

With the closing of COP 27 leaving frustration over the lack of urgency by many world leaders, here, SN Youth have their say about the impending climate catastrophe

A View From Extinction

*The wind rushed against my vibrant feathers,
As I swerved left and right,
I felt free. I was free.*

*But you ruined it.
My life, their lives, our lives.
Did you feel happy? Do you feel happy?*

*The giants, with weapons of mass destruction
right in their fingertips
I still hear the droning, the whirring, the endless cries for help,
My home, dead. Everything was dead.*

*What if your homes were torn down?
Surely you would've been devastated.
So why did you wipe us out? Why did we have to die?*

*No one knows of our existence.
Because you think you are the only ones in this world,
When will you understand? Will you ever learn your lesson?*

*We defined elegance,
We stood out, we caught your eye,
Was our beauty the cause of our demise? Or were you?*

*Scarlet; one of the divine colours of our feathers
It ended up being the imprint of your cruelty,
And the blood that was spilled. The blood that you spilled.*

*Was it worth the kill? The satisfaction you got from it?
Were we less important than the land you cleared?
Land can be reborn. We cannot.*

*But you knew, didn't you?
You've always known, yet you destroy us,
Creature by creature, limb by limb, soul by soul.*

*And you still do it, don't you?
You end those lives, you end the peace,
Perhaps it'll be better for you to face the same. For you
to face the shame.*

VISHALI THUSHYANTHAN & SOUMIYA INDRAKUMAR, THE HENRIETTA BARNETT SCHOOL

We owe art's beauty to our environment

Art is a human instinct – it is our natural disposition to create, elucidating what the mind is unable to articulate. It is in our nature to reflect on nature. The natural environment is the greatest inspiration known to artists. The earth's environment in itself is a wonderful canvas filled with the paint strokes of sunsets, the sketches of skies and the sculptures of seas – which we have instinctively adopted to create art. "Great art picks up where nature ends", thus Marc Chagall is stating that art is born from nature; art owes its beauty to the ethereal paradise that is the environment. It is essential to imagination, to expression, to optimism, to life, to art.

The very first pieces of art archaeologists have found (around 45,000 years old) are depictions of nature. They are representations of animals, as tribute, by primitive men and women to honour the nature they had to kill for survival. In the Middle Ages men had a complex relationship with nature which they viewed through elaborate religious and symbolic meanings.

However, perhaps my personal favourite representation of nature in art, is in Impressionism. In this radical art movement of the late 1800s artists focused more on capturing the transient effects of sunlight rather than the subject itself. There was a shift away from realism to a more eccentric, vivid portrayal of nature with magnificent, wonderful colours and audacious brush strokes to create an 'impression' of a natural scene – focusing on how sunlight could define a moment in time. Recently, I saw Monet's famous water lily bridge painting at the National Gallery and the effect was truly mesmerising. It immerses you with colour, texture, perspective and of course, light, so for a time you forget that you're standing in an art gallery with hundreds of people, and not in a make-believe paradise of vibrancy. Impressionism may paint our natural environment inaccurately, but the use of a chromatic palette and seemingly intangible but realistic light, leaves the paintings of nature covered in hope and optimism, evoking all kinds of warm emotions.

Impressionism proves that the portrayal of the environment in art can be incredibly personal, for both the artist and the observer. For nature, something so common and comforting to us, to be portrayed in this beautiful way, really does demonstrate how art picks up where nature ends.

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Greenwashing – the impact!



Greenwashing is when a company is spending more money, time and effort advertising and promoting themselves as sustainable than carrying out the actions which will minimize their environmental impact. This advertising causes customers to be misled in purchasing products that are not what they claim to be. It wastes time and may divert customers from supporting greener companies. But why do companies use this tactic? They use it to make people more likely to purchase from companies which have ethical credibility, they make a profit from emphasizing their social consciousness. This has particularly been found true for Gen Z, so it is likely that companies targeting the younger generation will be greenwashing. However, the other reason is that they simply don't know that they are doing it - a lot of the time there hasn't been enough research into the product that they are advertising. This leads to misconceptions about products but in some cases can lead to a fine and therefore companies should research their policies in depth to make sure all the details are correct.

An example of greenwashing occurred in 2019 when McDonald's replaced their plastic straws with paper ones which stapled McDonald's as a company conscious about their impact on the environment. However, it was found that the alternative paper straws aren't recyclable so a lot of public backlash followed yet the company continue to use them.

The issue is how can we notice when a company is partaking in this and then how do we find companies that are thinking sustainably? There are several things to look out for: providing no proof of a claim; the language that the company uses (either it only being what scientists could understand or words having no clear meaning such as 'produced sustainably'); or, something being the one 'green' part of the company. These are difficult to notice, and can be well concealed, so online websites such as Project Cece and Ethical Made Easy can be used to find more sustainable companies. As the climate crisis accelerates and we get closer and closer to irreversible changes it is important that we, the consumers, are conscious about greenwashing.

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