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Sustainable Systems Course Inspires Paradigm Shift

Divyakshi Kedia is a BA/BFA student in [Illustration](#) and [Literary Studies](#) with a minor in [Art History](#).

Divyakshi has spearheaded multiple charity events including a fundraiser where she managed to raise 34,000 dollars for the rejuvenation of rivers in rural India. She enjoys making artist books and walking around New York City. For her project in Sustainable Systems, Divyakshi wrote and illustrated a children's book about composting. Check out

our interview with Divyakshi, and keep scrolling to read her book!

Q: What inspired you to write and illustrate a children's book about composting?

Having lived in a big city all my life, I've become well acquainted with the glaringly obvious fact that bigger cities will produce more waste. Overwhelming statistics about our landfills only support my observations. However, I only experienced a paradigm shift after seeing the landfills in New York City myself, during a Sustainable Systems class field trip. The trip jolted me to do something that numbers on a page never could. I realized that if people living in apartments in big cities composted, we would reduce the quantity of food waste and methane production, as well as end farmers' overreliance on fertilizers. Adults tend to be rigid in their mindset, but children are eager and susceptible to change. Their determination can lead to a metamorphic change in society- and this is what prompted me to aim my project at children.

Q: What lessons from your Sustainable Systems class will you take with into your future design projects as a student and as a professional?

Every design, every illustration, and every garment has its own purpose. In my class, I learned to think analytically about what that purpose was, and learned to question as well as respond to the impact my art had on the environment, society and myself. Sustainable Systems was crucial in the mindset I developed over my first year at Parsons. The class not only made me responsive to the growing need for sustainable design but also kindled within me a desire to improve the world. I learned that every action we undertake is cyclical in nature and creates a ripple effect. Every system exists in a closed loop. In order for me to propose a change in the system of composting, I had to identify its closed loop, find a way to break into it and alter it to make it a positive one, in a manner that children can understand. Sustainable Systems prepared me to identify feedback loops, enabling me to work on solutions via design.

Q: How do you hope your work will inform, impact, or inspire others?

I have always believed that even the smallest actions contribute to a big change. Change begins with each individual. I hope my story not only provides children with context on why we need to compost, but also provides simple instructions to carry out the same. Through my story, I

hope to ignite a spark in young people. By distributing my book throughout cities, I would aim to share it with children, inspiring them to give back to earth. I know that I cannot resolve environmental issues completely, but I feel that the first step is to create a wave of awareness for both parents and children. I aim to do this with my book, which I see as a small but impactful tool for change. I dream that one day, every child in New York will have access to it.



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