

**Topic:**

**Virtual Learning Space and Its Impacts during the COVID-19 Pandemic  
Lockdown: A Case Study of Art Educators' Hangout**

**By:**

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**Venue:**

<https://www.inseaconference.com/plenary-session>

### ABSTRACT:

There is a growing demand for global competence and cross-cultural skills, and that international experience is invaluable for teachers and their students; but the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has put a halt to so many social and academic gatherings. For this reason, Teaching Visual Art has created a virtual meeting place for art educators tagged Art Educators' Hangout. Reality of today's world during the COVID-19 pandemic is that things are no longer the way they were. The world is observing social distancing and this has made it impossible for art educators to come together physically as the borders are closed and countries are on lockdown. The Art Educators' Hangout has offered the art educators the platform to discuss their works, interact and inspire one another towards advancing the learning field of Art and improving the quality of art education on the continent of Africa. The initiative is to foster dialogue and sharing stimulating art projects to improve creativity and art appreciation with the vision to build network of art educators across the continent of Africa that are locally relevant and influential with global perspective. This presentation provides the broad overview of the virtual learning space, Art Educators' Hangout and its socio-economic impacts on Art educators during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.



Figure 1: Some of the virtual meetings, Art Educators Hangout

## INTRODUCTION

A Chinese proverb says, “If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.” In a knowledge-driven world, countries with low literacy rates have no future, as they will be left behind. There is a growing demand for global competence, IT literacy and cross-cultural skills, and that international experience is invaluable for educators but the COVID-19 pandemic has put a halt to so many social and academic gatherings.

Reality of today’s world during the COVID-19 pandemic is that things are no longer the way they were. As the world was observing social distancing, it became impossible for art educators to come together physically to share ideas and knowledge as the borders were closed and countries were on lockdown. Hence the establishment of the virtual meeting place for art educators on the continent of Africa tagged the Art Educators Hangout. The Art Educators Hangout is a virtual platform where art educators from different part of Africa beyond the borders meet while on quarantine from the comfort of their homes to contribute to the conversation about the future of art education in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic though has affected our world in no way words can express but it has not stop the Art educators from talking about how they can better their world through art, and how they can advance the learning field of Art on the continent of Africa through the platform Art Educators Hangout. The Art Teachers Hangout progressed to having presenters from diverse art related topics to sharing personal artistic experiences.

Creativity is contagious (Albert Einstein), when we share our creative works, we open others for more inspiring creative engagements. The Art Educators Hangout provided the art educators with the platform to foster dialogue and sharing stimulating art projects with the aims to improve creativity and art appreciation with the vision to build network of art educators across the continent of Africa that are locally relevant and influential with global perspective.

*Art education takes many form and follows many paths. Some through recognized, established institutions, some through community and grassroots initiatives. Art education must find the artist in the environment where they live. Why? That environment provides the elements the artist accesses to develop their art. It is their palette, their paint box, their idea trove, and the place where their thoughts are formed. Meeting them in those spaces centres the budding artist and helps them speak their “local language.” —’Segun Olude.*



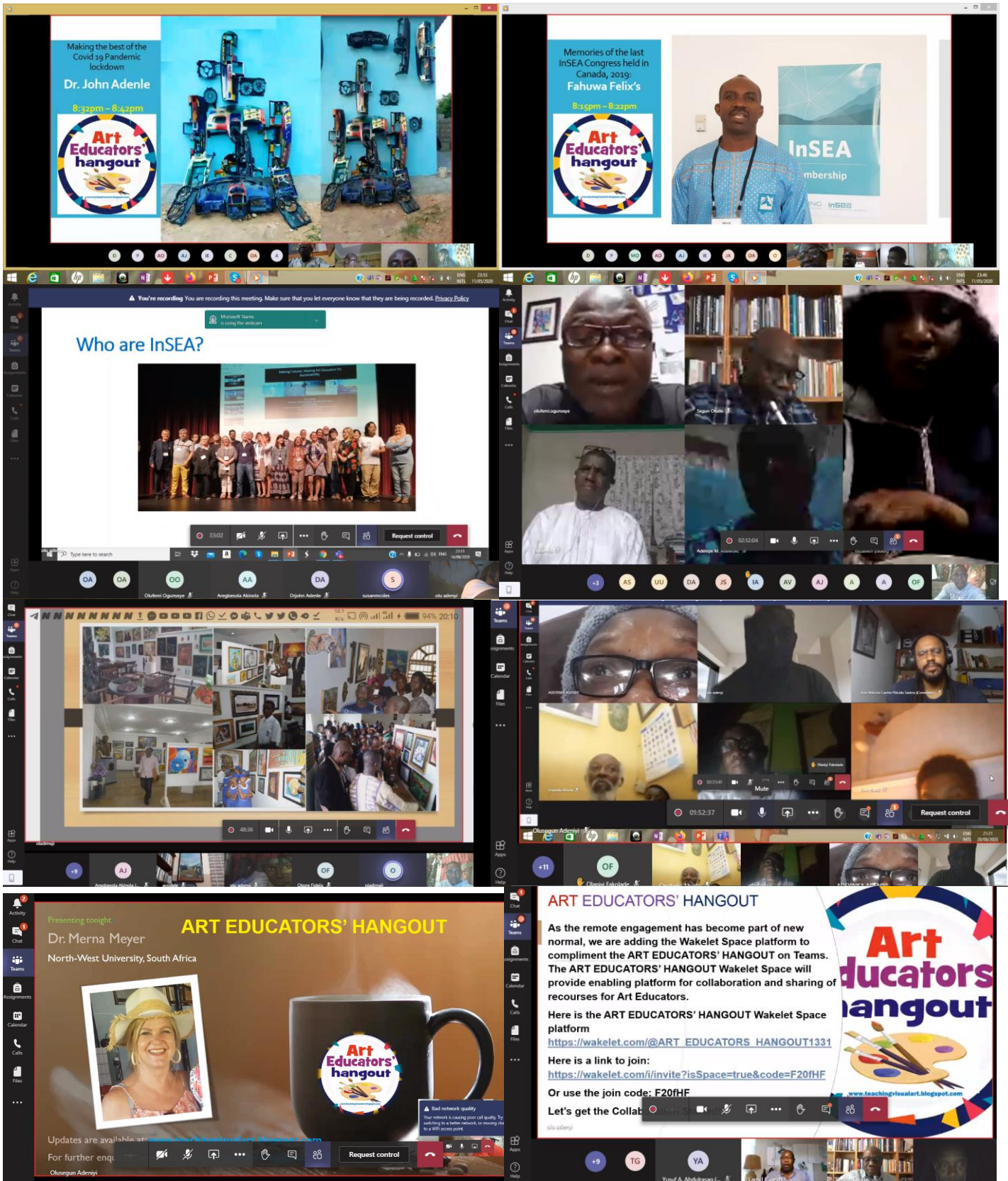


Figure 2: Art Educators Hangout at a glance

## THE VIRTUAL LEARNING SPACES

The new technologies provide opportunities for creating learning environments that extend the possibilities of the four walls of classroom, as well as offering new possibilities. These technologies provide access to a vast array of information, including digital libraries, data for analysis, feedback and inspiration. They can enhance learning for teachers, as well as that of students, and increase connections between schools and the communities.

These days, students should not only share their research and ideas through technology within a classroom or school, but also share their learning worldwide through online publishing tools and websites that reach a global audience.

Digital media literacy in a global era offers more than using technology to do the things that were done by hand before, such as data or word processing, retrieving information, presenting knowledge, and one-to-one communication. It now allows easy participation in the sophisticated global experiences and networks that our wired world affords.

Technology can be a powerful tool for transforming learning. It can help affirm and advance relationships between educators and students, reinvent our approaches to learning and collaboration, shrink long-standing equity and accessibility gaps, and adapt learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners.

## OBJECTIVES OF CREATING ART EDUCATORS HANGOUT

The Art Educators Hangout was created with the following objectives:

- I. To provide a platform to art educators on the continent of Africa discuss their works, interact and inspire one another towards advancing the learning field of Art and improving the quality of art education on the continent of Africa.
- II. To foster dialogue and sharing stimulating art projects to improve creativity and art appreciation with the vision to build network of art educators across the continent of Africa that are locally relevant and influential with global perspective.
- III. To save the dwindling state of art education on the continent of Africa and bring about art advocacy to change the narrative.
- IV. Strengthen collaboration among the art educators within Africa and beyond
- V. To expose the art educators to new concept and ideas, and to inspire a cross fertilization of themes and working practices.
- VI. To brainstorm on ideas and practice that is key to current development in the field of art practice and training.
- VII. To challenge the status quo and set a new form of reasoning so as to meet up with the dynamic changes in the educational system this 21st century.



- VIII. To develop cross-cultural understanding while addressing global issues
- IX. To expose the art educators to a broad range of artistic expressions, cultural expressions and artistic opportunity for effectiveness and efficiency in post Covid-19 era.

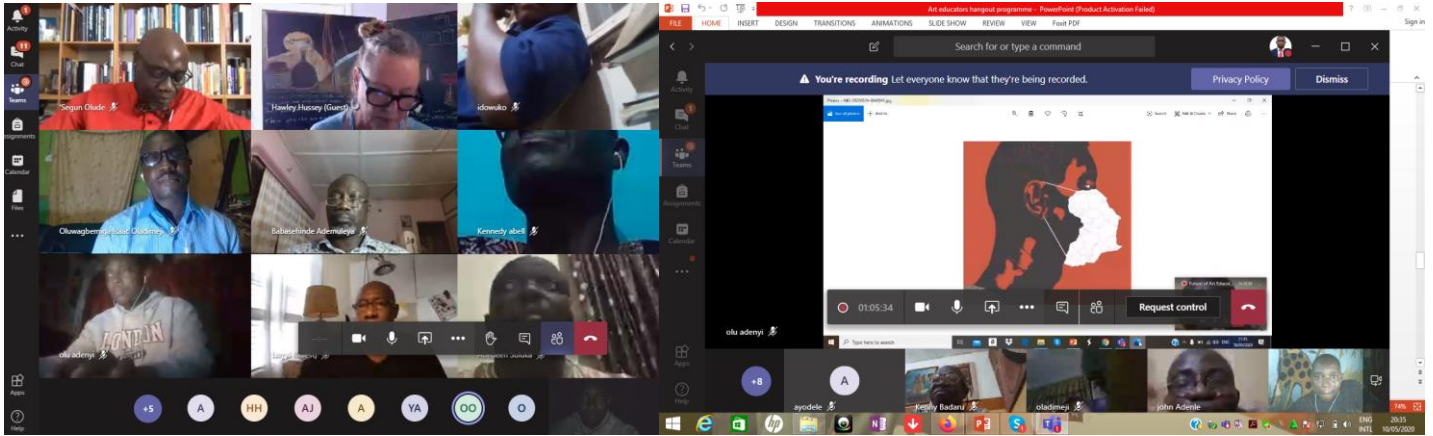


Figure 3: Connecting art educators, fostering dialogue and sharing stimulating art projects on Art Educators Hangout

## MODUS OPERANDI OF THE ART EDUCATORS HANGOUT

Art Educators Hangout holds on Microsoft Teams every Sundays since April 2020 at 8:00 pm, West Africa Time (7:00 pm GMT). The participants join through same link since inception: <https://bit.ly/ArtEducatorsHangout> with updates accessible at: [www.teachingvisualart.blogspot.com](http://www.teachingvisualart.blogspot.com)

It hosts at least one presenter at each meeting and some are problem led discussions. There are sections for questioning, comments and sharing future opportunities.

The sessions recorded videos are later uploaded at: <http://bit.ly/Youtube TeachingVisualArt>



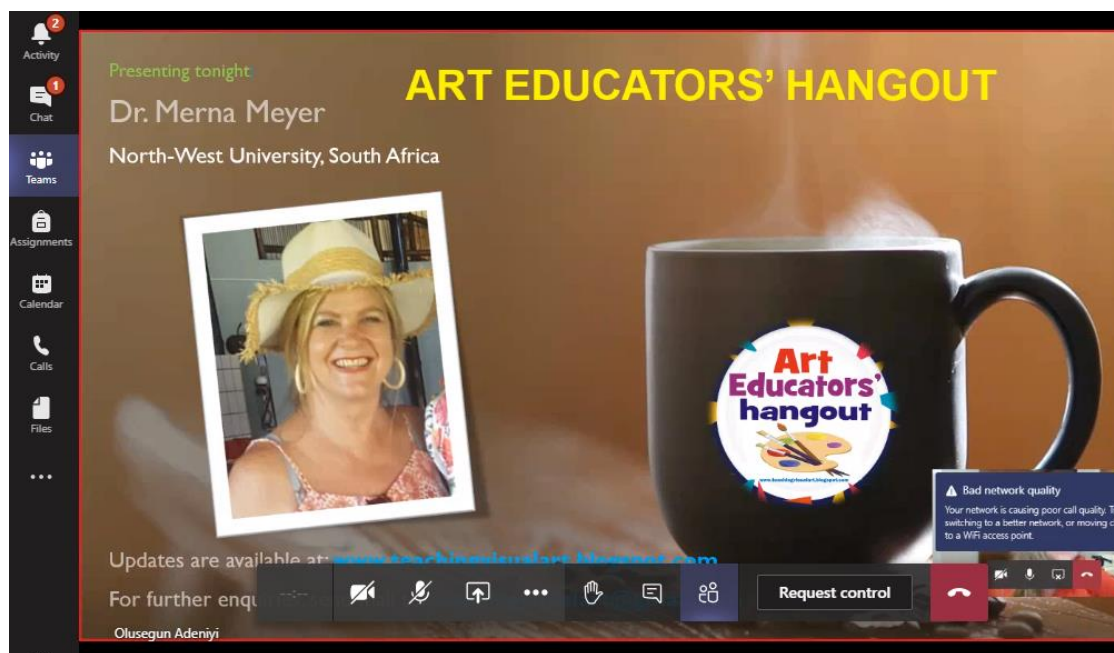


Figure 4: Screen display during one of the Art Educators Hangout Meetings

## IMPACTS OF THE ART EDUCATORS HANGOUT

Highlighted below are socio-economic impacts on Art educators during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

### 1. Rich Diverse Learning Experiences

The art educators were exposed to a broad range of artistic expressions and cultural expressions from different presenters from different social cultural backgrounds. Below is the list of presenters, Country, and topic with date of presentation

- i. Mrs Olaniba Abosede, Nigeria; Promoting our Cultural Heritage through Textile Design; 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.
- ii. Dr. Angela Saldanha, Portugal; 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2020
- iii. Dr. Ademola Azeez, Nigeria; 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2020
- iv. Hawley Hussey, USA; 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2020
- v. Dr. Ademuleya Babasehinde, Nigeria; 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2020
- vi. Dr. Merna Meyer, South Africa; 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2020
- vii. Larry Jackson, USA; an Enriched Art Life; 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.
- viii. Hawley Hussey, USA; the Vital Role of the Arts in Healing Complex Trauma with Creativity, Play and Access to All Art Forms; 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.

- ix. Dr. Tijani Khadijah Iyabo, Nigeria; the Values of Art Education; 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.
- x. ART has been scrapped from the school curriculum in Uganda, what are the possible measures the Art community can take to save the situation? (Discussion); 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.
- xi. Segun Olude, CGD, Canada; 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.
- xii. What role can parents play in developing their wards' potentials? (Discussion); 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.
- xiii. Mr Olugbenga Oladimeji, Nigeria; Rediscovery lost Heroes in Pre-Nigeria Art Education; 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 2020.
- xiv. Prince Olusegun Adeniyi, Nigeria; the Adventure of an Art Teacher; 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 2020.
- xv. Segun Olude, CGD, Canada; 21st Century Art Teacher's Character and Capacity Building in Art Education; 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2020.
- xvi. Dr. Samia Ahmed Mostafa El Sheikh (Vice President of InSEA and past world council regional representatives for InSEA Africa & Middle East region), Egypt; "SHE, from their EYES" mixed media with hand weaving re-contextualizing famous portrait through history; 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2020.
- xvii. Susan M. Coles, Uk; the InSEA Manifesto; 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 2020.
- xviii. Oladimeji Oluwagbemiga Isaac, Nigeria; celebrating the heroes of Nigeria Art Education (Chief Aina Onabolu, 1882—1963)
- xix. Fakolade Olaniyi, Nigeria; celebrating the heroes of Nigeria Art Education (Solomon Irein Wangboje, 1930 – 1997)
- xx. International Arts Education Week Special (Discussion); 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.
- xxi. Fahuwa Felix, Nigeria; Memories of the last InSEA Congress held in Canada; 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.
- xxii. Dr. Kenny Badaru, Nigeria; catching them young; 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.
- xxiii. Dr. John Adenle, Nigeria; Creative responses to the current world situation: Making the best of the Covid 19 Pandemic lockdown; 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.
- xxiv. Oladimeji oluwagbemiga Isaac, Nigeria; Shapping Art Education future; 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2020.

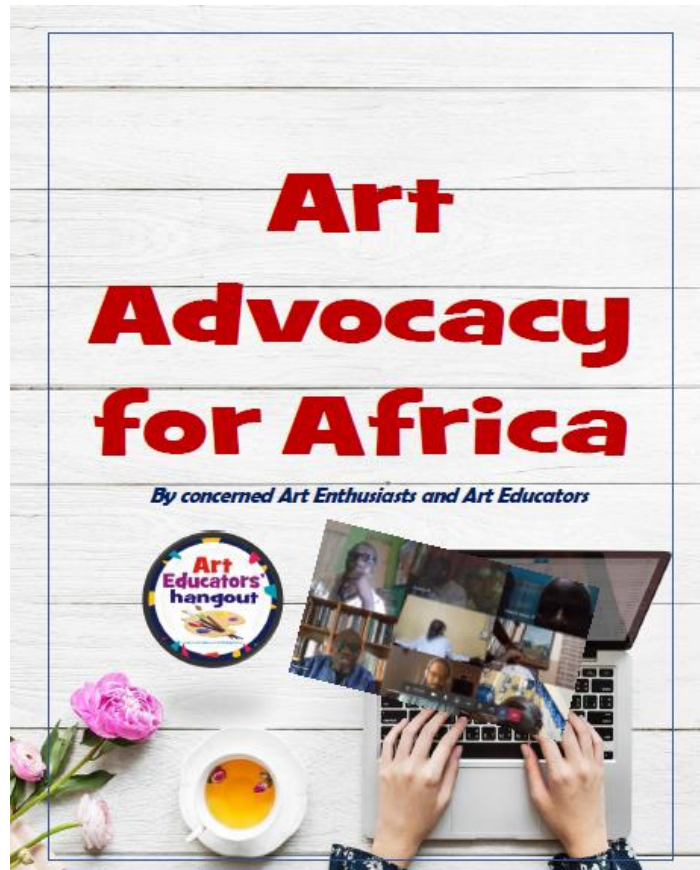
## 2. Art Advocacy for Africa Booklet

The July edition of the Art Educators Hangout was centred on the concerns of art educators towards the dwindling state of art education on the continent of Africa which gave birthed to the Art Advocacy for Africa booklet. The first action taken was a call for art enthusiasts and



art educators to lend their voice to the topic: The importance and value of Art education to the society. The responses were put together in the booklet to strengthened and advance art advocacy in Africa.

The Art Advocacy for Africa booklet could be requested by a mail to [teachingvisualart@gmail.com](mailto:teachingvisualart@gmail.com) or accessed at [https://wakelet.com/@ART\\_EDUCATORS\\_HANGOUT1331](https://wakelet.com/@ART_EDUCATORS_HANGOUT1331)



*Figure 5: The Art Advocacy for Africa booklet*

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### 3. The Values of Art education to the society

On 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 2020, Dr. Tijani Khadijah Iyabo was invited on Art Educators Hangout to speak on the topic: the value of Art Education. Dr Tijani is an Associate Professor of Art Education at the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria. Excerpts from the presentation is shared below:

- i. The first activity carried out by a child is art
- ii. Art is a means of communication
- iii. Art is use as a teaching aids to foster learning
- iv. Art serves as a means for culture transmission from generation to generation.
- v. Art instil aesthetic value
- vi. Art formulates how we live in our communities
- vii. Art is custodian of culture.
- viii. Art is an integral of human life and core to human growth
- ix. Art teaches empathy
- x. Art encourages and foster collaboration, creativity and critical thinking (thinking out of box). All the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- xi. Art is used for therapy
- xii. Art is a means of expression
- xiii. It is Science encapsulated in Art that becomes innovation, a novel and invention.
- xiv. Art stimulates imagination
- xv. Art foster observation skills
- xvi. Art foster problem solving skills.
- xvii. Art instill self-confidence and improve self esteem
- xviii. Art is used to relieve stress and improve wellbeing.

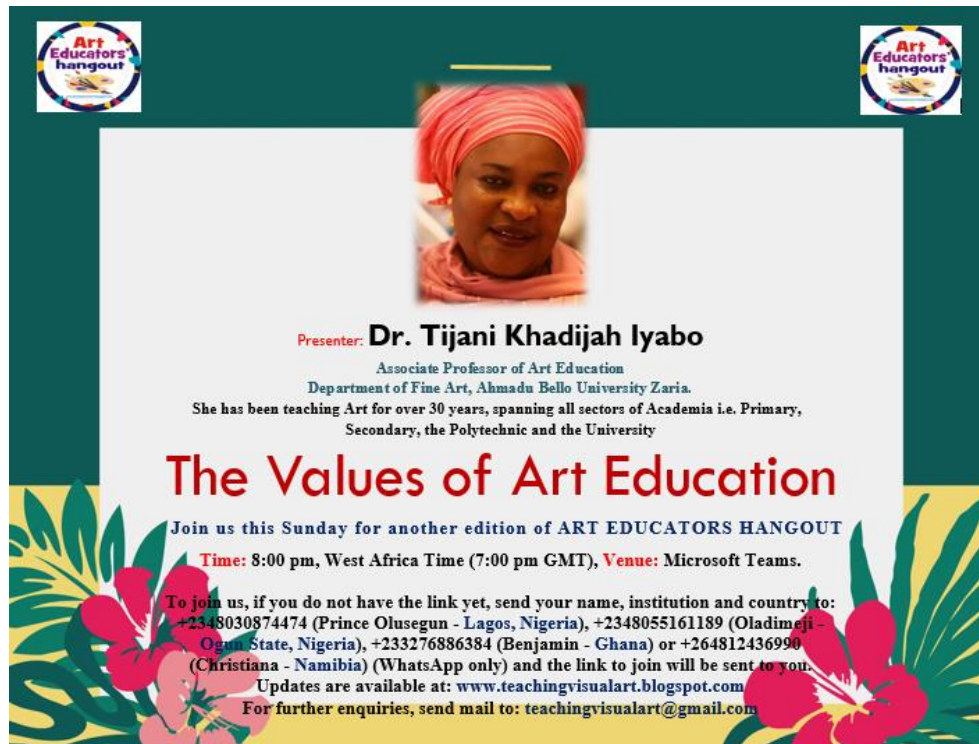


Figure 6: The values of Art Education Poster presented by Dr Tijani

#### 4. Virtual Resources Space

To bring continued resources and support for art educators to advance art education on the continent of Africa during the Covid-19 pandemic period and beyond, a Wakelet Space was created. Here is the link to Art Educators Hangout Wakelet Space platform [https://wakelet.com/@ART\\_EDUCATORS\\_HANGOUT1331](https://wakelet.com/@ART_EDUCATORS_HANGOUT1331) and collaborators can join through this link <https://wakelet.com/i/invite?isSpace=true&code=F20fHF> or use the join code: F20fHF

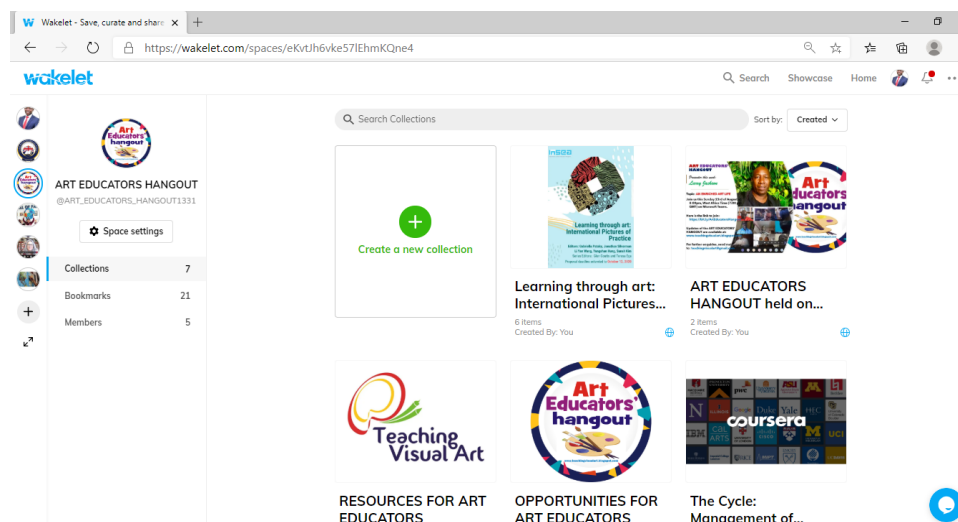


Figure 7: The Art Educators Hangout Wakelet Space



## 5. Collaborative Opportunities

The Art Educators Hangout provided platform to connect art educators and opened up collaborative opportunities for them. A very good example is the presentations with the students of Caleb British International School, Lagos Nigeria which has increased the students' motivation, awareness and understanding of the arts.

- I. Dr. Angela Saldanha, from Portugal shared her works in a virtual class with the Year 10 Art students of Caleb British International School, Lagos Nigeria.

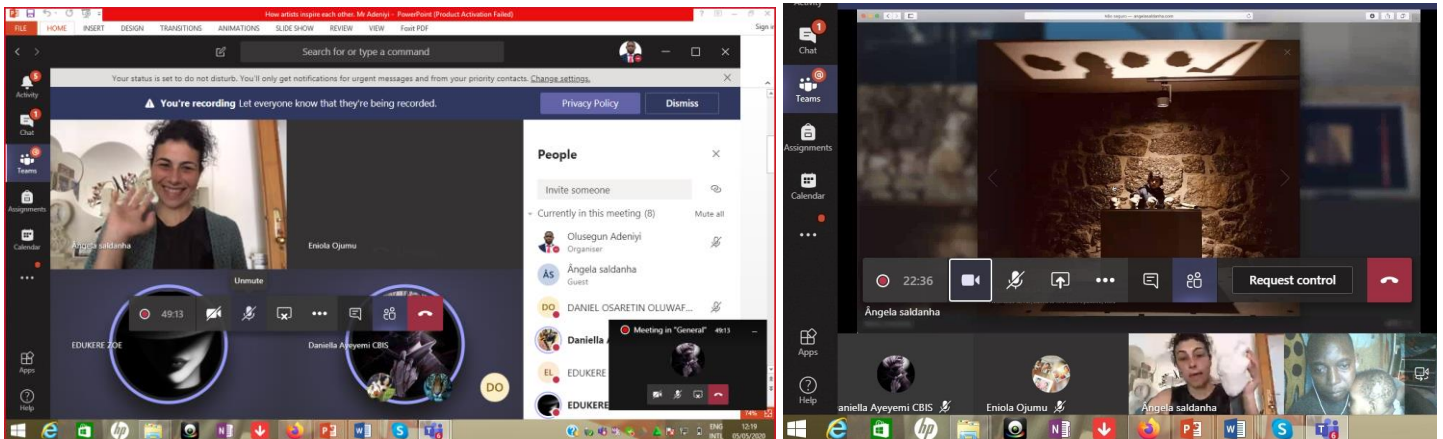


Figure 8: Dr. Angela Saldanha in a virtual class with the Year 10 Art students of CBIS, Lagos Nigeria.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/Cnyth5S6SBO>

- II. Dr. Samia Ahmed Mostafa El Sheikh from Egypt shared her artworks from her recent Art Exhibition titled “SHE, from their EYES” (mixed media with hand weaving re-contextualizing famous portrait through history) in a virtual class with the Year 10 Art students of Caleb British International School, Lagos Nigeria.

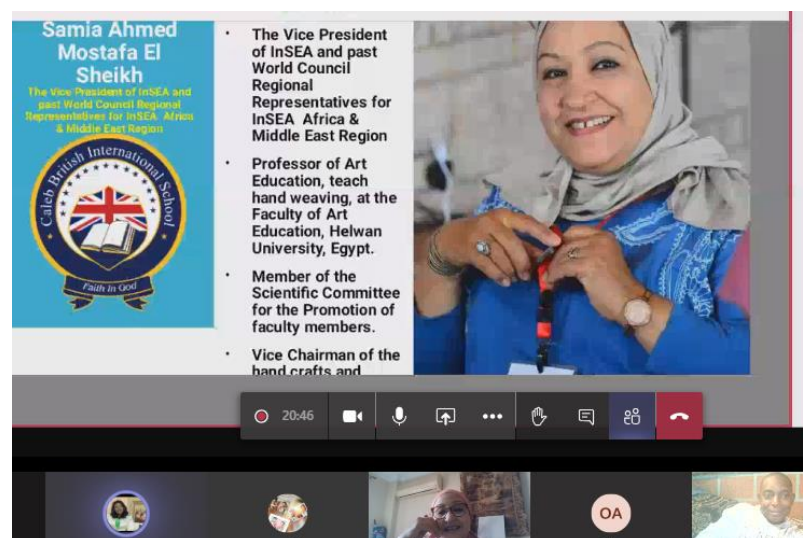


Figure 9: Dr. Samia Ahmed Mostafa El Sheikh in a virtual class with the Year 10 Art students of CBIS, Lagos Nigeria.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/6l9Zkv2zAyQ>

- III. Larry Jackson from USA shared her works in a virtual class with the Year 7 students of Caleb British International School, Lagos Nigeria.

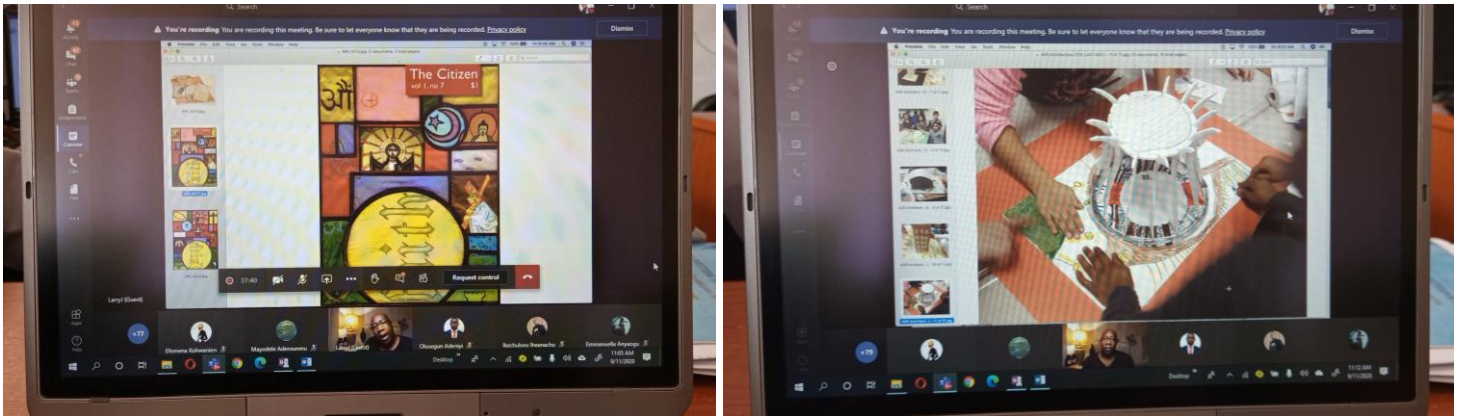


Figure 10: Larry Jackson in a virtual class with the Year 10 Art students of CBIS, Lagos Nigeria.

Watch the video and many more on the art teacher's YouTube Channel:  
<https://bit.ly/OlusegunAdeniyiYoutubeChannel>

## 6. Created Opportunities for bigger Stage

The platform has opened up opportunities for the presenters to present at other conferences. The likes of Professor Segun Olude and Mrs Abosede Olaniba received special invitation after their superlative presentation at the Art Educators Hangout to present at the SSASEA UNESCO Arts Education Conference organized by Sub-Sahara Africa Society for Education through the Arts (SSASEA) which will be held at the North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa between 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. The Conference Theme is: Embracing indigenous knowledge through the Arts for sustainable development goals (SDG's\*) in general and in times of (pandemic) disruption and uncertainty.

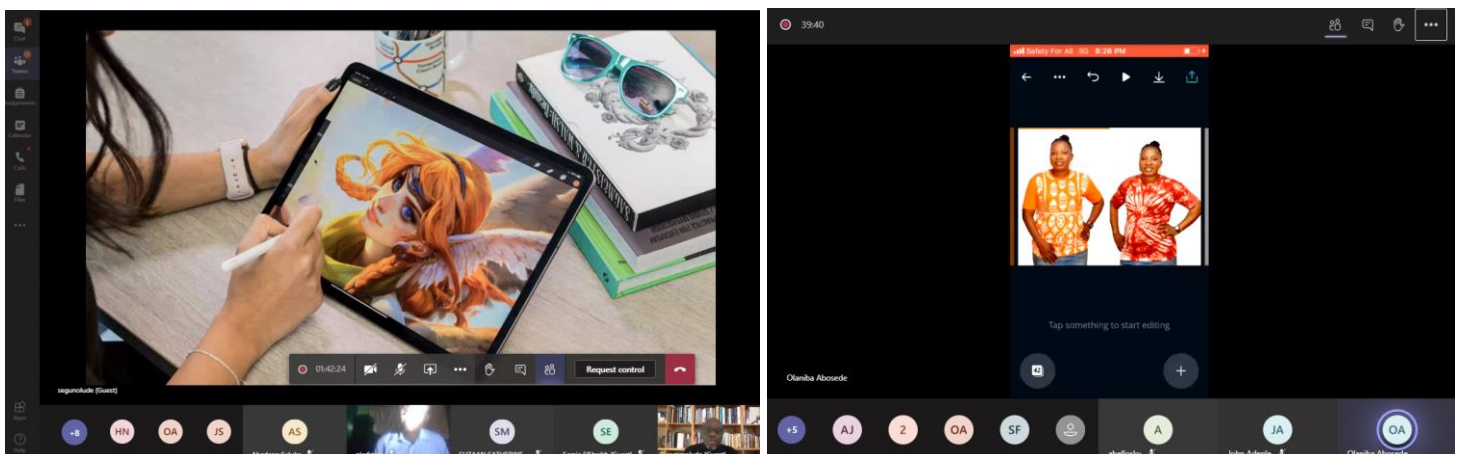


Figure 11: Presentations on Art Educators Hangout by Professor Segun Olude and Mrs Abosede Olaniba

## 7. Contents for Learning and Professional Development

The meetings will continue to be a reference point in advancing the knowledge of art and further discussion to expose the art educators to new concept and ideas, and to inspire a cross fertilization of themes and working practices. Hence the meetings have been documented online.

Watch previous editions of Art Educators' Hangout at: [http://bit.ly/YouTube\\_TeachingVisualArt](http://bit.ly/YouTube_TeachingVisualArt)

Updates are available at: [www.teachingvisualart.blogspot.com](http://www.teachingvisualart.blogspot.com)

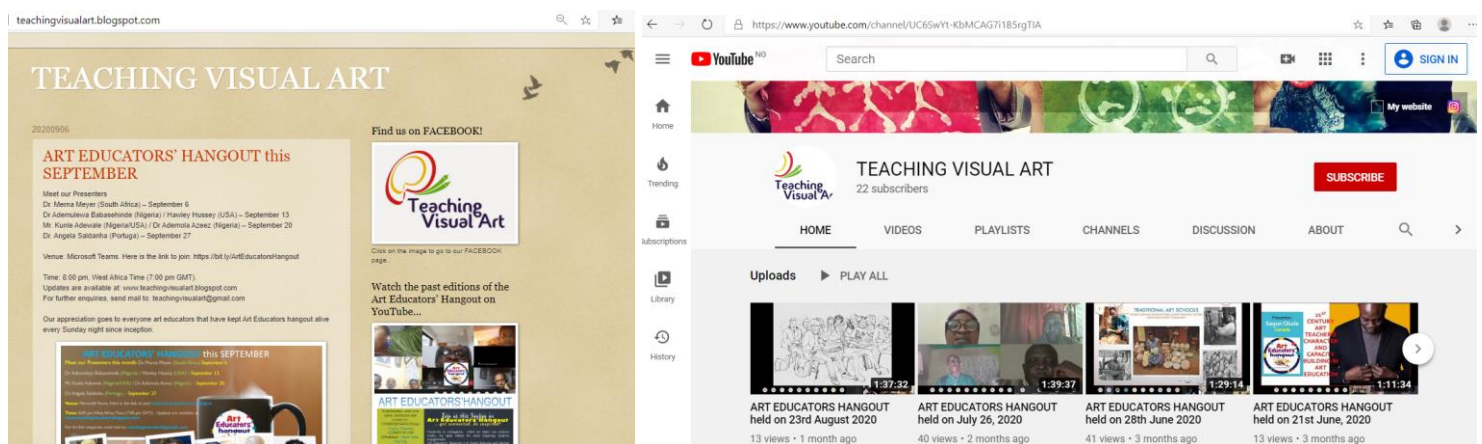
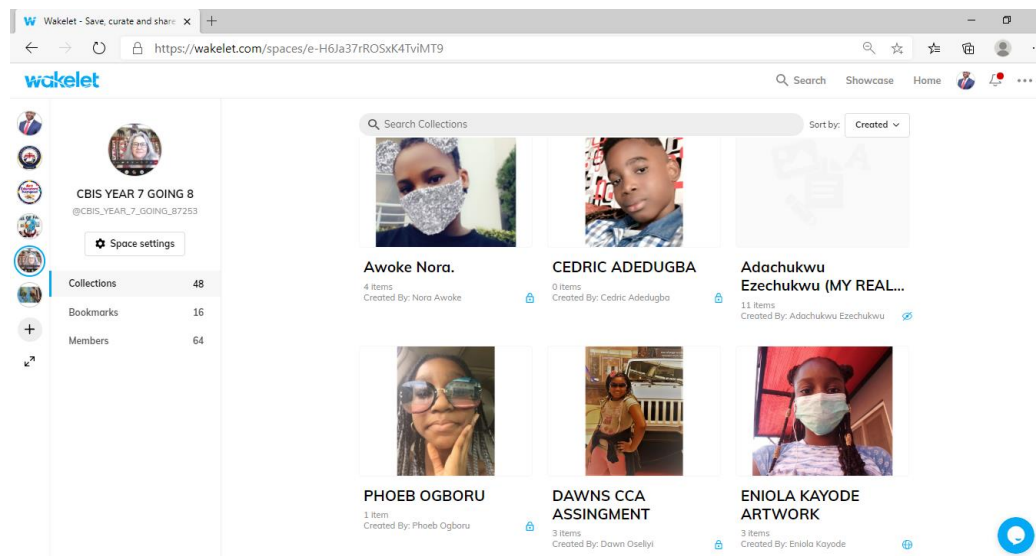


Figure 12: Art Educators Hangout updates on blog and YouTube

## 8. Exhibition of Students' Artworks with invitation of Parents

One of the lessons from Larry Jackson presentation “an Enriched Art Life” on 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, 2020 was the need for art educators to frequently exhibit their students' artworks. This statement inspired the virtual collection of artworks created during the Covid-19 lockdown by the students of Caleb British International School, Lagos Nigeria at: [https://wakelet.com/@CBIS\\_YEAR\\_7\\_GOING\\_87253](https://wakelet.com/@CBIS_YEAR_7_GOING_87253)





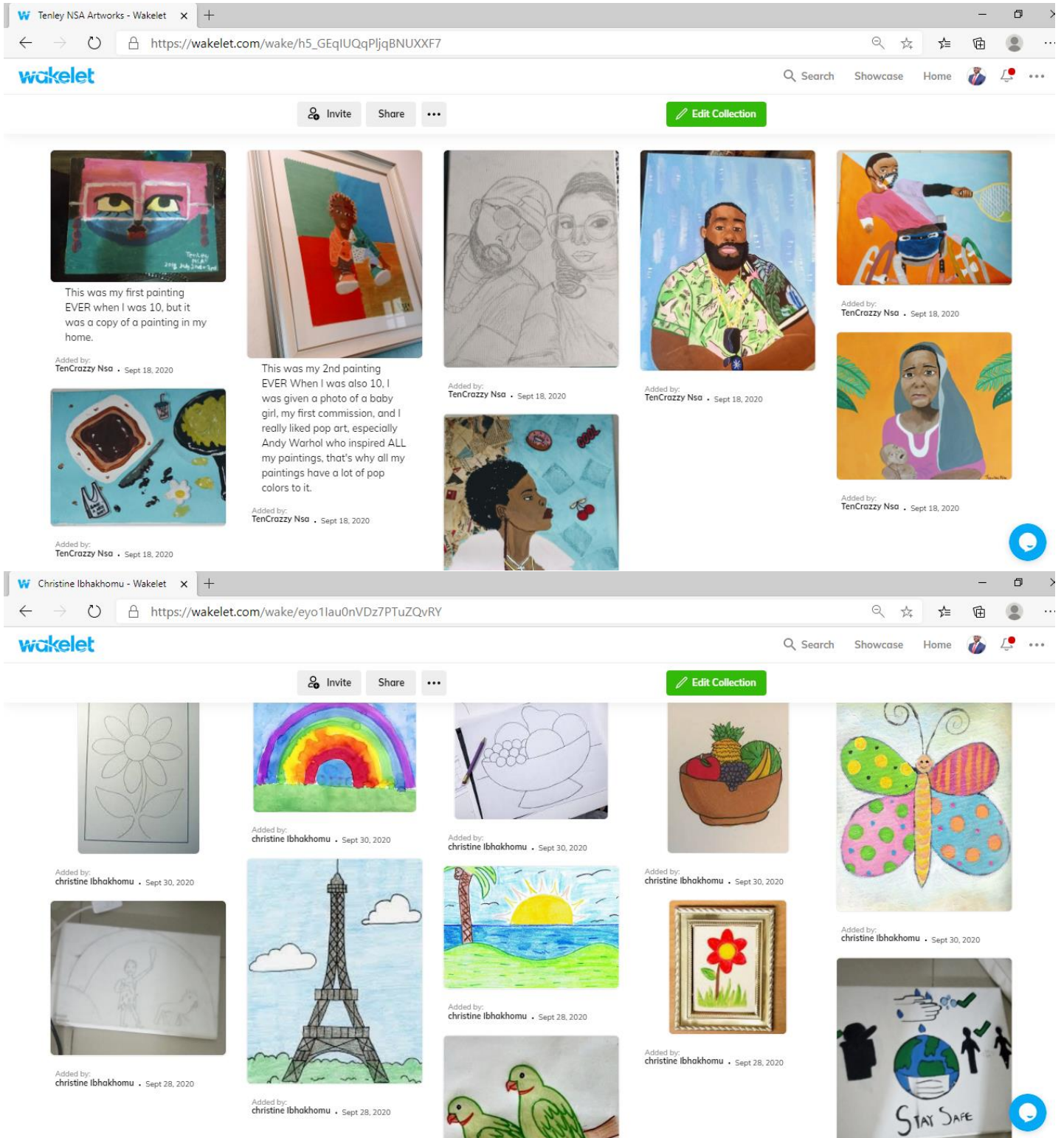


Figure 13: Virtual Exhibition on Wakelet by the students of CBIS, Lagos Nigeria



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Artistic exchange and collaboration virtually between art educators across the continents will be essential in our new world, post Covid-19 era.

Training of art educators in the new technology tools to be able to meet up with the challenges of our ever changing world.

Community art should be encouraged in many of the African countries to increase art appreciation.

More platforms should be created to encourage shared knowledge and ideas to foster creativity.

To realize fully the benefits of technology in our education system and provide authentic learning experiences, it is recommended that educators should use technology effectively in their practice. Hence, Digital media literacy trainings and presentations should be part of future conferences schedules.

To remain globally competitive and develop engaged citizens, our schools should weave 21st century competencies and expertise throughout the learning experience. These include the development of critical thinking, complex problem solving, collaboration, and adding multimedia communication into the teaching of traditional academic subjects.

Learning experiences enabled by technology should be accessible for all learners, including those with special needs. Thus, switching to virtual learning due to occurrence any future global crisis will be smooth for both teachers and students.

Blended learning, Hybrid learning and other models of learning enabled by technology should be encouraged in schools. Educators should organize physical spaces to facilitate best collaborative learning using digital tools.

### Recommended Reading for Art Educators

<https://wakelet.com/wake/a630302f-7802-47f6-a3bd-96c3aa3740f1>

<https://wakelet.com/wake/2da47fde-8a0c-47bb-9efd-5c6747865ed1>

<https://wakelet.com/wake/06100833-308e-4af1-931c-3a0c6498d0e3>

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## REFERENCES

- i. Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education: 2017 National Education Technology Plan Update; U.S. Department of Education (<http://tech.ed.gov>) January 2017
- ii. Beverley Oliver and Peter Nikolettatos; Building engaging physical and virtual learning spaces: a case study of a collaborative approach; Proceedings ascilite Auckland 2009
- iii. V. Jalgama and Fotis Liarokapis; An Online Virtual Learning Environment for Higher Education; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224249396>