



Transnational tomorrows today:

Graduate student futures
and imaginaries for art education

Guest Editors:
Anita Sinner, Kazuyo Nakamura
and Elly Yazdanpanah

UNESCO OBSERVATORY
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY eJOURNAL IN THE ARTS

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ABOUT THE e-JOURNAL

The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal promotes multi-disciplinary research in the Arts and Education and arose out of a recognised need for knowledge sharing in the field. The publication of diverse arts and cultural experiences within a multi-disciplinary context informs the development of future initiatives in this expanding field. There are many instances where the arts work successfully in collaboration with formerly non-traditional partners such as the sciences and health care, and this peer-reviewed journal aims to publish examples of excellence.

Valuable contributions from international researchers are providing evidence of the impact of the arts on individuals, groups and organisations across all sectors of society. The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is a clearing house of research which can be used to support advocacy processes; to improve practice; influence policy making, and benefit the integration of the arts in formal and non-formal educational systems across communities, regions and countries.

INTERLUDES

EMPATHY AND THE FEELING OF VALUING: *CHERISH*

A VISUAL ESSAY

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Figure 1.
CHERRY-ish Heart.

KEYWORDS

empathy, appreciation learning, ethical consumption, SDG #12, SDG #16

SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY AND CONSUMER ATTITUDE

Technological innovation has made our lives increasingly convenient. However, as a negative effect, human bonds have been weakened. In addition, we seek only simplistic and temporary joy and fun. In this visual essay, I emphasize the importance of timeless values and people's connections. In an era such as the present, people should consider long-term values and interaction with others. This is related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12, *Responsible Consumption and Production*, and is an important perspective for a consumer (Japanese Government Consumer Affairs Agency, 2013). Furthermore, compassion is essential for building a peaceful world, and in that sense, this issue also relates to SDG #16, *Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies*.

INITIATIVES RELATED TO ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency released an 'Image Map of the System of Consumer Education' in 2013. This document is a summary of each stage of life from early childhood to old age, showing what types of content consumers are expected to acquire and when, in order to develop into consumers who form an independent consumer civil society. In the image map, the goals of 'taking care of the things around us' and 'understanding the importance of co-operation' are set in the early childhood stage. However, whether we as adults achieve this is questionable. We must take a sincere look at the value of the things we buy and cherish the connections we have with the people around us.

Karl Bengs (2015), a German architectural designer, has been involved in many projects to revitalize old houses. His primary area of focus is ethical consumption. He criticizes Japan's recent culture of disposability and mass consumption, and works to promote the value of Japan's wooden houses to preserve them for future generations. He cherishes the words of Japanese painter Kaii Higashiyama: '*A town without old houses is like a person without memories*' (Bengs n.d.). Bengs suggests that the revitalization of old houses will lead to the reevaluation of Japanese values as well as of the way we live and think. Bengs's work is in the field of architecture; however, his ideas can be applied to society at large. The idea that when something is of good quality, if it

is taken care of, it can be used for a very long period of time. This is a principle that we should recognize and learn from.

THE FEELING OF VALUING: *CHERISH*

The word '*cherish*' perfectly reflects the idea underlying this paper because it can be used for both things and people. Cherish is defined as '*to love someone or something very much and take care of them well*' (Longman English Dictionary n.d.). This term expresses my idea of caring for things and people well, and it inspired me in creating my artwork. The two hands wrapped around the heart represent people's feelings of caring for something, and the branches of the cherries tied similarly to ribbons represent the connection between people's thoughts. This shows that the feeling of cherishing is linked to other emotions. One's thoughts may be inconsequential, but thoughts that spread can change people's attitudes and eventually the world. My artwork shows two hearts in the shape of cherries, a play on the words '*cherish*' and '*cherry*'.

I am currently conducting research on the development of appreciation learning to foster children's empathy. The feeling of cherishing is related to empathy, which is one of my research topics. By fostering empathy, we are able to care for others, which relates to our desire to take care of things. This can be cultivated through art and art education. Art provides an opportunity to consider value, intentions, and emotions. In appreciation learning, we can enjoy colors, shapes, and compositions; moreover, art also connects us with various things through dialogue related to artwork, other people, and ourselves. In summary, fostering empathy strengthens human bonds and relates to SDGs #12 and #16.

In recent years, the value of both art and art education has been reviewed. The creation of new values often consists of a deep understanding and consideration of past values. Cherishing things that stand the test of time is associated with a sustainable society.

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