

Riyaaz 4th session  
24<sup>th</sup> June – 30<sup>th</sup> June  
Hoshangabad

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Team: Atanu Roy, Chandramohan Kulkarni, Dileep Chinchalker, Shashi Sablok, Sushil Shukla, Swetha, Taposhi Ghoshal.  
Guest: Nachiket Patwardhan,

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Riyaaz had begun even before the set dates. Dileep proposed that seven students sign up for a surprise assignment.

In the morning it was seen that the timetables for the seven days were illustrated by those who volunteered and were on display before the session began. It was a pleasant surprise and visual delight to see the playful nature of the illustrations.

We have Amrita join us from this session. She is here in place of Ankita, who discontinued after two sessions.

## **24<sup>th</sup> June**

### David Gentleman's India: Chandramohan Kulkarni

David Gentleman is an English illustrator. A student of Royal college of Art, London. He works with multiple medium – pen and ink, watercolors, lithograph, screen-prints. Has published many books, one of which is David Gentleman's India. Selected works of his from that book were compiled and presented in this session.

His view of India can be seen in his works.

About the process, he mentioned that he travels to places, does sketching on-spot, clicks photographs and uses them for referencing, collates them and illustrates his experience. Although he uses photographs, they are not photorealistic in style. He renders them in his own style by composing it effectively.

It included architecture and study of people, carts, street life, temples, people in public spaces as studies and how he balanced bringing all of these in creating

illustrations. There is movement in his lines. The movement gives a certain life to the sketches. The fine detailing of the architecture brought out the essence of the illustration. The use of water colors keeping in mind the perspective, lighting and contrast makes them absolutely fantastic.

Of people he had captured the local attire, the grace, their body language. It was possible to get a sense of the texture of the cloth by the kind of treatment given with watercolors. From the sketches it was possible to immediately associate the subject with their geographical background.

The straight lines of his architectural drawings and curved and wavy lines used for rendering human figures are not merely showcasing his skill in rendering but that of discerning what kind of line has to be used for best output at the intellectual and intuitive level.

This was an opportunity to talk about working with crowquills which has now been replaced by pens. Crow quills are very sensitive to pressure and can be used to great advantages. The disadvantage (if one has to think of it that way) though is that one has to keep dipping it in ink because there is no continuous supply through a cartridge or filler.

Chandramohan specifically pointed out to specific aspects like the continuity of line, logic of disproportionality, color scheming, distribution of colors to acquire balance, rendering of hands and feet (which the students here find most difficult),

He added that though all these are aspects one must notice, each student must arrive at their own style. It was important to try every possible way of doing without discrimination or fear but without blindly following one particular style.

We viewed 24 out of 45 images on this day and the rest was viewed on another day for lack of time.

There were discussions about the technique and crowquill as a medium which led him to suggest that all of them try their hand at crowquill. It has been suggested that they try sketching with crowquill for their assignment.

Practical exercise: Illustration for Chakmak and Pluto

The students were given texts – stories and poems to be illustrated for Chakmak and Pluto (2 children's magazines). The students were at random handed out the stories and poems. Each text was illustrated separately by 2 students.

The students immediately got down to working on them.

The students as always read it, discussed it with their peers and faculty members. They were to share their blue-prints of illustration in terms of layout and elements with the faculty for feedback.

The faculty felt that they were taking longer than they should. Maybe because they are making many a drafts before they make one perfect illustration.

## **25<sup>th</sup> June**

### Dimensions and Perspectives: Dileep Chinchalker

Dileep made a presentation to introduce dimensions and perspectives. He proposed this idea also as a precursor to the sessions to be held by Nachiket Patwardhan.

He introduced these aspects through historical references to the academic aspects of mathematics which deals with dimensions. He went through the contributions of famous mathematicians who helped in building the aspects of dimensions. Then there was a graphical representation of understanding dimensions with the help of a 2D insect.

Art, until medieval times dealt with representation using only 2 dimensions.

Representation of 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension was introduced in 13<sup>th</sup> century by the architects and scientists Leon Albertii and Fillipo Brunelleschii.

He also described the very confusing 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension in which the variable is time, because of which the whole experience is beyond mere sensory inputs but more of imagination. Conferring the ideas presented by the thinkers so far in mathematical formulations, 4<sup>D</sup> was looked at in art and literature too.

With photographs, he explained the concepts of one-point perspective, two-point perspective, three-point perspective and four -point perspective. The difference being in the number of vanishing points which are formed because of the position of the viewer with respect to the objects/ places viewed. He also

explained how the size of the object varies with the distance from the viewer, the translation of which into images can induced a sense of perspective in art.

The argument that Indian art was primarily based on zero perspective (madhubani, mysore style, patachitra, and that perspectives were a western influence was sidelined by the examples from traditional paintings – kangra style, moghul style, pillars carved, ellora caves he pointed out as examples where skills of Indian artists was unquestionable. Why the photographic perspective does not appear in the Indian paintings was a question he posed for the class to find out. It was because court painters had to put emphasis on achievements of their masters and not merely indulge in technicalities of painting.

#### Practical exercise: a perspective drawing of a room

Dileep Chinchalker asked the students to make a drawing of any room keeping in mind the perspectives.

Either one point perspective or two point perspective. The students finished their works and got feedback on their works from the faculty.

One could see that it was not an easy exercise. While it was easier to draw out the contours of the room, to place the objects in perspective while maintaining their relative sizes is something that most of them had difficulty with.

The students sketched their drawing room, bedroom, and kitchen and so on.

Those who had placed very minimal objects were asked to add more to gain understanding over the subject.

In this case the walls are straight, what if one had to draw walls with a curvature? And had domes instead of flat roofs?

### **26<sup>th</sup> June**

#### Presentation of illustrations: Taposhi Ghoshal

The book Winning Team, written by Gita Hariharan and illustrated by Taposhi Ghoshal is a collection of old stories retold in the voice of a mechanic wherein Birbal and mullah Nasrudeen are people we see in our everyday lives. She

chose this book because it was related to the character study which was the focus of the previous session.

The book is for older children and hence is text heavy so the challenge was that the illustrations get limited space and the illustrations have to be managed within that space. It becomes very important to look at the page layout keeping in mind the spread of the text. At the same time, the layout itself has to keep changing to break the monotony.

The book was a compilation of different stories. So at the beginning of each story, instead of using text for title, she used a portrait of the main character in the featuring story. Selected illustrations from the book were displayed and Taposhi would briefly describe the plot of the story and her reasons for choosing to do that particular illustration and the minute details that were crucial to the story.

There were characters of different ages, roles, socio-economic background shown in various situations and from various perspectives. The expressions, gestures of the characters, objects that suggest the feelings of the character and ambience of the space were all important learnings. She emphasized that to maintain the consistency in character one must have strong visualization so that one is able to render the character from any perspective and action.

Certain facts about the context of the story could be established without even stating the obvious and it is in the search of these things that the illustrations wear freshness.

The presentation was followed by a very engaging discussion on how and why we choose to portray things in a certain way.

(This is an attempt to capture the points that emerged without getting into who said it)

One of the points raised was regarding the role of illustration. What was the illustration doing differently if it continued to use established and set images of people? Where is it that one is bringing about a change in the view of the reader while catering to the quest of a better society? What is the illustrator bringing or adding to the content?

The need to bring in atypical aspects of the character was not always necessary but it depended on the need of the textual content. It was argued that this text did not demand for such an intervention. There was also this opinion that the responsibility of re-imagining a better society was the role of the writer more than the illustrator. Maybe if it was a picture book, then it is the illustrator who plays a major role in narration, but for books which are text heavy, the writer should have an upperhand and illustrators not so much. It was opined that the writing and illustration must go hand in hand instead of fighting for who gets the limelight (between the writer and the illustrator).

It was observed that the marginalized category of people were depicted darker than the ones holding power over them.

This was refuted saying that it was not true in all cases and explained that there is no need to deliberately color people in a certain way just because one has to, since the working class works hard out in the sun, it results in them being darker and that is what has been depicted.

Some students pitched in with their opinion that the role of illustration was to attract the reader and support the text. It was responded that any literature or work of art shouldn't need a "support" of another art to say what it wants, and that it must have an independent existence. The support is a very limiting role of an illustration. Just like props are not an essential part of theatre, illustrations too are an add-on. The role of the illustrator is not to actively engage in a quest unsaid in the text. The color of the characters need not be changed if the writer doesn't demand it.

Another ripe opinion was that while it is a challenge to look at characters described in the story in nuanced ways. It was also pointed out that one could have experimented by making ambiguous imagery that doesn't cater to stereotypical images and still make relevant illustrations to enhance the experience of the story (any text). We must make a distinction about things that must definitely not be illustrated – to keep the imagination and curiosity of the reader alive.

It is uncertain at the moment whether it is possible to create illustrations for this text without characters at all. But, maybe it was not necessary to introduce the character's portrait even before the story began. Maybe one could have just used the settings and not included characters at all. There are of course very many ways to do it.

It was added that the characters in themselves are not as important as the themes which are being explored in the story – feudalism – characters are only a small and insignificant part of the text compared to the emphasis given to commentary on social conditions.

The writer doesn't always describe how the characters look and hence it is the illustrator who must give form to the characters.

There was a reference to the scope of understanding and using *sanchaari bhaav* (a tradition in Indian aesthetics where there is magnification of a certain emotion experienced by the bringing together of two or more very different emotions) popularly used in literature.

Illustrations are sometimes a hook to attract the readers to pick up the book. So if that is the purpose it is serving, then there is nothing wrong with it was the opinion for another student. There are children who will pick up books only if there are images.

There are two ways of looking at it. One, we are trying to teach language through a story. Two, when that story is given to an artist, she has a dialogue with the textual content and makes illustration. We cannot make "generalized" images just so that they pick up language but go further in creating a nuanced way of looking at. From the many ways of looking at it, the illustrator's view is one of them and that enriches the story.

If it is mere representation of story, why must one do it at all? It is the responsibility of the story to convey what it wants to completely by itself.

On being asked if she would have done the illustrations differently now, she pointed out to some of the illustrations and explained why she would have done them differently. That was quite an insight to be able to look at

one's own work objectively and re-evaluate according to new understanding.

### Illustration of students viewed on screen for feedback

The illustration of all the students were photographed and projected onto the screen. Most of them were completed works. Some had made more than one illustration and all of them were shared in the class.

The students explained why they chose to depict a certain visual vis-à-vis the text (story or poem) that they had received. The other students were called forth to give their feedback on the work of their peers.

The leading questions that the students were supposed to ask about each illustration was “does the illustration bring out what the text is attempting?”

The students provided their views on the visuals in two ways – one the art as an independent entity and another with relation to the text was an illustration. They also commented on what elements could have been added to make the illustration more effective. The students commented on the need to experiment with colors and not just forms to bring out the mood of the text and so on.

This was also a forum for the students (those who are also verbally activate) (or active ? former is a verb and later a noun. American English has a trend of using verbs for nouns ) to express openly the process in which they arrived at this kind of an illustration. They sounded out all the ideas that they had and why they rejected them and chose to do what they have done. Some of the reasons was (were?) limited skills, uncertainty in acceptance of the idea, lack of time, lack of understanding of the core of the text, wanting to depict a certain mood, fear of expression.

The faculty also asked the students to describe the process and steps of illustration to determine the course that each one has taken to arrive at the finalized illustration. It was nice to see that some students were able to think about and defend their ideas behind illustration and not just agreeing to all the feedback given to them.



### **Film: Kanaka purandara**

It is a non-feature film released in 1988. It's directed by Girish Karnad and won the National Award for Best Non-feature Film.

The art-director for the film was our guest faculty Nachiket Patwardhan.

The Film is about the saints Kanaka and Purandara who led the Bhakti movement, which insisted that theological language be spoken in popular dialect rather than Sanskrit.

We had a brief discussion on the choices made in the film regarding the set and editing and so on. Nachiket also addressed some questions on the making and editing of certain scenes and provided some insight into the realities – joys and difficulties – of making a film.

### **Film: Utsav (1984)**

The film had won national awards for best art-direction. The art-directors of the movie were Nachiket Patwardhan and Jayoo Patwardhan. It is not very often that we get the opportunity to interact with artists such as these.

The film is an adaptation of *Mrichchhkatikam (The Little Clay Cart)*, a ten-act Sanskrit drama attributed to Śūdraka an ancient playwright generally thought to have lived sometime between the second century BC and the fifth century AD whom the prologue identifies as a Kshatriya king

After wasting a lot of time on the technical glitches and almost giving up on watching the movie. We managed to have a good show and followed up by an informal discussion with Nachiket Patwardhan about the movie.

During which he spoke about the kind of preparation and work that went into designing of the sets and costume for the film.

**27<sup>th</sup> June**

### **Film: Let the scream be heard**

The film was made by Dheeraj Akolkar

It is an international documentary film and an artistic exploration of the universal and timeless quality of Edward Munch's oeuvre – an artistic career that extends over 62 years and more than 40,000 works.

It sketched the historical and artistic timeline of the artist. Looking for answers regarding the inspiration and inclinations of the artist and how he responded to his times. It was contrasting to see the art vis-à-vis the art market.

### Outing: Amraee and Bandraban

Amraee – mango orchard - is on the way to Baabai. An hour from the campus. We all enjoyed a quiet afternoon under the shades of the mango tree. Now being the fruiting time, we all had our hearts fill of mangoes and just relaxed through the few hours we spent there – talking, playing and climbing trees.

On our way back we stopped by at Bandraban – our ritualistic outing spot. We continued to relax and oil our mind gears by sitting on the banks of Narmada. We shared our ideas in private, some went swimming. We went back once the sun decided to leave.

### **28<sup>th</sup> June**

[Ishita, Kanak, Pragnya and Shivangi arrived on this day. While the others left on the same day, Shivangi stayed back for one more day]

### Film: Building Nari

The film took us to this phenomenon called Nariman Dossabhai Gandhi through his architecture and accounts of memoirs from people who knew him closely.

The movie includes houses designed and created by Nari Gandhi. The visual tribute to this master has taken nearly 15 years of research by Girish Parmar, an architect, environmentalist, weaver, sculptor, potter and now a filmmaker.

The film is insightful to get an understanding of how personal values that Nari held closely determined the quality of what he built. Not having a strict plan but allowing for the building to emerge organically under the influences of various factors like money, landscape, flora, expectations of the inhabitants and so on while sticking to producing a piece of art with every wall or pillar, and every little space.

## Guest Faculty: Nachiket Patwardhan

Nachiket Patwardhan - a graduate from MS University, Baroda in architecture is essentially a multifaceted artist who engages in architecture, writing, painting, illustration, art-direction, restoration and teaching.

This was an opportunity to get to know his works and experience in those fields while he took us through his latest works. He showed us the photos of buildings and the idea behind the conception and creation of it. One could get an idea of the expanse of spatial imagination that one needed to have and develop in order to be able to design architectural spaces.

He showed us images of a *haveli* being restored in Aihole. The project has been going on for 6-7 years and was about to be completed. The building is been restored with stone after having introduced electrical lines, waterlines, structural steel. One could see that the restoration was not merely a building project but also a reimagining of the whole space. He also shared his experiments on simplifying the dancing *nataraja* form of *shiva*.

He shared his personal photographs of Nari Gandhi's work. This was different from the architecture captured in the movie. Although there were closeup shots of the architecture, he claimed that the experience is way better when one actually is in the building rather than seeing photographs.

The building was built and decorated with bricks themselves. Each brick was cut and shaped according to the needs. Sometimes the structure went against the principles of western academic architecture.

Illustrated stories of Nachiket were shared too. "Sharab Nama of Jamshed" was an interesting account of the discovery of wine making. Illustrated in miniature style in pen and ink and colored with a very minimal sober color scheme, it really looked like a book dug out of an archeological debris. The font was very interesting in the fact that it was stylized to look like Arabic but it was in English.

It is very simple and has these quirky use of idioms. The language was simple but the drama was palpable and unmitigated.

He said that the illustrations were architecturally biased, with longshots of the setting of the story.

“A tragedy in fourteen pages” a story that got created in the spirit of his own personal setback, once heard can be seen is a story of hope. It is the story of power, jealousy, and finding hope beyond all the bad things life throws at one. The color scheme was very much like the previous book and the art work were primarily with pen and ink. The story takes place in a realistic setting but it weaves in a fantastic surrealistic ending to keep the hope alive.

### Practical exercise: self-portrait poster

Nachiket proposed that the students design a poster. The theme was “self-portrait”. He added the Indian miniature was the form in which it had to be made because it has a combination of close-up, mid-shot and long shot. It was necessary have to include an animal that they fear or hold dear objects that one used in their lives, the mid-shot must include the architectural details with an understanding of perspective. All these elements have to be composed in an interesting way.

With colors he said one had to think it through, understand the colors and selectively use them according to the needs. The time given was an hour and he thought that it was more than sufficient for this exercise.

Once the students had finished one could see that there was a lack of understanding seen in the works. Most students had made photographic images whereas what was expected was to break out of the perspective of photography. The students had all the elements that he had mentioned but they were composed like a photograph rather than a poster.

He was able to point out two works which had managed to break out of the photographic image. The importance is more in the relationship connecting the elements used in the composition. This bringing together must also consider design aspects, overlap, and integration instead of fragmented elements.

He said the one must think of the story one wants to say through the poster and this has to be planned beforehand. The decorative elements can be included after and not as crucial as the composition and leave out the distractive elements.

He said that one must also think of the empty spaces just as much for that too plays a role in the visual as a whole and cannot be neglected.

The students were asked to rework and send it to Nachiket Patwardhan by 7<sup>th</sup> July for feedback.

### **Film: Children full of life**

In the award-winning documentary *Children Full of Life*, a fourth-grade class in a primary school in Kanazawa, northwest of Tokyo, learn lessons about compassion from their homeroom teacher, Toshiro Kanamori.

He instructs each to write their true inner feelings in a letter, and read it aloud in front of the class. By sharing their lives, the children begin to realize the importance of caring for their classmates.

Toshiro is an amazing example of what all teachers across the world should be like. He truly understands what teaching children is all about and certainly made a positive difference in the lives of these 10 year olds.<sup>1</sup>

### **Discussion on the film: Children full of life**

It was evident that the film had a deep impact on the students. Everyone was activated and wanted to share their impressions because the topic of education is relevant to everyone. There was a rich discussion around film and education and extend it to an understanding that is required for a meaningful life.

There was a comparative analysis of the education system in Japan and India. It was noticed that the aims of education were different for both the countries and the aim determined the workings and that made a lot of difference.

### **Life, books and movies: in conversation with Nachiket Patwardhan**

Students and faculty gathered outside the classroom to share views on education, books, and films and so on. Nachiket and Dileep took turns to share

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/children-full-of-life/>

reminiscences from their lives. Students shared that they valued his coming for having opened out various windows of possibilities.

The students were very curious about his works and he was only happy to share in detail the process of various illustration projects that he had undertaken. The other faculty members too pitched in to share their perspective and attitude towards illustration work.

The students requested him to share his list of favorite movies, books, writers and filmmakers. The books that made a difference to his life. A long list of books and movies were exchanged with him emphasizing the importance of reading to build imagery.

It was a pleasant evening of light conversations of serious stuff- much was learnt in the most informal way.

### Film: Devi Ahilya Bai (2002)

" The reign of Ahilya Bai, of Indore in central India, lasted for 30 Yrs. This has become almost legendary as a period during which perfect order and good Government prevailed and the people prospered. She was a very able ruler and organizer, highly respected during her lifetime, and considered as a saint by a grateful people after her death."<sup>2</sup>

The film portrays the journey of Ahilya Bai as an extremely intelligent and efficient ruler who worked hard through her principles to serve the people under her reign. She is noted for her generosity and as a caring ruler.

The director of the movie is Jayoo Patwardhan and Nachiket Patwardhan.

Nachiket has also done the screenplay for the movie along with Shama Zaidi.

Nachiket left this very evening and we could not have a conversation with him about the film.

### **29<sup>th</sup> June**

#### Feedback on character sketch

The character sketches by students for their own text about a memorable person in their real lives. The feedback to the students was given by both faculty and

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<sup>2</sup>Jawaharlal Nehru: Discovery of India, 2004, page-304

the students. There was discussion around understanding body language of humans to be able to make illustrations more effective.

The students writing was quite rich but when it came to illustrating the same, it was a bit of a struggle. The peers gave up inhibitions and gave valuable inputs for improving each other's work.

### Excerpts from diary

Students read out excerpts from their diaries. They were either reflections of the classroom exercise, or of an experience they had outside the classroom.

The accounts were very interestingly written and it was a pleasure to hear it in the voice of the writers.

The issue however was that not all students were participating. It was the same voices which was heard over and over.

The students have been asked to be more regular in their writing.

The other issue that cropped up was that some of the students who had not written in Hindi were discouraged from sharing. While online it says that the course is bilingual, why is reading out in English a problem?

Reading in Hindi is essential for others to understand. Those who wrote in English translated their writings for the benefit of their classmate. But some did read it out in English.

### Chandramohan's life

Since there were no more sharing from the side of the students, Dileep requested Chandramohan to take us through his life's journey as an artist.

It was wonderful to listen to the stories – serious accounts of his life being commented in a comical way yet unwavering from the message he wanted to give.

It was mostly stories of his earliest days as an artist and experiences as an art student. His inclinations and struggles and jolly times were all presented with details of the historical context that we find hard to imagine today.

If it were not for the mosquitoes who sent us inside, we would have continued for a few more hours.

**30<sup>th</sup> June**

Sharing Book reviews

Some more students, read out their book review. There were some moments of discussion. Dileep encouraged everyone that all need to participate and not just some.

In order to show examples of good variety of writing, Dileep read out three reflections that he had penned on various occasions.

One was a memoir of a book. He takes us through the book by describing in detail, the visuals and layout of the book with details of the color of the book, the lettering, name of the writer (Ahilya Bai) and the reference she has made to her brother with a photograph alongside.

The book is about the unfortunate death of Srikrishna Pantvaidhya who was passionate about flying. The account is written by his sister Ahilya Bai after whom the international airport in Indore is named.

Another was a writing about a photograph and how it reminded him of his sister.

The image in the photograph was that of girl students standing in an assembly with a teacher playing the harmonium. It's raining and while the students are getting wet, there is an umbrella over the teacher's head held by another person also getting wet in the rain.

The photograph was a window to the times he shared with his sister and how as a child and younger brother, he always got her into trouble. He is almost like the teacher enjoying the rain under the umbrella while his sister gets drenched in difficulties. The idea was to find out what kind of story a picture incites for there is a saying that a picture is equivalent to one hundred words.

The last one was reminiscing about the little things in life that bring true happiness. For example, this write-up was about how he found a man taking bath in the open during a cold winter and happily so. This inspired the writer too to consider doing it even when it was petrifying to even imagine it. The



discovery of the joy in simple things like bathing in cold water in winters was what it was about.

### **Home assignments**

- Book review and Daily Reflections
- Sketching
- Re-do self-portraits and mail them to Nachiket Patwardhan before 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017
- In 500-700 words describe the changes that have been taking place in nature in one's own locality in the month of July.