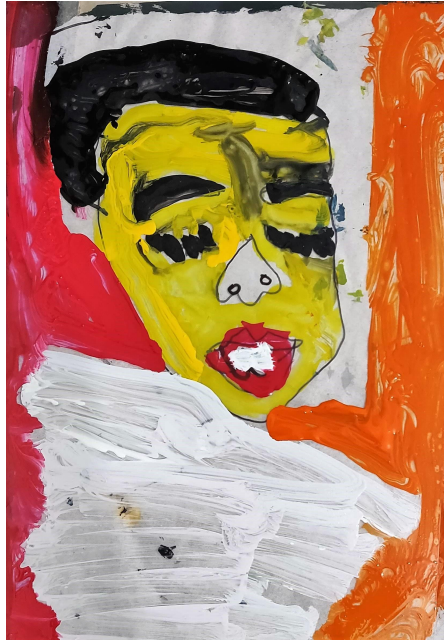


REFLECTION DOCUMENT

BY VARNITA SETHI, RESIDENT OF
ARTREACH INDIA TEACHING RESIDENCY PROGRAMME 2018-19
PROGRAMME PARTNER: BOSCO, NEW DELHI

PROGRAMME SUPPORTED BY: KIRAN NADAR MUSEUM OF ART



INTRODUCTION

Artreach India endeavours to support artists leading groups of young children through a few months of engaging and meaningful workshops and field trips planned out carefully as part of the Teaching Residency Programme. The aim of a Teaching Residency is to offer a comprehensive experience of art education - introducing participants to a variety of mediums, methods and techniques and to a selection of artists and styles. Beyond the teaching of technical skills and insight into art history and aesthetics, the artists aim to encourage participants to use art as a tool for critical exploration of the world and to cultivate their imaginative, creative and reflective skills to find an individual expressive voice.

For this particular Residency, 20 to 25 children and young adults of refugee and asylum seeking families, primarily from Afghanistan, residing in Khirkee Village of Delhi, attended the workshops. These modules playfully introduce participants to art, visual games, movement exercises and a variety of art media such as collage and basics in drawing and painting.



From October 1, 2018 until July 30, 2019, the children were led through 12 workshops at the BOSCO centre and 4 walks through the KNMA exhibitions which comprised of “Jangarh Singh Shyam: A Conjuror’s Archive”, “ARPITA SINGH | Six Decades of Painting” and “Hamari Chhaap” an exhibition of artworks by Artreach India, Teaching Fellowship students..



AIM

If we want children to value art, we must give them access to it early on in life.

Art allows kids to develop their creativity which is important throughout their lives. By doing something creative, you allow for self-expression and this lets kids express (and cope with) their feelings. It also fosters mental growth in children by providing opportunities for trying out new ideas, new ways of thinking and problem-solving.

I came across this interesting article about Mary Ann Kohl who is the author of numerous award-winning art idea books for children. In an interview, she says “In children, creativity develops from their experiences with the process, rather than concern for the finished product. Creativity is not to be confused with talent, skill, or intelligence. Creativity is not about doing something better than others, it is about thinking, exploring, discovering, and imagining.”

I came to this Residency with a background in Painting and with the experience of many years of teaching. It was my endeavor from the beginning to bring in my knowledge of drawing and collage in a manner that is more relatable to the children. It was for me an opportunity to simply work with Art.

As an artist and their art teacher, my only aim was to enable children to communicate what they see, feel and think, through the use of colour, texture, form, pattern and different materials and processes. They explored ideas and meanings through the work of other artists as well.

The appreciation and enjoyment of the visual arts enriches all our lives.

PROCESS

Art is a delightful way through which you can record the development of the child's growth. The role of a teacher is to expose children to a variety of materials so that they can create art. Once the variety is offered, children will then have a choice as to whether they want to use the materials or not. But without the exposure, there is no choice. Creating art is a fine way for children to make choices and solve problems. Every step involves making a decision: what color to use, how to make a line, what size to make something. With every choice the object becomes more and more their own. Everyone has an imagination. Art takes it a step further. Through art, children create something that, until that point, was only imagined. Thus, they create visual manifestations of abstract ideas.

For the first workshop, drawing with lines was an excellent starting point. So, we started with an ice breaker activity where children walked over the lines created with chalk on the floor. There were straight, zigzag, swirl, dash, curvy and many other forms of lines, which children enjoyed following. The students were really delighted by the movement as we walked around the room. This activity instantly added energy, fun, smile and a level of comfort in the class. Soon after this fun filled game, we talked about horizontal, vertical, diagonal and zigzag lines kids created line art patterns using different colors on newspaper.

The second workshop, was based on the simplest element of drawing dot. Dot art was a fun, interactive art project for children of all ages. We talked about, how the dots can be big or small , in color or in black and white, thick, or thin. They can be drawn next or very far to others. They can also be drawn so big that they are considered circles. Children started creating dots which soon progressed into circles. This activity was a group activity where kids worked over each other's artwork. The beauty of these murals were that the students learned several art concepts, such as collaboration and creating mural using the form dot, outlining and shading, as they progressed throughout the project. They learned about the shape circle.

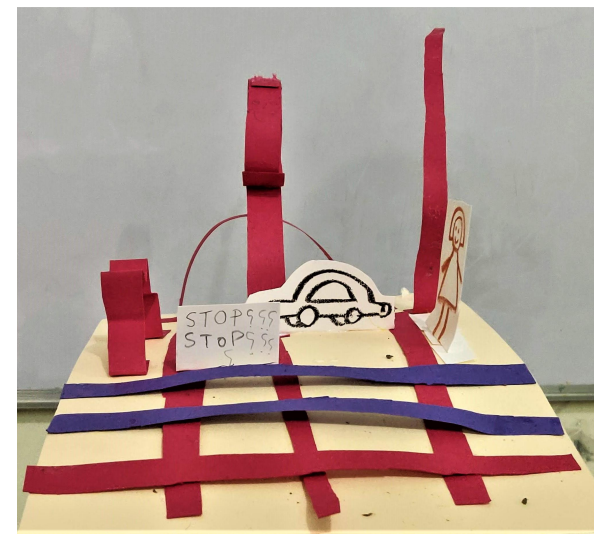
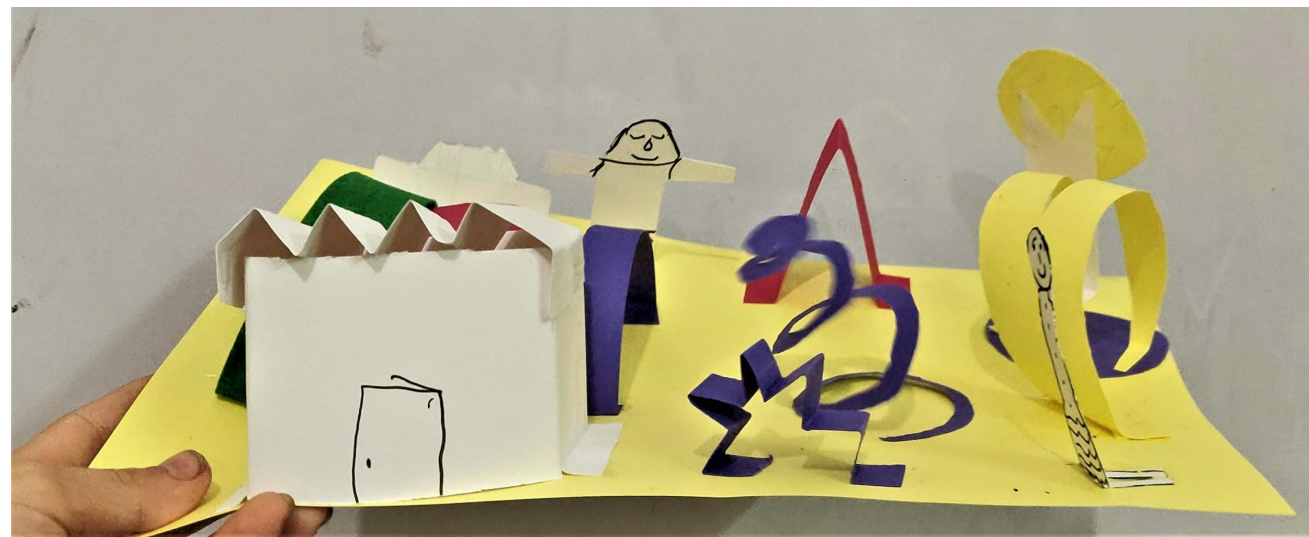


Gripping a paintbrush, drawing dots and lines, mixing colors, cutting with scissors, controlling a glue stick or squeezing a glue bottle, kneading and rolling playdough, tearing paper—all of these tasks require increasing amounts of dexterity and coordination, yet they are so fun and rewarding that children want to do them over and over. As kids engage in art activities over time, their fine motor skills improve.

As we moved to our next session we worked on 3d paper sculptures. This project is great for the kids because it develops fine motor skills, teaches paper manipulation, introduces types of lines and the concept sculpture. I demonstrated how to curl and twist the paper, how to make zig-zags and spirals and how to glue the papers so they stick up. They created paper sculptures using different techniques of paper folding. They had a hands on experience with the first 2 lessons of line and dot in 3d form. Paper sculpting also helped them with the sense of construction. kids enjoyed creating their paper sculptures. Some kids made their sculptures really high, and some even narrated a story with their sculptures. Children were very pleased with their artworks, I could see spark in their eyes while they were sharing the concept and story behind their work.

Using the fact that the children were now introduced to paper construction technique and they enjoy the art of crafting things. We created rats and spiders in our class. The idea of teaching them rats was to introduce them to cone shapes – as they are made from paper cones. The construction of rat developed their sense of 3d sculpture, as they worked on all the visible sides. They used their previous skills, as they made cone with a newspaper circle cutout. The tail of rat was created using line which was later swirled with the help of pencil. The facial details were done using their drawing skills. In the same session they also created spiders, where they made its body out of a 2d circle shaped paper. A lot of patterns were used on spiders body to give it a personal touch, and its legs were created using straws. I sketched a huge web on the whiteboard where children hanged all the spiders. They were amused as their spiders were hanging from their web.



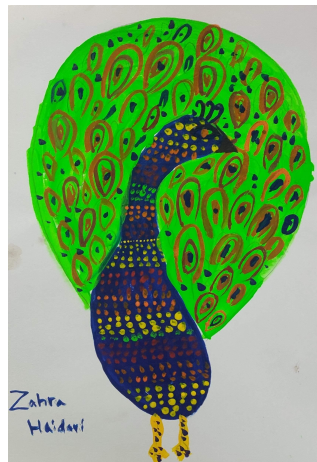
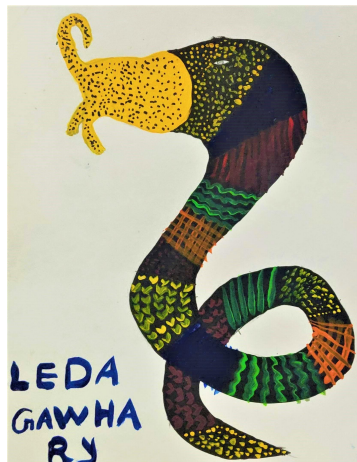
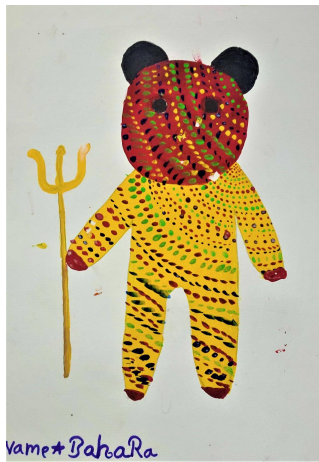


Our next workshop we decided to work with portrait study, where children created portraits of their peers using markers and OHP sheet. The first step was to get in pairs of 2 and then they outlined the portrait and features of each other. Once the outline was sketched the second step was to paint their friends portraits. Students learned how to mix colors and create compositions with acrylic paint. This activity developed their drawing skills, observation skills, perspective and hand/eye coordination and helped them to focus on facial features. A wonderful surprise of this activity was that the partners got the chance to connect. Students understood how to make thoughtful choices regarding the appearance of their final project, and be able to explain the choices they made. The outcome was amazing, yes, but the process was just as good and the kids were feeling so crazy proud of themselves when they completed it.

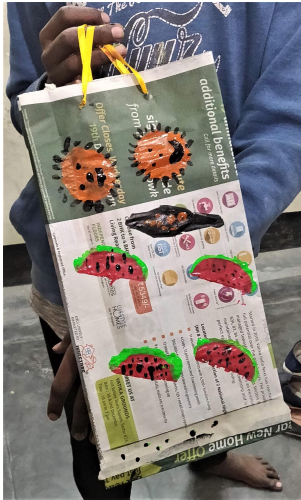


Our next two workshops, were a walk through at Jangarh Singh Shyam's exhibition, a Gond artist, in Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Saket. Gond paintings are a form of painting from folk and tribal art that is practiced by one of the largest tribes in India with whom it shares its name. Gond comes from the Dravidian expression, Kond which means 'the green mountain'. While Gond paintings are considered to be from predominantly from Madhya Pradesh, it is also quite common in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhatisgarh and Odisha. Children created a piece of art taking inspiration from the artist. They drew vibrant artworks using gond technique and essence. Day 1, they created a sketch of a tree using sharpie and filled the composition with the patterns, as the artist did in his work. The work was decorative and detailed in nature. However on day 2, we painted a new composition using bright vivid colours such as white, red, blue and yellow. We focused 'on line work', Lines are used in such a way that it conveys a sense of movement to the still images. Dots and dashes are added to impart a greater sense of movement and increase the amount of detail.

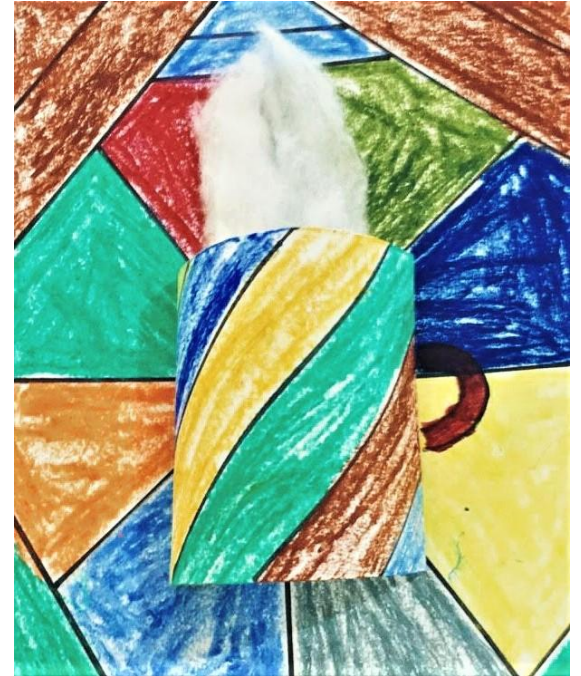
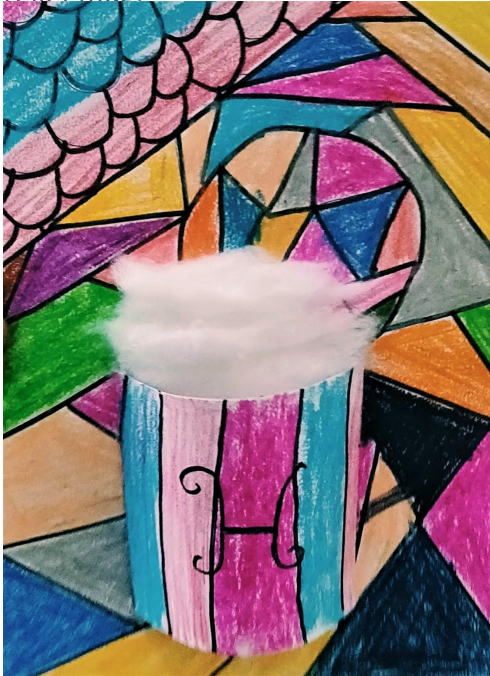




This workshop focused on the development of students' life skills. They started the session with making a paper bag, using old newspapers and some ribbons for handles. They appreciated the art of recycling and to add elements of design on their artwork, they created their own stamps using potato and printed a pattern on the bag. Potato printing was fun and simple craft for children. Kids were messy and creative, producing potato prints that really are works of art. Using an object as a stamp is a great way to create pictures that are truly unique. The results were amazing, most of the kids carried their books back home in their new bag. Knowing the fact that children are quiet efficient at handling paper crafts, we increased the challenges of the task. They worked on a Big mouth fish. Children created a fish puppet, following the simple steps of folding the paper and had fun closing and opening its mouth! I also asked the kids to use their imagination and add other things to this picture— something hiding inside the shark's mouth? The kids drew it. Fish swimming around the shark? Draw that too. The ocean is full of amazing creatures that can be added to this to make it even more fun. They also created things that fish loves to eat like small fish or ice cream may be candies and so on.



In this session children created 3d coffee mug. This lesson incorporated 5 Elements of Art- (line, shape, color, texture, and form), as well as perspective, and one of the Principles of Art “variety”! They worked on a background through their imagination and then glued the coffee mug on top. They first flipped the mug paper over and folded back the ends, creating 2 flaps. Then they glued the flaps down to their background papers as they curved their mug paper creating a three-dimensional mug. They drew the handles by drawing the letter C on the paper. Students assembled their pieces together! The final touch was adding a small amount of polyester batting to the mug for steam!! The aim of this activity was to teach them the difference between 2d and 3d. They enjoyed creating this relief mug.



Tropical Birds are a wonderful way to teach a variety of lessons: color balance, drawing techniques, negative and positive space . I used the “shape” strategy: Draw a circle for the eye, draw an arrow for the beak, etc. Most kids find it easy to draw when a confusing and seemingly difficult image is broken down into basic shapes. Children created side profile of a bird using different shapes and patterns. They added leaves in the background to give them a natural habitat. Birds are an art room staple. They are easy to draw and even more fun to color. I love this lesson because no matter what the child’s perceived artistic ability, all were totally surprised with how well they did.



To begin, we identified the qualities of line, color, brush work and composition and that the palette is limited. Preferably layers or multiple levels of these; must have background with sky and trees, foliage incorporating movement through the use of line. Children created landscape with the help of lines as trunk and the bushes in forefront were created using the technique of dabbing. After the students painted their trees with warm color, they added a little bit of purple for the sky, and a dab of green, yellow and white for the tree and ground foliage. They learned to create foliage and had fun creating a nightscape.



Our next workshop, was a walk through at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art where students from a Teaching Fellowship 2018 conducted by Artreach had displayed their works. The aim for this workshop was to expose children with other mediums and techniques that children of their age have worked with in different centres. They were quite fascinated to see works of other kids in a formal space. Students loved the photography section, they themselves wanted camera to click images. After the walk through, children were asked to sketch or paint something that they feel inspired from. Every child had their own style and way of executing their work. This session was more of a self expression and exploration day.



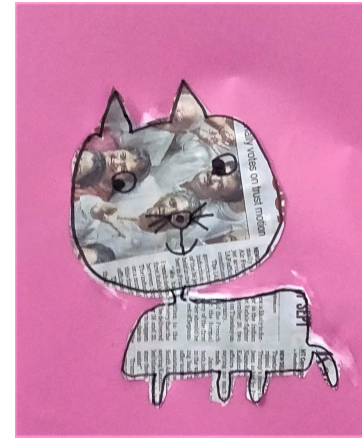
Our concluding session was more of a fun day. Children need a lot of time to explore the properties of any new material before they use it. Collage is a wonderful place to start, especially for young children because it nurtures their natural desire to explore the world through their sense of touch. It also allows a certain level of flexibility. Children created a relief hippopotamus collage using newspaper. The mouth of hippo was open and to add volume, kids pasted some teeth in hippo's mouth. In their second half, children ventured on their own trip, where they created collage in their own styles. Through the introduction of collage to the children, I noticed how much more observant they have become. They are beginning to look closer and notice texture and form out in the world. They see the beauty in ordinary things and can appreciate the possibilities of everyday objects.



Observations and Thoughts

There were some challenges during the sessions. One was the disparate age groups of the participants which made teaching something that resonated with all age groups a little bit of a demanding task. Another was that the participants varied from class to class and it was not a constant batch which made tracking their progress a little harder. The biggest challenge though was the language barrier which was only somewhat overcome by their willingness to learn. They copied my actions and made modifications as per their creativity which really made it possible for me to hold constructive sessions.

What really worked was that the kids were really passionate and curious and whenever they were introduced to a new medium, they were always excited. The new mediums gave a different avenue and flow to their ideas which had previously been limited mostly to paper and crayons.





Thank you

I would like to take this moment to thank the staff of Artreach who showed faith in me and my work and believed that I would be able to make a difference in the lives of these children.

A special thanks to Ita, Anarya and Shivangi who helped me through out my residency.