

Reflection Document

By Tanaya Rao Raj

As part of the BOSCO Teaching Program
2022 by Artreach India

It was my absolute privilege to head the 12 workshops at the UNHCR Bosco Centre from 2022. It was a great experience for me to join the teaching realm physically, as opposed to the online modules which I had previously conducted with the Artreach team for various care homes. I was really happy to initiate these modules again at the venue, which had come to a halt abruptly in 2020. Co-facilitating the workshops from September to December, 2019 along with Shivangi Singh, gave me the necessary tools and confidence to be able to conduct my own in 2022 finally, along with Reshma Khatoon's assistance.

The main objective of these workshops was to introduce basic art and craft activities to the children, that would provide a creative outlet for the kids to view Art as part of their daily life. Through basic movement exercises and ice breaker sessions, Reshma and I tried to lighten our interactions with the children.

We explored various mediums of drawing and simple craft activities with a wide age group of children from around 4 to 12 years.

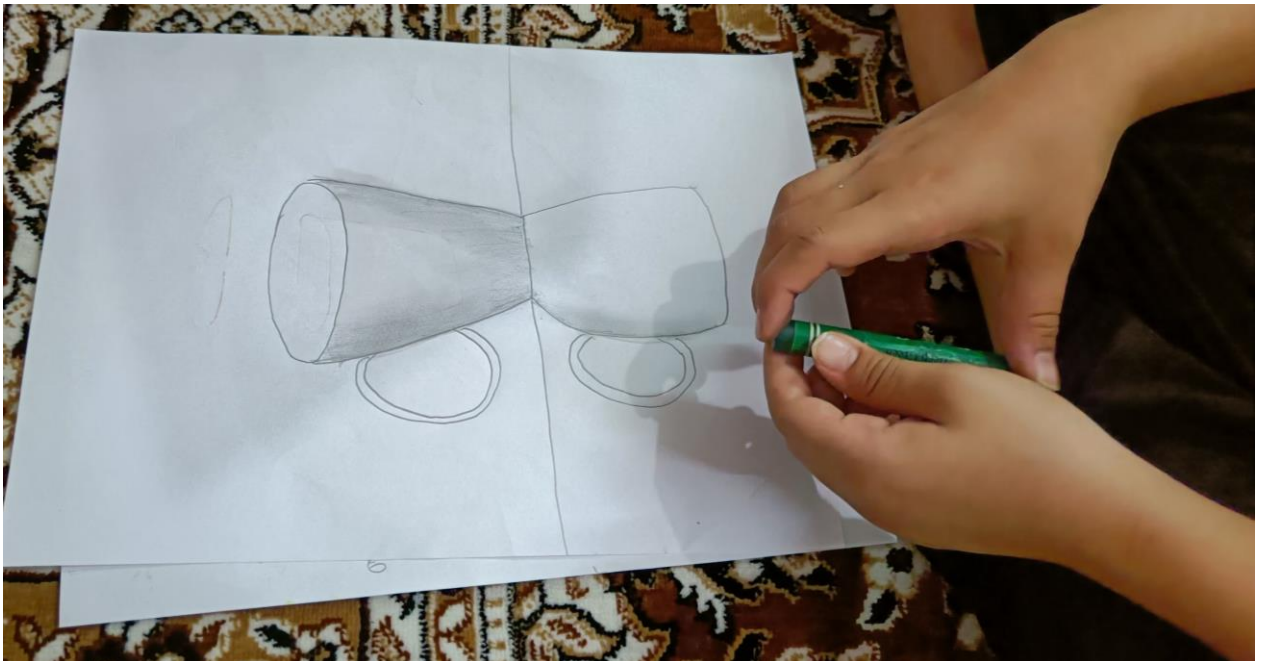
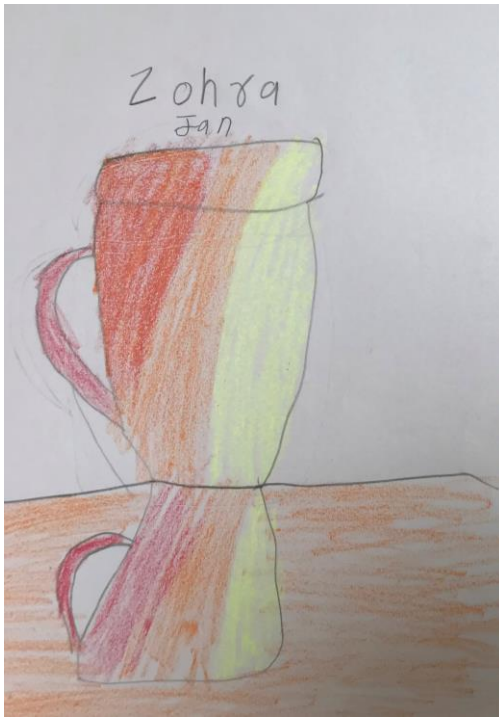


Cross hatching colour wheel and still life

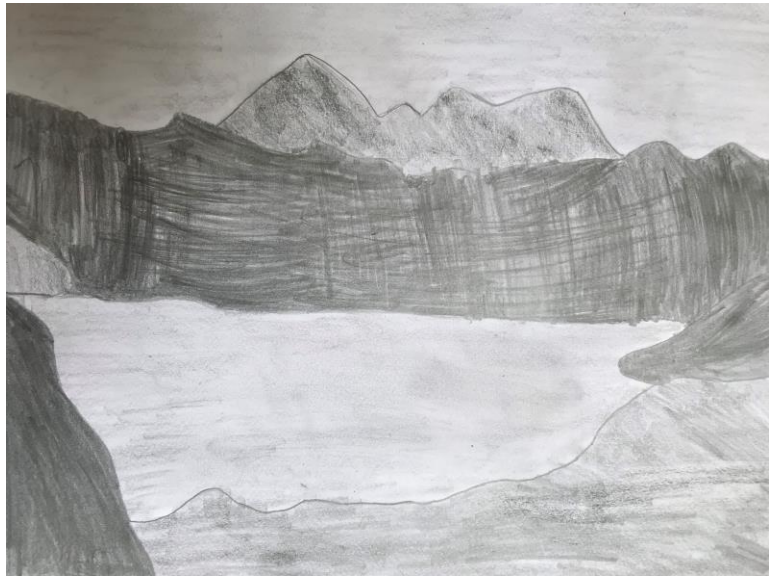
In the first session, we introduced the children to the colour wheel containing primary and secondary colours. Each child drew his own colour wheel and used oil pastels for the activity. The children were taught the technique of cross hatching to create their secondary colours, instead of using the existing shades of the pastels.

Next, the children applied this technique to create their own still life of a cup with its shadow.

As is the case with most activities, we did not want to stop the children from exploring their own creativity. Many of them broke out of the instructions and made their own compositions with the cup.

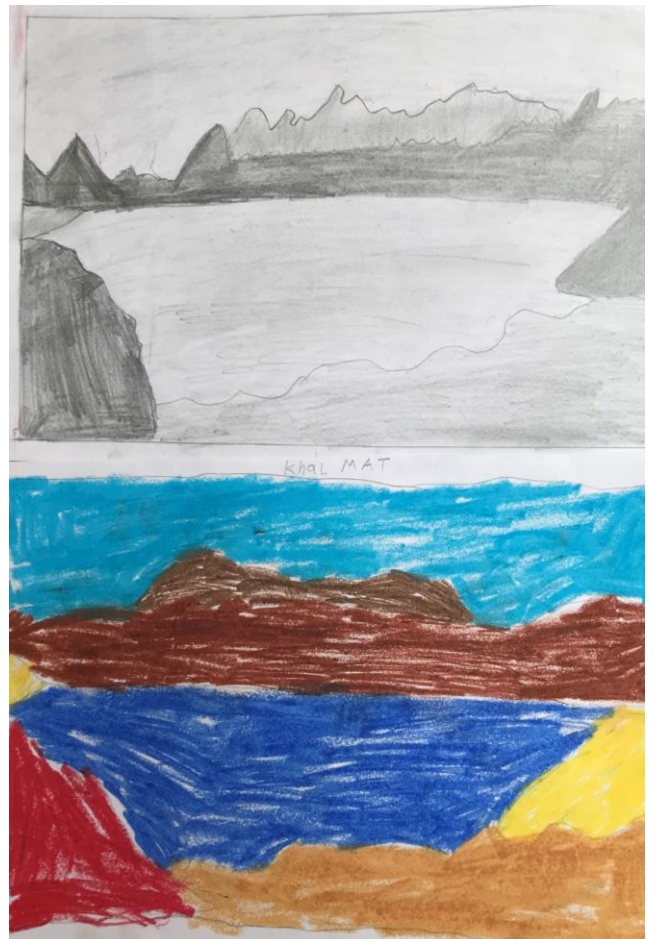
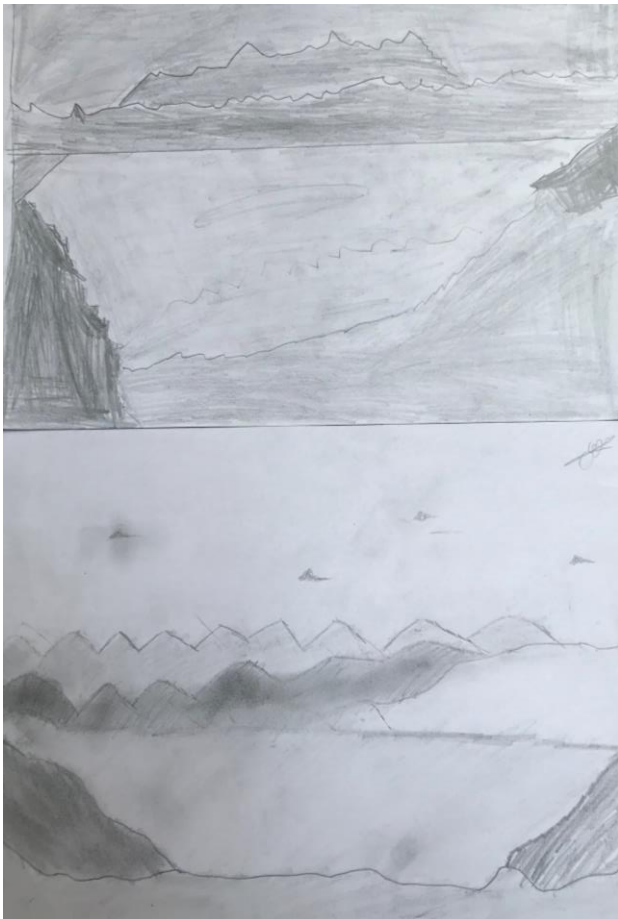


Monochrome and in colour – Recreating Nicholas Roerich's landscape



In the second session, we introduced the children to Nicholas Roerich's landscape painting. Most of his paintings are monochromatic or with minimal colours. Using pencil shading, the children created their own versions of Roerich's landscape. They learnt that by applying various degrees of pressure using the same pencil, they could get various shades of the same colour.

In the second part of this activity, they used oil pastels to explore the same landscape in colour.



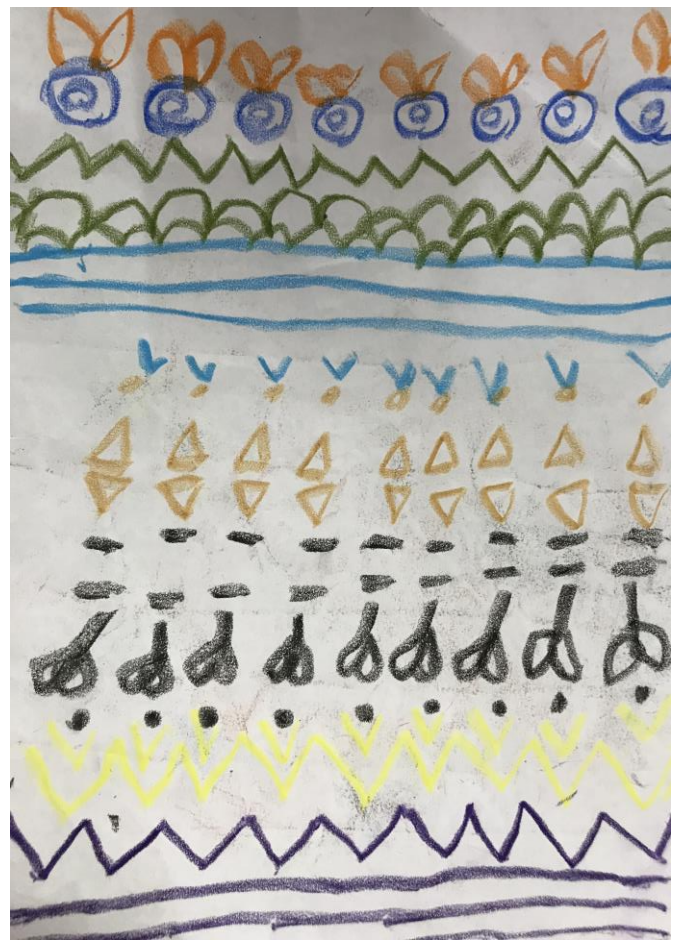


Origami is always a fun activity for children, aimed to also strengthen their motor skills. It is fascinating for them to see how a simple piece of paper through various acts of folding can result in such complex creations.

The children created a whale and fish through Origami in this session. By pasting them on A4 sized sheets, they further created their own compositions of the sea.

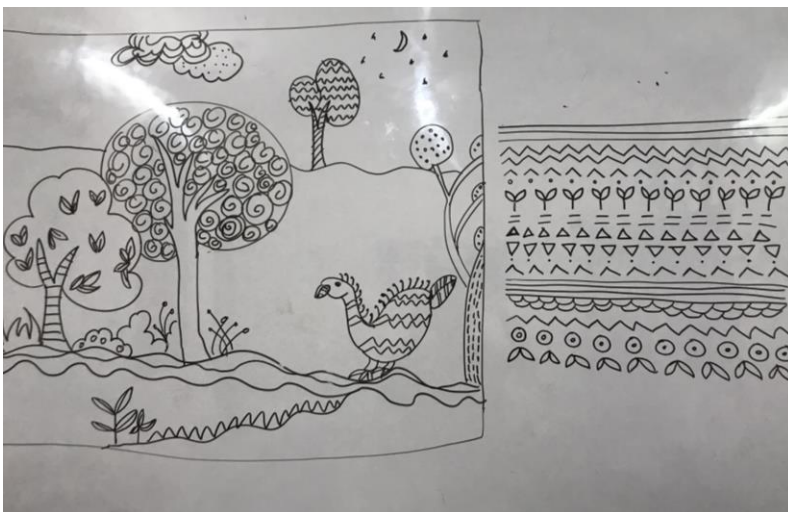
Origami – Whale and Fish





Repetitive patterns are visuals which we keep seeing in our everyday life. In this session, we first did an exercise of drawing simple lines on paper. The children then replicated the patterns using oil pastels that we drew on the board.

These same patterns they then used to create their composition inspired by a book cover. The composition was based on the idea of nature: plants and animals transported to a fantastical universe of patterns!



Fun with patterns- Composition





Paper quilling: Create your flower pot

Through paper quilling, the children created their own flower pot. They were provided with various coloured strips of scrap paper, which they rolled with sticks to create their spirals. These spirals were in turn used to create their flower compositions.





In this session, the children observed Paul Signac's painting. They pointed out that there were thousands of dots in his painting in various colours. Using the technique of stippling or dots, the children used oil pastels to recreate Signac's painting.

Composition with dots – Recreating Paul Signac's painting







We concentrated on animal drawing in this session using basic shapes through a step by step process.

The children learnt how to draw various animals of the forest: elephant, lion, fish, giraffe etc. They then used oil pastels to colour their compositions.

Forests are places usually seen in movies or through visuals but not experienced as such. Unlike most other activities, where we explored topics personally experienced by the children, this one in particular was the opposite and stood out.

Composition with animals in a forest





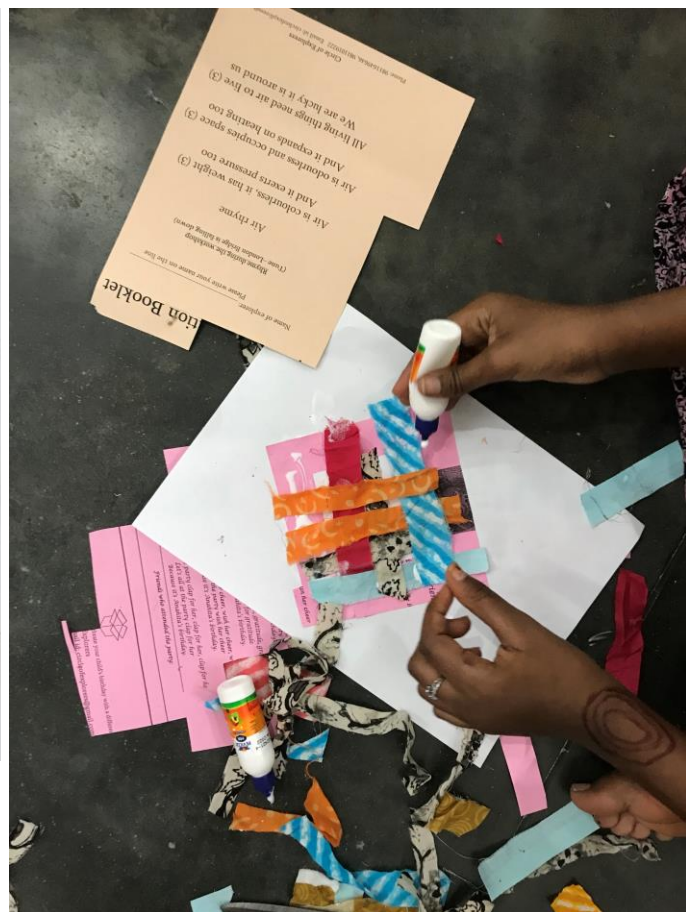


This paper crushing activity was aimed at using scrap paper to create a composition around the umbrella. It was raining heavily during that time of the week and I felt that it would be interesting to create something around the rainy season.

Umbrellas are simple objects that the children can identify with. The activity of paper crushing added an extra element of creative expression for the children. The children drew rain drops, puddles and things they enjoyed doing during the monsoon.



**Paper
crushing and
composition
– During
monsoons**



As an artist interested in found materials, I wanted to explore the medium of cloth (a material I have in abundance in my studio) with the children in a simple manner.

The children used Katran (cloth waste) to create their own mats by weaving them alternately with hand. This was one of the most interesting yet intensive activities for the children, something that they had not explored before.



**Cloth weaving –
Make your own
mat**





For the theme of Children's day, I wanted the children to use their own creative expression to design their own T-shirts. The children drew what they wanted to do on the event of Children's Day. Some also made colourful patterns and designs, reimagining what it would be like to wear these T-shirts.

We did not want to restrict their freedom during this session. We also did a small display activity at the end of the session at the centre.

Create your own T-shirts

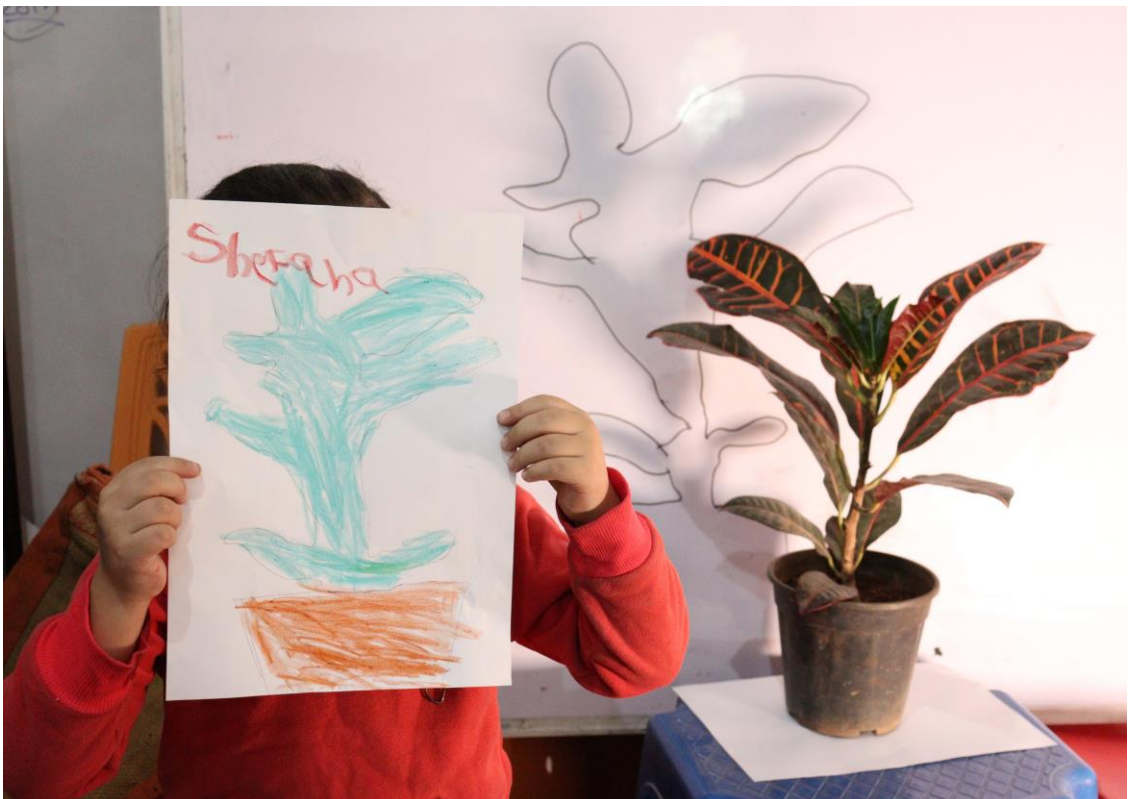




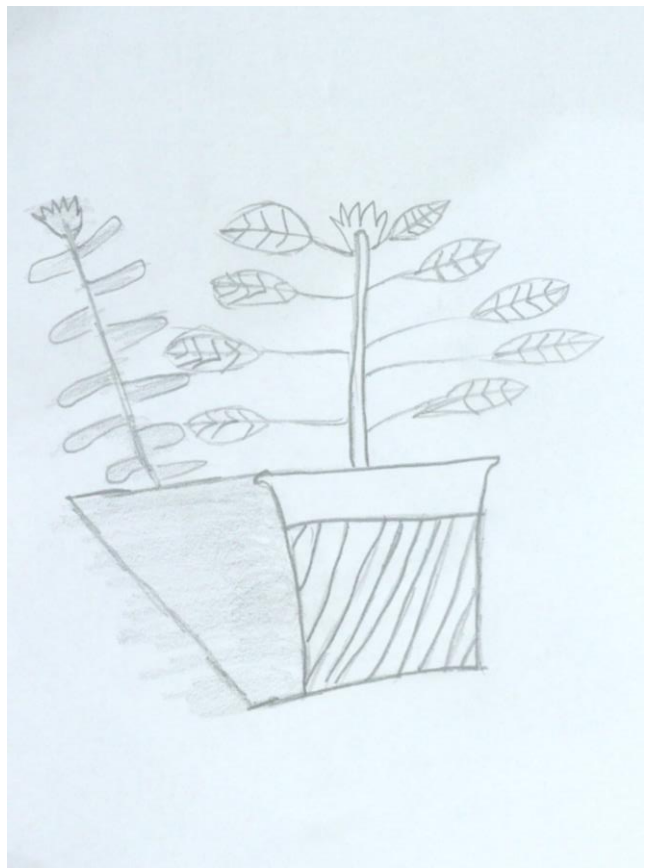
In this session, we used a particular light source to create a shadow of a plant. The idea was to demonstrate the play of light on objects and explore the shadow first, instead of the plant itself. The children observed and drew the plant along with its shadow. The spectacle of seeing the shadow change with the change in light of the plant, fascinated the children.



Shadow drawing of a plant



N. ASIR JAN

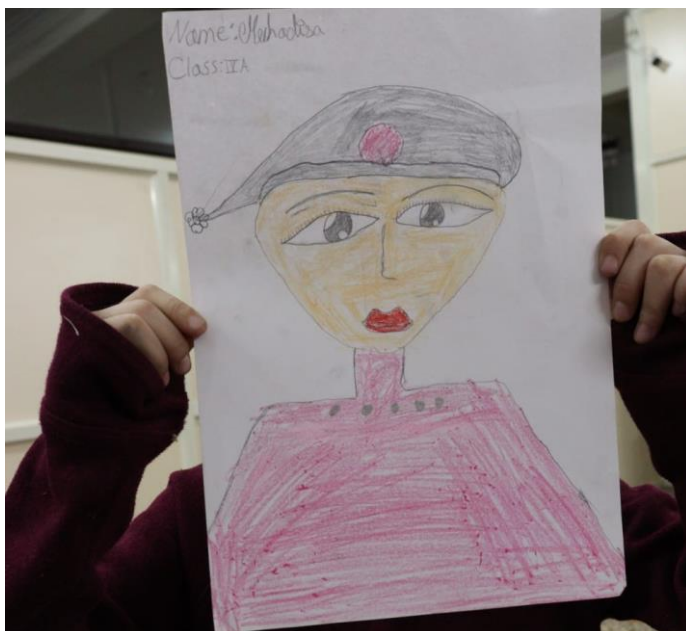


Portrait of your friend



In this session, we grouped the children into pairs and each pair had to draw the portrait of the other. Reshma led this particular session with a twist! She initiated a process of drawing with both hands. This activity required concentration and coordination of both the hands together.

The children explored the symmetry of their respective friend's face and also observed features that stood out in them for eg. The colour or style of the hair, a particular kind of accessory he/she wore etc.





My Observations

Apart from the Afghani refugee children, it was heartening to see the African refugee kids join in as well. Communicating with this diverse group, in age and culture, provided exposure to us as well to innovate in our teaching methods. Reshma and I, both realised that simple craft activities worked well with the children, as they developed their motor skills. Hands on activities enabled them to go beyond the basics of drawing and be open to new ways of creative expression. They were all curious to learn anything new.

In the limited one hour sessions, it was our aim to focus on the process rather than the finished work. We tried to boost the confidence of the children by simply allowing them to try and leave behind their notions of right or wrong in art. This was both a challenge for us as educators as well as a reward. Each workshop was different in its own way. We didn't know what to expect: the number of children who would join in or how effective the overall session would be. No matter the number of children per session though, their overall enthusiasm was the most encouraging for us educators to see and experience.

A Note of thanks

I would like to thank Shivangi from the artreach team for her constant feedback and the time she spent on coordinating with the BOSCO centre for our various modules. I would also like to thank Reshma who assisted me during the sessions and initiated the documentation of the various modules.

I look forward to the next set of workshops at the BOSCO Centre and see the smiling faces of the children soon!

