

Artist Shubhada Zunjarwad of Art 'n Fun with Shubhs Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

SUNNYVALE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A 2024 study published in the Sapienza International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies following 64 children over six months found that regular exposure to music, drama and visual art improved their reasoning skills, math and reading skills, as well as their emotional well being. The finding comes at an awkward moment for American schools, which have leaned harder into STEM instruction, pushing art coursework out of the schedule. A former Silicon Valley executive has spent the past year building an answer to this problem. Shubhada Zunjarwad, founder of ANFS Studio, is filling the gap schools are leaving behind, one paintbrush at a time.



Shubhada spent more than two decades in the tech industry before founding the studio, including 13 years at Microsoft and a later role as a technical product manager at Starbucks. Painting had always run alongside her career, although mostly in the form of birthday portraits she made for friends and family. Last year, when Starbucks's corporate reorganization eliminated her position, she used the unplanned time off to visit family in India, where she taught art to her nieces and nephews. That's when something clicked.

One year later, almost to the day, Shubhada teaches roughly 30 students (age group 5-7, 8-12, 13-17, adults and seniors) out of her studio in Sunnyvale. In fact, the studio is growing so fast, she is planning to double in size, going from a 250 square foot facility to a new space with two rooms, a big hall, private bathroom and independent entrance. The move will help all age groups, especially kids and seniors, as no stairs are required to reach the studio which offers

easy access to the bathroom.

"With art, there's no right or wrong," Shubhada tells students who arrive convinced they can't draw a straight line. She often opens a beginner session by pointing out that acrylic paint forgives almost anything, explaining that a layer that doesn't work can simply be painted over. From there, she introduces techniques such as tracing to help nervous students build early confidence before they attempt freehand. "I often let participants tear off plastic from a fresh new canvas as first step, and tell them that they are going to walk out of the studio with their masterpiece painted on this blank canvas, all created by them!" Shubhada adds.

Her approach is paying off with students of every age. One adult student, a radiologist with a demanding schedule, began by tracing a portrait onto a large canvas. Months later, she was drawing an original folk art scene freehand. Shubhada credits the shift to time spent simply sitting with the work rather than any single lesson.

Shubhada has also built a peer teaching model into her studio, an approach she says surprised even her. A January workshop at the Sunnyvale Public Library drew 40 children ages 5 to 7. To help with the class size, Shubhada recruited eight of her own students, all between 6 and 12 years old, to help guide younger students through the session. One of her students opened the event with a short, unscripted speech reassuring the room that mistakes are simply part of the process.



Shubhada sees technology and art as connected skills, rather than competing. "Excelling in science or math requires a calm, focused mind," she shares, "and art is one of the few reliable ways to build that kind of focus." She even provides Zen Time, a quiet time when the studio lights are dimmed for a bit to allow kids to work on sketching/mandala art, or to just lie down on a couch/bean bag. "I have observed that ten minutes of Zen Time adds so much more creativity, and kids are recharged to try out new ideas!" Shubhada explains.

Remove art from an education program, and a school may be quietly working against the very skills its STEM programs are trying to strengthen.

Shubhada's feelings about artificial intelligence follow the same logic. She has no objection to using AI for administrative tasks such as drafting emails, and she's fine with a student asking it to suggest a color palette. What she won't do is let a program generate a finished piece of artwork, because doing so would erase the part of the process she values most: the unplanned discovery that happens mid-painting. She describes a workshop where a woman set out to paint a mountain range and, partway through, felt an unexpected pull to imagine what lay behind those peaks. Her detour became the most meaningful part of the piece. "That kind of surprise only shows up when a hand is moving the brush without knowing exactly where it's headed," Shubhada asserts, "and it's the first thing to disappear when the work is handed off to a machine."



Ask Shubhada what separates a great piece of art from an ordinary one, and she doesn't talk about technique. She talks about heart. Looking at a finished painting, she says she can feel the energy the artist poured into it, almost like stepping back into the moment it was created. She recalls one of her own paintings of two horses running and says looking at it still carries her back to exactly how she felt while painting it. "That energy," she says, "is what a viewer actually responds to, and it's the one ingredient a machine cannot supply. A program can assemble an image from a prompt, but it cannot feel anything while doing it." Whatever unease people sense in AI generated art, in her view, comes from exactly that missing piece.

Family has become part of the studio's story, too. Earlier this month, Shubhada's teenage son and his friends asked to hold their own painting session, at 10 p.m., a request she happily accommodated. The group painted for two hours with no phones in sight, an outcome she has documented on her Instagram account alongside regular glimpses into daily studio life. (https://www.instagram.com/reel/Dbn_JUrNwPp/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsi=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D)

Looking ahead, Shubhada hopes to expand the ANFS Studio beyond painting into a broader home for creative disciplines such as ceramics or textile crafts, built in partnership with other local artists. A recent collaboration with a local artist produced a dot mandala workshop where students created bracelets tied to an Indian tradition of sibling gifts, blending technique with meaning.

Her advice to anyone hesitant to pick up a brush is simple: Everybody is already an artist. The only requirement is a willingness to sit with the process and see where it leads. She compares this mindset to the one she carried through her years as a product manager, where a feature only worked once she had truly considered the person using it. "Art," she says, "asks the same question of its maker, just with a brush instead of a keyboard."

About ANFS Studio

ANFS Studio is a Sunnyvale, California, art education business founded by Shubhada Zunjarwad, a former technology professional with over 20 years of experience at companies including Microsoft and Starbucks. The studio offers painting and drawing instruction to students ranging from young children to adults, hosts community workshops at venues such as the Sunnyvale Public Library, and shares behind-the-scenes lessons through its YouTube channel and Instagram accounts @artnfunwithshubhs. In October, the studio will be hosting a Rock Mandala booth at the Sunnyvale Community Center, and in November, a Sand Art workshop for Teens at the Sunnyvale Public Library.

Close Up Radio recently featured Shubhada Zunjarwad, artist and founder of ANFS Studio, in an interview with Doug Llewelyn on Thursday October 1st at 4pm Eastern

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For more information about Shubhada Zunjarwad, artist and founder of Art 'n Fun with Shubhs, please visit <https://www.artnfunwithshubhs.com/> and <https://www.24-7pressrelease.com/press-release/537877/marquis-whos-who-recognizes-shubhada-zunjarwad-for-visionary-leadership-in-art-education-and-technology> on Instagram and YouTube @artnfunwithshubhs

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