

Print & Imprint Workshop

L a s t S c h o o l



“Beauty is his footprint showing us where he has passed.”

Savitri, Sri Aurobindo

Last School, in existence since 1985, relocated in 2014 to its permanent home in Auroville's Cultural Zone. It aims at developing each part of the being so that students create rich instruments of expression. Based on the Free Progress approach it requires structures and programmes to be as diverse and supple as possible in order to respond to each student's line of progress.



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Why workshops?

For many years, Last School Workshops have been a preferred method to launch the new year or the new semester. These workshops, organised to explore myriad themes and approaches to human creativity, provide a unique opportunity for students and teachers to become co-learners in a concentrated atmosphere of silence where the learnings happen on numerous levels of the being.

The aim is not to be the best, but rather to find within one's psychological nature a position of well-being that creates an inwardness of growth and progress. There is no age or limit for such learning.



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The initial introduction usually begins with highlighting some aspect of the material world in its present moment of self-expression.

This could happen through a significant poem, an event, an experience, a scientific discovery; something that will lead naturally into the theme and topic of the workshop.



Prints & Imprints



We live in a world of immense material order.
Nature has patterns that repeat themselves – seemingly endlessly.
Day follows night; seasons return with metronomic efficiency;
flowers unfurl, bloom and then fade, replaced by others of their
type; a banyan seed grows only into a banyan tree.



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In the last century humanity's material discoveries appeared to take quantum leaps. The splitting of the atom ushered in the atomic age; the discovery of the genome has led to a new science of life. And the digital age with its expanding developments, has allowed us to look at Nature's secrets both at the micro and macro level. Mathematical models for Nature's patterns leap out. Suddenly, and in myriad domains, a whole new world of knowing and understanding has emerged.

Material Nature appears to have master-prints from which all things derive their patterned shape. The very cells of our body seem to know what they must evolve into – a liver, a heart, a brain neuron. All things seem automatically imprinted with their own unique patterns.

The Fibonacci sequence and The Golden Ratio, known for long, now can be photographed and observed innumerable – in the large and the small – through these enhancing technologies.

Fractal geometry has opened out new ways of seeing.

Hitherto unseen symmetries emerge in diverse natural forms: in forests, trees and leaf patterns; in spiralling star clusters; in river meanders; in breaking waves and coastlines; in foam and sand patterns.

We can discover endless geometries in nature. Patterns, prints, repeating shapes and forms spring forth everywhere. And, through the Golden ratio, the expanding spirals that emerge infinitely.

A mathematical set – the Mandelbrot Set describes a shape so ubiquitous, that it has been labeled by some a “footprint” of God.

A world of Wonder presents itself to the questing human consciousness – a Oneness in multiplicity.



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The disruptions caused by the pandemic have demanded that youth find deeper resources for being and doing.

Difficult moments are opportunities.

Many questions arise:

What should be our attitude?

Are we in a transition to another way of being?

How can one develop perspective?

Responses to such questions do not reside in popular and prevalent ideas.


Are there significant images that can stimulate the idea of change, of mutation and transformation?

Rich and suggestive processes are observable in the transmutation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

Interestingly though, we lack a language to describe such transitional moments.

What is this entity which we call a chrysalis?

It is no longer a caterpillar; it has not yet become a butterfly.

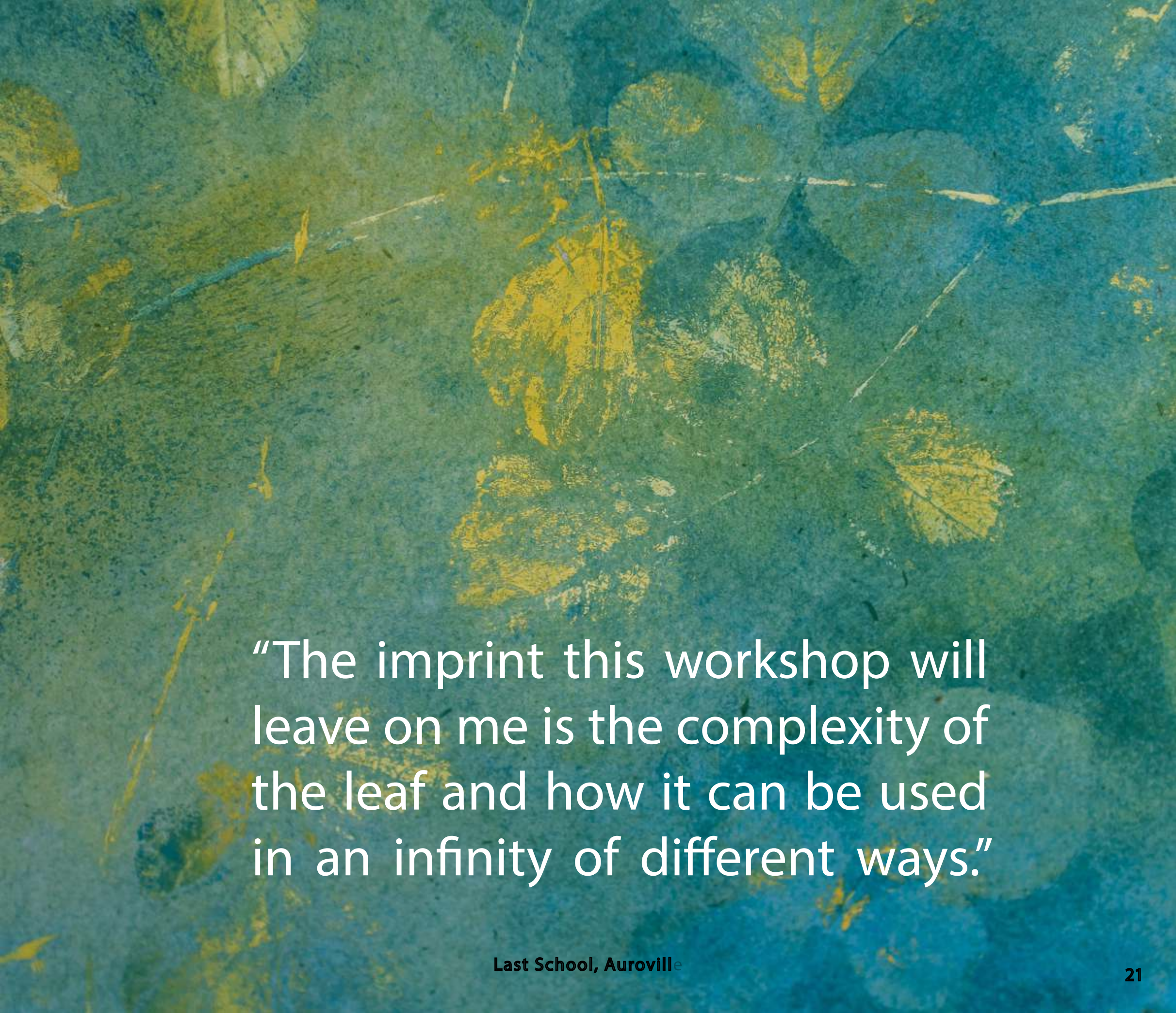


The truth is that transformation is largely a dis-integrative moment. One is neither here nor there and words don't exist to define intermediate moments.

How do prints and imprints shape you?



In students' words:



“The imprint this workshop will leave on me is the complexity of the leaf and how it can be used in an infinity of different ways.”





“This workshop taught me that there is a balance between being dependent and receiving help. It seems obvious, but to me, being independent used to mean not needing other’s help, support, but receiving other’s input can be useful.”





"Anything we put into us, changes us.

Memories imprinted in the mind make sure they are not washed away by the river of time.

These two remarks are what I take away from this workshop along with trying to be more open minded and less attached to my unfinished works. And I think that it's not only what we physically put into us but also the words we say and think and the situations we experience."





"I am learning the lesson that the quality of a piece lies in your intentions and not how aesthetically pleasing you can make your piece look."










“Before this workshop I was pretty much convinced that I was bad at art. This workshop helped me shatter that label and realize that there is no such thing. I hope this will leave a lasting imprint on me and keep me from labeling myself in such a way again.”





“Prints and imprints are like building blocks, each one will shape you differently for better or for worse.”

“I face difficulties such as not being satisfied with my work, getting stuck in one idea or a feeling that there was a shortage of time that wouldn’t allow me to move forward. At such times, I had to pause, calm myself, look at my work and the workshop from a broader perspective. When I had to combine all my pieces, I felt overwhelmed because there were so many possibilities and yet nothing was manifesting. I went outside. These moments, looking at the wide sky, seemed to root me and give me a sense of clarity and direction.”





“Since I was born, everything I perceived and received from the outer world, whether I was conscious about it or not, has left imprints in me.”







“If I am positive, I can really work heartfully,
I give my best and have good results.”








“One of the imprints the workshop left on me is the togetherness, with everyone trying to support each other. This was one of the first times I felt as though I fitted in completely, that Last School was my school and that these people were the people who would help me and walk with me for the next few years. Even though, I might forget details of the workshop, these feelings will stay with me for a long time.

Imprints such as these shape us as human beings, they affect our decisions and contribute to who we are.”

The background of the page is a warm, yellowish-gold color with a soft, textured appearance. There are several dried, pressed leaves scattered across the surface, particularly on the left and bottom right sides. The leaves are light yellow and have a delicate, veined structure. The overall aesthetic is calm and nostalgic.

“As I grow, every experience or situation I witness, every aspect of my life, leaves memories. These memories are just fragments that have been caught in time and have some effect on me. Imprints are almost like reminders of my past and although they can pull me back to what’s already gone, it is often said that we build our future from what we learn from the past. Imprints can be good or bad, but if we don’t only identify ourselves by them, they allow us to move forward and also give our life a direction and purpose.”



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This is a combined work of the Last School team.

While this work records ideas and images of one particular creative moment in the school's educational processes, readers are referred to a previous publication "Passage" that includes a description of Last School's educational approach.

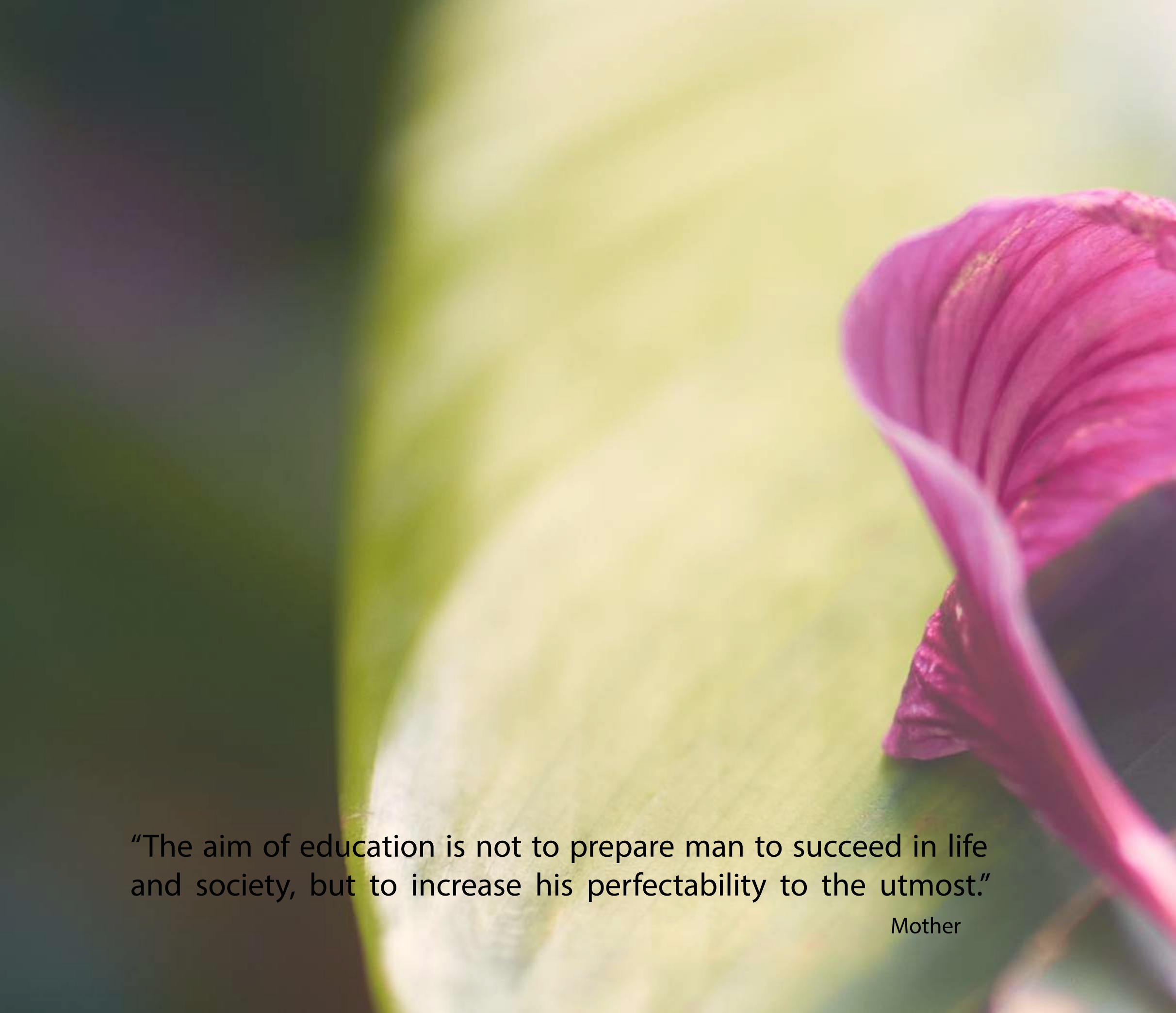
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“Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.”

– Keats



“The aim of education is not to prepare man to succeed in life and society, but to increase his perfectability to the utmost.”

Mother