
July Session

**Riyaz Team – Sushil Shukla, Atanu Roy, Dileep Chilchanker, Chandramohan Kulkarni, Shashi Sablok,
Shivangi Singh, Swetha Nambiar**

Guest Lecturer – Ashok Bhaumik

25 July 2017

Reading session of observations by students

The first day of the session started off with a reading of the assignment given by Dileep. Students were in this assignment had to write their responses to the changing season especially focusing on rainfall, monsoon, the clouds, the colors that one can see with the advent of monsoon.

This exercise was to hone the observation and writing skills of the illustrators (students), to create an interest in not only visualizing a story but creating it from scratch. It is also as Dileep explained a testament of their experience to make mental notes of the changing season and the different kinds of imageries that they are observing. While reading out their different poems, essays and accounts, they offered several viewpoints ranging from an experience of melancholy to that of joy. While these are only the two extreme spectrums of the varied emotions felt during the advent of a new season, there were many observations which spoke of longing, memory, love and melancholia. Some couldn't go beyond household chores and customs.

Nikhil, in his observations noted the aspects that fascinated him the most about the first rains in his city. He noted that the small birds, animals and people started finding shelter before the rain even started and how he found indications of the impending rainfall in this behavior. He was enthralled to experience the touch of the first raindrop white almost like a drop of pearl, makes way for many others. As if the white droplets of rain have created a white blanket for earth to wear! With these expressive tones he noted the beauty of the event, but then started noticing the change in the surroundings post the rainfall. These included the broken roads, the more frequent accidents with people falling into the open sewers and a silence in the atmosphere save the birds chirping in the background. He noted how the white blanket of the rain gave way to a green blanket of the new found youth of leaves.

Shubhangi gave a stirring observation on how the sun and the clouds, the rain and the sunlight play games with each other in the month of 'Saavan'. She noted the color of the sunlight as being reflected in the whole environment around her. Basked in the yellow light of the sun she noted how the colors of the roads and the trees lining them kept transforming when the grey clouds masked the sun from time to time. The rainfall recedes, giving way for sunrays to envelop the sky. With the halt of the rain, the green of the trees is still and an atmosphere of stillness follows the brisk movement of rains. Her composition spoke of the cyclical nature of rain, where each drop becomes a reservoir for the next rainfall, where the grey transforms into white cloud again and again.

Sagar spoke in his note, titled 'Baarish, Main aur Woh' of the first rainfall too. The first rainfall marking the onset of monsoon holds a special place, creating a new world each time. He spoke how are many

expressions of 'Baarish'(shower of rain) – like a shower of money, shower of happiness and how rain brings many things at once. This includes memories, a nostalgia of the time spent with friends roaming in the streets, or a good book. His essay in essence was a reflection of the season of monsoon, where he spoke of the memories of childhood and memories of rainfall. He spoke how he had an accident once during rains while driving too fast and how that incident livens up each monsoon with a bittersweet memory and some lingering pain. He also spoke of the farmers of India waiting for the rains in perpetuity.

Anantjit's essay titled 'Baarish ke Baad' noted how rain also gives way to newer lives especially of small plants, insects, and flowers. Each tree starts looking young and new – almost as if a child has woken up from a slumber to start playing. When one starts observing the plants and the outside world, the sound and the feel of the rain creates a rather joyful and playful atmosphere. This is why, one wonders as to the reason of rains being used as a metaphor of sadness and loneliness especially in cinema. She cannot, she says remember if she ever wanted to hide or take shelter from rain because she has always found the experience of bathing in the rain quite wonderful. Just one time when she had a lot of drawings in her hand, on her way home, did she open her umbrella. While she was about to disembark the bus, she met someone who wanted to share the umbrella with her and this encounter made for an everlasting memory of rain.

Like this, Tinu also spoke of the richness and variety of colors and emotions that rains bring to her in 'Varsha ke Rang'. She spoke how she is amazed by the changing colors of the sky and the earth, the trees and their branches and leaves. To her, rains are both an obstacle to go out and sometimes an excuse to stay inside. She admires how the grey and black clouds transform the day, and darkens an already dark night. She expressed how the sound of a raindrop is defined by the objects it touches, the color of it gels with the surface it falls on. The silence after a heavy shower of rain is broken by the noise of the frogs and crickets as evening falls making us feel less lonely.

Niharika in 'Varsha' spoke of her experience of the sounds of traffic as one of the indications of rains! She spoke how she lives in the city near a traffic light and can hear the increased noise following the road blockages that rain leads to in Bangalore. She spoke of the cacophony of the horns blaring in the city coupled as if in a competition with the sound of the rain. Together they create a symphony of sorts. Seeing a disparity between the excess of rain in Bangalore a city, and the villages around seeking rain much more desperately, she questions the decisions of the almighty. She notes how the single lightning or 'thunderbolt' shines up many plants on her balcony. In the evenings, she delights in the sighting of green parrots against a greener landscape. Her other observations included the love she has for the 'Jaamun' tree near her house and the 'Rakhtura' tree (African tulip) as well as the calls of the bird 'Koyal'.

Aayushi spoke of the absence of rain from her hometown of Gwalior. This series of observations titled 'Varsha Ji ki Narazgi' expressed a longing of the monsoon. In a playful way she explains how rainfall impersonated as Varsha Ji betrayed Gwalior many times. Varsha ji is upset at Gwalior and doesn't wish to visit; instead she acts as if she will come soon and then cancels. How she comes to a neighbouring town and returns, how she fools by sending out some winds along the way and how she creates a confusion by teaming up with sun.

Vrushali through her note expressed how like a travel mate she has been meeting rain along her different journeys this month. In Nasik she saw how the grass retained some moisture after the rainfall,

indicated its footmarks. While in Bhopal, the rain impersonated in her account as well as an actual person, was unsure of her travel plans. So there was a period where rainfall, sunlight and humidity kept playing hide and seek throughout. Later in Delhi and on her way to Alwar she noted how 'Baarish' was a fellow traveler on her road trip. She notes how back in Bhopal this same 'Baarish' has now seeped in through the walls into her house. She admired the small plants and flowers that have emerged sometimes by chance on pavements and gardens after the rain and went into detail about their forms and colors.

Meenakshi then expressed her love for winds that precede a rainfall in her account, which by all means a romantic one. She imagines herself as a heroine of a play by Kalidas, and feels all the emotions as if she is a fictional character and this is a heightened state of romance. She also recited a poem in Haryanvi, by her father which spoke of the beauty of this season even further. Another interesting aspect of the poem she recited was that the author speaks of the season being an unripe (unhealthy) one, the one which makes everyone susceptible to all kinds of diseases. Later in a second piece by herself, she expresses the coincidental joy that she experienced while writing about rain, rain did come. Lyrical movement of the trees, newborn plants in her ground, the bigger plants overlooking the smaller ones, the sound of crickets, different birds cooing, the street dogs protecting themselves of rain, all together create a playful and colorful canvas. Like many others, she also noted the fried food that she associated with monsoon.

Shailesh then spoke of the longing he has for clouds, rains and monsoon by large. He declared his love for the season and says that each year he waits for it to arrive and mark a period of festivity. In his piece, he also pointed out that this scene of the rainfall to him seems like a watercolor painting, where one drop of color mixes with another all too fluidly. He also spoke of the sound and the silences of this season, and made several remarks to the beauty of the sky bundled with different hues. He spoke of the inexpressible variety of these colors, the beauty of lotus flowers in lake of Bhopal and the flight of a bird dancing to the rhythm of the raindrops and the all pleasing nature of rain where all senses liven up at its arrival while also noting the several kind of rain – beautiful, drizzling, thundering and so on.

Debarti spoke of what all rain brought with her and puts forward several observations on the effects of rain such as – the fall of raindrops moistening the very paper she is writing on, the darkened atmosphere due to grey clouds in the sky, the feeling of relief following the humidity that was preceding the rainfall, the foggy glasses and windows. When rain falls, it is as if a moody person expresses his different moods that of joyous showers when he is gleeful, thundering rains when he is angry and so on. She notes the different discussions that commence on rainfall between the people in Bengal – especially on food. She also observes the change in different fruits as well as flowers with rain. She compares the glaring red of the Gulmohar with the burning heat which tempers down as soon as rain comes and washes down the flowers along the road.

Rishi also spoke in detail about the relief from scorching heat in the form of the winds that signal the onset of the first rainfall. The streets which were giving way to mostly just dust and dirt now emit the scent of wet mud. Sunlight starts dimming, as if someone has put a protective umbrella between the earth and the sun, tall dancing trees call out to clouds in the sky, the falling fruits have children waiting for them. While on earth the kids and in the skies, the clouds play with one another and raindrops start falling not long after. This is the time, when one starts getting closer to nature, when one starts paying

attention to the intricate details of nature – how raindrops sometimes create rainbows when they are pierced with sunlight and how puddles of rainwater create smaller worlds in themselves.

Avnish spoke in his poem on borders that of the human mind and of rivers as well. Titled 'Kinaron' or banks, it was a call to experience nature at its best i.e. during the monsoon, it also provokes to see the finer details that miss the eye. Amrita spoke of the pleasures of monsoon too, filled with delight on the showers in her city of Bhopal. She expresses how she enjoys the cool weather, the juicy mangoes of the season and is overjoyed at the light heartedness of the atmosphere. Pointing out how the small insects and reptiles like frogs start coming out of their homes dug in the ground because rain seeps into it, she expresses how more new organisms are seen in this season than any other.

Bandana then spoke of her experience of the rain fall from her house. She speaks of the melancholia and the feeling of isolation that she experiences in this weather and how she curbs that with a book in one hand and a steaming cup of tea in another. She further states that with the raindrops falling, the puddles on the street and the dance of the clouds, she experiences a state of joy not much later. The seemingly dull colors of grey and grey black richen up the sky with their presence in this weather. Many other colors intermingled with the daylight make for a dramatic sky to behold and wonder. Many other activities also occur simultaneously – the noise of cicadas, the springing plants, the musical voices of frogs, and the smell of the mud, thunder and lightning creating a state of bliss.

Finally, to give the students an idea about what was intended by this exercise, Dileep also presented a write-up. It was to make them observe around themselves, the changes taking place in the environs they inhabit. Change of weather is single most phenomenon that brings about a marked change, in Nature as well as human/ animal behavior. He made subtle observations of his surroundings just before arrival of monsoon and after the beginning of rains.

Dileep then brought the class to a discussion and reflected on the need for this assignment for them – elucidating how these written observations serve a much different purpose than the documentation by any photographs. That there will be a marked difference between the climates of summer and monsoon and in nature where in each season also brings a psychological change upon us which one can see in many of the writings that were read out. He lauded the references of insects and organisms that are seen in this weather, the scent of the wet mud. He also spoke of the fall of the raindrops on the rocks, the fireflies which appear in this changing season. He also commented on the observations of the students and a discussion ensued on the specific phrases that everyone enjoyed in each other's works. He stressed on the importance of using Hindi in the writings of the students so that more students in the class can understand the same. He also noted that the observations needed to be more focused on the outside world, than the inside in their accounts. He also read out his own note to the students to express his ideas and observations of rain. Chandramohan then suggested that the students make an illustration and submit their assignment on their own writings after an understanding of their own text. He encouraged that the students make a magazine size illustration which has ample details but need not be in any particular medium.

Presentation on 'Expression' by Dileep Chilchankar

After the series of presentations by students and the discussion, a session was led by Dileep Chilchankar who gave a detailed presentation on 'Dimensions and Expression'. He started with the narrative of a sculptor whose work he had come to admire after a visit to Essex. Noting the journey of this particular

artist, John Doubleday he recounted how he was impressed by the likeness he brought to many of his subjects. While noting the specific quality of 'expression' he spoke how that for him changed meaning while viewing and commissioning the portrait of his own father. He also noted in this way the subjective reading that sometimes dictates the manner in which one is to view or appreciate a work of art. Dileep spoke how the artist was later invited to his own house by him. Dileep requested the artist to create a head piece of his late father from photographs. He explained the arduous process that the sculptor undertook. He recollected how many people including some journalists thronged his house. The artist meanwhile answered the questions and also went on making the work. The whole experience was recounted to address the meaning of artistic expression as well as the very meaning of expression. Finally, when the head piece was completed, Dileep explains he turned the face of the sculpture which to him created the perfect portrait.

He also recounted the value that this artist gave to the clay he moulds his sculptures with. Also stating all the while, that the material knowledge coupled with an intimacy to the subject creates for a depiction which is full of life. He also said how John made a portrait of Nelson Mandela in a live sitting. During this live sitting he also was met with a woman who had an appointment with Nelson Mandela. This appointment continued for 30 mins instead of 10 mins and the woman kept crying throughout this meeting in which there was hardly much said between the two. This Dileep explained is an example of respecting your material, since the movement by Nelson Mandela was constituted with activists and he respected them as an artist would respect their material. The artist had come to Indore because of memories attached to the place where his deceased son had first come for his internship. Near Indore, a place called Mandu was mentioned sometimes to this artist by his son and so he painted a 13 canvas series in this memory. Dileep says he was reminded of his trip to Badrinath by this account, where he didn't on purpose see the idol in the temple. This experience was a case in point for an internalization of one's emotions to carefully orchestrate expression.

He explained that he searched for a likeness that he couldn't explain to John, because of his own intimacy to his father. This he said later seemed to him only appropriate that there was not a likeness to reality taking the example of Pablo Picasso's characteristic style of portraiture paintings. The most likeness of this statue was found in this way when the face of the statue was turned away for Dileep. Later he also started questioning the front face portrait photos of oneself and thus started giving out photos of himself turned away from the camera. Arguing that this was an expression of his personality. He argued that even in a classroom situation, one's way of greeting each other also represents or expresses their own personality. Many people assert their presence while others try not to gain any attention. He recounted an experience of him talking on stage where he was asked to answer as briefly as possible – Dileep chose to answer with an expression of his emotions. This he said is enough, as also seen in Mime theatre. With Salvador Dali's work he spoke of surrealism and some of his press conferences. One of these included him passing through the hall, without even talking once to the press. The eccentricity of the artist was also in the way he used to dress for an exhibition – in a scuba diving suit. All of this can be argued to be an expression of the artist. Where did he get these ideas which were taken from the imaginary and the subconscious for his paintings – he spoke of the attempts of lucid dreaming and meanwhile noting and drawing. He also spoke of one of the famous photographs that Dali composed with Phillipe Halsman where there had to be several attempts in the staging of the picture. Expression is not just the expression in a work of art but it needs to also have a creativity and originality. There needs to be no tradition to painting one needs to be creative to be able to express.

He also spoke of the crop circles which were found in different parts of the world, starting in England in 1960s. These inspired many conspiracy theories of aliens and ghosts later turning out to be a work by an artist duo! Even after this incident, many crop circles continue to appear around the world. Can vandalism also amount to artistic expression?

Mihir, a four-year old boy who was born and raised in US, was amazed at the number of animals he could see from a house in India. To him playing with cowdung provided him with a new found meaning of play. Recounting this experience, Dileep made a point on the beauty of a new experience which a child can experience but not his mother who will be caught up with other aspects of it. An enlarged photograph of the same cowdung can become potentially a piece of art.

He went into the works of art by Picasso especially one of the sculptural head pieces, recollecting how for the connoisseurs of art it was not appreciable at the time. He also explained how for Picasso as well, a childlike simplicity to create a work of art was of value. After this, he went into the expressive quality of a performative act/installation titled Shwetamabari by MF Hussain in Jehangir Art Gallery wherein he covered the whole venue of exhibition with white newsprint paper roll and bolts of cloth. Even this creation by him, was a playful activity and a childlike simplicity to create as well as to initiate an appreciation of it. He also compared the pretension that one likes or appreciates abstraction for newer forms of art such as installation.

He also spoke of the complex structures which are found in nature, including clouds, irregular shaped vegetables, pinewood planks, patterns, dried leaves, baked bricks, universal forms and objects which inspire beauty. He spoke of the 'Terracotta Army' in China to make a point on how the very arrangement of these statues creates a beauty. In this way he also spoke of the beauty of individual objects which isolated like bananas and lemons, can create an installation when assessed as an art object. In this way the expression of the artist can be found in such different ways. He also spoke of interactive installations. He spoke of Damien Hirst's installations which features animals such as a shark in the 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living' and a cow and calf in 'Mother and Child, Separated'. He asked the students if they consider this art? A lot of people might feel disgusted, but do they still consider it art? He also spoke of an artist Helena Sejet who curated a new artist, Tony Blair is incidentally a mouse. She would leave out stuff, which will have his footmarks, chew marks and so on on these objects which were then exhibited in this show. Dileep concluded with a question of whether or not all forms of art can be appreciated in an equal way?

In the discussion followed by this presentation, Dileep and Bandana thought together is it possible to think of perversions, as expressions of art. Bandana asked if all disturbing works of art can be called as works of art. Citing the example of Tate Modern arts gallery in London, there are many who appreciate such works of art said Dileep. Discussion also went into the ethics of certain taboo practices.

Concluding the session Chandramohan Kulkarni introduced an artist, *Akio Kitamura* whose video 'Getting Dressed' was done in the medium of animation to the class. The artist has worked especially with techniques of a dream like imagery and the stop motion animation was done primarily through drawings. This provided a visual impetus to the students and the day came to an end with them reverting to their assignments from the previous day.

26 July 2017

Discussion of the assignment of Riyaaz group on a journey

Students started the day by talking about the assignment that was given by Chandramohan Kulkarni on their WhatsApp group. The assignment was to make their own interpretations of a journey as a class or as a group. He had given an example of the bus to visualize such a journey, and students were given 24 hours but the students extended it to four - five days, to make this work in any medium of their choice.

In these presentations, Vrushali was the first one whose work was shown. Feedback was given to improve the drawing quality, and to give more time to the work than was devoted to this work. Vrushali spoke of the Harry Potter's bus for the abandoned wizards and compared it with the bus in her drawing. Chandramohan spoke of each detail, giving feedback on proportion of the human figures, the position of the bus, how calligraphy could have brought out the illustration to life. He was impressed with her color scheme and her overall composition. That it failed on both accounts of fantasy and reality was a real drawback for the visualization. Vrushali then explained how she wanted to develop the characters much more. Shubhangi's work was then discussed where feedback was given to re think the color schemes of the composition. It was also suggested overall to think that the example of the bus was not set as a standard to follow. Shubhangi explained that there was a fear in her mind to approach the figure freely. It was suggested that the figures needed to be better proportioned as well as a space distribution in the composition.

In the feedback for Bhargava's work it was discussed that it had many details which seemed to be unnecessary were in the composition. That a lot of small details like the leaves of a plant were included whereas more definitive character sketches needed to be built as well as more thought needed to be put into the overall composition including the importance of negative space. Anantjeet spoke of a composition that she had first made, which had a more realistic appeal. In a top view, which lacked individual characterization she was convinced to make another illustration at the last moment. This illustration she said she attempted to make few groups huddled together. It was suggested to get back to older illustrations and look at them afresh. Anantjeet then explained how she saw the exercise where she imagined the assignment as defining character sketches of each individual in the class. That one can get details through experiments was then suggested instead of reworking the works over and over again.

Ayushi started with speaking of the problem she faced in making the respective people closer to their identity, to which Chandramohan explained how she isn't supposed to make identical portraits. That attention to details and proportions is vital but still it is possible to extract symbolic meaning. Debarti started by explaining how she had imagined the visual to be an extension of the character of the people and also the scene as an extension of the activities happening. She also said that she would like to color some aspects to highlight them. Her idea was appreciated, and it was suggested that this could have been done through a close up of each person.

Niharika spoke how she didn't want to create the bus which was given as an example in the illustration. She spoke how she was dissatisfied with the illustration especially in terms of the proportions, and the lack of likeness that they exhibited in the characters. That she likes to stylize the figures is why she tried to do a realistic depiction in this illustration. Amruta explained that she saw the bus as the starting point, for the illustration. The bus has stopped and everyone is drinking tea at a stall. Chandramohan explained

how there needs to be an emphasis on composition, instead of the unnecessary details like textures she had made of the ground. It was also suggested that the students show their works to one another and create a dialogue. He also recounted the formulae that were given by Nachiket Patwardhan in previous sessions.

Vijendra's work was appreciated for its use of perspective. It was also suggested that he think of color composition in the future, and appreciated the quality of line. He suggested that more sketches needed to be done through a one-line technique so as to not have demarcations of rough and neat. Tinu spoke of her own problems with the drawing especially with proportions. Chandramohan explained the importance of looking away and looking from a distance the work of art – to ascertain proportions correctly. That one needs to literally throw the work down and see it again especially when one is involved with it for a long time. Nikhil spoke of the composition, where the color scheme was discussed as well as the village that they had visited. The feedback to think of the importance of the separate elements to create a composite whole was given in his example too. Meenakshi spoke of the incomplete drawing and how she wanted to make the autos which are outside the guest house. The visual was appreciated, as well as the drawing quality itself. That more elements be added and the composition be colored too.

Shubham's work was then discussed wherein the visual as a whole was appreciated. The illustration had the element of a storytelling and the characters were visible. Drawing quality was something that needed improvement. Again, there were many details that need not have been included and were in fact foreshadowing the elements or characters that were central. Rishi's observation was again appreciated. However, Chandramohan pointed out how there was a need to stick with the work but with some breaks. The continuous process doesn't always yield the best results. He spoke how some figures needed completion and even the composition needed completion overall. Bandana spoke of the composition she had imagined with a lot more movement. But finally settled with a direct composition with the lack of time. Chandramohan reiterated how one needs to make the figures with brush, rather than a pen. The composition is refined after making things whole and then thinning out with details rather than backwards. When one starts with details, one forgoes the larger objective according to the general principle. Patch work and darker shades through watercolors and not starting with line drawing as always were suggested as techniques.

Chandramohan also told the students to search for their own process, the time, the kind of drawing they need to make even as he shared his own technique and process. Perspective, visual, Line quality especially was appreciated by Chandramohan. He was impressed with the originality of all the works wherein the students all had their individuality showing through and through. He also spoke how he was really impressed by the observation skills of each artist.

Dileep added how the literal translation of the assignment, has reduced its meaning. He felt that a lot of them had 'missed the bus'. He described a journey of the bus, which sometimes goes around in the straight direction as if it's a journey of life. When one misses the bus, a break comes which can create newer observations for one. When there is a repetitive depiction of character sketches in more than one illustrations – it feels like a different take is needed by venturing into the same place with different aspects to focus on.

The assignment from the previous day continued for the rest of the day with students having one on one communications with their respective mentors. A new assignment was also assigned to make illustrations for a story/poem for Chakmak and Pluto.

27 July 2017

Reading the text with Sushil Shukla

Speaking about illustrations and their role in understanding the text, he expressed a long term goal of Riyaz to offer new perspectives on illustration especially when not many are offered in fine art academies of the country. Why do texts (stories or poems or essays) need an illustration? At the start of the yearly session, there was one presentation by Dileep that highlighted this role of illustration, but at this point can students create their own answers which answer this question of an illustration's role and need.

Students had been given a text to illustrate for a feature in the children magazines Chakmak and Pluto the day before. These stories were now to be assessed as a group to better grasp the meaning of the text and then to also discuss the potential hidden meanings of a text. The dialogue that emerges from this assessment of this text, the role of the illustration in respect to the text (before and after this reading). To also ask if the illustration adds something new or special to the existing story, its importance in the company of a text? Does an illustration present the text in a new light? When one listens to a poem, what are the things we focus on? Similarly, then one thinks of prose, he wished to present several examples of the same especially in the context of literature for children. For the current reading, the students were then encouraged to present their own view of what was the 'primary' or 'essential' part of the text?

Vijendra presented his text, which was a rhythmic and playful three-line poem. He said that the three words (*Kakri, Akri, Lakri*) which rhymed also created three compositions which he wanted to show as the process of life depicted in the poem. He had made three drawings as illustrations for this poem. The main character of the plant is also at the center of his work. Sushil then asked Vijendra what was the point at which he thought the poem was playful? To which he was asked that since most rhythmic sentences create a poem, how is this one a little different? Vijendra thought that there was a light heartedness to the poem especially in a three-line poem. Anantjeet added that to her the poem was in fact a depiction of a life cycle, and Shubham said that he could see the poem as a comment on old age. Sagar then said that there was no need to find too much meaning in this poem, in this case illustration could be designed to create something of beauty. If there is a distinct use of illustration more than it serving the purpose of decoration asked Sushil further? How would a reader assemble this poem outside of the meaning of it based on the illustration? Sagar said it seems that the effect of an illustration can be sometimes to create beauty. Anantjeet said that the text serves a purpose too which can supplement the role of the illustration in some cases. Sushil also explained that a lot of times that text has idioms and use of language that means more than one thing. In the case of literature for children, sometimes such language is avoided. Shubhangi also added that the illustrators themselves

have an active role to play in deciding and reading the text whether or not text needs to be illustrated. Sushil also added that it is quite impossible to find out the meaning of target audience and that one must enjoy the work they are making. Chandramohan also added that the illustration needed more originality for it to add something of value. Atanu also spoke of the page margins and also thinking of design while illustrating. Dileep then again brought the discussion to the text – where in the observation of the poet mirrors an observation skill for a child and that small joy can be appreciated by the young and adult alike. (*unclear, please reframe the sentence*).

Debarati said that while talking about an illustrator's role – one needs to think again if the early readers respond to an image which literally translates the text or if they understand through visual cues offered through an atmosphere of that image. Sagar said that Photoshop is a medium of making illustration, and said that use of photographs to create an illustration can be differentiated than using a photographic image itself. Debarati added that the question of making an image as if it represents reality is something that needs to be questioned especially if photographs already cover or present things occurring in nature quite appropriately and bear the stamp of reality much more than drawings/paintings/illustrations. This is why in several cases, Chandramohan asked the students to reinvent the depictions and follow different kinds of reference sources than a photograph that exists on the internet. He also encouraged the students to think about the role of the medium in making of their illustration. When one reads a text, what are the defining elements that they identify? Similarly, what are the specific visual imageries that come to their mind upon reading a text? Which are the aspects that need to be taken as important and which are the ones that can be sidelined?

The next poem was read out by Rishi in which he explained that the central character of an old woman is put into jail for stealing a cube of sugar and how the tone of the poem for him signaled that there is surveillance at play. Also noting the current climate of the government surveillance – where people are scared about the very ordinary and day to day things such as eating habits even in the privacy of their own house. For example - how can one be afraid of eating a cube of sugar? It was also possible that there is an element of showcasing poverty said Meenakshi. Shailesh saw it as a satire which exaggerated the need of an old woman. Chandramohan said that for him it was possible that too much reading was going into it and that it was a playful poem which he enjoyed. The poem follows a rhythmic structure and this too he discussed.

Anantjeet said that for her, she saw deeper and layers of meanings these days because of a generally heightened state of awareness and political correctness that she sees around herself, while Sagar said preexisting experiences also hinders people to imagine outside of the frame of reality. Chandramohan then added that there are many meanings available but not every illustrator needs to choose which a political one. In this regard, Sushil added that even though he appreciates imaginative works of literature such as Jaishankar Prasad's *Kamayani* he feels that it lacks the element of social consciousness and that he finds works which pertain to lived realities of human life more relatable. Such as *Malgudi Days*, which creates a vision of the society. He also said that experience is a good enough thing to take back from a piece of literature, instead of taking a moral or a message from it. Sushil also emphasized that he is hoping that everyone can bring their own independent views and interpretations and that he didn't want to impose his own readings. He said that how does one analyze meanings outside of the social facts or considerations? For example, most of the literature tends to the elite through the ages. And that meanings can be distilled by thinking it through and more critically. Sushil and Chandramohan also suggested that after engaging with a poem and illustration, one needs to throw it aside. Illustration

was then discussed, where in Meenakshi and Niharika said that they felt the illustration made it too serious or heavy while the essence of the poem is in its wit and light heartedness.

Meenakshi then spoke of her poem, which in summary spoke of the advices that adults give to children. She told that she saw this poem as a comment on the kind of societal pressure that children are put under. She said that she wanted to make something more abstract, whereas she then came back to a realistic approach. Atanu was impressed with the idea and the visual. Chandramohan suggested that more emphasis on drawing and sketching could improve the overall quality of the illustration.

Nikhil then spoke of the poem he had been given, wherein he was impressed with the imaginative qualities of the poem. That there were many elements which were used like metaphors and imaginative cues. He was interested in such cues to simplify this poem. There are many forms and cycles that water goes through from being in the pond to being a cloud, which was also discussed by Avnish. Sushil said that any reading of meaning that foregoes the enjoyable experience is not very useful. Shubhangi then recited her poem *Imli Vimli* which features a lot of little girls, Vimli eating Imli. The poem has several possibilities of multiple characters being depicted in the illustration. The different surnames of Vimli eating Imli make up for the rhyme of the poem, which for Niharika symbolized how diverse the country is and yet all kids long for something like Imli similar to each other. Sushil stated how does one create such an illustration when translating this meaning? Vrushali then added that there was a possibility of thinking of font too through the illustration to create differentiation of characters mentioned.

Manoj, then surmised the story he was given – *Anokhi Madad* in which a person comes to meet an impoverished old woman and helps her. His illustration showed an old woman against the backdrop of a hut. Sushil attracted attention to the question if is it possible to think of central characters a little more deeply. Chandramohan said that illustration need not be a figure drawing and to think of symbolic illustration. That its possible to not illustrate some stories, and that discretion should be exercised by the artist.

After this Radheshyam's poem was discussed, for which he had already started an illustration. Style was discussed in detail especially when speaking about Radheshyam's work. A lot of students explained why they saw his work in a different light especially since there was a style that he was following, which they thought had a direct relationship to his training. While assuming that he has a visual vocabulary from this training in the folk art, several points were discussed such as what are the distinctions between –

1. tribal/folk art and fine art or art and craft
2. illustration and art
3. design and painting

Shailesh's story was then read out in which a Momo meets a Tandoori Roti. He spoke of the playful character of this encounter which he wanted to translate in his illustration. The two speak of their journeys as refugees and he spoke how he wanted to show them against the backdrop of partition. Sushil implored the primary meaning of this story to which the illustrator responds? Shailesh wanted to focus on the element of unity after the partition. Dileep thought that the story evokes a sense of taste.

The session moved on to discuss few more examples of students' texts. Sagar spoke of his text which tells a story of a nine-year old boy and his father who speak of an incident in which he steals and

through conversation the boy comes to express his emotion. Anantjeet thought that the story was not meant for children and that it explored a parenting style. Many others disagreed, while the conversation came back to the question of the strength of the story. Sushil also added that the story has an experience of its own which is why it is important not to think that it serves a moral purpose alone or that it can solve moral dilemma. With Amrita's poem, discussion was brought to the imageries that are prompted by a story. In this case, for example was it possible to imagine something that is not already present in it? Shubham opined that a humanization of the animal characters could bring some more humor to it. Bandana in her poem spoke of the visual cues of raindrops hanging from the wires. Her illustration featured two women in a street, and she wished to complete this further. Discussion was focused on the illustration where Chandramohan added that suggestive illustrations can be done. Sushil also asked the class to wonder if there is a need to in fact illustrate all stories/poems? He asked why they thought it was important to illustrate this? Chandramohan said that one can very much use visualization to interpret a poem? He also said that there are some illustrations which can elaborate and some which can obscure the meaning. Atanu added that one needs to capture the mood of the poem to create the image. A lot of text as Sushil pointed out is written and imagined during the process of writing, similarly Chandramohan opined that an illustration needs its due process. Debarti spoke of the poem she had, and the first draft of the illustration. She again emphasized that she wants to redo this image. The next image she wants to create silhouettes of the characters instead of definitive ones. Chandramohan also asked her to create blots of ink to experiment and create the images. Bhargava then spoke of his story, which features a camel and a fox and the moon as pivotal characters. He spoke how he was looking at the physical attributes of a camel and the fox online to create something true to life. Bhargava also added that he is searching for a minimal form even as he wants to create something which truly depicts the form of the characters. Chandramohan advised him to enjoy making the illustration, and Sushil also said that illustration in this case can make visible the image of a desert.

The question of a perceived 'target audience' was also discussed. Is there a target audience for every image or story? Are real and unreal too disparate as categories to be brought together? If such elements are distinct and are available in a vocabulary of an artist from their prior training, what can be the originalities or new elements that an artist/illustrator brings to the fore?

Reading of Book Reviews

This was a homework that was given to the class, to write book reviews which present their understanding of the text in written form. That she could relate to many aspects of the book, as well as fail to believe the immoral actions of a peer back when she was a child. Niharika started with recounting of the book, 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' by Mark Twain and spoke of her impressions as a eleven year old child especially in relation to the kind of reading she has of it today. She also spoke of the illustrations in the book by Mitchell Ireland she had which accompanied the story. Impressed by the use of pen and ink, she was in particular fond of the simplicity of these drawings. Her vocabulary was appreciated and feedback was positive for her book review. She confessed to have first written it in English, which she is more comfortable with, and then translating it. She also recounted how she liked black and white drawings better than colorful illustrations as a child. Amruta spoke of a poem by Nagarjuna, 'Aakal aur Uske Baad' published by Eklavya, where she noted the inferences she was fascinated with in particular. In her writing she presented a summary of the poem. She spoke of the illustrations by Karen Haddock. She really appreciated the use of black ink on brown paper as a depiction of drought. And feedback was generally positive.

Meenakshi through her review spoke of the patriarchal nature of the institution of marriage and the family through her review. She also presented a summary while ~~then~~ describing the hypocrisy of the society as well as those of the institutions of law and order. Ekeshwar does the illustration where the effectiveness of them is quite on point because of their sketchy and minimal nature. The illustration supplements and creates the atmosphere for the story written by Professor Yashpal. She also surmised the story which took up most part of this review. Dileep suggested her to present more views of the characters and the story for a book review. Rishi tells of a story he read in Chakmak, 'Sardi ke Raat Mein Gaay', by Udayan Vajpayee and spoke of the qualities that he really admired. He could relate to the scenes of the story as well as stories from his own childhood. He appreciated the illustration by Nilesh which created a scene of winter night as was mentioned in the story. He also admired the quality of empathy for animals that the main character professes. Shubhangi's review presented a story of how she came to the book, this narrative for most part does not speak of the content inside the book. Dileep asked her to present more of her views and opinions on this catalog/book of Amrita Sher Gill. Anantjeet spoke of the story in a picture book written by Bharti Jagannathan, wherein she explores a question of a banyan tree who wants to fly like birds which perched onto its branches and speak of their travels. Dileep asked her to present this point much more without creating the air of mystery especially it's lost to the reader. She said that the book didn't have the best illustrations and that she thought they could have been better.

Debarti spoke of the book, 'The Enchanted Wood' by Enid Blyton, where she explains her impressions of the story, which includes a family and three children against the backdrop of many imaginative characters. She also speaks of her interest in more of colorful illustrations and how as a child she longed for those books, even though this particular book was very dear to her nevertheless. Feedback was given by Dileep to be more specific as to what she was calling 'stylistic' and what it denoted.

Bhargava added that she could have spoken more about the line quality and composition to be able to explain the illustration. Anantjeet also added that the black and white lines of the illustration did create the light and dark of a composition. Shubham then spoke of a picture book he had taken from the bookshelf, of 'Lakshmi'. He went into a page by page account and described how he didn't appreciate index etc. He related to the experience of listening to his grandmother's stories. He also said that he didn't like the use of Photoshop in many illustrations. Sushil said that one needs to present reviews on children books or literature and not on books which are outside the gambit. Similarly, he also said that the story is not enough for objective review writing. He said that writing of a review especially of picture books, needed to assess the design, illustrations and story together. That this discussion needs to happen more than the mere experience of a book. He also suggested them to read more of reviews so that they can go through and write more effectively in future and promised to send some examples via email.

Bhargava also read out his observation on monsoon in which he spoke of the effect of rain on all senses. In this he spoke in particular of sounds of rain, and also spoke of details such as this. He spoke of the romanticism and the memories of childhood associated with rain as well but focused more on the sound of raindrops falling on different surfaces. He also expressed that the sound of the river after flood, the thunder, the sea and the experience too. Avnish also recited his poem for Sushil after Bhargava. Feedback was given by Sushil to think less about the structure which Avnish has grasped enough but now needs to focus on the content part. That if he was to write more, it would eventually create more content driven poems. He also recited a few poems which followed the structure but creating the same content as examples, to create more writing with commonplace subjects. Meenakshi also recited her account, where she was struggling with placing her account between poem and prose. Feedback was

given by Sushil to not worry about the categorization but worry about the content itself.

28 July 2017

Presentation and Assignment on Alphabet Illustrations by Chandramohan Kulkarni

Chandramohan showed a presentation on his own work which presented a series of experiments he did with the alphabet and how that didn't necessarily was to illustrate a story or a poem. He spoke of his interest in calligraphy as it was emerging in the social media as he witnessed. He didn't like many of these interpretations he saw, and wanted to experiment on this himself. So he played on the question on what if the alphabets had to die, and how to make an interpretation of the ghosts of these alphabets.

He also requested the students to study and attempt the digital medium for illustration. He took this as a challenge. Describing his process, he sought to present how he tried to present a visualization of ghosts. He thought that the element of humor and the element of structure/shape of alphabet had to be preserved. He also said that he wanted to debunk the superstitions associated with the stories of ghosts. While working, he kept developing the alphabets one by one. He also spoke of the black and white treatment in these illustrations and also maintained that this decision came naturally.

He made references on the age, physical attributes, and the surprising things that he kept adding as went drawing. He explained that he also treated the first work as 'rough' so as to be free minded about it and not worry about the end result. At the same time, treating it with the prospect of becoming 'final'. He also spoke how this was not for a client or an exhibition, which made it all the more personally fun for him. He also started researching the literature on black magic, forms, age, religion, gender and names of the ghosts, superstitions and stories. From that idea, it also went into discussion about a theme park with ghosts with potential of it becoming a restaurant. In each experiment he imagined a new thing, sometimes foregoing logic, and inventing new characteristics like the thin beard, broken teeth and crooked feet for each alphabet.

The realistic approach that he has done in previous illustrations also helped him to create a whimsical work in this case. That he had a lot of freedom to make what he did, also meant that he could reimagine the use of the study. He spent good two weeks exploring this idea and process lead to a series organically. Once the idea is there, it is possible to execute in no matter what the material is. He also explained how accidental details create something. The positive side of using a digital medium for him was that there can be a lot of additions or edits in this medium. He also stressed the importance of the technique and the medium. That sketching alone cannot create the study, a holistic study will come from a mastery of the medium. He also said that tactile experience remains something of value, and that even the digital experience is built on the real. That the background was not as important as the very idea of making the ghost inspired series of alphabets. This was in response to an enquiry of Vrushali.

He added the accessories that the ghost would carry as punctuation marks. Several details he added, according to each of the alphabets. He spoke of the simplified forms that he wanted in his compositions and struggled how to unlearn the training of making things beautiful. That there are some forms which are already there in one's mind and they repeat themselves in the illustration was another struggle he expressed. He also added elements from his prior observations, current assignments like cactus, safety pins, jewelry, trees etc. That these alphabets also started expressing different emotions over time. The different shapes of body's features like the ears, nose, face, hair was something he kept inventing and

also kept repeating. He also started making the small case of alphabets with the upper case to signify their death together.

He noted how through the many stories of Ratnakar Matkari, a Marathi playwright, he has illustrated in the past brought him to a particular story in which the ghosts meet up at an abandoned house to talk. He took that forward with his own interpretations. He also brought an interpretation of a female ghost (Satwai) believed to be someone who writes the future of a new born in Maharashtra, who is both feared and revered. He also made a baby ghost in a crib surrounded by thorns as well as a woman with feet turned backwards and finally a family of ghosts on a Peepal Tree and ghosts playing cards. He gave the students an assignment that they make either a portrait of themselves as ghosts, the alphabet amalgamated with a ghost after the presentation.

Assignment on making a book by Atanu Roy

Atanu Roy gave an assignment on illustrating and inventing a story. He explained the importance of creating such a book as homework. He also explained to the class 'royalty' as a pertinent tool to assess their own work. Different from an illustrator's fee the royalty is given on the sale of a book which means that it has to be a book good enough to make sales. He stressed the importance of making money from this art of illustrating so as to sustain themselves as artists. He emphasized the dearth of new stories and ideas and works in publishing houses. He also encouraged the class to read and look at illustrated books with more voracity.

He stressed that this assignment be taken seriously and that students were free to choose mediums and formats as well as stories of their own free will. Several examples were shown from the library and students were encouraged to think about layouts, design, illustrations, back and front covers, and stories in tandem with each other. Students were encouraged to use text that they would like to illustrate and also were free to make picture books if they wanted to. He explained how the book should be in multiples of four and that a minimum of sixteen pages be done. He also explained that while an original story is appreciated, one can take an existing story too and any language can be used. Students were told to bring this assignment with some character sketches, initial draft and plan to the session in August.

Assignments were pending and so students pursued their pending work and caught up with their mentors for feedback for most part of the day.

29 July 2017

Guest Lecture – Presentation on ‘History of Art’

After everyone introduced themselves, a session of discussion with Ashok Bhaumik where he spoke in two parts marked the day at Riyaz. He spoke of his background as an artist who is self taught and had studied science in college.

In the first part he spoke of his understanding of art history especially in the context of India especially since he had little access to the books and seeing these works. In a PowerPoint presentation, he elaborated how for him an understanding of an art object was dependent upon its image in art history books. The difference between the experience of looking at an image of the artwork and encountering a real artwork in a museum was felt by him again and again.

Giving the example of the famous sculpture, ‘Dancing Girl’ from Mohenjadaro, he spoke how for him the actual size of the bronze sculpture was a surprise and how he imagined it to be a at least 5 ft in height. On encountering the work made in 2500 BC in the National Museum in Delhi, he found out that the real size of the sculpture is no more than 4 and a half inches in height. It is impossible to be an art lover, in the Indian context, because it is a difficult task to associate meanings to any object which is already laden with religious context. That there is a Indian art, was first described the colonial ruler

Overall, he spoke of the shifting identity of nation especially since before and after independence of India in 1947 where lines were drawn between Bengal and Punjab carving the then nation state of Pakistan. To him this shared history in our culture and civilization is just as relevant as the one we claim to call ‘Indian’. He noted the influences in art of the subcontinent and took the audience through the paintings illustrated first as part of religious manuscripts.

The meaning of Indian art is something he wished to focus on through his presentation, and explained why the challenge of a painter is different from that of a musician, writer or dancer. He explained with the Jataka or Panchtantra stories depicted in Ajanta caves, serve as one of the first examples of illustrations and are found in Buddhist religion. He showed examples from miniature art. He also spoke of the creative process of making and looking at a work of art is lost when one is only looking at the references or stories associated with religion.

He encouraged the students to make a resource of images to look and think about. His presentation focused on the evolution of the iconography of Hindu gods, goddesses and kings and symbolic reverence they gained through their visual depictions in miniatures and other forms of art. He spoke of the various examples of Akbar-Nama and Babur-Nama, which use illustrations to add to creating an image of the king.

He speaks of colonial invasion where in they started creating drawings of architecture, birds, flowers and insects from India to create anthropological records. Lady Impey, first commissioned the artists to create such records. There emerged a Company Style of painting with photography also on its way. The same kings who used to get portraits of themselves painted earlier were now getting their photographs done, and for the first time it was possible for the common man to get this done too. That was a moment of democratization which made it possible for the first time to see a portrait which was not of a king or a god. He also discussed several artworks by Raja Ravi Varma and how his paintings and subject matter

inspired an appreciation of art. That his artworks became household objects of calendar art, and became wall hangings.

He also spoke of the exaggeration devices used in illustrations and portrait paintings by kings, case in point – the depiction of hunting scenes with Akbar and Shahajahan standing on the globe. All of this is an attempt to create an immortal and invincible image of the ruler. He also spoke of his problems with the traditions of paintings where they mirror the religious stories instead of being independent of those motifs.

At the same time, he also spoke of Bengal school's renaissance and his problems of the icons such as Bharat Mata that were created by Abanindranath Tagore which continue to take on a different form as of today. He expressed an admiration towards the era of Indian art ushered in by Amrita Sher Gill and Rabindranath Tagore where the subject of the paintings shifted to the ordinary people from the prior examples of Indian art which focused more on the elite. Ramkinker Baij also brought a new kind of subject matter which he admired. Sadequain, a Pakistani artist immigrated from India during partition also expressed the perfect subject matter as the laborer who is tired after a long day at work. He also spoke of the work of Somnath Hore and Chittoprasad Bhattacharya in which a different kind of subject matter is taken and he argued that their work makes for a progressive art language.

He brought the discussion to the art and times of Progressive Artists Group and how he had an aversion to the way they capitalized on this identity. He also spoke of the repetitive nature of the painters from this group and also spoke of an elitism with which he identified their art. He spoke with specific examples through quotes from artists and critics with whom he had problems. He presented his contention with how the contemporary art has become centralized in the two cities of Delhi and Mumbai. He then also took examples from the art of the repetitive styles which one would repeat what would sell, something that he accused Jamini Roy of too.

He also spoke of SH Raza and how he kept painting Bindu repetitively. He criticized the market driven tactics of art production. To appreciate a painting is to feel it, and also to understand it by that experience and it is not a calculative thing to do. He also brought discussion to how a central line was not part of the Indian art previously and compared this element found in Raza's paintings as tilting towards design.

He also spoke on the domination of English and big sentences in describing art which for him hinders the experience of art. He also spoke of some contemporary artists like Subodh Gupta and Bharti Kher. That their art is completely market driven and falls into the category of commodities is something that he is concerned about. He also showed examples of works from street art, installation art, etc to make this point.

Sushil asked a question on how can one remove the context of a painting to appreciate it? And how can one not see references of religion like in *Muktibodh*, and then speak of the creation correctly? In discussion it was answered by Ashok Bhaumik that an appreciation of painting is not the same as understanding a text. He also expressed how some images of famine can transcend the location to signify a universal notion of famine. He also gave an example of the same sunset which can inspire different emotions that of sadness, or romance or any other emotion based on our own experience. He also said that the paintings should be appreciated with this outlook where it can inspire emotions based on our prior experiences.

Presentation on 'the art of Rabindranath Tagore'

In the second part of the presentation after lunch, he gave his thoughts on Rabindranath Tagore in more detail. With an example of how we look at even a natural phenomenon such as a beautifully occurring rainbow, or a constellation and how these elements are rather known through the references in religious or mythological sources.

Before Rabindranath started painting, the two kinds of paintings that were still prevalent – The Miniature Style of Mughal/Rajasthani/Kangra schools or Company Style set up by the British. In 1901 a revivalist art movement led by a handful of Calcutta based artists. He argued that many of the works by this group are of gods and goddesses which was to create a Hindu identity and the group was hand in glove with the British intentions of divide and rule.

Against this backdrop, Rabindranath painted the first paintings of common people. How was it that he transitioned from poetry to painting? In that regard, a lot of 'erasures' that he drew on to the paper, with the emphasis to evolve a form on to the paper. There is an attempt to create a canvas which has both poem and painting. There are also many of these experiments that feature a complete erasures of words. There are many abstract as well as figurative forms that emerge from these experiments by him. In an English poem that he wrote in Argentina, he painted a woman from such erasures. Rabindranath also said that he buried many words that he didn't have any use of in those poems through these erasures using the very same pen and ink which was used in the writing them.

He also explained how Rabindranath's words explain the intrinsic meaning of pictures explaining that they exist only to be viewed and express as such their meaning through their existence. Taking the examples of the landscapes by Rabindranath and his space division, in this way he also spoke of the difference between European and his own landscapes. Foremost being that they were painted from memory and not from a live sitting and secondly how he never titled his works.

In his portraits and self portraits, he made several heads without hints of shoulders taking from the photographs. He also noted in this way how the subject matter in his paintings of women in saree against the diagonal line giving it an identity of its own, including comical paintings. There was no attempt to make portraits in the given constraints of a paper. He also made many architectural and theatrical paintings which expressed his interest in these elements and movements. The excellent use of space is something that created a composite whole with many individual parts.

In Rabindranath, we also see the use of a technique of the 'self illuminated line', where he reduced the surface through painting and so the source of light is not from outside the frame of painting but on the surface of painting itself. He also spoke how there is a drama present in his paintings as well as a narrative within the painting. One cannot place these stories to a source, and they express their meaning without explaining. It is therefore left to the viewer to understanding the paintings.

After looking at the portraits, landscapes and theatre inspired paintings, Rabindranath's other creations were shown. Many of these birds, flowers though beautiful and expressive they had no bearing of the real animal but only a probable animal. The form of these birds, animals sometimes look strange or

prehistoric something that the viewer would like to imagine as real but that which intelligently avoids reality.

The use of lyrical lines in some works while geometrical lines in others define his art. One also notes that there is not one hero or heroine in the paintings of Rabindranath. This marks a difference from the paintings of his contemporaries in Bengal school. With example of the Mother and Child painting by Rabindranath, he explained the compositional power of the work especially the use of colors and background broken with space. He also explained how in some cases the cross hatching technique brought in depth against a simple composition of a flower.

In the discussion following the presentation, Vrushali asked if Ashok was including tribal and folk art in his description of art history of India. She also added that there are many depictions in tribal art with central figures of animals or birds. Shubhangi implored if he was also writing about his paintings, to which Ashok replied that while he wrote about painting as such, he never wrote about his own art too much. It also emerged from the discussion that there are many examples of doodling and playfulness that Ashok disagreed with and said that there was a level of sophistication that he brought to painting. It was also asked if his paintings were appreciated in his time, but it was explained that his work was not appreciated in the time which was dominated by the art of Abanindranath Tagore, Nandlal Bose and the group.

Discussion on the illustrations with observations on Monsoon

During the break from the first two sessions, students submitted their submissions where they had to illustrate the same stories or observations which they had read out on the first day. Dileep expressed his disapproval of how some students had not followed the guidelines of making the illustrations post rainfall observing the changes in the environment. Especially starting with the Ayushi, whose illustration focused on the paper boats, to whom he suggested that she make contrasting elements in the drawing for the purpose of print. Chandramohan also asked her to think of making an illustration that differentiated from photography.

With Amrita's illustration, Chandramohan explained that he thought it didn't appropriately describe the change in season while Atanu appreciated the visual qualities of the image. In the next illustration by Anantjeet, Dileep spoke of the problems with the limited colors in her illustration. Bandana's work was also discussed where Chandramohan and Dileep said that the interpretation of the text was not happening in the way it should.

With Bhargava's illustration, he explained how he had tried to depict the sound of rain through the watercolors in his composition especially when he was trying to depict a memory. Dileep commended the use of dark colors and the atmosphere that was created in an evening. Debarti spoke of the composition, which used the reference of Gulmohar tree's flowers falling after rain. Meenakshi explained how she had depicted the flow of wind before rainfall. Chandramohan asked her to think again about the space appropriated for the inside and outside of the composition, and Dileep asked her to think about the color and darkness that could be of the wall in her painting.

Niharika spoke how she had made the illustration from memory, and that there were some problems she saw in proportion of the elements of the painting. She also spoke of the problems she faced in

concentrating on the central elements i.e. the parrots against the backdrop of rain that she had in mind. In this way she herself spoke of the feedback she had received on one on one sessions.

Rishi's work was then discussed, and students appreciated the different aspects of the composition like the haziness of the colors, the movement in the composition. Sagar's work was then discussed where Chandramohan asked him to pay more attention to the medium of watercolor. He also asked about him to think about the purpose of using a form that is not realistic. Shailesh explained how he had depicted the elements mentioned in his account of dull colors creating a contrast against each other. Dileep and Chandramohan asked him to pay attention to the color composition and also the shadows for creating a certain realism.

Shubham's work was then seen which had an imaginative core with a boy attempting to catch a cloud before it passes away. Atanu appreciated the playfulness of the composition. Shubhangi's composition was then discussed and she explained how she had tried to simplify the trees instead of detailing it. Dileep asked her to pay more attention to the characteristic of the bird she mentioned. She had done two compositions in watercolor and acrylic. Tinu's work was then discussed and she explained how she had tried to make trees with different colors. Dileep asked her to pay more value to the study of individual trees.

Vijendra explained how he had tried to make a composition with kids playing in the rain. Dileep asked him to make the elements like frogs with more detail and Chandramohan too asked him to pay more attention to proportion. Vrushali's work was then discussed and she explained how she had made the flowers that come after rainfall with a child in silhouette. Feedback was generally positive on this work. The teachers asked the remaining students to also submit this work.

Presentation on 'Women in Art'

In the third session in the evening, Ashok Bhaumik spoke about the depiction of women. He began the presentation with the images of Bhimbetka Cave Drawings, followed by the examples of prehistoric art around the world like Lascaux and Altamira. He noted how through careful re examination of some of the cave paintings in Australia researchers found that the earliest found depictions may have been made by women (from the shape of hands used as stencils).

He also showed the depiction of Virgin Mary in Michelangelo's La Pieta and how the mother looks younger than her son, Jesus Christ. He also gave the example of Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci, and argued that the story of the last supper is not implicit in the painting unless we are told so. To be able to see this work of art in the right way, one must pay attention to the creation as well, the chiaroscuro, the composition, the depiction of human figures.

He noted through a few examples of paintings by Jean Francois Millet which has women laborers working in the field and how that shift reasserted the place of women's labor equally outside of the house which is traditionally understood. He also presented examples of women artists like Kathe Kollwitz and argued that painting children like women do is not possible, because of the motherhood that they experience. He also said that the meaning of creation is symbolized by woman and not man because they are the ones who give birth. He also gave the example of Picasso's blue period canvases and subject matter of these paintings was devoted to women who exhibited strangeness or insanity.

He explained that in the context of India, the order follows from God to King to Man to the audience again. He then speaks of the iconography of gods in Hinduism and the notion of a king, noting the particular details that link the two icons. He also spoke of the painting, 'The East offering its gold to Britannia' by Spridone Roma and spoke how the colonial ruler established and validated its rule through the medium of paintings.

Hemen Majumdar was commissioned by the Maharaja of Baroda to paint the subject matter with women after taking a bath and how wet clothes touched the skin. Raja Ravi Varma was another artist who painted women extensively, but from the Hindu religious texts. His calendar art and oleographs spread out across the country and also highlighted the lesser known characters of the mythology and Hindu religion. He also spoke of the depictions of women from mythology and argued that there were many problems with it especially of characters like Ahilya, Mohini, Sita, Draupadi, Kunti. Through these tales he explained the secondary role that women are given in comparison to men. He also spoke of the examples of Sati idols and memorials pan India that validated the now abolished practice of women dying by joining their deceased husbands on the funeral pyres.

Murali T's painting was shown of the Nangeli woman who cut off her breast as 'breast tax' imposed in the village of Kerala, and noted how the caste based discrimination or discrimination against women was unrecorded in Indian art. That there is in fact an attempt to degrade the woman through art which was not so in European art. There are some examples of progressive artists who have made women and men on an equal pedestal such as of Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher Gill, T Prabha, Somnath Hore and Chittoprasad Bhattacharya. He also showed the drawings of women in Tebhaga famine by Somnath Hore, of women laboring in the fields and Santhal women by Ramkinker Baij. With slides of their paintings, he argued that many of these subject matters such as images of childbirth, women in protest with men and woman in the fields were revolutionary.

In the discussion following the presentation, Sushil asked him if there was a generalization that was occurring through his discourse of cause and effect of women's position in society. He was also questioned on the disproportionate women artists in Indian art and his presentation by several students. It was also pointed out that the European art also had as many if not more examples of erotic art or 'disrespectful' art. Many also pointed out that the context was just as important in appreciation of any art form. Debate and discussion ensued on these points, where he emphasized that the stories or narratives have in fact resulted into the present condition of crimes against women. With many more questions and disagreements, the session came to an end.

30th July 2017

Guest Lecture - Ashok Bhaumik's presentation of his work

The day started with the presentation of Ashok Bhaumik's work where now he spoke of his paintings in particular. The different series that he had made over the course of his artistic career was presented.

While in childhood, he started drawing following the example of his mother drawing rangolis and the like in the house. He also explained his interest later in life, even though he was a science graduate and didn't study art. He studied art through books in the library, he used to sketch in different places including railway station. He explained that during the period of emergency he devoted a lot of time reading *Muktibodh*.

His first one-man show was in 1974, and noted how he changed over the course of the years with many inputs and influences from theatre, literature, music and dance and other artists. He also added that during the time he exhibited, there used to be long reports in the newspaper and many people and visitors used to come to really just see the work of art in an exhibition, including the general public. So the pressure of making something good was very much on the artist whether or not it could sell. This struggle was a part and parcel of him becoming an artist.

He showed the series he had made on *Muktibodh*, *Devdasis*, a series on landscapes all in black and white on paper. Starting 1997 he made the first attempts at color compositions. He spoke of the *Manushi* series which features women in his paintings exclusively. He showed how he attempted a mockery of kings in a painting that features the King Lear or the beggar king sharpening a pencil with a sword. He had also made a series 'Making of God' with several god figures. He also made a series on the royal Bengal tiger. There were many paintings from a series which was inspired from Warli Art.

He showed the paintings he had made inspired from the poems of Jitendra Shrivastav and which were exhibited in an exhibition in Pakistan in 2005. He also spoke of the techniques he preferred i.e. cross hatching with pen earlier on paper and then on large scale canvases. He also spoke of the children on the street, who he was inspired to make a series of paintings on. He also spoke on 'Amina and her birds' a series he considers pivotal to his artistic journey. He then spoke of the series 'Coalmines and the canaries' and also there are isolated series on 'flowers', 'birds', 'portraits' and 'bulls' inspired from Rabindranath Tagore's art.

In the discussion following, Chandramohan asked him to explain the series 'Amina and the birds'. He explained in answer how the portrayal of Amina came from a milkman's daughter who he knew back in Kanpur. The girl grew up in a farm with chickens, and years later he came to know how she had been married off at a young age. Her memory was haunting him and that drove him to make many of these paintings of a girl talking to her birds. Shailesh asked him on the style of his painting and how that has come into being. Ashok responded with how the form has also come to be defined by the structure of lines used in cross hatching. Sushil asked him his thoughts on depiction of gods in his own works especially with regards to his strong views on using any religious imagery. He explained that he had tried to comment on the religious imagery but again this was a period that he had left this time behind.

On his choice of technique, Sagar asked him how he saw the use of pen and ink as the main medium. Ashok explained how the use of this medium suited the contoured and sharp angles of his paintings. He also explained how he learnt from sketching and perspective from actually practicing on the street with

his main subjects, the waiting laborers sitting on a street or people on a railway station. Manoj asked him on how can any painter create something purely from imagination, when they live in a world full of stories, references, contexts and images. Ashok agreed that a personal experience is important in creating a painting.

He also spoke on his learning from poetry, and how that really creates an imagery through words and encouraged the students to read more poetry.

Assignment on riddles

Students were given an assignment to make a single page illustration for a series of riddles to be given on the next day along with their previous assignments. Sushil encouraged the class to use any medium of their choice.

Students worked on their pending assignments for the rest of the day and engaged with their respective mentors.

31st July 2017

Discussion on illustrations for the stories for Chakmak and Pluto

On the last day, the illustrations made for the stories and poems for the purpose of publication. Some of the riddles given as assignment on the previous day were also discussed.

Sagar's illustration was discussed first. Sushil told that it seemed that it didn't fit the category of a riddle and was like a generic poem. He also asked the class to come up with their questions and disagreements as far as they thought that the story/poem was not something they would like to illustrate.

Avnish's illustration was then discussed for the riddle that transforms a flower and fruit to a sweet. In the illustration, the answer became apparent, and Sagar also said that it should be more like a hint or a suggestion. Anantjeet added that an illustration for a riddle should be such that when you look at it, you can't figure out the answer or the illustration. However, when you figure out the answer, you immediately understand the abstract illustration. Ayushi's illustration also gave the direct answer to the riddle.

Shubhangi's illustration for the story 'Imli Vimli' was discussed, wherein she explained that she had made three different illustrations, and also spoke of the feedback session with Chandramohan. She speaks of the different mediums that she tried to use, and tried to make faces as expressive of the different kinds of the girls mentioned in the poem. Chandramohan explained of the different kinds of visualization that were possible with this illustration, and to experiment with various kinds of techniques to create something that weren't like a photograph. Sushil added that when the illustration focused on Imli more than Vimli, it seems like that is the more important aspect of the poem. So the interpretation that one has of the poem, should come stronger with the illustration.

Vrushali then spoke of her illustration, and how in her one on one feedback with Chandramohan, she was suggested to think about the aspects of calligraphy to give more credence to the dialogue that she had depicted in the image. Atanu had also asked her to think of the force and movement of the illustration. Amrita then spoke of the illustration with the herd of sheep in a bus, where Atanu spoke of the missing character of the bus. Amrita spoke how in her feedback with Chandramohan she was asked to think about the expressions of those people who were stuffed in the bus with the sheep

Shubham's illustration of a series of sneezing events with different animals. Sushil said that the poem's mood was not appropriately visible in the illustration. The movement in the poem, and the direction of the poem is such that they wanted it to have a mystery or play. As an illustrator they need not make what is already too obvious and instead offer a new perspective.

Avnish's illustration on a poem with a spider searching for a corner up a window, was then discussed and it also raised the question of the fun of the poem being lost in making of the illustration. Chandramohan said that the illustration should be able to raise the affect of a poem. He raised the issue of the artwork not being visualized by the students in a nuanced way. Sushil added that the illustration seemed to be a perfect fit for any poem on spiders and didn't do well to differentiate from the available illustrations.

Sushil also reminded the students that he wanted to also publish the illustrations as posters, and wanted that the illustrations take center stage and be all important for the illustrators.

Bandana's illustrations for the poem which had been revised were also discussed. Sushil added that the illustrations were beautiful and that they would not be ever disapproved from getting published anywhere. The issue was however that in Riyaaz they did not want to only appreciate the works without evaluating where it stands in comparison to many other existing illustrations. For this reason, he emphasized, the faculty was pointing out why they took issue with the kind of illustrations which seemed to have been done and seen before. Vrushali asked if it was possible to do some exercises in visualization alone, without the thought of illustration. Debarati's illustrations were then discussed, and feedback was positive for both of the illustrations. Sagar also explained the illustration he had made for the story and how he wanted to focus on the conversation between the two characters of the son and the father and how the cycle sets that conversation into motion. Chandramohan asked him to think about the visualization of the cycle and play with suggestive details in the future for example.

Vijender's take on the riddle was then discussed, and the feedback was positive. The only question asked by Chandramohan was if there was a possibility of coloring the composition. Sushil asked if it was possible to only allude to or suggest something giving the example of an illustration by Atanu in which he shows a sea empty when the text mentions a character drinking it. So an afterthought or a distance as Chandramohan pointed out was necessary to create an illustration.

Ayushi's illustration was then discussed and the poem recited. Sushil said that the poem was primarily a nonsense verse and so to attach too much meaning through the literal illustrations could only kill the joy of the poem. Chandramohan also said that proportion wise the illustration was not strong either.

Manoj's illustration was then discussed, where Sushil said that the image of the old woman was something very repetitive in the literature and the movies and all kinds of images in the media. That this story was also hinting at these repetitions and how those can they be avoided?

Feedback Session and visit to Adamgarh Prehistoric Caves

The last meeting of the session was fittingly a feedback session for which Sushil Shukla, Chandramohan Kulkarni and Atanu Roy were present. The session was conducted at the visit to Azamgarh prehistoric caves.

The students brought up discussion to the problems they were facing in the technical aspects of their works. They requested that actual medium techniques and skill building was something they would want to do through a series of demo classes and workshops.

They also spoke of the problem with Ashok Bhaumik's lecture and especially the problems they were facing in dividing their time appropriately for their work when these sessions took up a lot of time and that his views on illustration in particular were not presented rather a presentation on history of art was given.

They also found a problem with devoting too much time to writing assignments and their discussion and it was suggested that they send their writings in future via email for suggestions and one on one discussions with their mentors. Some also spoke of their issues with the use of Hindi language in writing

and that they spent a lot of time in translating this material from their native tongue and would rather focus on making the work in this time.

Apart from the different workshops and seminars, the students also saw two movies during the July Session – ‘Thoda Sa Rumani Ho Jaaye’ (Hindi) and ‘The Japanese Wife’ (English). Since one of the major assignments they were doing were on rainfall, they were asked to notice besides the portrayal of rain in these two movies by Dileep, film ‘Thoda Sa Rumani Ho Jaaye’ for its treatment of the story and ‘Japanese Wife’ for well balanced composition of each and every frame.

The students went on two outings, the first to Sethani Ghat and second for a feedback session to the Adamgarh Prehistoric Caves on the last day.