

Lighting-up Orange for Corona on World Patient Safety Day

by Selva Ozelli

Air pollution -- fine particulate matter (PM2.5), widely recognized as harmful to human health, are low lying airborne particles measuring up to 2.5 microns (μm) in size, made up of nitrates, sulfates, ammonium, and carbon--defies national borders and is inescapable. It is caused by a number of different sources, such as forest fires, sandstorms, the burning of fossil fuels, and vehicle exhaust fumes.

The current high levels of air pollution around the world has contributed to increased rates of chronic respiratory disease and impaired lung function in people of all ages. According to the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), each year an estimated 7 million premature deaths -- or 1 in every 9 -- are attributed to air pollution. In Europe this number is--one in eight deaths-- according to a study by the European Environment Agency (EEA).¹ A majority of the world population continues to be exposed to levels of air pollution substantially above World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines, [making air pollution a major and increasing threat to public health](#), according to a study published in the journal *Climate and Atmospheric Science*. Many of the diseases that are caused by long-term exposure to air pollution are the same diseases that increase the risk of severe illness and death in patients with COVID-19.

Researchers in multiple countries have been exploring the apparent correlation between environmental conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic, since seventy-five percent of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, originating from the transfer of viruses from animals to humans. A report [prepared](#) by the WHO stated that the true cost of climate change is felt when it penetrates deep into our respiratory and circulatory systems and damages our lungs, which is highly vulnerable to the coronavirus. And that a small increase in pollution exposure--which affects the immune system's ability to fight infection-- raises the number of COVID-19 deaths, as healthy lungs are our first defense against respiratory illnesses and viruses like COVID-19, according to studies conducted in the United States², Italy³, Germany⁴, Canada⁵ the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.⁶ Failure to reduce levels of air pollution could potentially increase not only infection rates of COVID-19, but the numbers of people who die from the virus in the long-term.⁷

Accordingly countries have been monitoring the effects of the pandemic on the environment, as it continues to spread across the world surviving even in frozen food supplies of--meat⁸ and

¹ <https://www.iamexpat.nl/expat-info/dutch-expat-news/400000-deaths-caused-europe-every-year-air-pollution>

² <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/air-pollution-linked-with-higher-covid-19-death-rates/>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7399615/>

⁴ <https://newsroom.iza.org/en/archive/research/poor-air-quality-increases-covid-19-deaths/>

⁵ <https://ccapc.org.in/policy-briefs/2020/brauer-covid>

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/methodologies/coronaviruscovid19relatedmortalityratesandtheeffectsofairpollutioninengland>
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/methodologies/coronaviruscovid19relatedmortalityratesandtheeffectsofairpollutioninengland>

⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7044178/>

⁸ <https://cointelegraph.com/news/tracing-global-meat-related-risks-with-blockchain-amid-covid-19>

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fish⁹ --for up to three weeks according to a recent study.¹⁰ They are monitoring COVID-19's effects on economic activity and pollution using NASA, ESA, and JAXA satellites.¹¹ For example, during May—while the global COVID-19 lockdown was firmly in place-- CO2 levels in atmosphere hit a record high. And according to the [United in Science 2020 report](#), it will only continue to increase.

The unprecedented pandemic, has put an enormous burden on health systems, healthcare professionals worldwide. So far, more than 27.9 million people around the world have been diagnosed with the coronavirus and more than 905,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. Some 18.8 million people have recovered. The pandemic unveiled the challenges and the risks health workers face globally including health care associated infections, violence, stigma, psychological and emotional disturbances, illness and even death. These frontline workers are physically exhausted and emotionally strained from the harrowing experience of serving on the COVID response.

To acknowledge the sacrifices of frontline healthcare professionals, on World Patient Safety Day, I have relaunched my first solo digital art show “Art in the Time of Corona” with fourteen paintings that were selected in three international art competitions-- United Nation's COVID-19 Open Brief (14), Indian Council for Cultural Relation's international Art in the Time of Corona competition (1) and the Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of Bihar, India's International Environment Day Art Contest (1). This art show was also published by the World's first climate change museum “The Jockey Club Museum of Climate Change – Hong Kong” in addition to over 110 other museums in 40 countries around the world.

- **Art in the Time of Corona, Pinelo Art**

Gallery: <https://www.facebook.com/527889230574675/posts/3281134275250143/>

With my coronavirus themed art show I explored whether Climate Change caused by carbon emissions might be one reason for the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic which spread around the world like a tsunami alongside heightened CO2, penetrating deep into our respiratory and circulatory systems damaging our lungs, to the point where we become highly vulnerable to it.¹² I intended to remind us of the importance of appreciating, respecting: life of all who inhabit this world – not only humans; our friendships- including with plants, animals; those who bring technological innovations that make life easier for humans; those who put their lives on the line to save ours – like Dr. Esmá Akin, Chief of Nuclear Medicine at George

⁹ <https://cointelegraph.com/news/tracing-fishy-risks-with-blockchain-tech-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic>

¹⁰ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/08/22/covid-19-can-survive-frozen-meat-fish-three-weeks-study-finds/>

¹¹ <https://www.theverge.com/21302906/satellites-covid-19-impact-economy-environment-nasa-esa-jaxa-dashboard>

¹² <https://cointelegraph.com/news/the-need-to-report-carbon-emissions-amid-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

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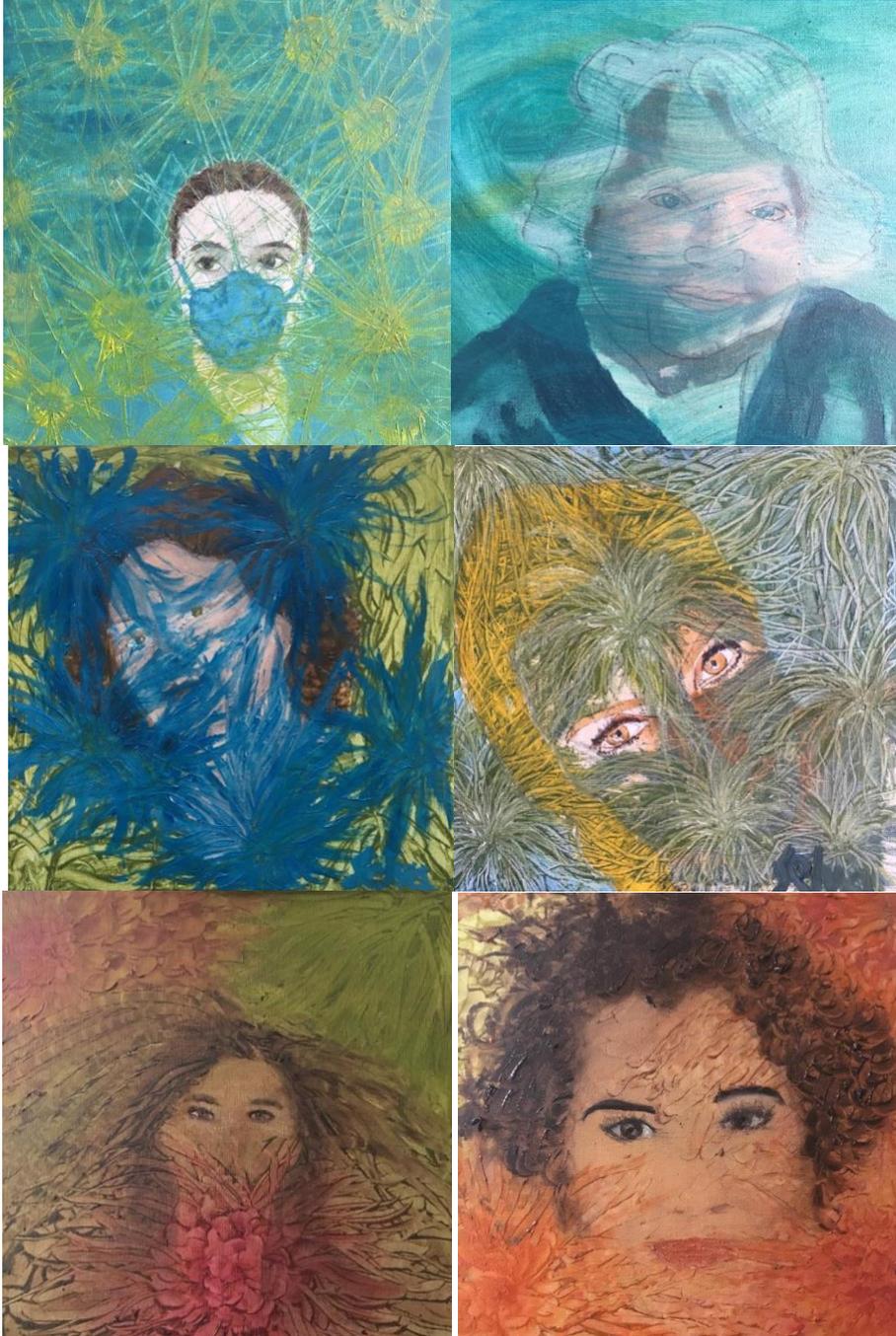
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Washington Hospital in DC, a COVID-19 hotspot-- as we collectively face and are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have also recently painted the corona themed portraits of Dr. Kalbiye Yalaz "Tsunami of Corona", who is the teacher of Dr. Esma Akin and established the first pediatric neurology department in Hacettepe Hospital; Lale Baymur Vanli "Surviving the Jungle of Corona", Pediatric Neuro Psychologist; Dr. Zubeyde Arat-Akdogan "Frontline Heroine of Corona", Nephrologist; Nursel Hacikulaoglu "Frontline Heroine of Corona II", Pharmacist; Ozge Alkan-Rampton "Frontline Heroine of Corona III"; Shariful Islam "Climate Change to Corona", Climate Change Activist and Founder of World Climate Change Organization; Cyd Upson "Chronicling Corona", TV Producer; and Sandy Kosmidis "Lighting-up Orange for Corona I & II" which is WHO's public recognition of health workers' efforts on World Patient Safety Day.

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To raise funds for the orphans of health care professionals who lost their lives to COVID-19 ([see brochure](#) for my art work) I donated artwork from my digital art show “Art in the Time of Corona” (Portrait of Vitalik Buterin who is the creator of digital currency Ethereum, Banu Avar TV Producer and self-portrait) to the [Portakal Cicegi Project](#) which will be on sale at www.portart.org from Sep 15 to Oct 15, 2020.

Further information about Selva Ozelli can be found at:

Artist Interviews: www.Trvst.World, www.norvergence.com, www.IrishTechNews.com, www.TimesofCorona.com

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Artist Profiles: www.talenthouse.com