

STORIES IN US, STORIES AROUND US

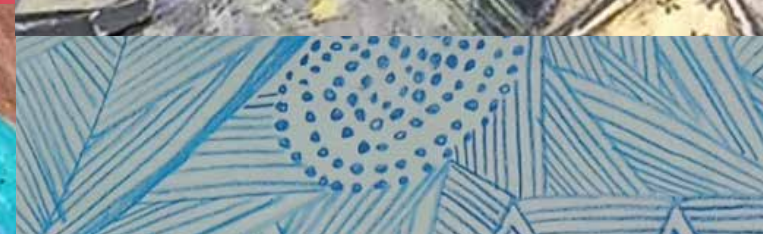
THE FINAL REPORT (REFLECTION DOCUMENT) OF THE TEN ART WORKSHOPS
CONDUCTED WITH THE CHILDREN OF KARM MARG FROM JUNE - NOV 2021
BY DHWANI SHAH FOR THE ARTREACH - KNMA TEACHING FELLOWSHIP



हेडमास्टर जी ने उत्साह में पूछा था- हम अब कैसे समझ बनाएँ। लोखेकी कहती है, हेडमास्टर जी को बच्चों के लिए अथवा प्यार और शिक्षा के प्रति समर्पण उन संपत्तियों से ज़्यादा अधिक लेनी पड़ती थी।

हेडमास्टर जी (श्री गोबिन्दाजी) और तोमोए का शिक्षा-बदलन

तोमोए उन्हीं हेडमास्टर जी को रूपा संसार था। आसह, उमंग और उल्लास से सराबोर। जितनाह और ऊँचे से लबरेज। उन्मत्त ज्वालकण। हेडमास्टर जी का बच्चों की रूख संरक्षण। बच्चों के प्रति उनका गहरी आस्था और संवेदनशीलता। बच्चों पर बच्चों की अपनी-अपनी तरह से काम करने की जलने की आज्ञादी। मरि पारंपरिक शिक्षण प्रथापति, रूपा समक गतिविधियाँ। लहय- शरीर व मस्तिष्क का समान





**List of children from
Karm Marg who took
part in the workshops:**

Nargis	Simran
Alka	Geeta
Pooja	Shama
Raju	(choti) Khushi
Vishal	(badi) Khushi
Rihana	Umresh



We initially started with 12 kids. Umresh and Rihana had discontinued early on. The attendance was usually around 8-9 kids for most workshops, except for the book binding one around Diwali when kids weren't around and only 5-6 of them had showed up.

Describe some of the sessions - what did you do, what were some of the games, how did you build communication and what skills/methods/artists/materials were introduced?

A brief summary of the ten workshops conducted between June to Nov 2021:

01. Mark making with self devised tools:

Exploring some alternatives for papers, drawing instruments and colouring materials and then the textures possible with these tools.

02. Working with found items:

Part a: Image making with collage with provided paper scraps (cut and/or torn) and Part b: learning the technique of black-out text to make your own original sentences with found words.

03. Style and Composition:

Exploring various ways of composing an image with elements based on prompts and using patterns with a limited colour palletes as a stylistic choice.

04. Concept Art:

Exploring different methods of combining multiple elements (juxtaposition, sum of its parts, metamorphosis etc) to come up with unusual visual concepts, trying out first with

basic geometric and/or organic shapes, followed by objects from a list of prompts (eg: Rubiks cube and sheep, plant and pipes)

05. Form of the book:

Familiarising with the basic anatomy of a book, and then exploring wordless picture books and books with experimental formats. Understanding how the shape and size of the book, the method of unfolding the pages and other printing techniques can also add to the narrative and reading experience alongside the text and images.

06. Expressive Typography:

Exploring the potential of a word as an image with exmples of title design in movie posters and illustrated hand lettering in magazines and childrens books and getting introduced to different kinds of ambigrams.

07. Making a Collograph Print:

Introduction to this basic relief printing method to make multiple copies of an image where the image is composed on a cardboard plate is composed using found objects.

Describe some of the sessions - what did you do, what were some of the games, how did you build communication and what skills/methods/artists/materials were introduced?

08. Objects in Art:

Part a: visually expressing emotions through analogies (bursting with rage like a volcano, or feeling light hearted as a feather, excited as a spinning top etc) and Part b: making an installation (that could be hung) made out of objects that hold some personal significance or meaning for you. The objects could be very ordinary but tells us something about you.

09. Book binding:

Learning the technique of Japanese four hole stab binding and designing your own diaries with features like rounded corners, irregular paper sizes, gatefolds, die-cuts, etc.

10. Paper Cut Illustrations:

Trying out the technique of layered illustrations using paper cuts where using depth as a conscious stylistic choice and attempting to make a light box art with a landscape constructed of several layers using only white paper.

A few ice breakers that worked well:

1. Drawing a quick portrait of one of the kids in front of you by simultaneously using both your dominant and non dominant hands, ideally with two different coloured pens. (Source credit: Lynda Barry's book titled 'Making Comics.')
2. Teaming up the kids into pairs of two and create letterforms from English and Devanagari script using their bodies.
3. Pretending to be a bamboo tree and making movements based on prompts like what if it is raining heavily, or a bird plops down on one of your branches or swaying caused from a gentle breeze hitting you etc. (Source credit: Ita Mehrotra)
4. Every kid take turns to contribute a single sentence to collectively build an impromptu story. (Source credit: Gargi Chandola)

A few images from drawing with both hands simultaneously exercise



ART BY NARGIS



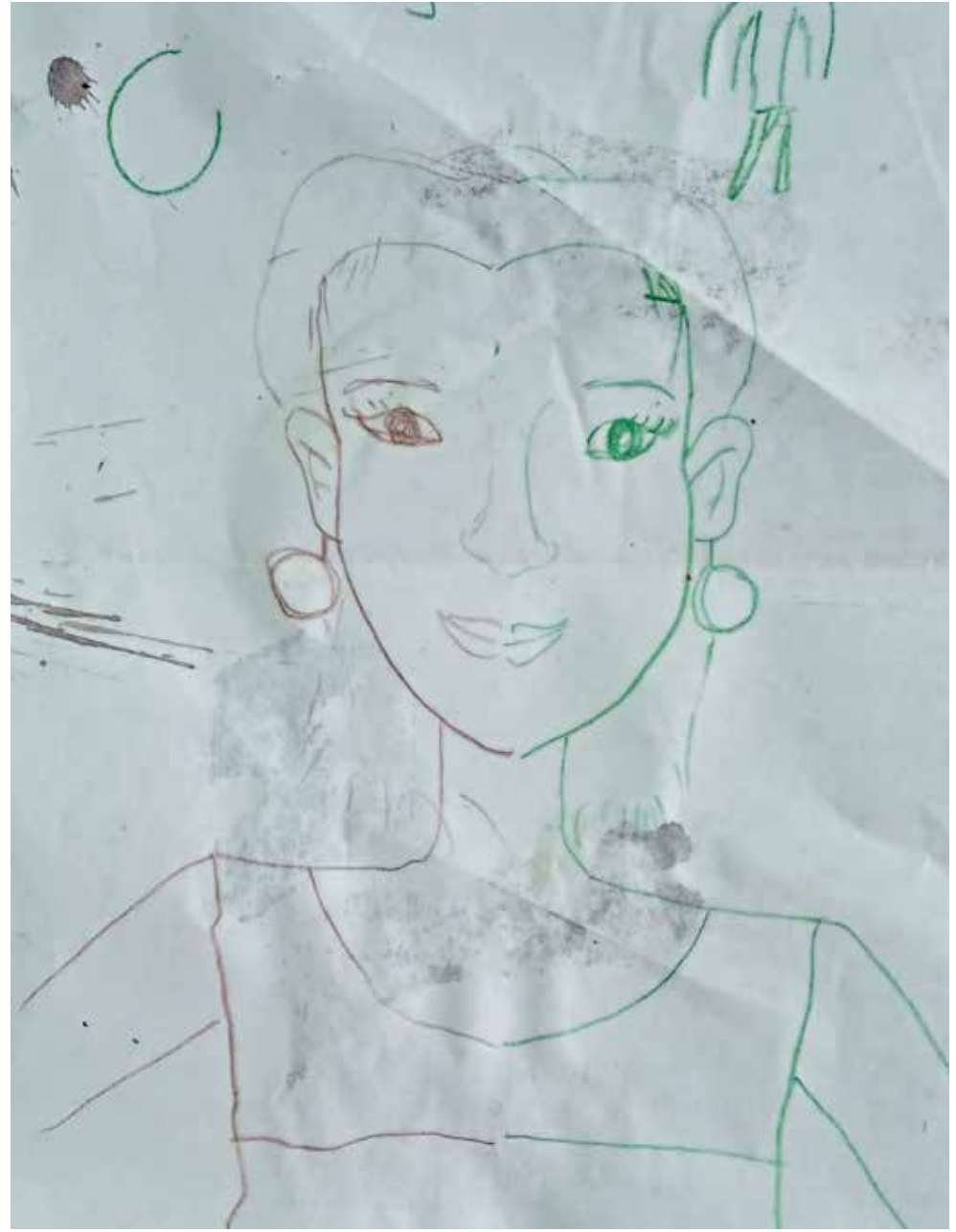
ART BY SIMRAN



ART BY (BADI) KHUSHI



ART BY ALKA



ART BY VISHAL

A few images from devising your own art material exercise



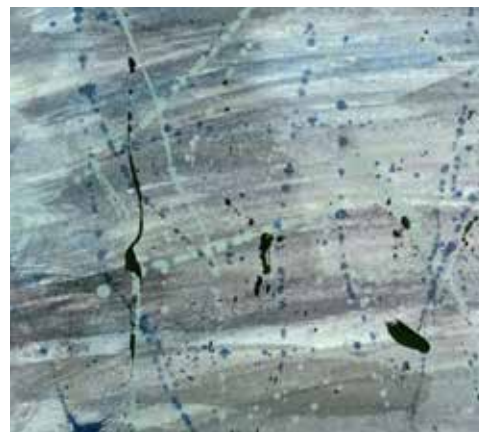
ART BY (BADI) KHUSHI



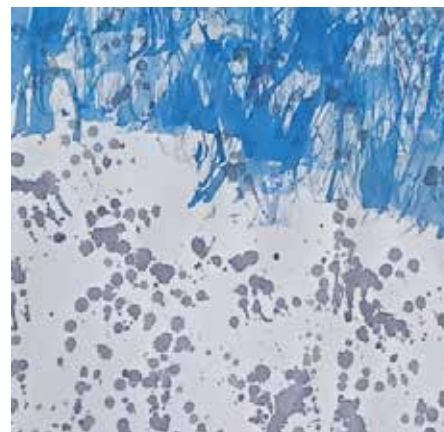
ART BY GEETA



TEXTURES BY SIMRAN



TEXTURES BY (CHOTI) KHUSHI



TEXTURES BY ALKA



TEXTURES BY (BADI) KHUSHI

A few images from the collage making exercise



ART BY (CHOTI) KHUSHI



ART BY NARGIS



ART BY SIMRAN



ART BY SHAMA



ART BY VISHAL

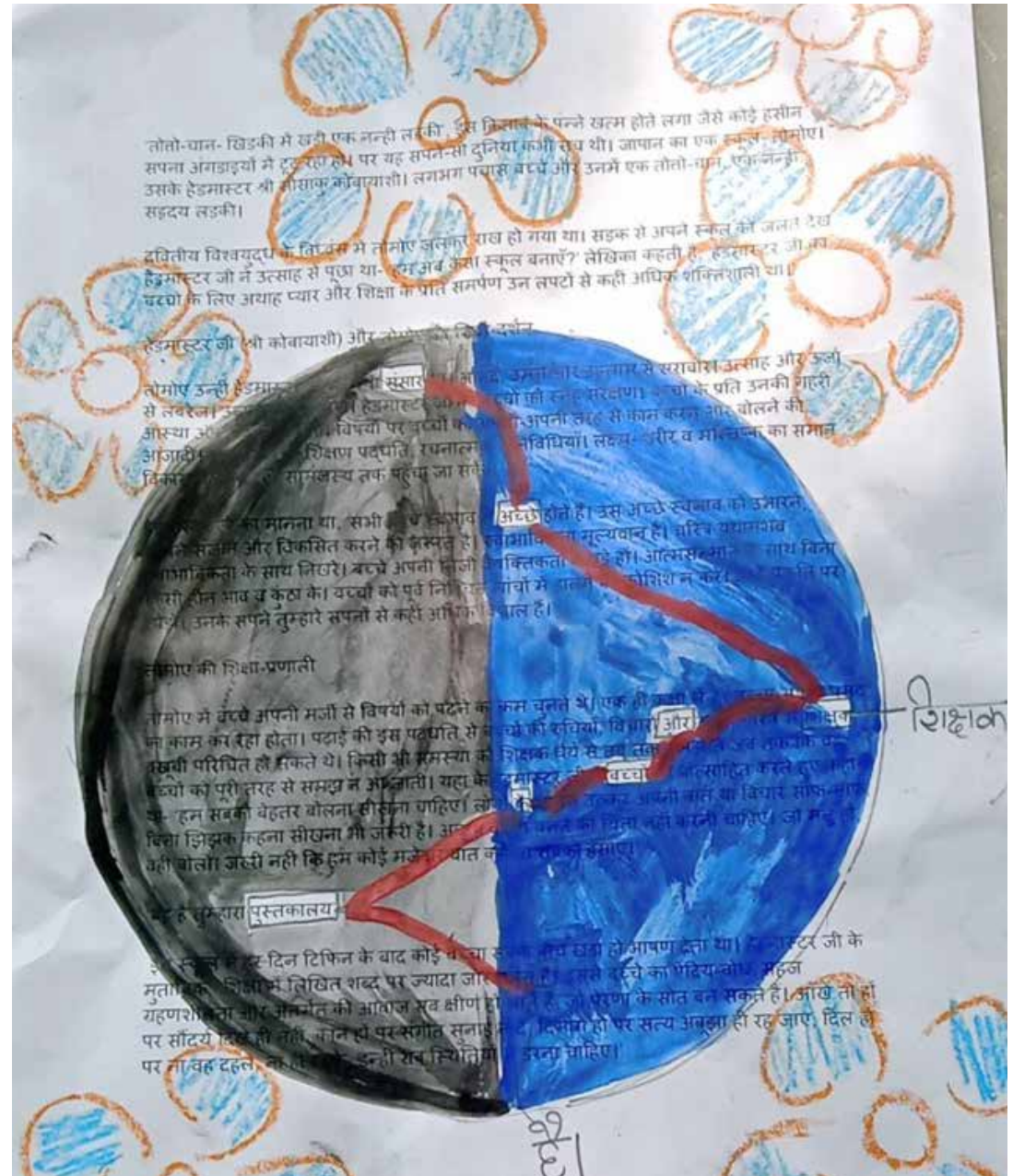


ART BY GEETA

A few images from the black out text exercise

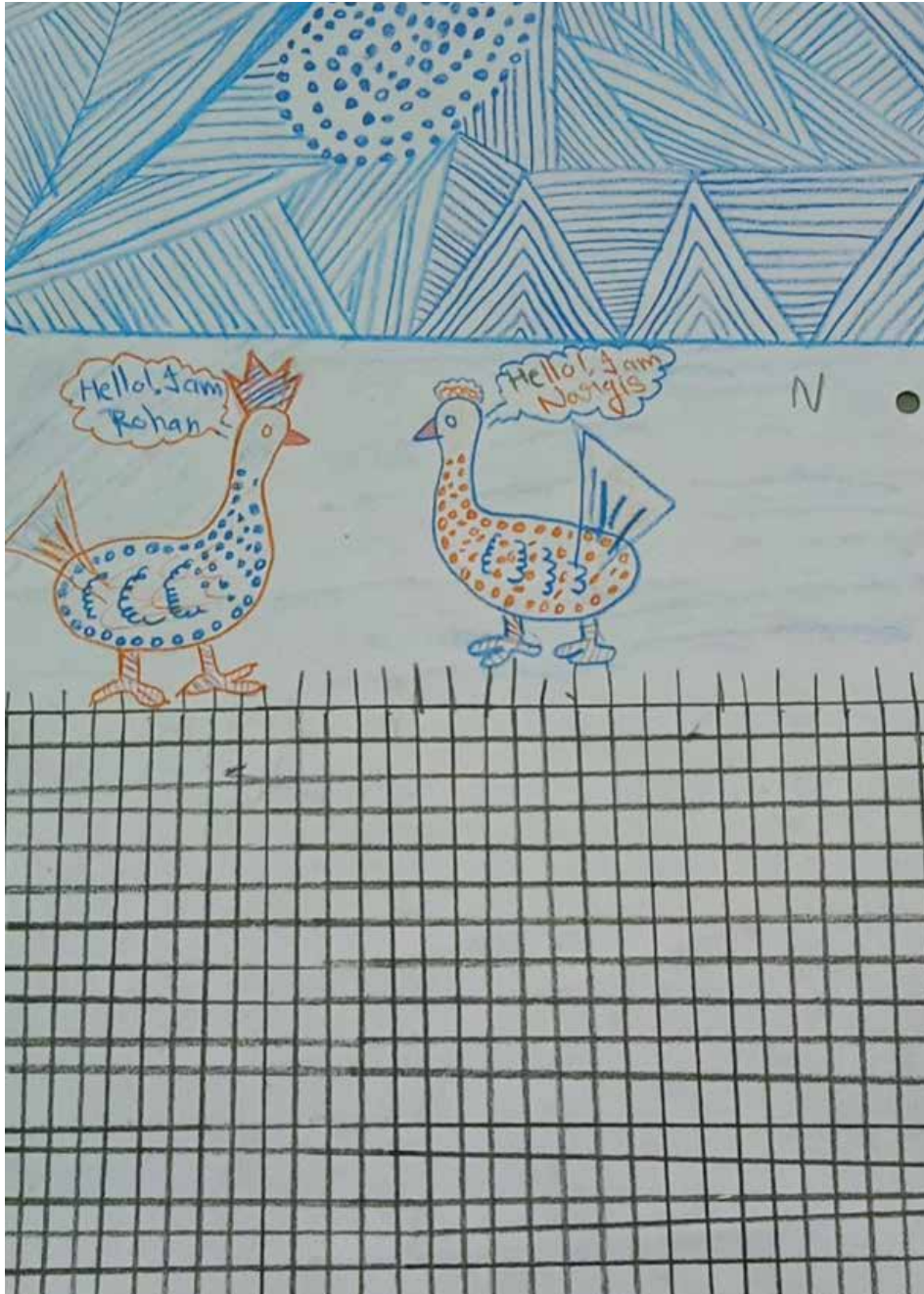


ART BY SHAMA

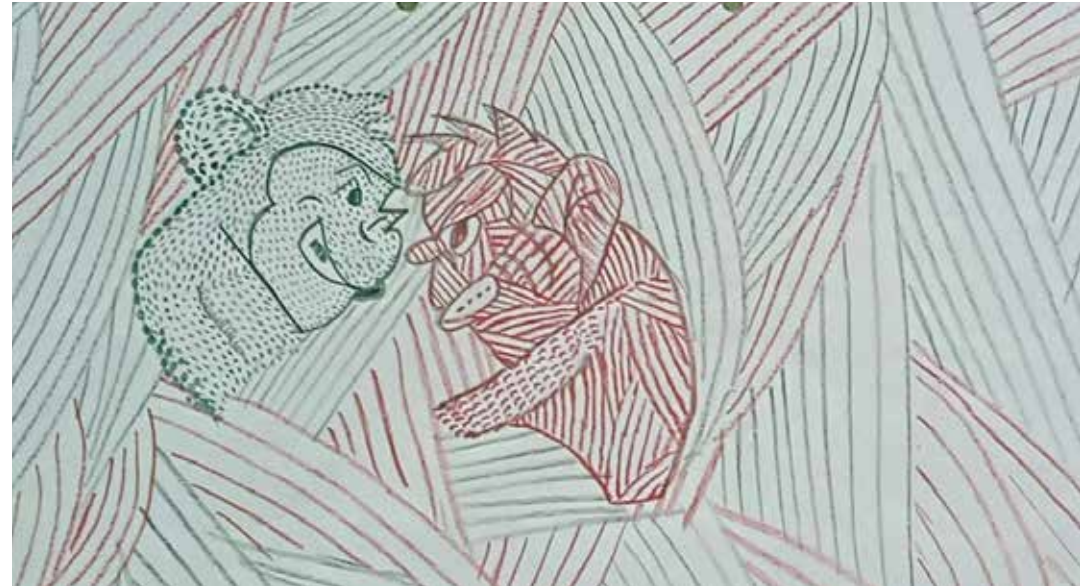


ART BY (BADI) KHUSHI

A few images from the patterns and limited colour exercise



ART BY NARGIS

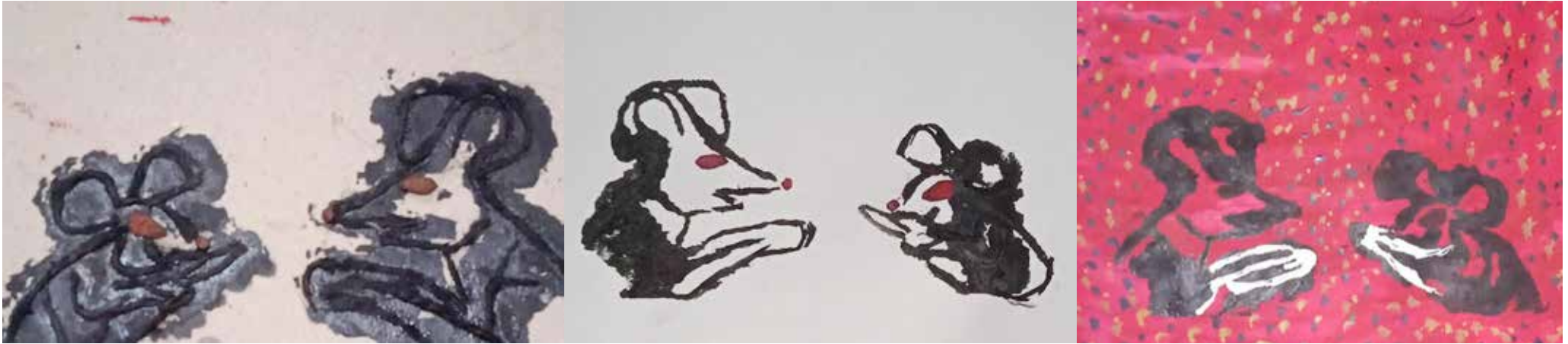


ART BY GEETA



ART BY NEHA

A few images from the collograph printing exercise



ART BY GEETA

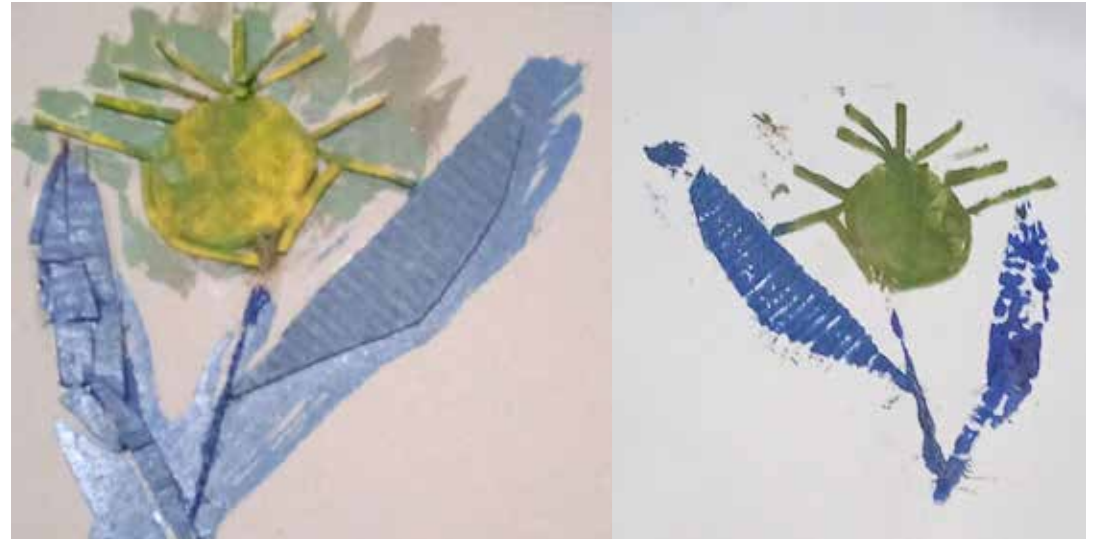


ART BY NEHA

A few images from the collograph printing exercise



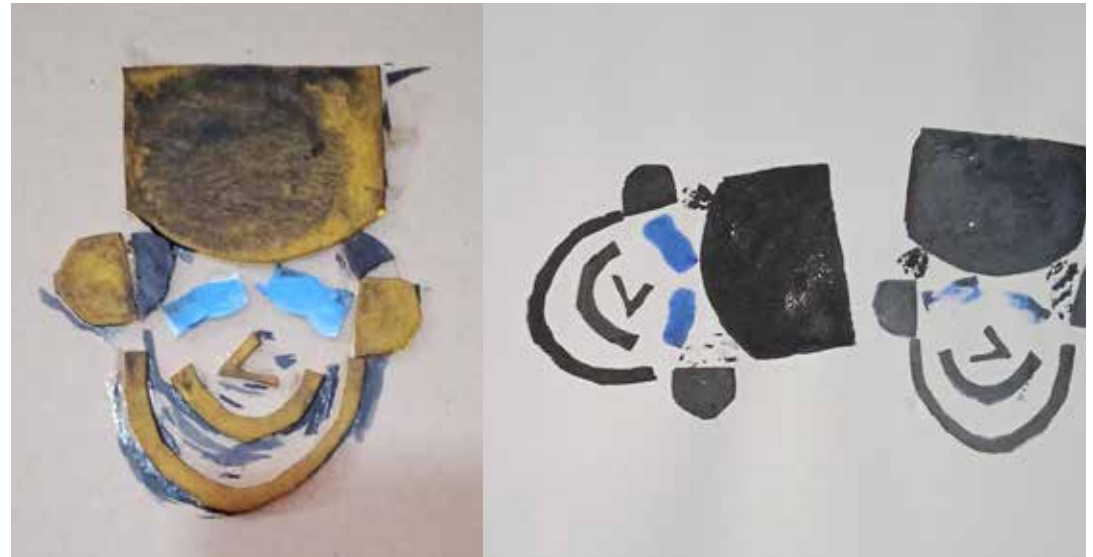
ART BY VISHAL



ART BY POOJA

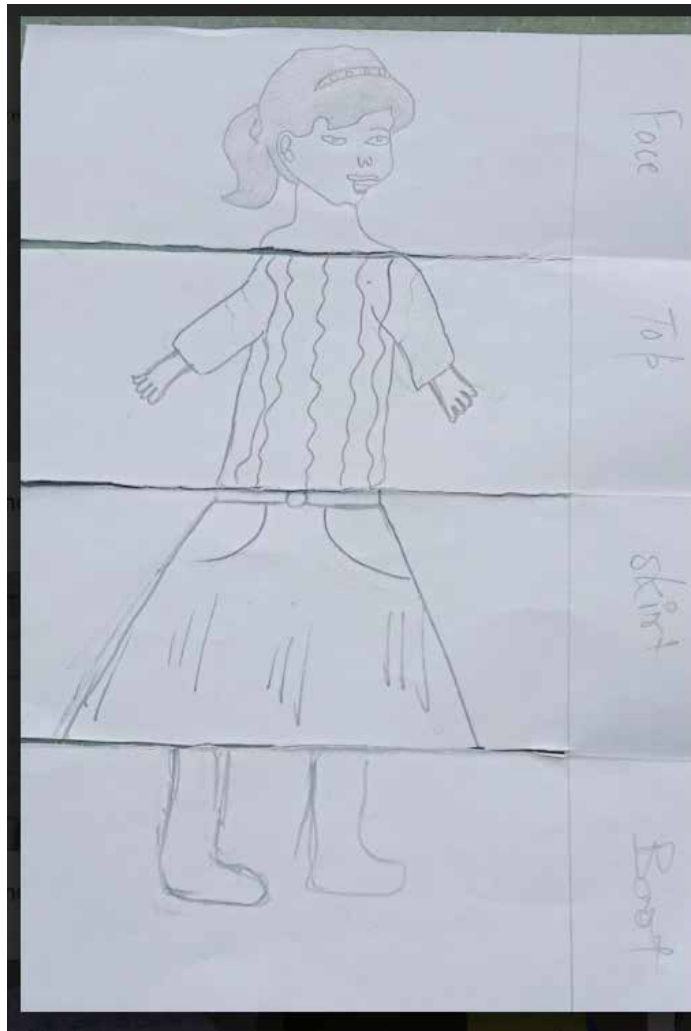
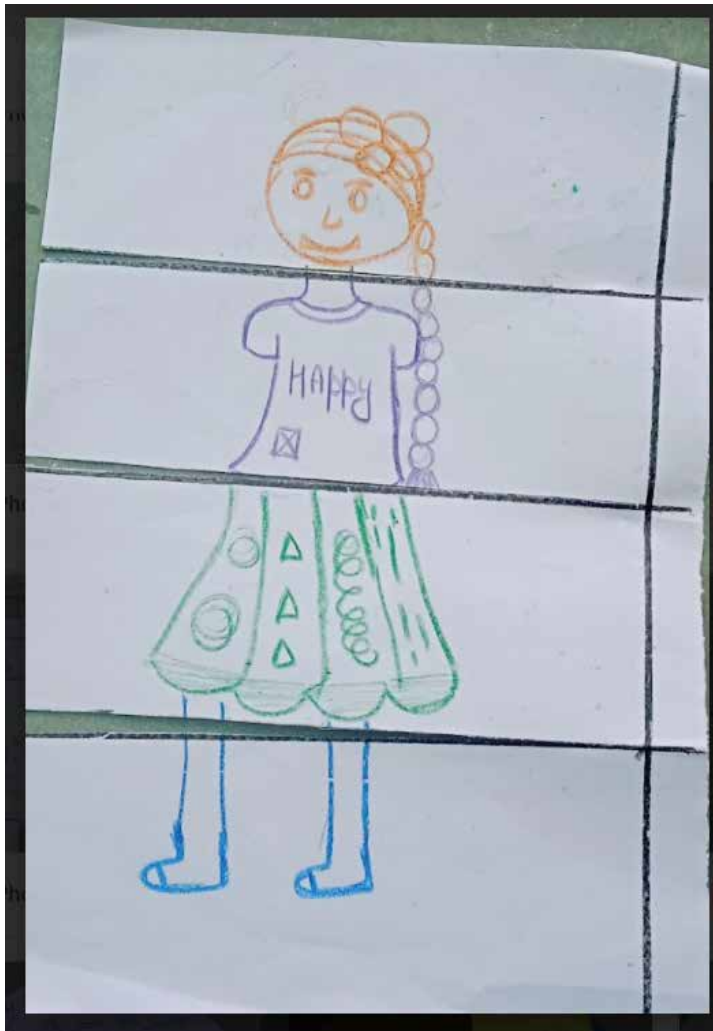


ART BY SIMRAN



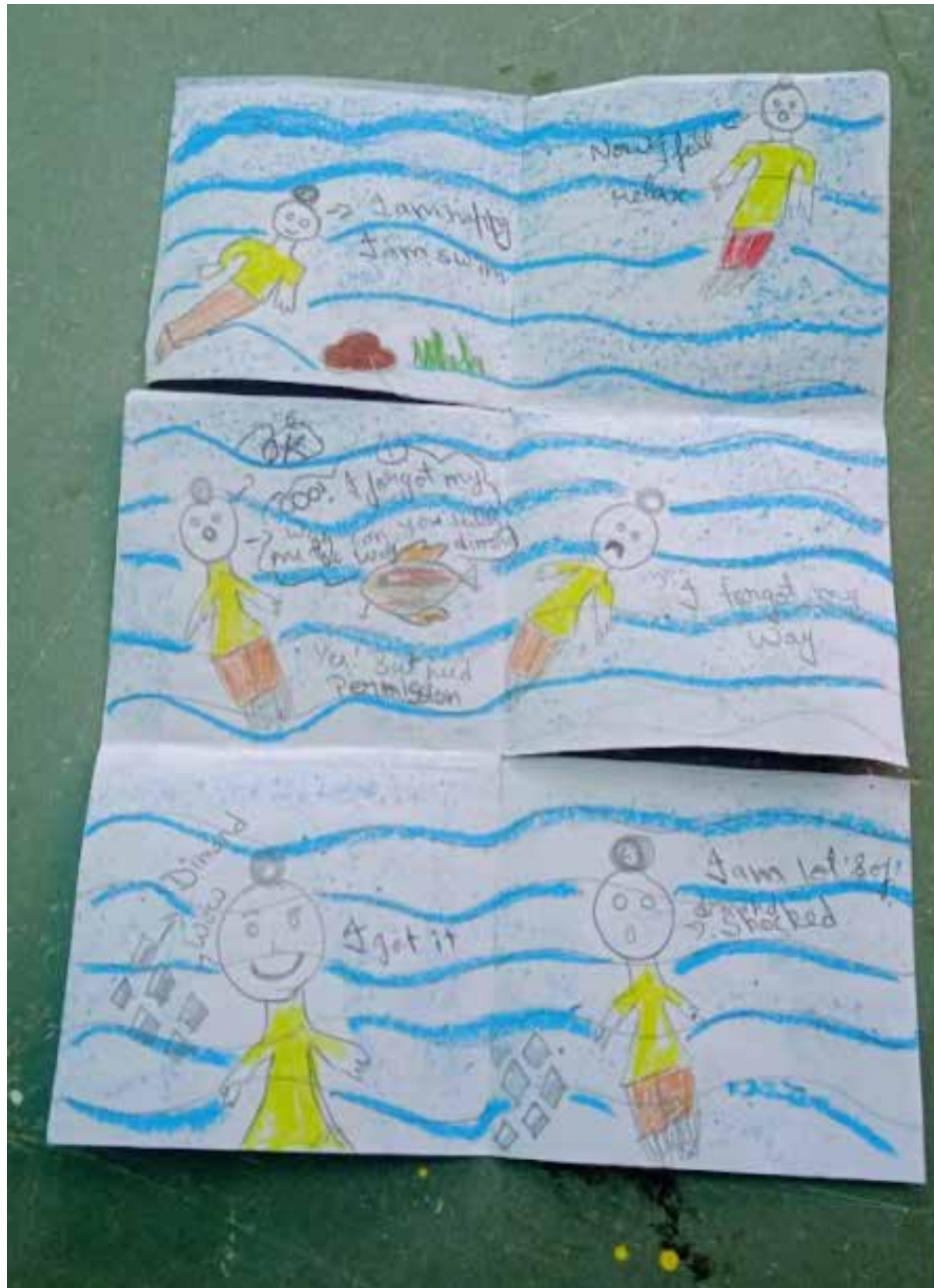
ART BY RAJU

A few images from the collective drawing flip book exercise

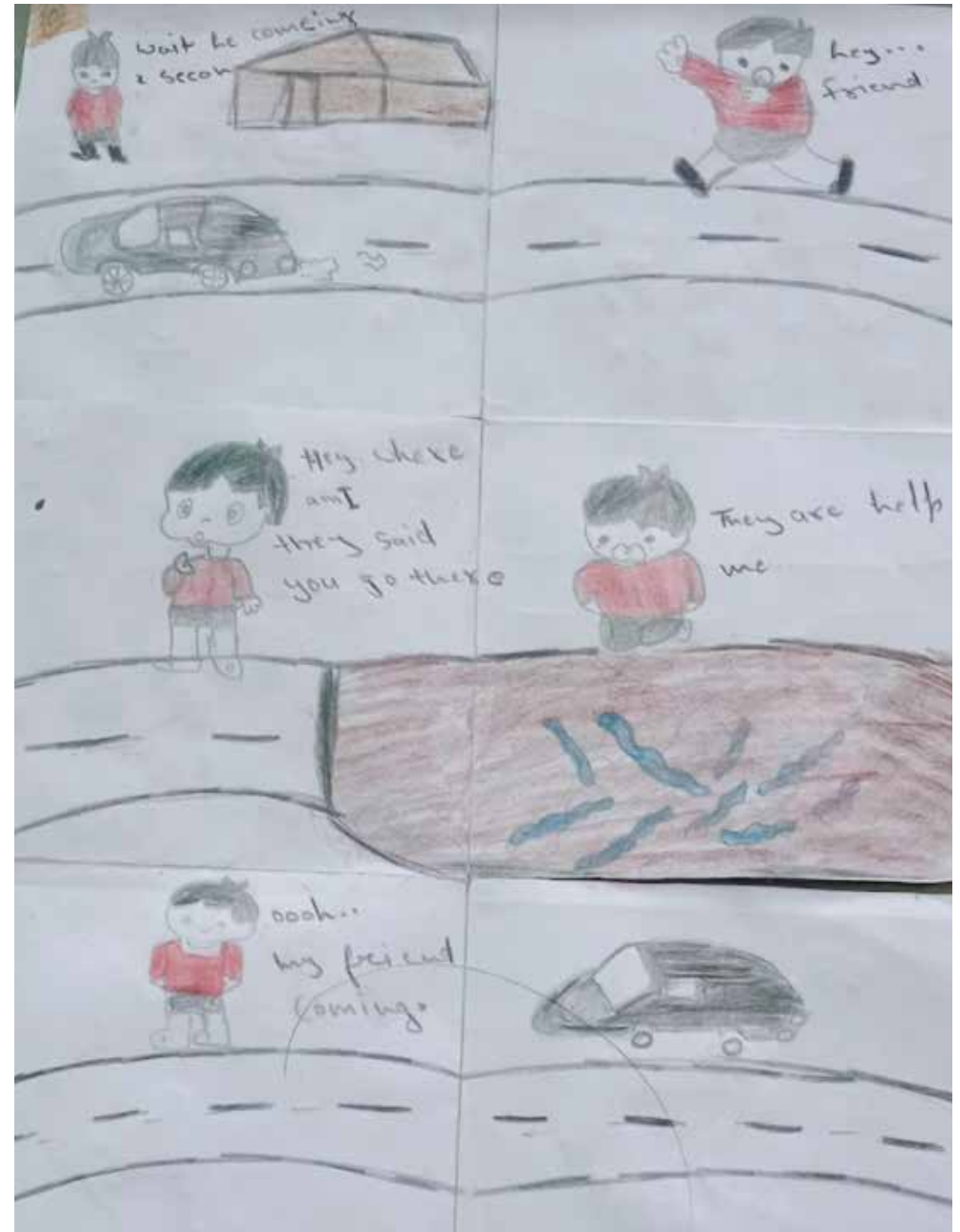


(TEAM WORK DONE IN GROUPS OF FOUR)

A few images from the form of the book exercise



ART BY NARGIS



ART BY GEETA

A few images from the expressive typography exercise



ART BY ALKA



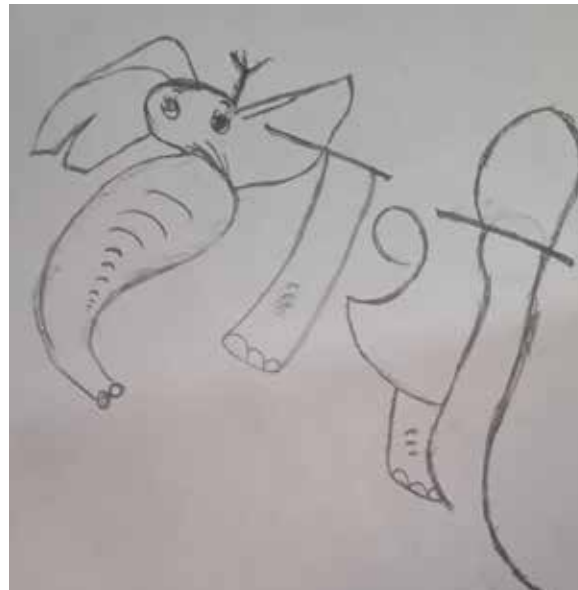
ART BY SHAMA



ART BY NARGIS



ART BY SIMRAN



ART BY GEETA



ART BY KHUSHI

A few images from the book binding exercise



Describe some of the sessions - what did you do, what were some of the games, how did you build communication and what skills/methods/artists/materials were introduced?

These are some of the artists whose work I shared across different workshops in the context of the topic being explored in those sessions:

Tushar and Mayur Vayeda from the Warli Community, Maharashtra, Sunita from the Meena Community, Rajasthan and the potter Ramu Velar from Tamil Nadu for using materials found around in our environment to make art.

K G Subramanyan, Eric Carle, Benode Behari Mukherjee, Jill Ricci Ana Matsusaki for working with collage.

Bhuri Bai from Bhil Community, Madhya Pradesh and Japanese artist Yayoi Kusuma and aboriginal artists from Australia for working with dots.

Henri Matisse for incorporating personal belongings and objects that hold meaning into his art.

Patua artist Rohima Chitrakar from West Bengal, Japanese illustrator Kaori Takahashi and French Linocut Joëlle Jolivet, and Japanese designer Katsumi Komagata for experimenting with the form of the book.

Bhajju Shyam from the Gond Community, Madhya Pradesh, Japanese art school teacher Koki Oguma, Redmer Hoekstra, Christoph Neimann, Priya Kurian in the context of conceptual art.

Sanjhi Artists from Mathura and Vrindavan and Bombay based artists Hari and Deepti for paper cutting and light box art.

A few images from some of the artists discussed in the workshops

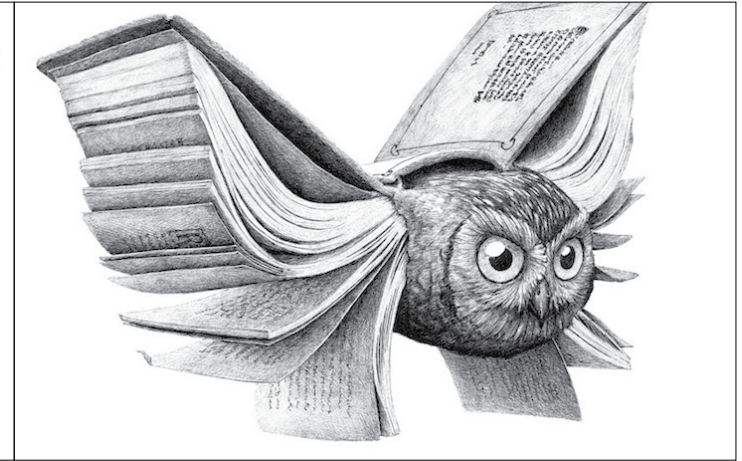
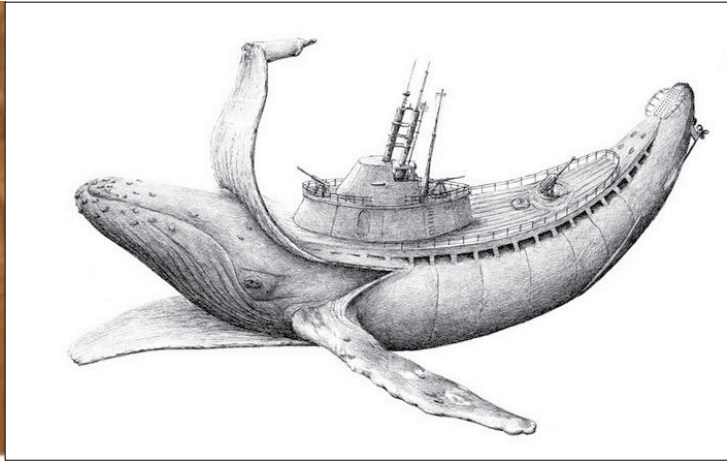


GOND ART BY BHAJJU SHYAM



WARLI ART BY TUSHAR AND MAYUR VAYEDA

A few images from some of the artists discussed in the workshops



SURREAL CONCEPT ART BY REDMER HOEKSTRA



PAPERCUT ILLUSTRATIONS AND LIGHT BOX ART BY HARI AND DEEPTI



COLLAGES BY JILL RICCI

How did you plan for workshops to happen online, what were some of the key artistic strategies you adopted towards this happening smoothly?

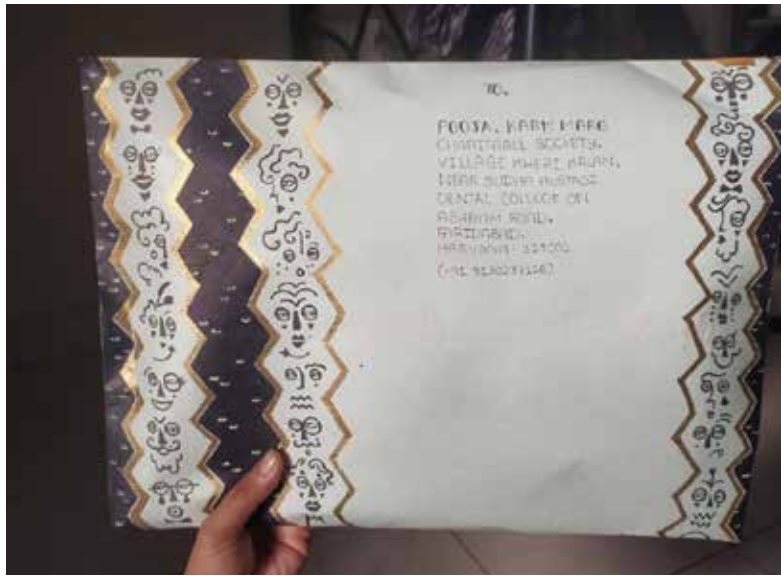
A peek into the basic process that was more or less followed for every workshop:

1. Brainstorm for a few ideas individually (about 8-10 days before the workshop).
2. Discuss it informally with my workshop partner from the Artreach team (Ita) over a phone call (about 6-8 days before the workshop).
3. Plan and gather the material that I would like to send the kids for the workshop to reach the kids in time for the workshop (about 7-8 days before the workshop).

Sending them stuff helped in generating a little excitement for the session and also helped a teeny bit to make up for the lack of personal touch in an online setup.

4. Refine the plan and note into an online document with a detailed time wise breakup of activities. Building in buffer time for each activity to account for unforeseen circumstances like power cuts and technical lapses like poor internet connectivity was important (about 4-5 days before the workshop).
5. Run it through the workshop partner again and make necessary revisions (about 3-4 days before the workshop).
6. Design a slides to be used for the visual presentation to be used in the session (usually the weekend before the workshop, i.e 1-2 days before the workshop).
7. Send a list of things to be prepped and kept ready on the whatsapp group (a few hours in advance on the day of the workshop).

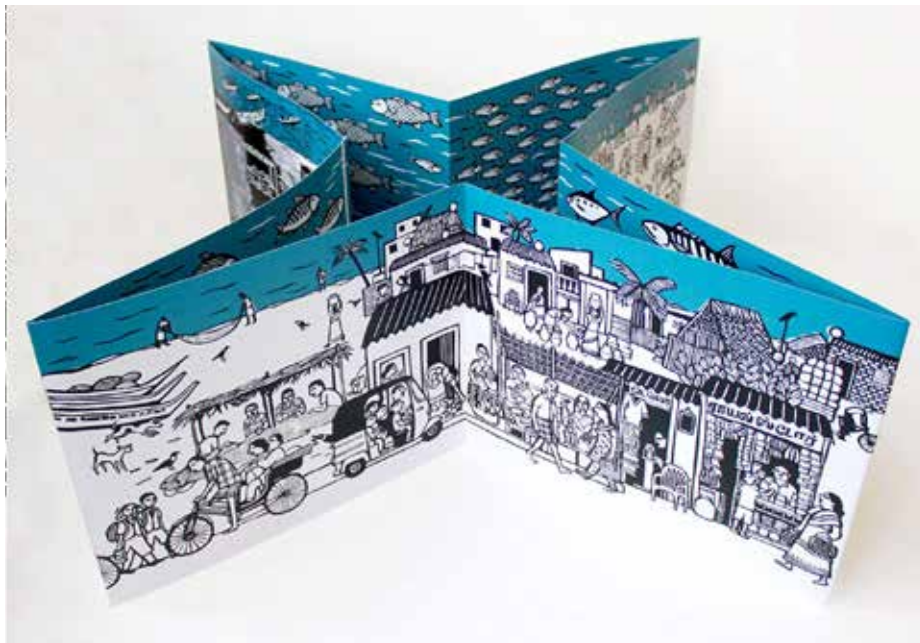
A few images from some of the material sent for the kids



A few images of some of the books sent to the kids



KNOCK! KNOCK! BY KAORI TAKAHASHI



AN INDIAN BEACH BY JOËLLE JOLIVET



A VILLAGE IS A BUSY PLACE BY ROHIMA CHITRAKAR

What do you feel are key take-aways and achievements, and also the challenges that you feel you faced, looking back at the fellowship as a whole?

A few insights and learnings gathered from the workshops:

1. There were times when I wanted to reveal the assignment only step by step, so that there is an element of surprise when the final output comes together. However, since the mode of instruction was online with limited scope of in person feedback, I realized that it was actually helpful to show an example of a completed artwork, to give the kids some sense of what they would be working towards. It helped in fewer cases of miscommunication during the steps and at times also helped in generating some excitement to ensure that the kids patiently worked through all the steps.

2. My initial plan was to divide every workshop into four parts: begin with a drawing based ice-breaker activity, followed by two main exercises focussed on the theme of the workshop and with a short exercise in visually documenting the experience of the workshop. However after the first few workshops, I came to realize that there were too many things to do and too

many instructions to follow. So the structure was revised for the later workshops.

3. Conversation and movement based ice-breakers in the beginning worked much better than drawing based icebreakers because it was an opportunity to have some fun and bond. For instance, instead of making them draw portraits/characters using typographic elements, I asked the kids to team up into pairs of two and form letters in English and Devanagari script using their bodies.

Ita's suggestion on using movement based activity (put your sheets and pencil down, raise your hands and shake them as we count to ten) to urge the kids to stop their work sometimes for further instruction or sharing presentations was also quite effective, as getting their attention was at times, a little challenging. Her inputs were useful, as I am camera shy and awkward. Looking back, I think I would like to learn from someone in theatre how to command attention and engage others in more lighthearted ways.

What do you feel are key take-aways and achievements, and also the challenges that you feel you faced, looking back at the fellowship as a whole?

My main takeaway from doing these workshops was that the children might not always get on board with the plans you may have worked out to the last detail. It is therefore important to not get very disheartened and be willing to improvise and adapt, and in the process you might discover and learn something new too. It took me a while to get there, and I don't think I was fully successful in doing it, but it has definitely led me to a new direction that I can work towards getting better at.

Challenges faced:

1. Since all the kids shared a single computer screen and not all of them were in view of the screen all the time, matching names to their faces took a little bit longer than expected for me. Often when they would present their work and ask for their names, they would just say 'main hoon, didi' but their sheet would be covering most of their faces. That also sometimes made it difficult to remember who did what in the workshop. A few icebreakers in the later workshops

which involved activities connected to their names helped a lot in this regard but the quality of interaction and developing a rapport and bond with the kids could have been much richer in the offline mode.

2. Once an exercise was announced and a certain amount of time was allocated for the activity, I got to see their work only right at the very end when they presented it. There was no real scope to walk around and offer help/demo/suggestions/feedback on a one on one basis while the students were working unless someone proactively wanted to discuss the work in progress and incorporate the feedback. The kids tend to (understandably) get bored of repeating the same thing, so there wasn't much scope to suggest pointers for refinement or a suggestion for a redo.

3. The quality of visual documentation suffered a fair bit as I had to solely rely on the kids sending pictures of the work done. The delays and/or interruptions due to powercuts or poor internet connectivity, were thankfully, few and far between.

What do you feel are key take-aways and achievements, and also the challenges that you feel you faced, looking back at the fellowship as a whole?

A few suggestions for future fellows for conducting online sessions based on my experiences:

- a. The kids might sometimes mute the system. Please gently remind them that the mic and the camera needs to be on throughout the duration of the workshop.
- b. There were one or two instances when I could guess that the kids were browsing for visual references on the computer. If your activity requires them to draw from imagination / memory only then you will have to actively discourage them if you notice them taking image references.
- c. Remind the kids on whatsapp to keep the materials ready on the day of the event,

even if you have shared the list with them earlier. It helps to save time. Also, if you are sending them materials, make sure you group them and label them according to the activities, so the kids don't accidentally use up some material meant for a later activity.

d. If you send the kids outside the room to gather a few things, give them a specific time limit and ensure that one or two older kids take up responsibility to make sure everyone returns back in time.

e. Sometimes when a project requires some complex steps, it helps to divide the kids into groups and brief the older kids from each group to help the others, so the exercise doesn't feel too overwhelming for anyone.

Can you take note of individual children's responses (as per your records) to the workshops - which children were more responsive to which activities, or any other particular remarks with concern to individual participants.

1. Some of the kids were quite drawn to storytelling and writing. Often they would have a narrative to go along with a piece of art they made, so we tried to encourage that during these workshops.

2. Activities that involved working with materials excited the kids more than two dimensional drawing activities. The fact that the children were confined inside for a while because of the pandemic, and were also subjected to some amount of screen fatigue could perhaps have also contributed to this.

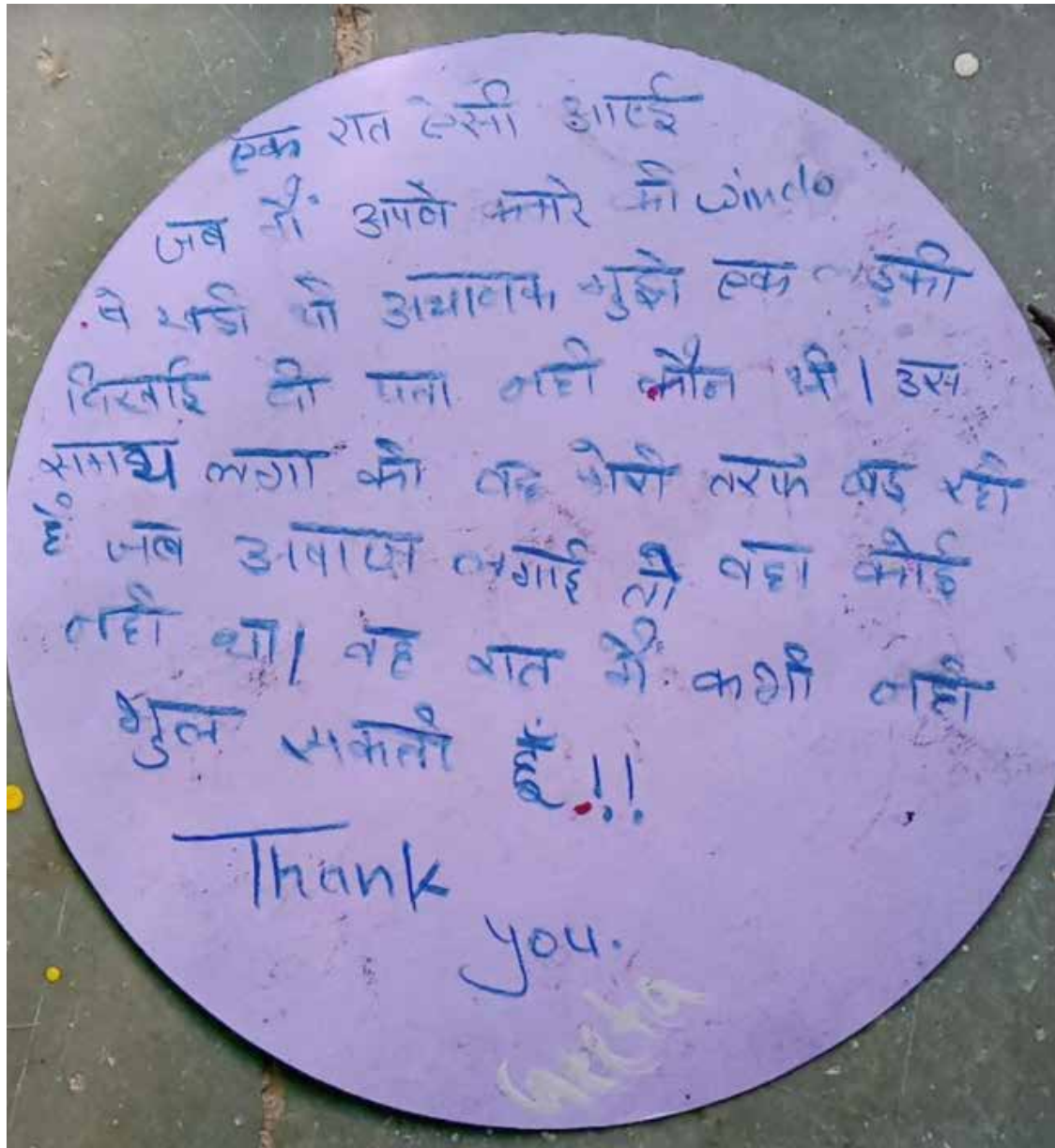
3. I remember the kids getting quite excited to see the surreal and conceptual artworks of Redmer Hoekstra.

4. I distinctly remember that during the book binding workshop, while most kids struggled to make holes in the bunch of papers for Japanese binding, Shama went out and got a nail and a hammer and tried to puncture holes through the block of thick paper. I wasn't sure it will work too well without tearing the paper, but she followed her

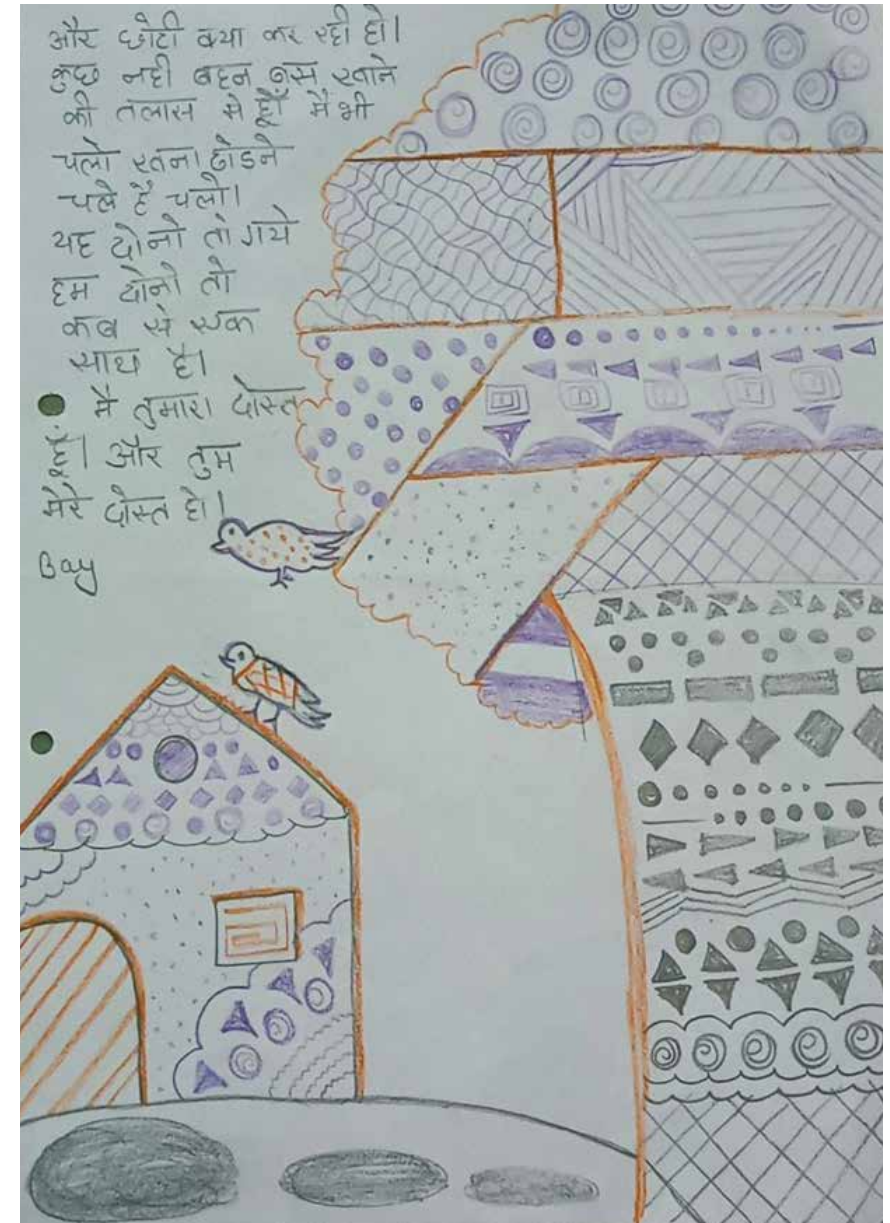
gut and tried it anyway and it worked well. She later helped some other kids too. I really appreciated her instinct for seeking better alternatives when stuck with a problem.

5. Most of the kids showed interest and potential and interest in art activities. but they may have different reasons for engaging in it. I had one thought to offer. I am not very sure if it would be feasible and/or suitable for the organization to consider it, but I would like it to put it out anyway: Drawing can be a great way of self expression, community building and being more present and mindful of your environment. If the workshop hopes to engage the kids with art as a recreational tool, the sessions could be designed keeping that in mind with focus more on the process and experience. However, if some kids would like to consider art as a potential career, there could be separate or extra sessions with a lot more focus on skill building and more follow ups to improve and build a body of work. It maybe a better approach than picking one or two kids who we feel have better skills than others?

A few images from kids' writings



WRITING BY GEETA



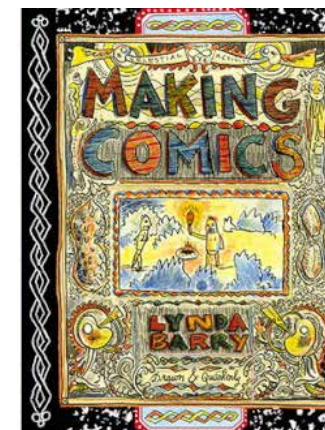
WRITING BY (BADI) KHUSHI

If you could share links to sites that you made use of, or particular application / e-books or other easily accessible resources here, this too would be of much help for future programmes.

I was very inspired from the writings of American Cartoonist Lynda Barry about her approach to teaching, especially her insights about drawing as a language and how everyone can draw. The ice breaker activity of drawing with your dominant and non-dominant hand simultaneously was from her book 'Making Comics.'

I haven't really used any particular website or app for the workshops. Some of the images used as reference photos in my presentations were from a mix of generic places on the internet like Pinterest, nothing specific worth mentioning.

The rest come from my interactions with some of the folk artists I had a chance to collaborate with when I was working with Tara Books, Chennai. The credits for those images lie with them.



ARTIST LYNDA BARRY AND HER BOOK MAKING COMICS

Do you feel you were adequately supported by the Artreach team - do you have any suggestions for how things could be done differently (within the context of working online, and with care homes).

Getting the opportunity and space to share my initial ideas with everyone including the board of advisors as well as hearing the experiences of the fellows from the previous year was a very good starting point for me.

Having someone from the Artreach team (in my case, Ita Mehrotra) to accompany me for all my workshops was very valuable. Her presence during the online sessions also helped in facilitating interactions better and maintaining calm, especially since the kids were on their own on the other side, without any older supervisor in the room with them.

It was also great to have Ita as a sounding board for the planning stages. Some of her feedback and suggestions on my plans for the workshop a few days before the actual

event helped me to conduct them with a little more conviction and also rethink and revise some activities wherever necessary.

The meeting arranged with other fellows to exchange notes after a few workshops was quite insightful too in understanding the issues everyone faced and how they navigated it. It was also heartwarming and uplifting to hear what worked really well for them as well.

Overall, I greatly appreciate the support from Artreach team throughout the fellowship program. The program structure is well thought out and the regular follow ups reflect how much they care for the workshops to be a meaningful experience for everyone involved.

THANK
YOU

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