

**FORMS OF ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES AND ITS PERSISTENT EFFECT ON  
NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY**

**BY**

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**BENIN CITY**

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS,  
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CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
BACHELOR OF ARTS**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this work is based on personal research undertaken by me in Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State under the supervision of Professor Manasseh Emamoke Imonikebe.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the glory of God, for his grace, wisdom and protection over my life.

With heartfelt gratitude,I also dedicate this project to my parents, whose selfless love, prayer and sacrifices have made this project possible.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

This project explores the Effect of Electoral Malpractices on Nigeria's Democracy through the lens of visual art. It focuses on how Nigerian painters depict these themes in their work, analyzing the techniques, styles, mediums, and colors they use. By closely examining various artworks and artist statements, the study aims to highlight the role of art in advocating for better electoral process. The Ways in which paintings that portray electoral malpractice reflect the societal impacts of vote rigging on Nigeria's political stability and public trust. How Nigerian artists use painting to highlight the long-term effects of electoral corruption on socioeconomic inequalities and public disillusionment. The aim of the study was to know how Nigerian painters depict the themes of electoral malpractices and what visual elements are commonly used to convey these issues.

To get the job done, the following steps were taken:

Step 1: Making the Canvas – building a frame called stretcher and stretching the canvas

Step 2: Getting the Canvas Ready – sizing and priming with emulsion paint and top bond gum

Step 3: Sketching the Picture – making detailed sketch of what to paint using colors and paintbrush.

Step 4: Painting the Picture – adding colours and shapes to bring the painting to life.

Step 5: Finishing Up – made sure it came together nicely, and made any final adjustment.

In the process of getting the project done the researcher learned how to control paint thickness by mixing liquid medium and linseed oil to achieve desired effects.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Artists have long used painting as a means to shed light on social and political issues, including corruption and election fraud. Through their work, they capture the chaos, injustice, and struggle that often accompany flawed electoral systems. By employing different artistic styles; ranging from symbolism and realism to abstraction and surrealism, they express the emotions, tensions, and realities of electoral misconduct.

In Nigeria, many painters have explored this theme, illustrating political rallies, violent clashes, and the secret exchange of money for votes. Some use symbolisms and abstracts to represent corruption and oppression, while others use caricature to expose and critique politicians and electoral institutions.

This study seeks to analyze the various forms of electoral malpractice in Nigeria such as vote buying, ballot box snatching, underage voting, result manipulation, voter intimidation and its effect on Nigeria as depicted in the painting as pillars with visible cracks which symbolizes the effects of corruption on the rule of law upholding Democracy in Nigeria. It will explore how artists depict these issues and how visual storytelling can serve as a powerful tool for raising political awareness and advocating for free and fair elections.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Artists use their creativity to shed light on the devastating effects of vote rigging, making its impact on Nigeria's future more visible and relatable. Through powerful imagery, they capture the struggles of ordinary citizens facing voter suppression, intimidation, and bribery. Their work tells stories of lost voices, broken trust, and deepening inequalities. Paintings, murals, and other forms of art become more than just expressions, they become calls to action, pushing people to reflect, speak out, and demand change.

Therefore paintings that explore painting as a medium to examine and critique electoral malpractices in Nigeria are in short supply.

Consequently, the shortage of paintings addressing electoral malpractice in Nigeria limits public awareness and engagement. Art has the power to educate and spark discussions, but without visual representations, these issues may not receive the attention they deserve and there is less pressure on authorities to implement reforms while the global community remains less informed about Nigeria's electoral challenges.

Without this artistic voice, the call for transparency and democracy loses a powerful force

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The following Research Questions were carried out;

1. How do Nigerian painters depict the themes of electoral malpractice and vote rigging, and what visual elements are commonly used to convey these issues?

2. In what ways do paintings that portray electoral malpractice reflect the societal impacts of vote rigging on Nigeria's political stability and public trust?
3. How do Nigerian artists use painting to highlight the long-term effects of electoral corruption on socioeconomic inequalities and public disillusionment?
4. What role does art, specifically painting, play in raising awareness and promoting dialogue about electoral reforms and accountability in Nigeria?
5. What will be the process of carrying out the painting?

#### **1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

##### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to produce a painting highlighting and addressing electoral malpractices and vote rigging in Nigeria. A painting that will also raise awareness and provoke public discourse on electoral issues in Nigeria through painting as a medium.

##### **Objectives of the study**

1. How Nigerian painters depict the themes of electoral malpractice and vote rigging, and what visual elements are commonly used to convey these issues
2. Ways in which paintings that portray electoral malpractice reflect the societal impacts of vote rigging on Nigeria's political stability and public trust.
3. How Nigerian artists use painting to highlight the long-term effects of electoral corruption on socioeconomic inequalities and public disillusionment.

4. The role of art, specifically painting in raising awareness and promoting dialogue about electoral reforms and accountability in Nigeria.
5. The process of carrying out the paintings.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This is an outline of the significance of the the study:

#### **To the Artist:**

Through this project, the artist gains a deeper understanding of the socio-political landscape, the struggles of the electorate, and the mechanisms of electoral fraud. This awareness allows them to translate complex issues into powerful visual narratives that can provoke thought and inspire change.

The project also strengthens the artist's role as a storyteller and advocate. By tackling a subject that affects millions, the artist contributes to public discourse, using creativity to engage audiences who might otherwise overlook these issues. This can elevate the artist's work beyond aesthetics, giving it social and historical significance.

Additionally, the project presents an opportunity for professional growth. Engaging with such a meaningful and challenging theme can refine the artist's ability to convey emotion, symbolism, and perspective in their work.

### **To the Researcher:**

For the researcher, studying a painting project on electoral malpractice provides a deeper understanding of how visual art can be used as a tool for social commentary, political awareness, and advocacy. By analyzing the themes, symbols, and messages embedded in the paintings, the researcher can explore how art influences public perception and discourse on electoral fraud, voter suppression, and democratic accountability.

### **To the Government:**

The imagery of vote buying, ballot snatching, and violence in the background serves as a stark reminder of the need for electoral reforms and stricter enforcement of democratic principles.

By placing the INEC chairman as the focal figure, the painting underscores the responsibility of the Electoral commission and the government in ensuring free and fair elections. It challenges leaders to uphold transparency, restore public trust, and address the issues that hinder democratic progress. The cracked pillar labeled “DEMOCRACY” in the background symbolizes a system under threat, urging the government to take immediate action to strengthen electoral integrity.

### **1.6 Scope and Delimitation**

The study is delimited to the six-geo political zones in Nigeria

The scope of the painting emphasizes the fragility of Nigeria’s democracy through electoral malpractices and the role of the electoral commission in ensuring free and fair elections.

All the five objectives therefore formed the scope of the study

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The review was carried out on the following topics:

- The Forms and Methods of Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria.
- Nigerian Painters and The Quest for Free and Fair Elections
- The Elements and Principles of Art
- Colour Theory
- Draughtsmanship

#### 2.1 The Forms and Methods of Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria

Electoral malpractices refer to unlawful or unethical activities that compromise the fairness, transparency, and integrity of elections. These violations have serious repercussions, such as weakening public confidence in the electoral system, enabling the selection of leaders who lack a legitimate mandate hereby, fostering corruption and poor governance.

In Nigeria, electoral malpractices manifest in several ways, including:

- **Ballot Box Snatching:** Some candidates hire thugs to steal ballot boxes, particularly in opposition strongholds. This strategy prevents valid votes from being counted hereby, influencing election outcomes (Adeniyi, 2021).

•**Vote Buying:** This occurs when candidates or their representatives offer money, goods, or services in exchange for votes. The practice is especially prevalent in rural areas where poverty levels are high.

•**Thuggery and Intimidation:** This form of malpractice involves threats, harassment, or physical force to manipulate voters' choices or discourage them from participating in the election. Often, political candidates sponsor these acts through hired thugs to gain an advantage.

•**Result Manipulation:** This involves tampering with vote counts at polling stations or during result collation to benefit a specific candidate or party. Election officials may be bribed or coerced into falsifying results (Kew, 2021).

•**Underage Voting:** According to the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, the legal voting age is 18. However, reports indicate that children as young as 9–15 years old have participated in elections, particularly in Northern Nigeria (Kew, 2021).

## **2.2 Nigerian Painters and The Quest for Free and Fair Elections**

Nigerian artists are increasingly using their art to advocate for free and fair elections, utilizing their work to critique political systems and promote democratic principles. Through visual storytelling, these artists highlight the challenges and aspirations of Nigerians concerning election transparency. Prominent artists such as Bruce Onobrakpeya and Victor Ehikhamenor create works that delve into themes of justice, accountability, and empowerment, engaging their audiences with ongoing political events and the significance of transparent elections (Okeke-Agulu, 2009). By addressing issues like corruption, these

artists offer critical social commentary and encourage public discourse on the importance of democratic participation (Smith, 2011).

In Nigeria, the influence of these painters goes beyond mere visual appeal; their work ignites conversations and shapes political debates. Artwork, murals, and exhibitions centered on electoral issues act as reminders of the ongoing struggle for a transparent election system, resonating with citizens disillusioned by corruption and election-related misconduct. This shows how art can be a powerful tool for social change, using visual expression to speak out, highlight public issues, and encourage a sense of civic duty.

Nigerian painters, by capturing both the frustrations and hopes of the public, contribute to a collective vision of a democratic society where every vote is truly valued.

### **2.3 The Elements and Principles of Art**

The elements and principles of art are fundamentals that guide the creation and analysis of art. These concepts help in understanding how artists use different components and methods to convey messages, evoke emotions or achieve aesthetic goals.

#### **•Elements of Art**

The elements of art are the basic building blocks that artists use to create their work. These include:

- Line:** A line is a simple mark made by a tool like a pencil or brush. It can vary in thickness, length, and direction, and helps define shapes or create movement in a piece.

•**Shape:** Shapes are two-dimensional areas, often outlined by lines. These can be organic or geometric and help define the form of objects within an artwork (Arnheim, 2013).

•**Form:** This is the three-dimensional aspect of art. While shapes are flat, forms have depth and volume, making them appear more lifelike or tangible.

•**Colour:** Colour is the result of light hitting objects and being reflected to our eyes. Artists use colour to convey mood or contrast, and it can be categorized by its hue (what we think of as its colour), intensity (how bright or dull it is), and value (how light or dark it is) (Albers, 2013).

•**Texture:** Texture refers to the surface feel of an object. It can be actual (you can physically touch it) or implied (it looks like it would feel a certain way). Texture adds richness and depth to art

•**Space:** Space is the area around, between, and within objects. It can be filled with objects (positive space) or left empty (negative space), and it's essential for creating depth and perspective in an artwork.

•**Value:** Value refers to how light or dark an area is. It creates contrast and helps establish depth, making objects appear more three-dimensional.

## **Principles of Art**

The principles of art describe how the elements are arranged or combined in a work of art. These principles guide the overall composition and visual balance of the piece:

**Balance:** This is about how visual weight is distributed across the artwork. It can be symmetrical (evenly distributed), asymmetrical (unevenly distributed but still balanced), or radial (radiating from a central point) (Arnheim, 2013).

**Contrast:** Contrast is the difference between elements, such as light and dark colors or rough and smooth textures. This difference helps create interest and can highlight important areas of the artwork.

**Emphasis:** Emphasis refers to the focal point of the artwork, the area that draws the viewer's eye first. This is often achieved through contrast, size, or color.

**Movement:** Movement in art suggests a sense of motion that directs the viewer's eye across the piece. It can be created by the arrangement of lines, shapes, or colors.

**Pattern:** Patterns are repetitions of elements, creating rhythm or unity within a composition. These patterns can be regular or irregular and are a common feature in art.

**Rhythm:** Rhythm is similar to pattern, but it's more about the flow created by repeated elements. It creates a sense of movement and harmony throughout the artwork.

**Unity:** Unity refers to the feeling that all the elements in the artwork belong together. It's the sense of wholeness that makes the piece feel cohesive and complete (Albers, 2013).

## 2.4 Colour Theory

Colour theory helps us understand how colors work together, how they affect what we see, and how they can create a sense of balance and harmony. It revolves around three core ideas: the colour wheel, colour harmony, and colour context.

The colour wheel, first introduced by Isaac Newton, arranges colours in a way that shows how they relate to one another. It includes primary colours (red, blue, and yellow), which mix to create secondary colours (green, orange, and purple), and tertiary colours, which are blends of both.

Colour harmony is all about finding colour combinations that look good together. This can be done using different methods, like complementary colours (opposites on the colour wheel), analogous colours (those that sit next to each other), or triadic colours (evenly spaced on the wheel).

Colour context refers to how colours change based on their surroundings. The same colour can look different depending on what's next to it, affecting how we perceive contrast, depth, and even emotions.

Beyond just being a visual concept, colour theory plays a huge role in everyday life. It's essential in art, design, and branding, influencing how we feel, what we pay attention to, and even the choices we make (Birren, 2016).

## **2.5 Draughtsmanship**

Draughtsmanship, also called draftsmanship, is the skill of drawing with accuracy, clarity, and expression. It is a key foundation of visual art, shaping everything from painting and sculpture to digital illustration. A strong understanding of draughtsmanship helps artists create realistic forms, maintain correct proportions, and depict perspective effectively, all while bringing emotion and movement into their work (Gombrich, 2000).

## Key Aspects of Draughtsmanship

**Line Quality** – Lines are the building blocks of a drawing. They can be bold or delicate, thick or thin, smooth or textured. Mastering line control allows an artist to define shapes and add detail effectively

**Proportion and Perspective** – Getting the size and placement of objects right is essential for realistic drawings. Perspective helps create depth, making a two-dimensional drawing appear three-dimensional (Loomis, 2011).

**Shading and Tonal Values** – Light and shadow bring drawings to life. Techniques like hatching, cross-hatching, and stippling help artists create depth and realism by adding contrast and form.

**Gesture and Expression** – A good drawing captures more than just appearance; it conveys movement and personality. Whether sketching a figure in motion or the emotion in a portrait, expressive drawing makes artwork feel alive.

**Composition and Design** – A well structured drawing is more visually appealing. Balance, focal points, and visual flow all contribute to a strong composition, guiding the viewer's eye through the artwork (Gombrich, 2000).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, the methods by which this research will be carried out is listed systematically

They are divided as thus:

- Subject
- Instrument for Data Collection
- Population of the study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Description of the Materials
- Procedure (Studio Production Process)
- Method of Visual Analysis

#### **3.1 Subject**

The Nigerians painters as a whole, the citizens, and society tangled in the adverse effects of electoral malpractices

#### **3.2 Instrument for Data Collection**

Data for this research were sourced from articles, records, journals, news reports and other electronic devices, which includes the internet, articles, cameras, and news reports.

### **3.4 Population of the Study**

The entire Nigerians is the population of this study.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique used in the selection of the subject is the simple random sampling technique.

### **3.5 Description of Materials**

**Stretcher Frame** – A wooden rectangle that serves as the backbone for a canvas. It helps keep the fabric stretched and firm, whether before or after priming, so the surface is ready for painting.

**Canvas** – A sturdy fabric, usually cotton or linen, that artists paint on. It's stretched over a wooden frame, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the artist's preference.

**Staple Gun** – A small, handheld tool that works like a stapler. It's used to attach the canvas securely to the stretcher frame with a simple squeeze of the trigger.

**Gesso** – A mixture of paint and adhesive (often PVA glue) applied to a canvas to create a smooth surface for painting. It fills in the tiny gaps in the fabric, ensuring the paint sticks properly.

**Paintbrush** – A tool usually made of synthetic or natural fibers, used to apply paint. The bristles are held in place by a metal band called a ferrule, which connects them to a rod-like handle.

**Oil Paint** – A slow-drying medium made from pigments suspended in oil, typically linseed, known for its rich colors, smooth blending, textures and long working time.

**Palette Knife** – These flat, flexible tools look a bit like spatulas and are used for mixing paint on a palette. They can also be used to apply paint directly onto the canvas, creating textured effects.

**Palette** – A flat surface where artists mix and arrange their paints. It can be made from wood, plastic, ceramic, or other non-porous materials and comes in different shapes and sizes.

**Rag** – A scrap of old fabric used for cleaning paintbrushes, palette knives, and palettes. It helps keep tools tidy during and after painting.

**Container** – A plastic or metal cup-like vessel used for holding water, kerosene, or other solvents needed during painting.

### **3.6 Procedure (Studio Production Process)**

This project was carried out under the following stages:

Stage 1: Construction of stretcher and stretching of the canvas

Stage 2: Painting ground preparation which includes sizing and priming with a mixture of top bond and emulsion paint

Stage 3: Making the pictorial composition sketch

Stage 4: Blocking the pictorial composition sketch.

Stage 5: Painting the pictorial composition

Stage 6: Detailing the painting

Stage 7: Finishing

### **3.7 Method of Visual Analysis**

A critique (discussion) was carried out to evaluate the project which includes:

1. Project Title
2. Medium
3. Size
4. Concept
5. Draughtsmanship
6. Colour
7. Style
8. Technique
9. Analysis

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PROCEDURE (STUDIO PRODUCTION PROCESS) AND CRITIQUE**

This chapter provides a detailed breakdown of the various stages involved in completing the project, along with a critique of the final work.

#### **4.1 The Process**

##### **Stage 1: Preparing the Surface**

###### **Step 1: Building the Stretcher**

To begin, a wooden frame measuring 6 feet by 4 feet was constructed. The wood was cut to size and assembled into a rectangular frame to suit the composition.

###### **Step 2: Stretching the Canvas**

A canvas was carefully placed over the wooden frame and stretched tightly to ensure a firm and even surface.

###### **Step 3: Priming the Canvas**

A mixture of top bond glue, emulsion paint, and water was applied to the stretched canvas, creating a smooth, sealed surface for painting. This step was repeated twice to ensure that all pores in the fabric are being completely sealed and to prevent the painting from being see-through.



**Plate 1 Cutting the Wood and Stretching the Canvas**

**Photographed by Olafusi Israel**

## **Stage 2: Transferring the Sketch**

Once the primed canvas had dried completely, the initial sketch was transferred from the sketch pad onto the canvas. This was done using oil color to outline the compositions before the actual painting began.



**Plate 2: Transferring the Sketch**

**Photographed by Olafusi Israel**

### **Stage 3: The Painting Process**

#### **Step 1: Applying the First Layer of Paint**

The painting process began with the application of base colors to define the figures and overall composition.

## **Step 2: Establishing Tonal Values**

Different tones and hues were introduced to create depth, contrast, and dimension in the artwork



**Plate 3: Painting in Progress**

**Photographed by Olafusi Israel**

## **Step 3: Establishing the Various Elements and Principles of Art**

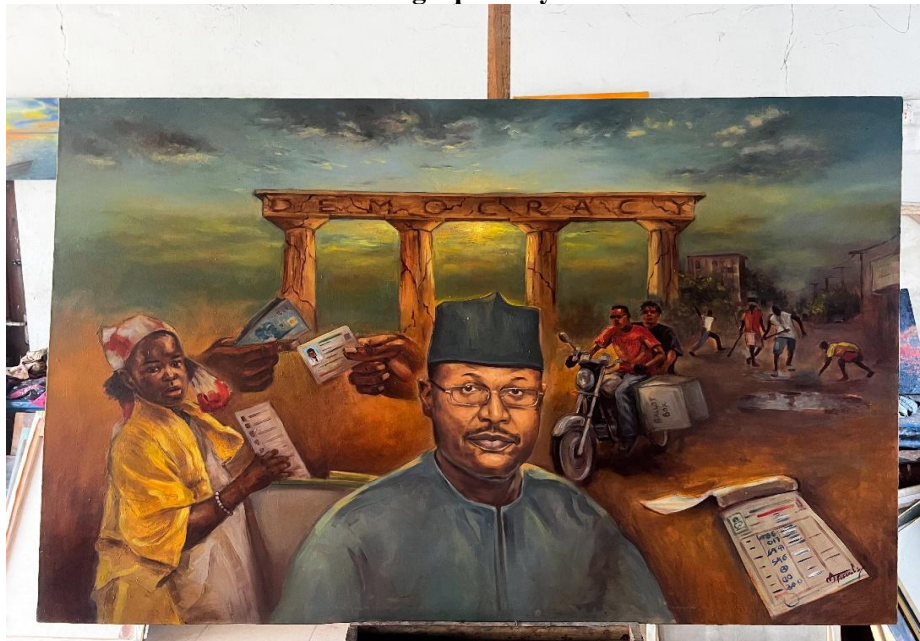
Throughout the painting process, essential artistic elements such as balance, harmony, contrast, and movement were carefully considered to enhance the composition.

## **Stage 4: Detailing**

The finishing stage involved refining details, adjusting colors, and enhancing textures to complete the painting.



**Plate 4: Adding Final Touches**  
**Photographed by Olafusi Israel**



**Plate 5: Completed Artwork**  
**Photographed by Atolagbe Ayomikun**

## 4.2 Critique of the Project

**Title:** Forms of electoral malpractices and it's persistent effects on Nigeria's democracy

**Medium & Size:** The painting was executed using oil color on canvas, with dimensions of 6 feet by 4feet.

**Concept:** The artwork visually explores the various forms of electoral malpractices and the negative effects on Nigeria's democracy.

**Draughtsmanship:** The initial sketch was carefully outlined using oil color and tiny brushes to guide the composition before rendering.

**Technique:** A realistic painting approach was used to depict the figures, and the sky with varying brushstrokes for texture and depth.

**Color Scheme:** A mix of cool colors were employed for the sky and warm tones was used almost throughout the painting to create a sense of depth, utilizing light reflections from the setting sun at the background which served as the primary light source in the painting

**Style:** The painting follows a realistic style.

### **Analysis:**

This painting project seeks to visually explore the consequences of these malpractices through a series of evocative images aiming to highlight the struggles of ordinary citizens, the manipulation of electoral processes and how it affects the country in the long run.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1.1 Summary**

Painters and other visual artists have played a significant role in shedding light on electoral malpractices in Nigeria and inspiring change. Through their art, they capture the struggles of ordinary citizens, expose acts of election violence, and highlight the manipulation of votes. Their work serves as a powerful tool for advocacy, sparking conversations about the need for free and fair elections. Their art not only raises awareness but also educates the public on the importance of transparency and accountability in the electoral process.

Ultimately, artists ensure that conversations about electoral malpractices do not fade into silence. Their work keeps the issues in public view, inspiring people to take action and push for reforms. By using their talent to advocate for a better democracy, they contribute to building a political system where votes truly count, and leaders are chosen fairly. Through their art, they remind Nigerians that democracy thrives when elections are free, fair, and credible.

#### **1.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research shows that it is possible to visually represent the forms and effects of electoral malpractices in Nigeria using colors, composition, and symbolism. It highlights how painting can serve as a powerful tool for social change, helping to educate and engage viewers on this important issue.

### **1.3 Recommendations**

Further research is needed to explore how Nigerian artists can continue using their work to highlight the country's challenges and shortcomings.

Artists who actively advocate for Nigeria's economic growth deserve more support and recognition.

Art institutions and organizations can play a vital role by providing platforms and resources that help artists create meaningful and impactful work on these issues.

Educational programs and workshops can also help artists develop their skills and knowledge in using art for economic development.

Artists should use their talents to address economic issues and inspire change.

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