

RIYAAZ SESSION | 17 – 23 SEPTEMBER 2017

Mentors: Sushil Shukla, DileepChinchalker, Atanu Roy, Chandramohan Kulkarni, TaposhiGhosh

SessionDocumentation: Shivangi Singh | Guests: Kanak Shashi, Shashi Sablok

17 September 2017

First day of the session began with a brief introduction by Dileep about the session and the changes in the time table structure of the session. He then distributed the sweets amongst the group and hinted at a good news. Sushil then commenced the session by reading out some stories by Sadat Hassan Manto. Reading out an introduction to the oeuvre of Manto he gave a context to his short stories. These included 'Mahaul', 'Karamaat', 'Dawaat-e-amal', 'Khaad', 'Safaipasand', 'Ulahna'. He urged the students to read Manto in their spare time. He asked the students about the works which were given last time, taking stock of their ongoing work. He presented new poems to the students, asking those who had already finished their work to work on these new posters and illustrations.

Dileep gave a short presentation in continuation to his presentation on 'demonstration' from the last session. He wanted to remind the illustrators of the sizes and dimensions of paper that are generally used. Within these constraints, he asked the students to be careful about the size of the paper in proportion to the drawings they were making. He asked them to think about the sizes of the publication in relation to their drawing and pay special attention to the corners of the drawings. Sometimes, illustrations meant for flesh cut (i.e. edge to edge) are cut carelessly, to avoid which the illustrator can draw some more details on the edge of their drawing (bleed). He gave an example of the dummy of Chakmak, telling the students to think about the layout and design of their illustrations (and contend with the fact that many illustrations will be given the place in a book according to how appropriate it is for that particular book). Then, he spoke of importance of the negative space in a poster or the cover page of a publication (citing an example from Chakmak which also needs a space for the title text). Students resumed their work after this presentation for the rest of the day.

From August session Dileep has introduced a new feature- The Evening Show. The purpose of this picture presentation besides a break from the day's tedium is to see what students see. Whatever sights and subjects Riyaaazies see and click with their cell-phones are shared with rest of the class during this short 1-15 min break. In the beginning Chandramohan and Dileep shared their pictures. Today Taposhi and Atanu shared their photographs with the students on the big screen and spoke briefly about the photographs (where they were taken, what they like in their photos and their specific interest in photography). Taposhi spoke about the specific photographs she had been taking of stairs whether in Sethani Ghat or on a visit to a fort in Rajasthan. She also noted how some photographs (like of village scenes) serve as references for her work later. While Atanu spoke how he likes to shoot photos which have a sense of humor, and takes a lot of photographs while travelling in trains of the landscapes outside.

-

18 September 2017

Noting that the students were facing challenges in painting shades of a color in their ongoing assignments, Chandramohan gave them an assignment where they all had to take an A4 sheet to make a tonal shade card with watercolor/poster color. This exercise was to create a tone variation with either the colors like ochre yellow or blue or grey (to understand tonal value in the gray tones). So the day started with students doing this exercise in the time period of half an hour. They all had to make at least three shades of Dark, Medium and Light.

After this exercise, students started on their assignments for the posters, stories and poem cards given to them on the first day. In the evening, the group visited the *ReshamParisar* and spoke at length with Rajesh, an artist working in the medium of terracotta and ceramic sculptures. He gave details about the process of making, baking and crafting the sculpture. Students interacted with the artist and learnt how he had crafted a unique process through which he uses pottery in his sculptures.

-

19 September 2017

The day started with the mentors asking the students about their pending assignments of making a book and their illustrations. Since there were only a few students who had finished their assignments of the picture book. Atanu, Dileep and Chandramohan asked the students to update the five mentors in Riyaz about any work that they are doing outside of the classroom for publishers.

Dileep asked the students to also display their works for others to see in the classroom and be more active in communicating with the mentors. Taposhi asked the students to continue sketching regularly to make their work better than before, to think about memory and observation. She also asked the students to come up to the teachers for feedback regularly. Chandramohan asked the students to speak about their problems with finishing the work on time. Atanu asked the students about the size and dimension of their illustrations and how they needed to be more careful about this process. Taposhi added that the illustrators who ignore this are not taking into account the publishing aspect of it.

Students spoke about their individual problems in this discussion, opening up about the issues they were facing. Anantjeet said that she was finding it difficult to continue a previous assignment while a new one was being given. She also said that she was trying to give the book her priority attention but finding it difficult to finish it. Nikhil, Shubham and Radheshyaam expressed their inability to finish their work because of the projects given by Room to Read. Bandana and Shubhangi expressed their problem with having to redo their illustrations for Chakmak at the behest of the publishers. Atanu said that before going to publisher, the work needs to be approved by the five mentors. Avnish, Shailesh and Meenakshi spoke of their struggles with their subject and style. Bhargav spoke of his dissatisfaction with his work. Rishi spoke how some of his work was unfinished and needed some more work. Ayushi explained that the technique of collage was more time taking than she had previously thought.

Dileep asked the students to read more and look at more illustrations and illustrators. Giving the example of Norman Rockwell, he gave the example of his artwork which realistic enough, still had his very own style. Dileep also asked them to prioritize their work if they so wished to multitask, qualifying his suggestion with an advice that 'multitasking' may be fashionable but is not a healthy practice. Taposhi asked them to divide their work and set deadlines separately. That they finish one work before committing to another to give their total attention to it. Dileep asked them to be able to be open to the publishers about their deadlines and limitations. After this students had one on one discussions with the mentors on their works in the groups of three.

After lunch discussion resumed on the illustrations for the posters. Ayushi's illustration was first discussed and she read out the poem that she had made the collage on. She explained that this was the first time she was trying the medium of collage in an illustration. Atanu asked her to use painting wherever she thought pasting paper could not render details. Taposhi pointed out that a combination of the whole objects which are available in magazines with paper cut objects could create a balance in the composition. Keeping the poem in mind, Dileep asked her to consider if it was possible to include a human presence such as a hand of the character mentioned in the poem. He also asked her to be more careful with the colors used in the illustration. Anantjeet spoke of the illustration she had made as part of her assignment on the poems with 'pattal' leaves. She was advised to think about the specific nature of the leaves mentioned in the poem along with the other elements even as her overall experimentation was admired. Her illustration on a poem about a truck and their clouds was also discussed. She was suggested to make visible the form of the truck so as to create a sense of movement in the illustration.

Bandana's illustration was then discussed, and Atanu asked her to fill in the details of the tree on which the owl was perched. He also suggested that she reconsider the claws of the bird. Taposhi asked her to think if it was possible to make the tree look fuller as if almost to conceal the owl. Sagar's work was then put forward, and Taposhi asked him to concentrate on the movement suggested in the poem with more emphasis. Dileep asked him to include the seat (Hauda) on which people sit while riding an elephant as it came up in the poem more than just once. This addition could enhance the aspect of movement of the elephant and those of the people riding on top. He was suggested by Chandramohan and Atanu to avoid the tendency of overworking on his illustration and render the work with simplicity wherever required and pay attention to the correctness of size and dimensions at the drawing stage.

Shubhangi's work on a poem about grass was discussed and was told that a human figure (by Chandramohan) and/or a butterfly/grasshopper (by Dileep and Taposhi) can add more life to the work. Atanu asked her to suggest the scale of grass by using a reference point in the background like a tree or human figure. He also told her to photograph grass around in the campus to use as a reference. Then her work for a poem on ants and a bird was then discussed. Taposhi suggested to think about the form, shape and size of the bird. She also suggested that the treatment of leaves in the background needed to be in sync with each other, their handling not too different from one another.

Bhargav's composition was discussed, which was focused on a girl and a goat and their relationship. Atanu told him to concentrate on the central figures' posture. He was also suggested to make a distinction between the color of the goat's skin against the girl's hair who was hugging her and the bark

of the tree in the background. Vrushali's illustration was then discussed, and Taposhi suggested that she could have drawn the spiders more delicately, while appreciating her composition otherwise. Amrita's work was discussed where she was advised by Atanu to make more details and render the finishing touches. Her typography and idea as such was appreciated. Avnish's work was seen and he was suggested to think about the color of the foreground, walls, and adding details to the human figures. Manoj's stylization in his illustration was appreciated but Taposhi also suggested that he think about the form of the buffalo and attempt to maintain it. Details like dimension and unfinished quality of certain elements in the illustration was discussed. Meenakshi's illustration on sunlight and shadows was presented and she was suggested by Taposhi to pay attention to the form and details of ant. The shade of color used in the shadow was discussed and she was asked to work on it more intricately.

Sagar's illustration on a buffalo and a cow was discussed where he was advised by Atanu to pay attention to proportion and make the drawing again especially like the neck of the buffalo, and drawing of the cow. Shailesh's work was then shown, and he explained how he was already in the process of reworking this all over again. After these presentations, students resumed their individual works, and their conversations with the mentors.

-

20 September 2017

Amrita's book was the first to be reviewed in the common discussion. Her story about a snail and a coconut was appreciated for its overall effect. Considering her this was her first attempt to make a storybook at this stage, Chandramohan appreciated her storytelling. The simplicity of the forms, color scheme and workmanship impressed the mentors. Dileep asked her to think about the placement and the color of the font for the final draft while Atanu suggested the option of using handwritten calligraphy.

Debarti's dream in her childhood about buffaloes invading her house, made for the subject of her picturebook. The word less book, she said, wanted to capture the essence of this dream in a playful manner. The book was largely appreciated and the idea seemed very interesting as well. She was suggested to complete the remaining pages of the book (cover and back cover). Atanu also asked her to pay attention to what seemed like wrong proportions in the composition. She explained that she wanted to exaggerate the size of the buffalo to create a sense of fear.

Sagar's book was then shown and his use of the technique and the treatment he was doing was criticized by all. On looking at each page, he was suggested to flesh out the details of his compositions, and also pay attention to the design of the book. Pointing out the problems with the double spread on several occasions, he was suggested to find a solution to this issue. It seemed more like a rough dummy at this stage and he was told to redo the whole book with more finality.

Shubhangi had attempted a complete redo of the book that she had presented in the previous session. She spoke how in this attempt she had tried to incorporate the changes suggested such as making a smaller size of the illustrations, giving an overall connection between one image and the next and

adding some more illustrations. Her work was also disliked by the mentors wherein she dabbled in various styles, totally ignoring consistency. She was suggested to fine tune several details in the work, and it was pointed out that most of the problems from the previous illustrations were still carried onto the new ones.

As Vrushali's work was discussed, Atanu and Chandramohan spoke of the drawing errors in the illustrations which seemed too obvious to ignore. It was suggested that she think of better strategies while trying to make impactful stylizations of the human figure. She was also suggested to redo the illustrations and that several details needed rework especially as far as continuation from one page to the next was concerned. Sushil opened up a discussion on the format of the discussion and urged the students to participate more in the common feedback session. Noting that the feedback was largely concerned with mentors speaking about the work, he urged the students to pay more attention to what was being discussed. Taking Vrushali's example he asked the students what they thought about the illustrations. A discussion ensued after this on the different approaches that students may want to take while thinking about the terms such as 'distortion', 'stylization' and 'simplification'. Mentors were of the opinion that a writer's fancy cannot always be incorporated in the illustration. Writing and illustration are essentially different and have their limitations. Shubhangi raised the question of whether there can be opposing views and yet all be valid at the same time since appreciating an artwork is subjective. Sushil asked if everyone agrees that an illustration must reflect the essence or the mood of a text. He asked if not, then would an artwork be considered as an artwork alone and not an illustration reflecting the text. Chandramohan advocated in this way Anantjeet's poster saying that it does reflect the mood of the text even as it doesn't follow the text exactly.

A short movie, Eidgaah, by Gulzaar was shown by Chandramohan. He asked Rishi to especially pay attention to the same, considering he had made an illustration for the story on a previous occasion. After the movie, the group discussed how the movie did not quite do justice to the story written by Premchand. Rishi for example said that the movie failed to show the pivotal last scene of the story in a convincing manner, while Sushil spoke of the categorization of the Muslim boy as a problematic. He also spoke how some small things like white costumes could not do justice to the role of the woman who is struggling to make ends meet. Meenakshi spoke against the long and overstretched scenes of the movie and how they could have been edited to make the story crisp and to the point.

In the evening, it was decided that a film would be screened for the students post dinner. Before the movie, 'The girl with a pearl earring' was to be screened Dileep presented a slide show on the life and works of Vermeer. He spoke of the use of camera obscura and the techniques of chiaroscuro that Vermeer employed. He discussed how an artist Tim Jenison has made a documentary on staging Vermeer's painting, 'The Music Lesson'. Attempting to create the paintings with exact dimensions and measurements this restaging was an attempt at proving his theory about how the artist used optics. Dileep presented the paintings as such in this slide show, ending it with the painting on which the movie is based.

21 September 2017

Dileep asked the students about the movie that was screened on the previous day, 'The girl with a pearl earring'. Students discussed their reflections on the movie discussing particular scenes that they found interesting. Dileep spoke about the need for a collective viewing of the movies as well collective reflections on it later. Discussion focused on the particular scene of a chair which was removed (by the character of the maid) from the scene being painted, and how in the film Vermeer values that judgment enough to incorporate this change. The discussion touched upon several aspects of the film and its subtle details. For e.g. Shubhangi mentioned how she liked that how the maid's going away was suggested through the sound of footsteps.

After this brief dialogue, students went back to their work for the day and had one on one discussions with the mentors. In the evening, a documentary on the life of Van Gogh was showcased for the group. Students also saw a presentation of photos by Amrita, one of the students.

-

22 September 2017

The day began with everyone gathered at 9:30 am for the session. Dileep asked the students to finish their projects since an evening out was being planned to Sethani-Ghat. He also told them that on the last day of the session, they had planned to take out an hour for a feedback session with the students. And that there will be a small presentation by Dileep on the last day. With this in mind, the students were asked to find out the best possible solutions to finishing their works.

Students started with their work, and continued one on one discussions with the mentors for the rest of the day. In the night the group went to Sethani-Ghat to see Ramlila and enjoyed the show.

-

23 September 2017

Last day of the session was focused on a group gathering. Dileep started the day with an explanation of how he was going to focus the session on the very importance of research and thinking methodologies. He recounted in a presentation his own understanding and reading of a book written by Roy Maxham, 'The Great Hedge of India'. Introducing the hedge known as *Baagad* (in Hindi) and *Kumpun* (in Marathi), he spoke of the different species of birds, rodents and animals (like a hedgehog) that make this fenced grass their home. This specific kind of grass is composed of Vanaspati and is still found in the hedges /grass fences in modern day India.

Dileep gave the students a thorough presentation on the research conducted by Roy Maxham on one of the biggest hedges in colonial India. The British author wrote the book after having picked up on the mention of a hedge in a memoir written by a British official during the British colonial rule. This hedge was 2300 miles long planted by the British across the Indian subcontinent for strategic purposes. Picking up on this mention, Roy Maxham started a journey to find this hedge and documented his experience in

this book. Dileep presented a summary of the travels and the adventures leading up to the discovery of the remaining parts of the hedge which Roy writes about in his book.

Dileep then spoke of his own attachment and investment to this book and how he came upon it in his life. After reading this book, he happened to be visiting London, when he decided to get in touch with the author and speak of the book and the way it inspired him. During this meeting, the author expressed a desire on help in translating the book in Hindi. The book had already been translated into Marathi from English but translating it into Hindi, gave Dileep a rich experience and also a friendship with the author of one of his favorite books. The experience of translating also provided him with a chance to give the book a different reading altogether widening for him the scope of the book even further.

After tea, a presentation of photographs was shown. Dileep spoke about this presentation, and spoke of the patterns that are visible in abstract spots as well as seeking life in inanimate objects. He spoke of the things that one needs to observe while looking at the life around us especially when they travel. *Wind in the wilderness of the mind* by Dileep Chinchalker. He showcased a series of pictures on trees, hedge, moss, grass and different plants. He presented photographs which he had taken documenting the dogs that he shares a loving relationship with. He also engaged the students in a conversation on the Ramlila which was visited by the students and mentors on the previous day.

After lunch, Chandramohan started with the feedback session and asked that every student should pitch in their views on this session. Chandramohan asked the students to speak about the problems with medium, composition, size and the aspects concerned. Rishi spoke of the problems that he was facing with the aspect of translating the idea of the text into an illustration without being too literal about it. Sushil asked him to elaborate on this aspect further as a feedback. Rishi spoke of the problem in understanding text and translating his ideas. Avnish spoke of the difference between the two workspaces and how he benefitted from the one on one discussion with the mentors. He wanted this feature to be repeated again in the following sessions. He thought that the work which was done was more qualitative and quantitative.

Vijendra spoke of the invisible characteristic of a text, and how he through this assignment could read this and has attempted a viewpoint from this assumption. Shailesh spoke how the one on one session helped him to speed through the process of visualization, and how the exercises of making smaller layouts helped him. In what way, would you take forward the same was just as crucial pointed out by Sushil. He said that one when is drawing it is difficult to simply think of new elements but because of the visits to Potter's Studio where you see other artworks, one can think about new elements that can be drawn and illustrated. He spoke how this session helped him chart out a better plan and that there was sufficient time to work. Sagar spoke of the problems he faced in making works on the size specific artwork. He also spoke of the comfortable size in which he wants to work. He urged that a decision on the size of drawing should not necessarily be based on how it will be published, rather it should be based on the kind of content it is. The size should be made deciding if it's the right fit for the content/layout. To say that the printed image needs to be as big as the painted image is something he was finding difficulty with. Chandramohan pointed out how the use of size of the paper creates more

realistic idea of the printed image later. This is technically and artistically sound way of judging an artwork.

Anantjeet spoke of the problem that she was facing in resolving the issue of the illustration that she had made for a poem. She said that the session in potter's studio was supposed to be a session for sketching and that it didn't quite happen. She also said that going to any outdoor session with an emphasis on exercise on sketching and the outcome would be much more useful. From this discussion was steered by Dileep by asking whether it was important to sketch for observation alone or if students could present instances of their observations through their photographs. Chandramohan asked if it was possible to arrange a system by which daily sketches could be viewed collectively on to the board/display. Shubhangi spoke how she was feeling a bit confused about certain things related to size and the rough sketches. It was reminded by Chandramohan that the emphasis should be placed on the work and not the technical issues surrounding it. Meenakshi spoke of the aspect of visualization that she was undertaking for a work and how that would have to change because of the kind of feedback she was receiving. In such a situation, she expressed a desire to get more ideas from the mentors on how to move the work forward. Debarti spoke about her own progress and expressed a general sense of contentment on it while Ayushi explained how she was looking to explore the new techniques further to have more works in quantity next time. Manoj spoke of the way he was exploring the different styles of drawing especially trying to break the framework within which he used to be in.

Vrushali then spoke of the carrying forward of assignments as well as the works which were to be shown in the common feedback. She asked if it was possible to do the feedback as well as correction on the artworks during the session itself, because of which time was not being managed properly. To do so, it is important that the students were able to finish all of their pending assignments. Concluding the session, Sushil asked the students to come back to the mentors as soon as their work was finished for their feedback so as to avoid wastage of time. The mentors through these discussion sessions, are also able to take special care of highlighting and correcting students works individually and uniquely.

In the beginning of the session, all the four mentors- Atanu, Chandramohan, Dileep and Taposhi interacted with all the students at length in groups of 3 or 4. The idea was to know the problems preventing them from putting up their best. These close talks were conducted in a secluded room to avoid any possible discomfiture. There was frank interaction, suggestions, solutions and promises from students to do their best.

In summation the major Interactive methodologies that were taken further in this session by the mentors -

1. Mentors started a personal dialogue with a smaller group of students (groups of three or two and sometimes individually). This method was initiated so as to talk about the individual and specific nature of each student's work and helped the students to talk more openly with the mentors about their progress and shortcomings. It especially helped the students who hesitated in common feedback sessions.

2. Carrying forward the one-to-one demonstrations/discussions from the last session, students in their discussions with the mentors were able to look at the technical aspects of their work. In these sessions, the mentors guided them individually and independently. Students were asked to take their work for feedback as soon as they were nearing completion, so as to create a space for correction and also to update the mentors of their work's progress.
3. Group discussions were carried forward for some works which had been completed in the previous session, so as to have a common feedback from not only the teachers but also the peers on their work.
4. Photographs by the mentors and students were shown so as to think about ways of seeing and observing on the big screen. This method was developed for not just the purpose of understanding photographs, but also what drives the students or mentors to take an image, and how they visually respond to each other's images.
5. Films that were shown were discussed by the group in detail, and the practice of collectively viewing and understanding things was upheld through these sessions.