

**Akram Ahmadi Tavana**

**Papers**

**What Do You Have at Hand?**

**Creating Art Together**

**(Visual Essay)**

**2022**



# 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

## WHAT DO YOU HAVE AT HAND? CREATING ART TOGETHER

### A VISUAL ESSAY

#### AUTHORS

Akram Ahmadi Tavana<sup>1</sup>, Fazila Teymuri<sup>2</sup>,  
Khatereh Feyzi<sup>2</sup> and Golsoom Sadat<sup>2</sup>

#### ARTIST STATEMENT

This visual essay is part of an ongoing educational and curatorial project about Afghan immigrant women in Iran and the importance of creating a platform to display some of their artworks. This visual essay is a collaborative practice in which the focus is on the importance and potential of consumable products and recycling of materials in art, and the possible improvement of the quality of life for immigrants.

#### KEYWORDS

immigrant women, creating together, art resources

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<sup>1</sup> Alzahra University

<sup>2</sup> Mehrhouse (NGO)

If we consider art and the creation of artworks as an opportunity for introspection, then this practice is not exclusively defined by artists or particular groups, but by all members of society. Although the necessity and purpose of art education and the creation of artworks varies according to each individual and situation, sometimes this necessity is forgotten, faded, or rendered impossible, but it is never diminished. Factors such as immigration and being a woman in some societies can be a reason for forgetting or neglecting this necessity. In an art workshop, teaching individuals how to create opens up possibilities for making art, reminiscent of the adage: 'If you give a man a fish, he will be hungry tomorrow. If you teach a man to fish, he will be richer forever'. In our case, we strive to be able to improvise the necessary resources, no matter the circumstances. Our primary goal is to recognize the availability of art resources differently, and maintain an exploratory approach to discovering and devising new instruments and approaches. In this way, we collectively participate as a group of women who actively seek to make art 'out of nothing'.

Our method involves experimenting with objects and materials. Appadurai (1988) divides the value of objects into three categories: aesthetic, social, and market values. However, these values, which simultaneously present objects with particular roles, are not confining nor restrictive, and can operate to create a dynamic space for hesitation, uncertainty, fluidity, and reflection. So we turn our attention to discarded items. Discarded items can be a source of possibilities for art activities. As materials with dual life-giving and perishable aspects, recycling items like this can offer new opportunities to transform from absolutely useless objects, into a work of art with aesthetic value. In this way, there is a new potential of waste materials to be re-activated. Objects assume a new role as they are washed and taken out of trash cans. Passive materials are activated with a specific direction and purpose, and in making a work of art, these sensitive surfaces and malleable materials are given new meaning. When painting a self-portrait, house, landscape, or any other subject on objects that are doomed to be garbage, we instead enter a labyrinth of possibilities. The individual's relationship to objects is reconsidered, and their dormant energy is activated and exchanged between the person and material (Hickey Moody & Page 2016).

Our curatorial project aims to find ways to bring art to the homes of Afghan immigrants through mothers who are the central figures of families. The goal of the project is to have a tangible impact on the quality of life for the family and their social relationships. Although it seems non-essential or insignificant, our companionship with each other, and acquaintance with art, are definitely necessary and effective elements in this process. By challenging assumptions about single-use materials and claiming new activities with these materials, we promote the idea of repurposing, in relation to the family. What remains in the end is neither the material in its original form, nor an artwork that is conventional or familiar. I hope that women, who often and involuntarily migrate from country-to-country and from one city to another, can explore the possibilities of art with a keener eye than before.



**Figure 1.**

Fazila Teymuri, 2022. A necklace.



**Figure 2.**  
Fazila Teymouri, 2022. My home containers.



**Figure 3.**  
Khatereh Feyzi, 2022. My paintings.





**Figure 4.**  
Golsoom Sadat, 2022. My process.

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