided a boost to the 'Swachh

Bharat Abhiyan' and 'make in India project' and forges ahead towards transforming waste to wealth.

CONCLUSION

Thus, a dilapidated surface of wall, an insignificant location gets a new lease of life with vibrant and beautiful pieces of art, completely transforming the locality. The local's sense of pride in these works and being involved with the initiative is very endearing. This shows that Art can make a big difference to the lives of people, create awareness, change perception of people, give them a sense of pride and purpose. It can make people happy and turn a gloomy place into a place of joy and that too using unwanted materials or spaces.

CITATIONS

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