

HOW DO IMAGES MOVE AND TRANSFER?
SOMETHING INSIDE ONE PERSON TAKES EXTERNAL FORM - CONTAINED BY A POEM, STORY, PICTURE, MELODY, PLAY, ETC - AND THROUGH A CERTAIN KIND OF ENGAGEMENT, IS TRANSFERRED TO THE INSIDE OF SOMEONE ELSE.
ART AS A TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR IMAGES

RUMI: "I'VE SAID BEFORE THAT EVERY CRAFTSMAN SEARCHES FOR WHAT'S NOT THERE TO PRACTICE HIS CRAFT. A BUILDER LOOKS FOR THE ROTTEN HOLE WHERE THE ROOF CAVED IN. A WATER-CARRIER PICKS THE EMPTY POT. A CARPENTER STOPS AT THE HOUSE WITH NO DOOR."
- FRAGMENT FROM A POEM BY JALALUDDIN RUMI (1207-1273) TRANSLATED BY COLEMAN BARKS

This practice can be a wonderful side visual or written work although a work of art is not what I'm after practicing this art.
What am I after? what Marilyn Frye 'being present' and what's there."
This book is a collage of bits and pieces from many notebooks during my first try of trying to figure

100mpilw/ calendar Bone Folder coffee
"SCIENCE DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY OUR BRAIN SOMETIMES AUTOMATICALLY SUPPLIES US WITH A MEMORY THAT WE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO DELIBERATELY CALL TO MIND -- AND WHY WE CAN'T REMEMBER THINGS, EVEN WHEN WE MAKE AN EFFORT."
"DIFFERENT SIGNAL PATHS FOR SPONTANEOUS AND DELIBERATE STIMULI LEAD TO DIFFERENT PATHS FOR ACTIVATION OF MEMORIES."
PHYS. SCIENCE NEWS 8-13-10

Print, Publishing, Pedagogy, and the practicality of its co-existence

Anshuka Mahapatra

It was the month of November, and I was feeling quite disoriented. There was work waiting to be done, but my mind kept drifting toward the uncertainty of what lay ahead. During this time, the idea of visiting the new Coforge public library in Hyderabad began to feel like a small refuge. With each visit, I found myself lingering longer, pulled toward the graphic novel shelves. It was during one of these quiet afternoons that I came across *Syllabus: Notes from an Accidental Professor* by Lynda Barry.

I had never encountered a book like it before. Part sketchbook, part lesson plan, part personal archive, *Syllabus* felt less like something to be read and more like something to be experienced. Through its colorful, hand-drawn pages filled with collages, notes, and doodles, Barry documents her time teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, offering unconventional exercises that explore the relationship between the hand, the brain, and the image. What struck me most was not just the content, but the voice behind it: a renowned cartoonist openly reflecting on her role as a professor of Interdisciplinary Creativity, approaching academia with playfulness, vulnerability, and an almost disarming honesty.

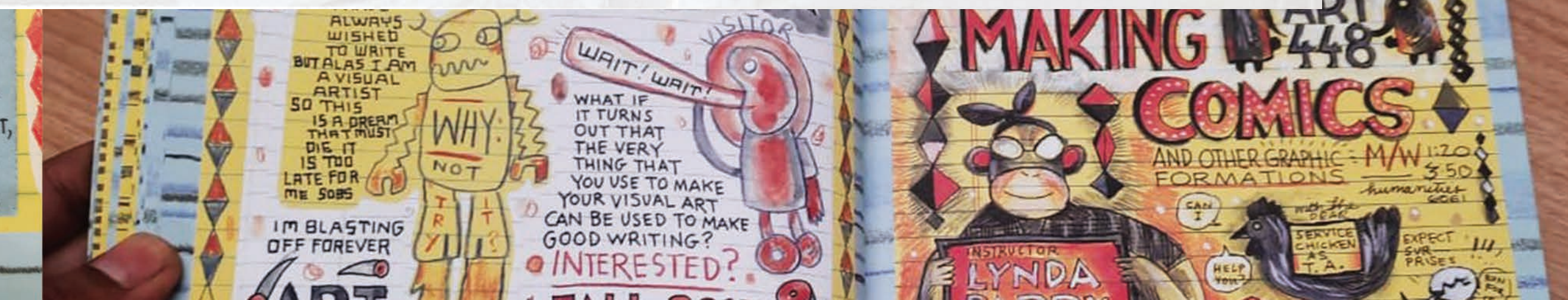
I had previously tried my hand at morning pages, influenced by Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*, but Barry's approach felt different, more tactile, visual, and somehow forgiving. I had never imagined creativity could be accessed this way. The book filled me with quiet excitement, opening up possibilities for how I might look back on my own ten-year journey in the art field, through my education, practice, and gradual entry into teaching. My desire to write for this publication began to take shape here, and in many ways, *Syllabus* offered me not just inspiration but a gentle permission to begin.



Teaching this: To be able to accept what shows up. What do writing, drawing, dancing, music -- everything we call the arts -- what do they have in common? Why do we group these things together? How do people who don't speak the same language communicate? How do we communicate with babies? When we translate something, what is being translated?

The ordinary is extraordinary. FEB 14 2011
NOTEBOOK ENTRY 11

Artistic evidences from the book *Syllabus: Notes From an Accidental Professor* by Lynda Barry





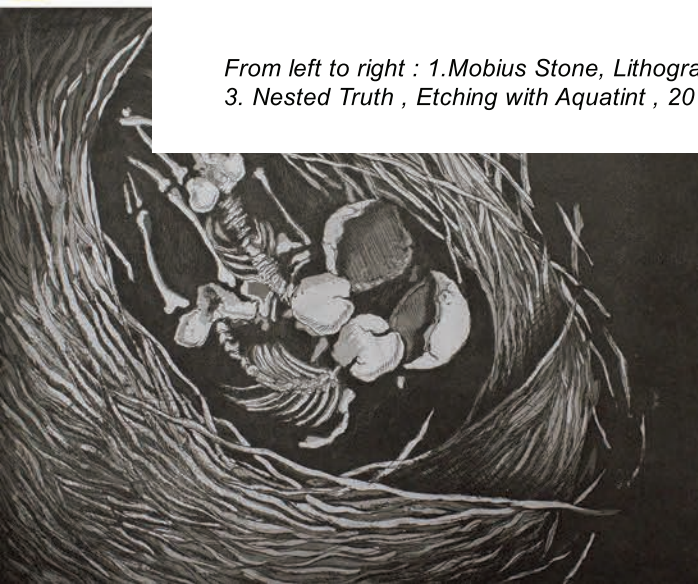
Is printmaking my specialization?

In 2016, at Jamia Millia Islamia, I chose art education over painting or applied art. The decision was practical. I wasn't sure if practice alone could sustain a livelihood. Art education promised the same foundation in making, along with the security of teacher training. If I could not become a practicing artist, I thought, I could at least become a good teacher, especially for children.

In the beginning, the course felt meaningful. We studied child psychology, developmental stages, and the ways children see before they learn to name what they see. It was fascinating to think of art not as output, but as perception unfolding with age. But by the third year, fascination gave way to fatigue. The depth I was searching for dissolved into repetition, lesson plans in identical formats, submissions that differed only in title, a system more concerned with structure than understanding.

Teaching across school levels was intimidating, but what troubled me more was the absence of reflection. Not a reflection on classroom performance, but on the purpose of the training itself. Were we learning to teach with conviction, or simply learning to complete requirements? The course seemed to prepare us for the routine life of a school art teacher. Yet nothing about teaching young minds feels routine. The responsibility is immense. The realization that we knew so little about it was also unsettling.

From left to right : 1. Mobius Stone, Lithography, 2019 ; 2. Look Closely , Etching with Aquatint, 2019 ; 3. Nested Truth , Etching with Aquatint , 2019; 4. Self Portrait, Serigraphy , 2019



The compulsory dissertation in the final semester exposed this gap further. I found myself assembling citations, borrowing the authority of researchers, trying to explain ideas I barely understood. There was little guidance on research methods, data collection, or case studies, only the expectation of submission and a signature at the end. No conversation. No feedback. Just completion.

Around the same time, I began looking at art education programs outside India and realized how expansive and serious the field could be. At its best, art education shapes habits of attention, sensitivity, and emotional health, not only in children but in adults as well.

That realization quietly closed one door.

By then, another had already opened. I had begun to fall in love with printmaking, the slow emergence of an image through pressure and repetition. Instead of pursuing a master's in art education, I chose printmaking

From left to right : 1. Teacher's Training Display, 2019 ; 2. 1. Teacher's Training Display, 2018 ; 3 - 5. Teacher's Training, 2018

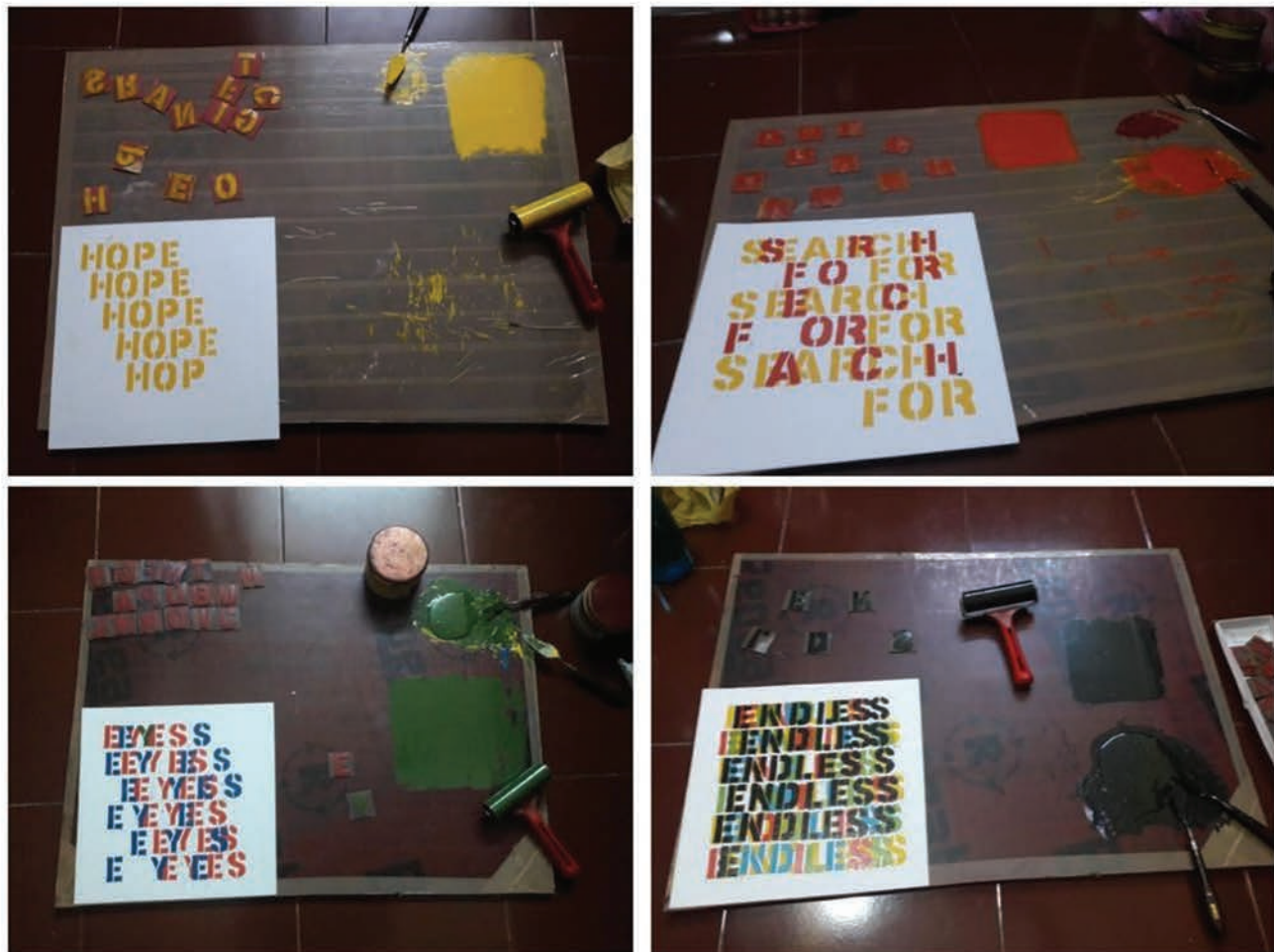


The decision brought me to Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication at the University of Hyderabad, in the middle of a pandemic. The first ten months passed in isolation, two semesters reduced to online sessions and unstable connections. The professors tried to keep the course together, but learning printmaking without a studio felt like learning to swim without water. The irony was unavoidable: the one thing I had come to study, I could not practice. I improvised with hybrid methods, combining whatever materials were available, trying to keep the work alive through invention rather than technique.

When the campus finally reopened, the studio itself needed rebuilding. Weeks went into cleaning, organizing, setting up presses, locating materials, and slowly re-learning how to occupy a shared space. What remained of the program was eight compressed months that had to carry the weight of what was lost. The pressure to academically articulate practices we were still learning to physically understand continued even here.

Somewhere hanging by a thread, we all somehow managed to put up something in the final display. But the contradiction remains. I now hold a master's degree in printmaking. I know the theories, the histories, the processes, but my hands fail to agree.

So I return to the question, quietly: Is printmaking my specialization? Or is specialization still necessary? Or is this guilt itself institutional conditioning?



Linocut Printing Process , 2021



As I watch the evening when the traffic of my thoughts, I can see myself recalling the trees by the road. The road that has led me here. A stranger in a strange land.

I fear I have bungled that last refined thought. I return home, tired I climb the steps to my temporary residence, only to trip over the mat outside my door. As the dust slips in the narrowness of my hands, that trail of thought flickers.

Like this, unkindly I of the day, night melts and my heart turns inside out. Probably by this time that thought has also sailed away.

Linocut Stamping , 2021



After my master's, while switching between jobs and dealing with the anxiety of navigating the art scene, a friend and I thought of shaping our shared interest in comics and graphic novels into something of our own. It came from a desire to engage in creative work just for fun and not take things too seriously. Until then, both of us had faced our share of rejections and, for real, questioned our abilities.

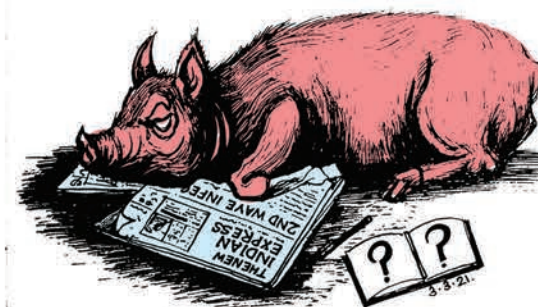
This idea was largely influenced by her visit to the Indie Comix Fest in Bangalore in 2023. The comic art scene is quite niche, yet it is thriving in its own way. Our goal then became to participate in the next year's fest.

I came up with a story, more like a personal experience. We discussed it together and made a storyboard. After my rather scattered first draft, we figured out how to approach the script. We prepared the dialogues and developed the narrative while colouring the manual drawings digitally. The process was far from linear, but our final output received a good response at the 2024 fest.

All the while, a thought kept running in the background: where was my printmaking practice going? Its absence, or my lack of engagement with it for several months, made me feel guilty, as if I were not devoted enough to it. While working on comics was enjoyable, the growing pile of rejections from residencies and grants was equally discouraging. It almost felt as if I should abandon printmaking altogether and move toward comics instead.

This self-initiated publishing effort made me question where I should go from here.

I CAN'T HANDLE ANOTHER YEAR OF...
CREATIVE BLOCK !!!!



From left to right : 1. Miss Pigpen , Illustration, 2020 ; 2. Indie Comic Fest , Bangalore, 2025 ; 3. A Boy Named WORD , Experimental Comic Book , 2025



Seminar Hall 2 , just before theFirst Lecture , 2024

Would you like to teach master's students?

In April 2024, around the same time that I was immersed in making comics, I received a message from my professor at the S.N. School. There was a position open for a visiting faculty member. Would you like to teach?

I could hardly believe it. I had never imagined myself teaching, especially so soon after graduating. My imposter syndrome surfaced immediately. I expressed my doubts, saying that I did not think I was qualified enough. But my professor insisted that I should try. As Franz Kafka once wrote, "You have to be delusional. By believing passionately in something that still does not exist, we create it." Trusting that thought, I applied.

By July, I was back on campus, this time preparing lectures, presentations, and notes. Returning to campus as faculty rather than as a student altered the space in unexpected ways. Before I could begin teaching contemporary art practices, I first had to understand the students themselves, their previous training, artistic influences, geographical shifts, and the visual languages they carried with them.

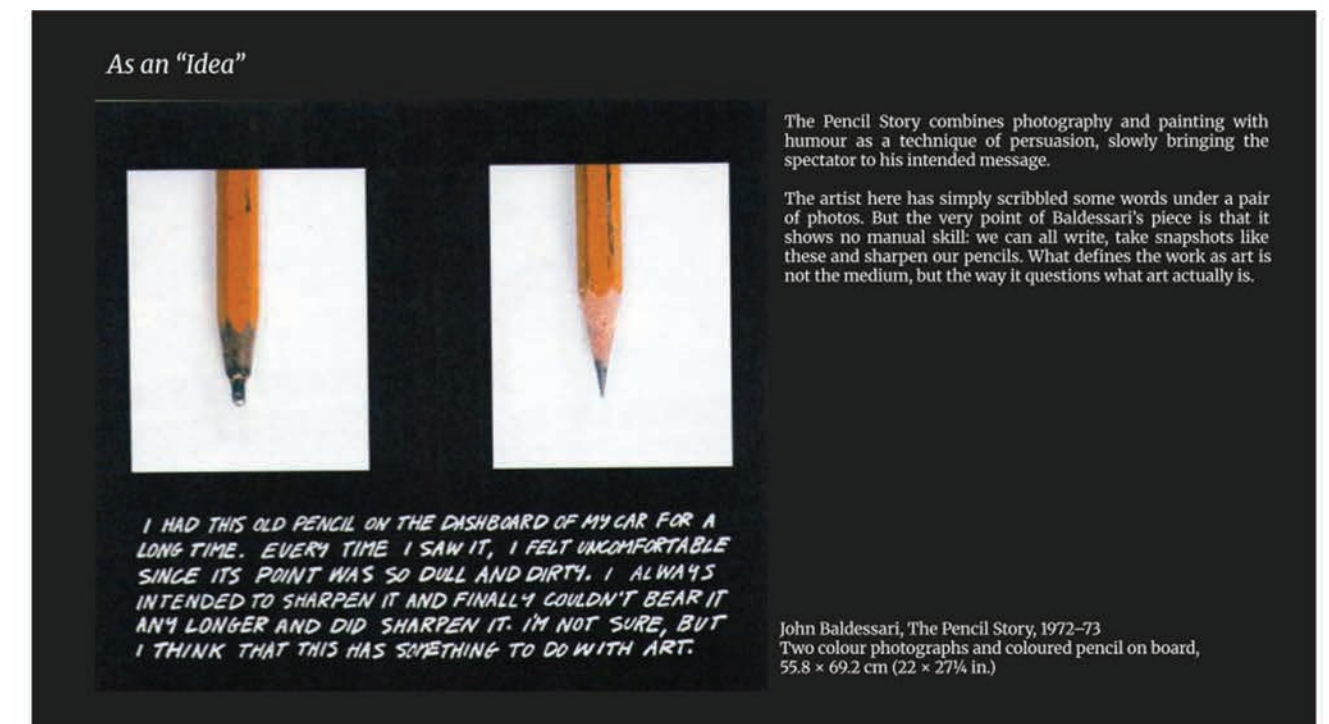
Very quickly, I realized that teaching contemporary art could not begin from theory alone. It had to begin with listening.

In the beginning, some classes went well. At other times, I struggled with difficult questions or the discomfort of not always knowing enough. I found myself intrigued by recurring visual tendencies emerging from different regional backgrounds. Some students from Kerala worked with psychologically dense imagery and expressions of grief or violence rendered through intense blacks and reds, while many students from Bengal gravitated toward textiles, domestic narratives, and folk references that echoed older artistic traditions through contemporary concerns.

At first, I worried about reducing these practices into categories I did not fully understand. Over time, however, I realized that these tendencies did not emerge from obligation toward regional identity alone. They were often tied to memory, lived environments, inherited aesthetics, and emotional familiarity.

During one discussion, while we were speaking about recurring imagery and personal symbolism, a student casually remarked: "Maybe these images are already around us before we even decide to make them."

That sentence stayed with me for weeks.



Slide from one of my lectures



Behind the scenes from FINAL DISPLAY 2025

Much of the learning happened outside formal lectures. The studio gradually became a space where conversations unfolded more honestly, about homesickness, language barriers, financial anxieties, material shortages, or the difficulty of adjusting to Hyderabad itself. Students struggled not only with conceptual frameworks but also with practical negotiations: unfamiliar city, material shortages, financial anxieties, language barriers, and the emotional difficulty of displacement.

Over time, I began noticing that the institution often functioned not because everything was structurally in place, but because students continuously adapted around its absences. They shared resources, exchanged references, helped one another install work, discussed ideas late into the evening, and slowly transformed the studio into a livable space. In many ways, their collective drive kept the department alive.

Looking back now, I realize how close these experiences were to what bell hooks describes as “engaged pedagogy,” where education emerges not through authority alone but through participation, vulnerability, attentiveness, and mutual transformation. Teaching contemporary art was not simply about delivering references or explaining movements. It involved learning how to listen to the conditions students were already navigating before they could even begin making work.

Midway through the semester, I introduced an assignment titled “Knowing from the Inside: Image, Text, and Object,” asking students to work through personal associations between images, text, memory, and objects.

Knowing from the Inside: Image, Text, and Object.

Overview:

This exercise aims to help students explore the relationship between images, text, and objects in their everyday lives. By combining these elements in different ways, students will better understand how meaning is constructed and how these insights can inform their art practice.

Session Breakdown:

1. Introduction - Wednesday 28th August

- Discuss the significance of everyday images and objects in art.
- Introduce the concept of "Knowing from the Inside" – understanding images' and objects' essence and personal significance.

2. Image Collection - 29th August to 1st September

Task: Students must collect or create at least 10 images/videos from their everyday life. These images can include:

- Photographs of events, places, or landscapes.
- Advertisements, maps, or signs.
- Text from books, journals, or public spaces.

Method: Students are encouraged to think beyond conventional beauty and focus on personal connections or meanings associated with these images.

**** Do not sketch or paint your observations but rather “print the images”.**

3. Object Collection - 29th August to 1st September

Task: Students collect at least 5 objects that have personal significance or memories attached. These objects can be found around Hyderabad's Old City, the university campus, or other familiar places.

Method: Students are encouraged to select objects that evoke a strong emotional or conceptual response. The objects can have a certain smell, taste, and kinetic movement to it.

4. Image-Object Pairing and Exploration - 2nd September

Task: Students experiment by pairing different images with objects.

Discussion Points:

- How does the meaning change when an image is paired with a specific object?
- What narratives or stories emerge from these pairings?
- Are there any surprising or unexpected combinations?

5. Reflective Writing - 3rd September

Task: Students write about their understanding of the combinations they've created.

Focus: Reflection on the emotional, conceptual, and aesthetic impact of these combinations. Consider how these insights might inform their broader artistic practice.

6. Group Discussion and Feedback - 4th-6th September

Activity: Students present their findings to the group.

Discussion Points:

- Share the most significant image-object pairings.
- Discuss how different combinations altered their initial perceptions.
- Offer constructive feedback on each other's reflections.

7. Translating Insights into Art Practice

**** For the semester**

Task: Students brainstorm ways to incorporate their new understandings into their art practice.

Focus:

- What mediums (printmaking, sculpture, mixed media) best convey the meanings discovered?
- What methods or techniques can be employed to express these ideas effectively?
- How can the understanding of image-object relationships inform future projects?

Start developing works that incorporate the insights gained from the exercise.

Materials Needed:

- Camera or smartphone for image collection.
- Sketchbooks or journals for notes and reflections.
- Studio access for further development.

Outcome:

By the end of the exercise, students will have a deeper understanding of the interplay between image, text, and object, and will have explored ways to incorporate these insights into their art practice, potentially leading to new approaches and projects in their MFA studies.

Lesson Plan - Exercise , SEMESTER 1 , 2024





Image



Object

Image: Kengeri Mori (drainage), Vrishabawathi

Object: Water bottle

Layered meaning :

All the water resources have been converted into drainages with no availability of natural water source. The water bottle symbolises the purified and recycled water that reaches most of the homes and since this purification may have some loose ends a few people severely get affected. Another example of a river converted to drainage is the Ganga.



I choose this object for that image because they are completely different things but somehow they interconnects each other.

The objects which are the dried skin of trees. All of them are from different types of trees, Shows different texture. But the common link between them is that they are coming from the kingdom of trees.

Now look at the image or the video, or the photo that I took from a page of a book in the library; that 'yellow signs' came unexpectedly out of nowhere. And I found out interesting that it shows different identity. Its pointing out that we are one that belongs to homo sapiens but we are completely different from each other.



So I taken my hand as an object. A wound in a finger that stitched, now what is remaining is a scar. And the image that I took is that the wall has been left scarred by the uprooting of a parasitic plant. Parasitic action always left a scar based on the human behavioral. I think we can take a positive way, as the reaction of it.

The act of breaking and act of stopping/not touching lies in sharp contrast to each other. The two images show a certain dichotomy which exists in the world around us.



From left to right : 1.K.V. krishnamurthy ,Printmaking ; 2-3 ,Sapthamol K C ,Sculpture; 4. Aritra Dey , Printmaking

On the next page - 5. Abhishek , Sculpture Batch of 2024-26



Whose hands, who's bone

13-09-24



Celebration of post life

13-09-2024



Where is the source



13-09-2024

While reviewing their responses, I found myself trying to understand how they see, how they construct meaning, or sometimes, how they struggle to. It was evident that they did not understand the assignment or make sense of it. And it made me question whether I was unintentionally imposing my own way of looking, simply to make sense of my own understanding. The process felt uncertain, even chaotic.

I kept asking myself: Was this how my own education had shaped me? And if so, did I still have more unlearning to do?

The experience made me realize how much I still needed to learn about the methodologies of teaching art. Artistic practices are diverse, and each group of students brings its own ways of seeing, its own difficulties with contemporary art, and its own strategies for navigating it.

Teaching did not feel like a position of authority. It felt like standing inside a process that I was still trying to understand.

What truly is interdisciplinary, and do institutions or the art world at large cater to it?

As quoted By Gwyneth Shanks in "In the Midst: Interdisciplinary Art and the Walker Art Center":

"The term 'interdisciplinary' is a slippery one, defining as it does scholarly pursuits or aesthetic practices that fall between established disciplines or genres. As a prefix, 'inter' comes from the Latin and means: between, among, in the midst of, mutually, reciprocally, together, or during. The meaning of the prefix shifts, though, as one moves through these various definitions. While between might describe an artwork, for example, that slips between conventional classifications (e.g., painting, sculpture, drawing, dance, theater), in the midst of or together seemingly defines interdisciplinary, and thus the art it modifies, as central, not tangential, to artistic production. To be in the midst of something is to be, quite obviously, in the middle of it, a phrasing that offers both a temporal ('we were in the middle of our conversation') and a spatial ('I was in the middle of the room') meaning. Together, in a similar vein, implies proximity and simultaneity. Interdisciplinary art, then, is not tangential to or beside anything, but is instead central to contemporary practice."

They all start saying:
we want **A STRONG IMAGE**
but the time
everyone agrees on
"what kind of strong" ...
it becomes **A WEAK IMAGE.**

11-11-25

Experiments with text

THE LIMITS OF
MY LANGUAGE
ARE THE LIMITS
OF MY WORLD.

Experiments with text, Pages from sketchbook

When the
process is the
process of the
process.

People are
people are
people are
PEOPLE.
They come as
they are.

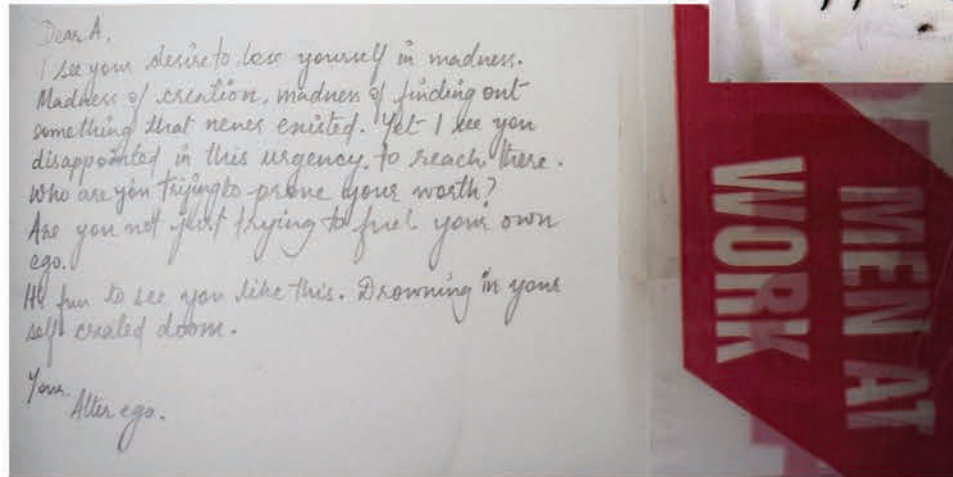


Vision board close-up 2015

For now, my disciplines, printmaking, comics, and teaching, are running parallel to one another, often informing each other but hardly merging. Lately, however, staying connected and informed within each discipline has become so difficult that it leaves me feeling restless rather than fulfilled. In my constant search for some kind of ease, I began to think it might be meaningful to combine them. Yet the fear of validation and rejection has kept me uncertain about how to proceed.

A useful quote from Roland Barthes' book of collected essays, *Image-Music-Text*, helps frame this tension:

"Interdisciplinarity is not the calm of an easy security; it begins effectively (as opposed to the mere expression of a pious wish) when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down ... in the interests of a new object and a new language, neither of which has a place in the field of the sciences that were to be brought peacefully together. This unease in classification is precisely the point from which it is possible to diagnose a certain mutation." (Barthes 1977: 155)



Snippets from visual journal.

Many institutional frameworks within contemporary art education continue to borrow heavily from Western pedagogical and curatorial models, often without adequately adapting them to local material realities or infrastructural limitations. While institutions increasingly encourage interdisciplinary practices, the infrastructure rarely supports them meaningfully. Specializations are relabeled as “expanded media,” and “new media” often becomes shorthand for contemporary relevance, even when resources, technical support, and critical guidance remain insufficient.

Having experienced both sides as a student and now as a teacher, I witness an education system that feels as though it is slowly collapsing, sustained largely by the efforts of students who genuinely want to learn and teachers who are exhausted by administrative demands. While talks and workshops keep appearances intact, students' artworks often emerge through continuous struggle rather than structural support.

It takes time to move from learning about interdisciplinarity to actually embodying it. And I am only beginning to understand perhaps one percent of what that truly entails.

Next steps ?

Perhaps the only way forward is to remain in the midst of it. I might take a jab at it by presenting this messiness in the spirit of what Professor Lynda Barry has done with her book *Syllabus: Notes from an Accidental Professor*, and title it *Interdisciplinary: To Be or Not to Be - Notes from a Temporary Visiting Faculty*.



1. Close-up of a linocut print, 2024

2-3 POSTERS issued by Scarfolk Council (Scarfolk is a fictional northwestern English town created by writer and designer Richard Little, who is sometimes identified as the town mayor, L. Ritter. It is trapped in a time loop set in the 1970s, and its culture, parodying that of Britain at the time, features elements of the absurd and the macabre.)