

Good morning, teachers, and all my fellow artists. Today, I would like you to do a simple task for me. I would like you to think of your favourite song. It's catchy beat, it's rhythmic sound. How its lyrics make you feel. I would like you to appreciate your favourite movie. It's cinematic composition. Those amazing actors and how you felt the first time you watched it. You can also think about your favourite poem – and its brilliant structure, your favourite line, and how it tugged onto your heart from start to finish. And then, I would like you to imagine a world where none of those longer exist. A world where none of those can ever exist – or at least, never again.

Now, imagine that world again. That world that exists without the presence of art. Imagine waking up to blank walls, reading a bland book, or listening to a bad, bad song in general. For the rest of your life. A world with just a little less colour and a little music, a little less art – is a world that is a little less alive.

The earliest forms of communication took forms of paintings and illustrations. We looked at a tree, called it art, and discovered science. We saw a shape, called it art, and defined mathematics. It has even helped identify historic life. In recent years, the educational system governed in most countries have shifted heavily towards the core subjects of language, science and maths. There has been an ongoing negligence of the arts – in all its shape and sizes. I know this to be especially true as when I tried to look for books regarding my speech about the topic, I could only find one or two books about art in our school library. All of which results to the question our generation begs to ask – is art even important?

Yet art exists with a purpose that we as a species seem to constantly find – and in its inexistence, we might find just how much we needed it. As we continue to ignore and disregard art – what else can we as a species not discover? What else will we fail to validate? Art itself reveals and brings forth an unconsidered perspective – its value should not be simplified by its aesthetic no by anything else, as it is a bridge to a better understanding of the world. It is a form

of communication that encompasses all grounds of sex, age and even language. It is a manifestation of human experience and thoughts – a clear reflection that familiarizes to humans what is yet to be defined.

According to research, art has helped children recognize, understand, and express a wider range of emotions – something that is very important, especially as it will be needed a lot as children grow up and develop. It also says that the subject helps people with their communication skills, as they are not restricted to only written and spoken forms of communication and are exposed to even visual and creative expressions. Art makes us think more deeply, strive more intently, and feel joy more profoundly. It captures the rituals of our everyday lives, and gives us glimpses of worlds as yet unknown. It can take a world of chaos and commotion, and provide us with moments of order and calm. And whilst maths and science makes the modern world we live in – from smartphones to spacecrafts, medicine to the internet - the arts is what makes living in this modern world worthwhile.

There is no need for this ongoing negligence in art – and there is no need for this ongoing negligence towards artists. A world that dares to exist without them is a world that will continue to exist, but will fail to live. Let us treat artists of today with respect and without looking down upon them, as they are not inferior to other people because of their difference in the way they approach the world. Too many people have told me that I won't make it in life because of the simple fact that I see it differently. Yet, today, I congratulate myself for doing one thing: letting you imagine. Letting you think in a creative manner. Letting you create pictures in your mind no one else has seen.

Now, for the last time, I would like you to do something for me. I would like you to imagine a world – a world where not one of us can even do a very, very simple task. Imagine a world where people can't even imagine.