

Conversations through Calligraphy

Project III

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*'For every form,
He has been the ideal,
His form, visible everywhere.'*

Rig Veda VI.47.18

Data Collection

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Concept

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Expression

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Early expression and evolution of Language

world's oldest paintings
cave art on the walls of
France's Grotte Chauvet



Urge to express - drawing and painting

Sound to speech evolution

System for communication - language emerged

Set of symbols and rules - alphabets & Grammar

Areas of content of the written word:

its semantic structure

its linguistic interconnections

its etymology and grammar

Script and writing



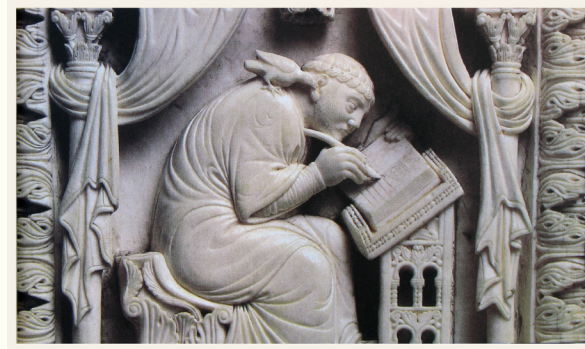
CLOCKWISE

Nagarjunakonda Scribe
RAJA LEKHAYA

Wooden Scribe from
Thebes (Cairo Museum)

Assyrian Scribes
(8th Century B.C.)

God Toth
In the form of IBIS



Accumulation of wisdom necessitated its being recorded
Sound - speech - writing

Systems of writing across time and cultures

Origin

Configuration of letterforms

Intrinsic attributes

Necessity

Purpose

History of Scripts



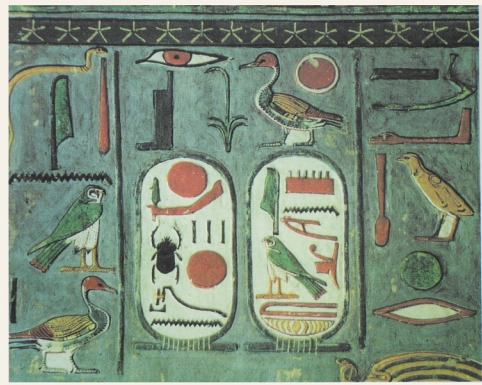
Cuneiform Script
Royal Palace of Ebla,
2400 B. C. E

pictures - pictograms - ideograms -
rebus, syllabic and phonetic writing - the alphabet

Art of Egyptian pictograph

The Chinese ideograph

The Semitic Phoenician Alphabetic signary



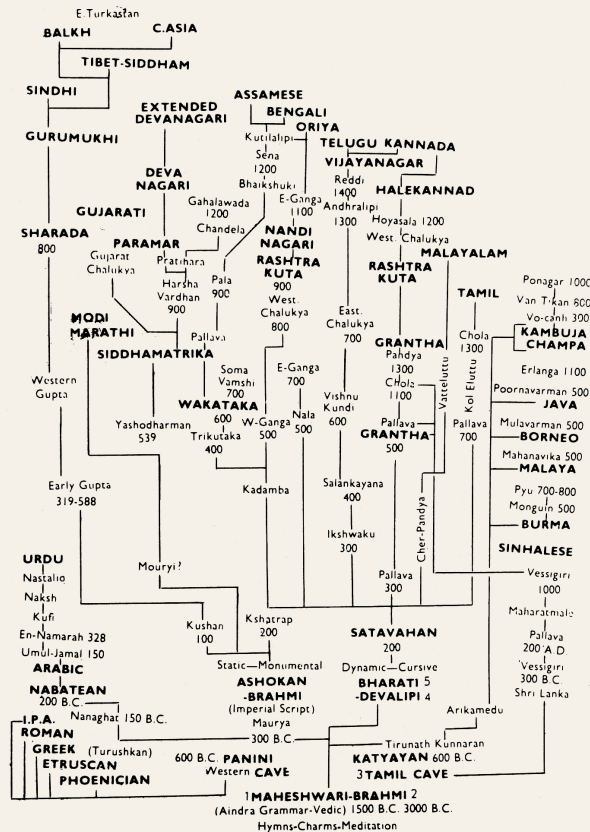
Hieroglyphic script
tomb of Horem Heb



Hieratic writing on
Papyrus 1285 B. C. E.

History of Scripts

SOUTH-ASIAN SCRIPTS OF THE BRAHMI FAMILY OF SCRIPTS



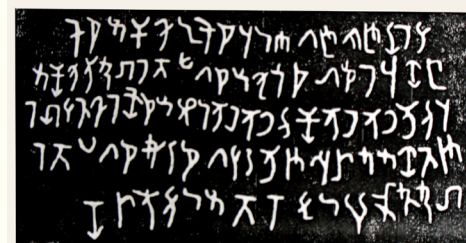
- 1 Pannavana Sutra.
- 2 Jaina-Bhagavati Sutra, Lalitavistara
- 3 Lalitavistara
- 4 Padmapurana, Lalitavistara.
- 5 Amara-kosha, Padmapurana

The Maheshwari sootras - fourteen syllables
from the sounds of the Cosmic Dancer Shiva's damaru
key to the great grammarian Panini's

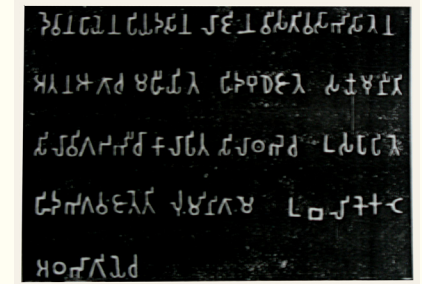
The signs on the Indus Valley seals
Before 3rd century Brahmi and Kharoshthi flourished in India.

The Mauryan Brahmi of Ashoka's edicts of the 3rd century B.C.
base for the development of various scripts all over India

Travelling through time and topography - Brahmi changed



Kharoshthi



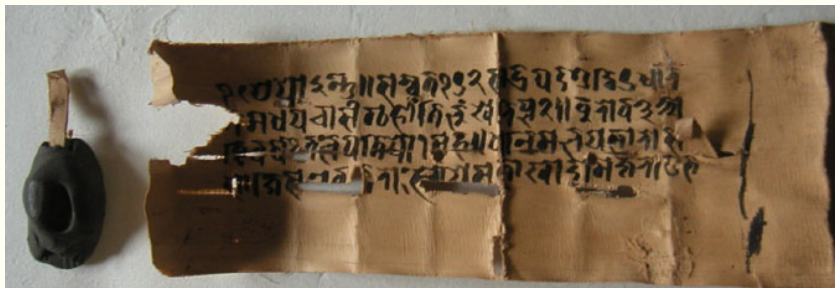
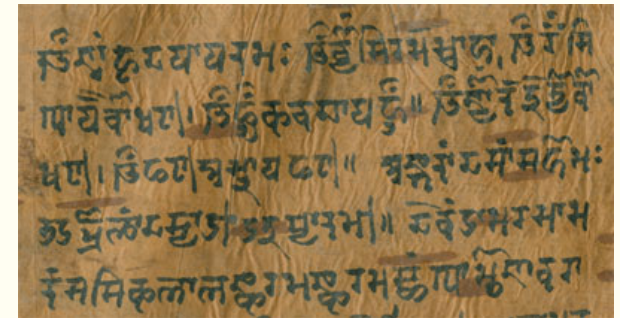
Brahmi

Writings through the ages

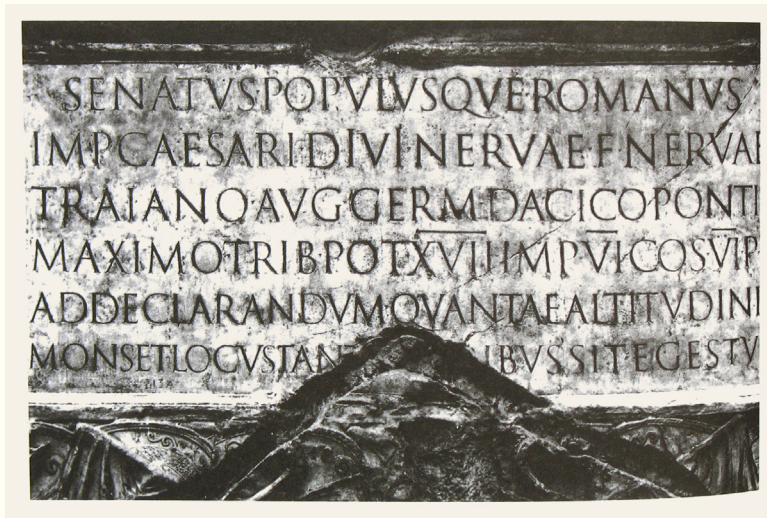
'GANESHA HYMN' GANAPATI-ATHARVANA-SHEERSHAM
TEXT OF THE 'TOP-HYMN' TO ATHARVA-VEDA

ॐ नमस्तै गणपतये ॥ त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं त्वमसि ॥ त्वमेव केवलं कर्तासि ॥ त्वमेव केवलं धर्तासि ॥ त्वमेव केवलं हर्तासि ॥
 त्वमेव सर्वं त्वत्वं ब्रह्मासि ॥ त्वं साक्षादात्मासि नित्यं ॥ ऋतं वच्मि ॥ सत्यं वच्मि ॥ अवत्वं प्रो ॥ अवक्तारं ॥
 अवप्रोक्तारं ॥ अवदत्तारं ॥ अवधातारं ॥ अवावृत्तान् प्रययिष्ये ॥ अवपृथ्यानात् ॥ अवपुरस्तात् ॥ अवोन्मत्तानात् ॥
 अवदक्षिणात् ॥ अवधोर्ध्वात् ॥ अनापानात् ॥ सर्वतोऽप्योपादिपादिसंयतात् ॥ त्वं वायुः पृथ्वी न्यस्यः ॥
 त्वं वा नंदपथस्त्वं ब्रह्मपथः ॥ त्वं सच्चिदानंदोऽद्वितीयोसि ॥ सर्वप्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि ॥ त्वं ज्ञानं प्रथो विज्ञानं प्रथोसि ॥
 सर्वज्ञादिदेवं तं तानोक्तये ॥ सर्वज्ञादिदेवं तं त्वत्त्वं नित्यं वच्मि ॥ सर्वज्ञं त्वं त्वत्त्वं नित्यं वच्मि ॥ सर्वज्ञादिदेवं तं तानोक्तये ॥
 त्वं सृष्टिपादिदेवं तं तानोक्तये ॥ त्वं चत्वारिबाहुकृपासि ॥ सर्वत्राश्रयादेवं ॥ त्वंदेवं प्रयातीतं ॥ त्वं कालप्रयातीतं ॥
 त्वं मृताधारस्थितोसि नित्यं ॥ त्वं शक्तिप्रयात्प्रकः ॥ त्वं शक्तिगोप्याश्रयं नित्यं ॥ त्वं ब्रह्मा त्वं विष्णुस्त्वं रुद्रस्त्वमिन्द्र-

सन्ध्याग्निरस्त्वंवायुस्त्वंसूर्यस्त्वं चंद्रमास्त्वंजलप्रापुर्ध्रुवःस्वरोम॥ गणातिर्पूर्वमुच्चार्यवर्णीतं तदन्तर्नरं॥ अनुस्वारः परतरः॥
अर्थं दत्तमिदं॥ तारिण रुद्धं॥ एतच्चमभुस्वरूपं॥ गकारः पूर्वस्वरं॥ अकारो मध्यमस्वरं॥ अनुस्वारश्चोच्चस्वरं॥
विंशत्तारस्वरं॥ नादः संधानं॥ स षड्विंशतः शिः॥ मेघागणोऽतिविशालः॥ गणकः ऋषिः॥ निचुद्राग्रेऽप्युत्तरे॥ गणपतिर्देवता॥
ॐ गणपतये नमः॥ एकदन्ताय विद्महे ब्रह्मजन्ताय धीमहि॥ नमोऽन्दीना प्रबोदयन्ताय॥ एकदन्तं चतुर्हस्तं पाशमकुशा-
धारिणम्॥ रवेचरदहर्हस्तं विप्रान् मूषकां च जम्॥ रक्तं केचोदरं शर्यकणं रक्तं वासवं॥ रक्तांगं मुकुतांगं रक्तपुष्पं॥
सुग्राजं ताम्रं॥ भक्तानुकीर्णं तदेवं जगत्कारणमञ्जुलं॥ आविष्कृतं चतुर्दशराशे पृथुः शर्य॥ एतन्महाशक्तिः शिवो नित्यं-
मोक्षायै योगीनां वरः॥ नमो गणपतये नमो॥ गणपतये नमः॥ प्रथमस्तुतये नमस्तुतये॥ अस्तु केचोदरायै केदन्ताय विद्महाशक्तिः॥
शिवस्तत्प्राथम्येन स्तुतये नमः॥
- गणपत्यष्टवर्गवर्णम्



Writings through the ages



Trajan column



Book of Kells



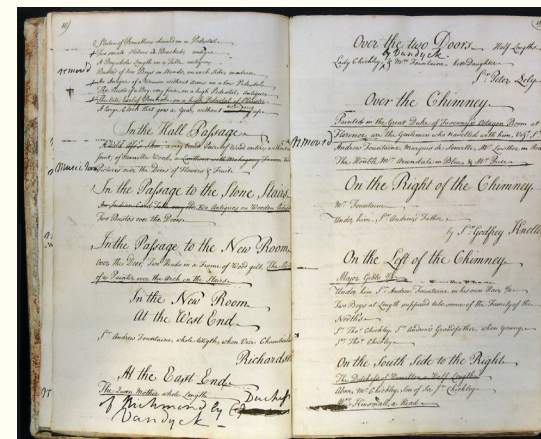
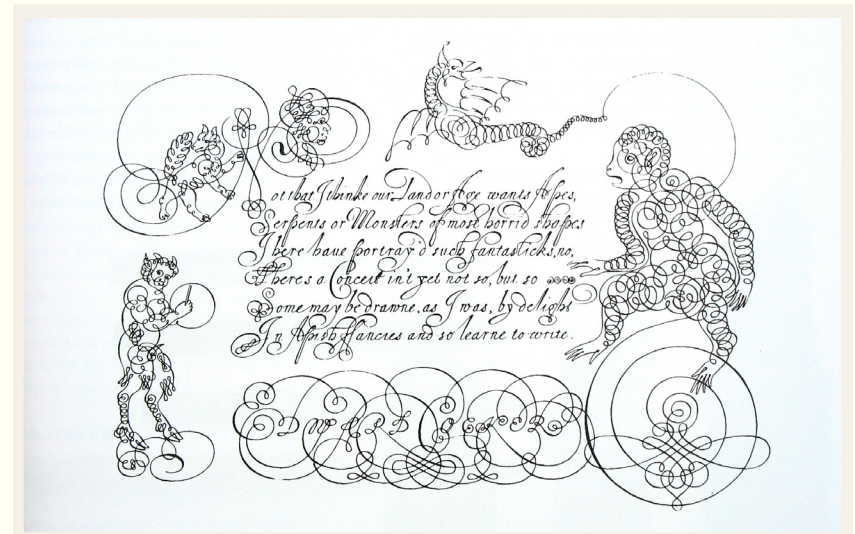
Writings through the ages



Carolingian Script

Seguita lo ssempro delle' lre' che pono
 ligar'si con tutte le' sue sequenti, in tal mo-
 do cioè
 aa ab ac ad ae' af ag ah ai ak al am an
 ao ap aq ar as at au ax ay az
 Il medesimo farai con d i k l m n u.
 Le ligature poi de' e f s t sono
 le' infra:
 scrutte
 et, fa ff fi fn fo fr fu fy,
 st st
 ff ll β st, ta te ti tn to ty tr tt tu
 te ty
 Con le restanti littere de' lo Alphabeto, che
 sono, b e g h o p q r x y z
 non si doue' ligar mai tra
 alcuna sequente

que euangelizarū et apostolorū au-
ditorias promulgauit. In quibz in-
ta de ueteri testamento legimus que i
nostris codicibus non habentur: ut
est illud: et egipto vocauit filiū meū: et
quoniā nazarethus uocabitur: et vi-



Cursives

Typography



Guttenberg's Bible

First mass-produced book was successfully printed - the Gutenberg Bible of 1454

Rotary steam presses

Line-casting machines – linotype, monotype

Photocomposition (Intertype et. al., start 1950-60, end 1975-85)

Digital (start 1973-83)

Digital fonts

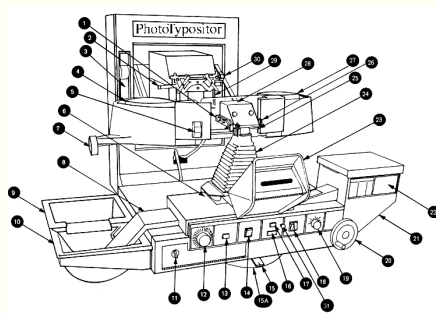


Structural differences - Graeco-Roman and Indian scripts.

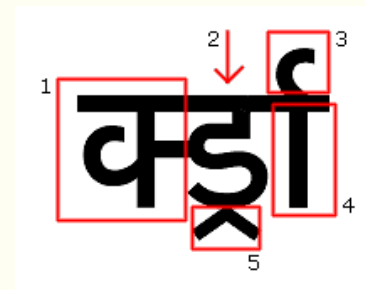
Printing press arrived in India 1556

Books printed n Devanagiri 1796

Most of the type styles took inspiration from calligraphic traditions.

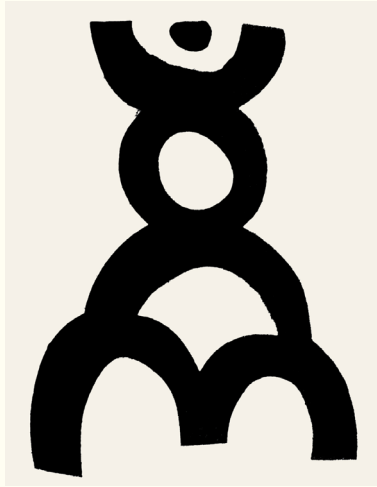


Phototypesetter



Type - Indian Languages

Calligraphy



Expression of sound, idea, inspiration through form

Explore the emergence of sound (nada);
of speech of writing which gives form (akara) to language

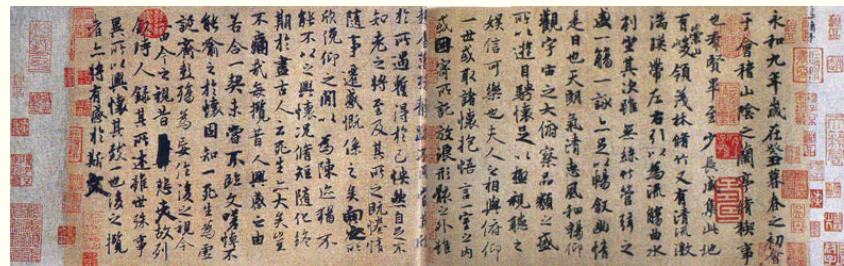
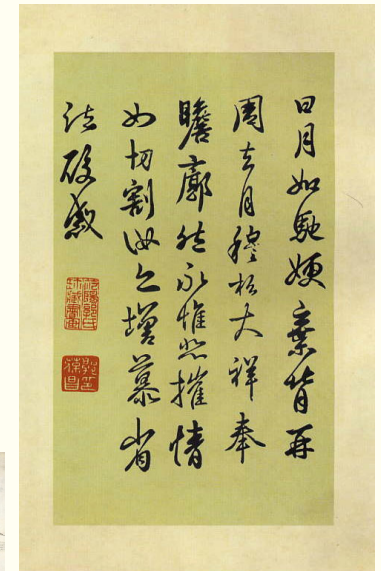
Language of the letterform is seen to become equivalent to the
written word itself

An awareness of the metaphysical (adhyatmic),
aesthetic (saundarya), structural (rachana), spatial (akasha)
and technical (upayojana) considerations of the aksharas

In the care and concern with which it is written,
the sign becomes symbol, the unmanifest is made manifest.
And the form transcends the act of writing to become an act of
spiritual dedication: Calligraphy

In most languages word is the basic unit of meaning, whereas,
in Sanskrit, the letter is the basic unit of meaning

Calligraphy from across the world



Calligraphy and its various tools



"An unerring sense of relationship is called for: of writing tool to surface, or content to form"

Writing tools and surfaces affect letterforms.

Chisel on stone - austere characters

Stylus on palm leaf - curvilinear scripts

Birchbark (bhurjapatra) and etched copperplate - formal quality of writing

Paper and brush, with inks in 'five shades of black' - vital art in China and Japan.

The quill, gliding over the smooth surfaces of parchment and vellum (made of sheepskin and calfskin, respectively), - intricate patterns of the illuminated manuscripts of Europe.

It is the broad nib that gives the pen its constructive and educational value. It is essentially the letter making tool."

Edward Johnston

In India surfaces used for writing were:

rocks, pillars, gold plates, silver plates, copper plates, palm leaves, birch bark and cloth.

Meeting with Prof. Kshirsagar



The story of letters - why was letter born?

Now that technology takes care of the standardization,
why not go beyond...

Calligraphy is a performing art

I also see a book than just read it

Education has not created the recognition of its aesthetic value

Japanese calligrapher - why just black ink and paper?

Tonal values allow people to see colours they want to see

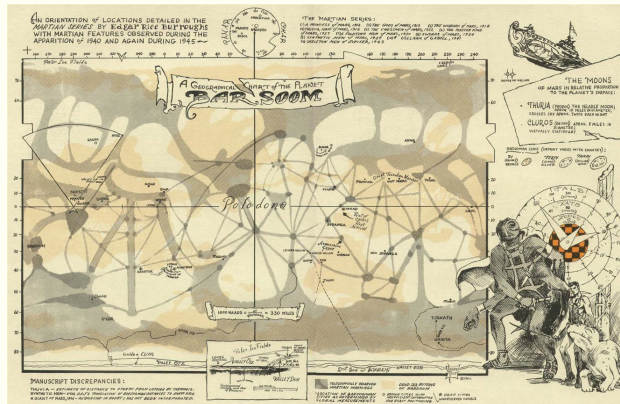
Mind exists in an abstract reality: it is either in the past or
the future. In the present it is only the absence of mind which
happens when I am doing.

My sorrow is I can't be illiterate again.

My sorrow is my word will only reach to the limit
of your vocabulary

Applications and role today

Cartography



Visual Poetry



Cartography

Musical notation

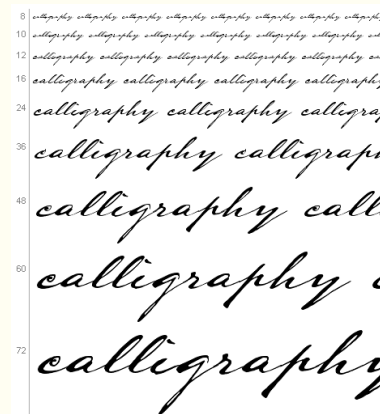
Visual poetry

Calligraphic Fonts

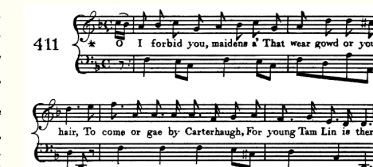
Communication Design



Calligraphic fonts



Musical Notes



Applications and role today



The Jain Mandir adopts the original writing method to document their holy scriptures.

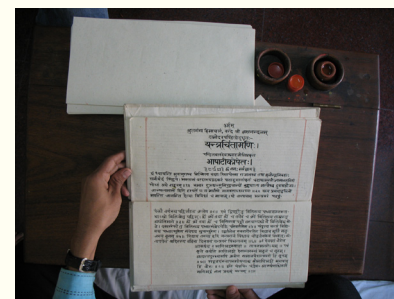
Trained scribes

Specially made paper

Specially made ink

Appropriate attire and head gear

Traditional method of binding



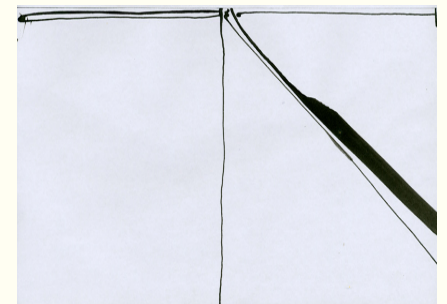
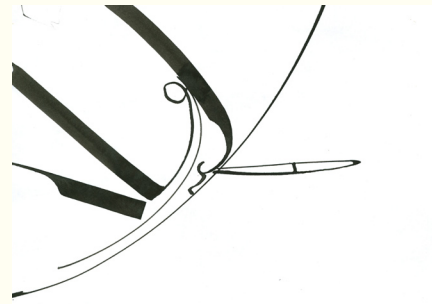
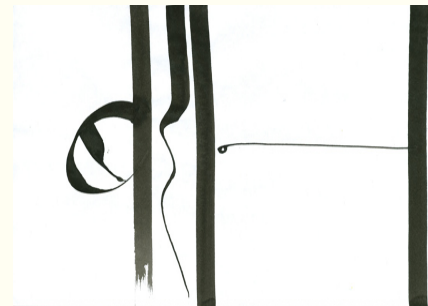
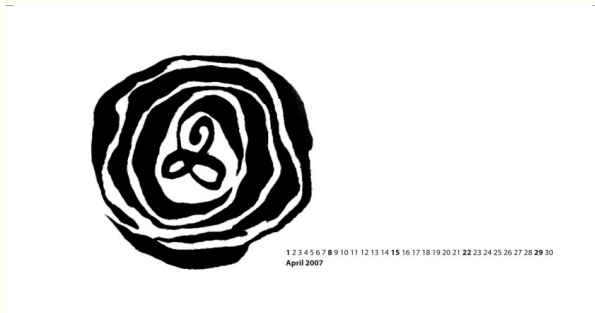
Contemporary Calligraphy

Aksharaya - a group of people interested in Calligraphy

Works of Achyut Palav

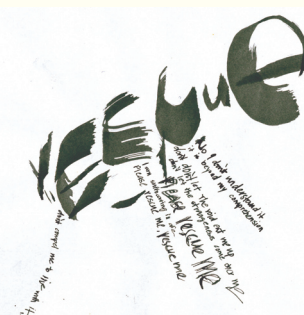
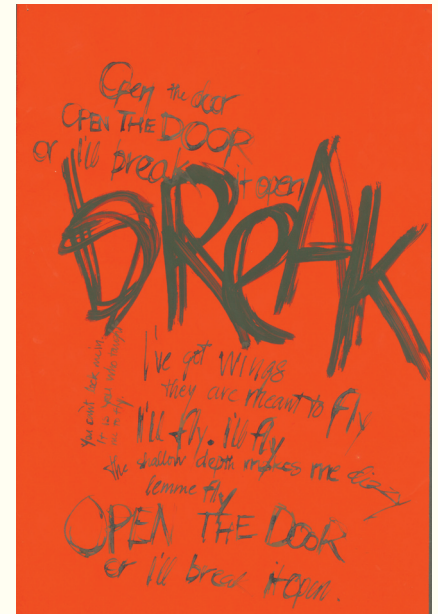
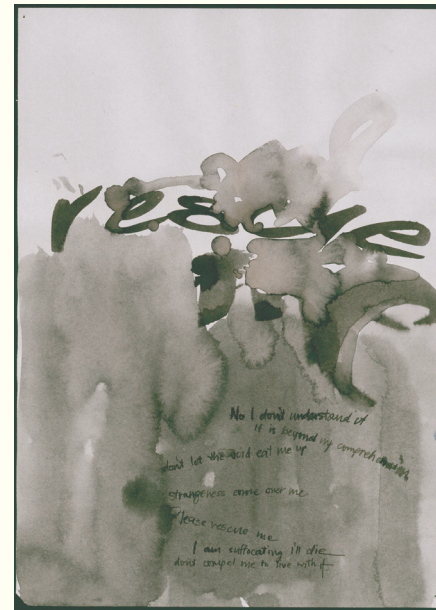
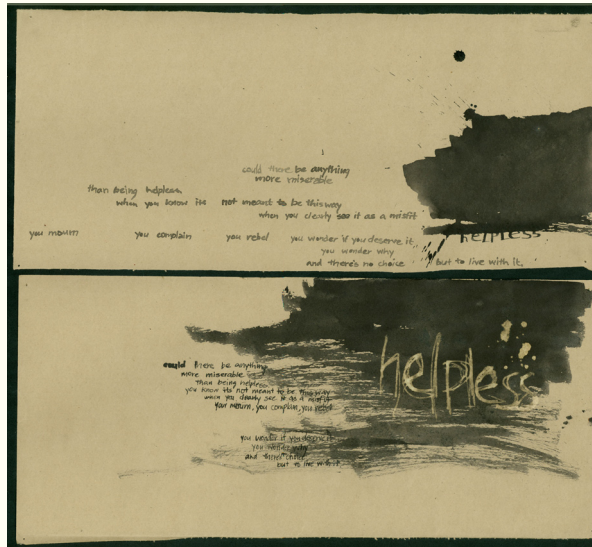
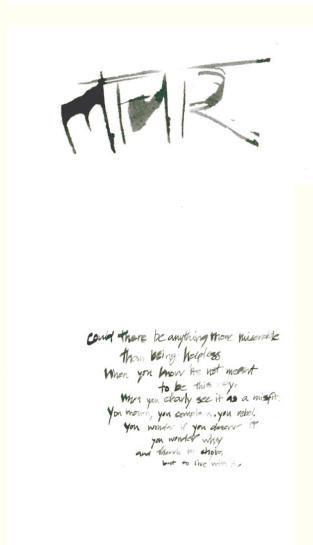
Aksharyoga seminar held in IDC in February 1986

Prof. Santosh Kshirsagar



Explorations

Calligraphy workshop
Prof. Santosh Kshirsagar



Explorations

Urdu Script
Exploration of single words

مکرمچہ

کشمکش

صبح

مصرف
مصرف
مصرف
مصرف

مصرف
مصرف
مصرف
مصرف

انسان

اکیل
اکیل
اکیل
اکیل

مصرف

حرام
فطرت

Explorations

Arabic Script
Doa E Aayatul Kursi



Initial thoughts

Illustration through calligraphy

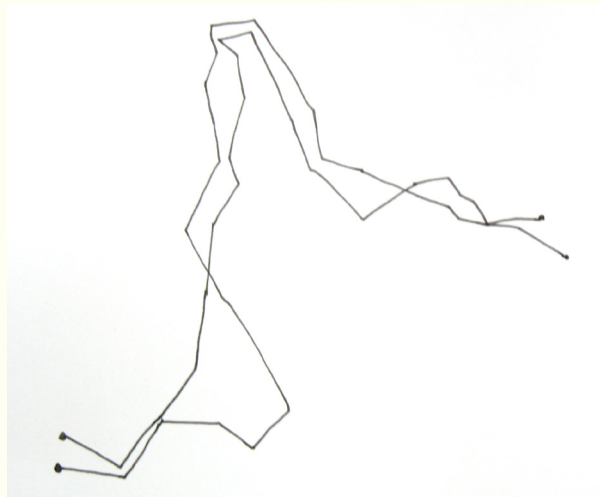
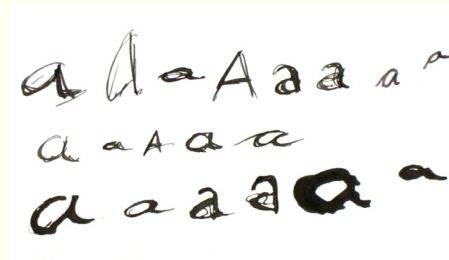
Emphasis on text as an image and not just alphabets

Express using the forms of the alphabets itself
than relying on the meaning they suggest



How can thought be directly reflected in
a typographic expression instead of relying
on a structured understandable or legible text ?

Initial Concepts



A graphic novel

A story where the characters as well as the environment and circumstances would be represented in calligraphy

Fictional stories on each alphabet (for children)

A set of stories based on each alphabet as a character
How it behaves in different situations

Story of letters

How they were born, where all did they travel
and how did they evolve into various forms

Nature of Conversations

How colourful conversations are in their structure, pattern
What are the varying tonal values that appear & disappear
Tone of voice and its visual expression

Conversations at different places

Kind of conversation that are peculiar to a place
How do they contribute to the identity of the place

Identities of people

Speaking patterns that become representative of characters

Initial Concepts



Representations of conversations through calligraphy

Natural conversation between different people at different places



Conversation between a same set of people at various occasions

Expression of opinion over a particular concern by different people



Routine conversation between the same set of people who meet up at a same place, time regularly and talk

Conversation of one person throughout a day

Conversations that take place at a particular place

Conversations that take place between a certain distance



Perceptions of space

Spatial Order

Concrete perceptions in terms of figures, directions, positions, magnitude, direction

Space relations

Sensation of particular line and angles

Perception of whereness to thereness

Kant

"Neither space nor time are conceived as substances, but rather both are elements of a systematic framework we use to structure our experiences"

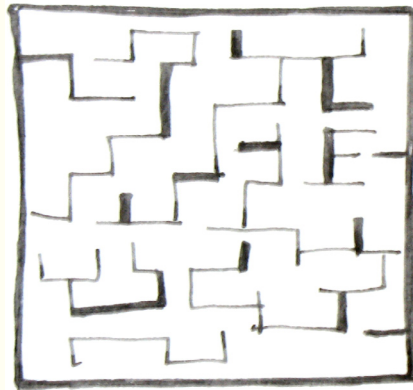
Schopenhauer, in 'On the will in nature'

"Space is the condition of the possibility of juxtapositions"

Is space real or is it just a conceptual framework?

What makes any given space different from the other?

Perceptions of space



Even if its a void, it is still a space as a whole
There is a space within a space within a space
Perception of boundaries

Is it mental associations or the physical positioning
that gives it identity?

Places are often arbitrarily assigned a NAME
Name - Textual association with the abstract space

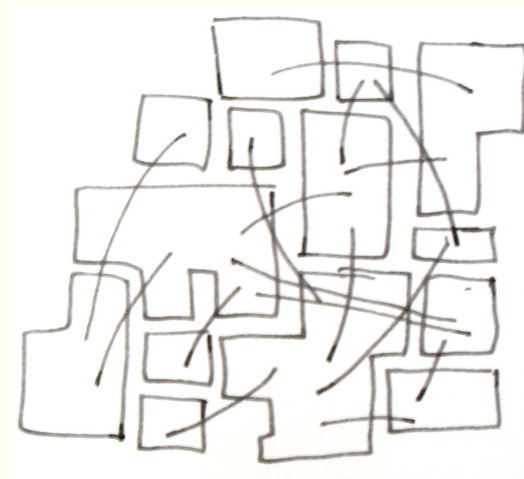
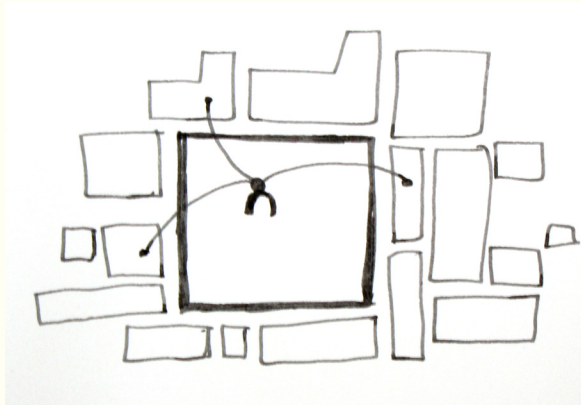


Container of all the stationery and dynamic elements it holds
Artefacts create the visual image of the space
They are physical, tangible, finite and hence identifiable
with names attached to them

A place also holds a lot of invisible or intangible things
smells, sounds and minds are some of them

A space when shared also allows for interaction
It takes place when a place facilitates it,
people perceive it and act on it
It is then a part of the space

Interactions in a space



Conversations is the verbalisation of concepts involving abstractions and concrete objects which make up the reality in which we reside - Wikipedia

It is communication between by 2 or more people on a particular topic

Temporal and dynamic

They are invisible

How much room does a place allow for what kind of interaction is an individual's prerogative

Are certain kind of interactions associated to a place?

Will the layer of intrapersonal or intragroup interactions alone be able to represent that place?

People's association with other contexts and places

Narratives in a conversation connect it to other places

Space - part of larger interconnected space

Narratives of different places converge and diverge

Representation of a space

Challenge is to recreate a given space in another given space through visual representations of narratives that exist there in the form of conversations



Label / Name
Arbitrarily
defined space



One plane
longshot view
all elements
all activities
all its layers



Physical
structure
navigation
division



Activities
Multiple
co-ordinated



People
as a whole
similar activities
purpose



People
as individuals
different
backgrounds,
different
contexts,
different
mindsets



Narratives
Convergence
and divergence
of various micro
narratives

Conversations in a space



They travel in time - they travel across a distance

Depicted in a space they travel in directions

Several conversations when take place in a space they are all entangled and layered one on top of the other. They are all travelling differently, at different magnitudes, in different directions all in a given space

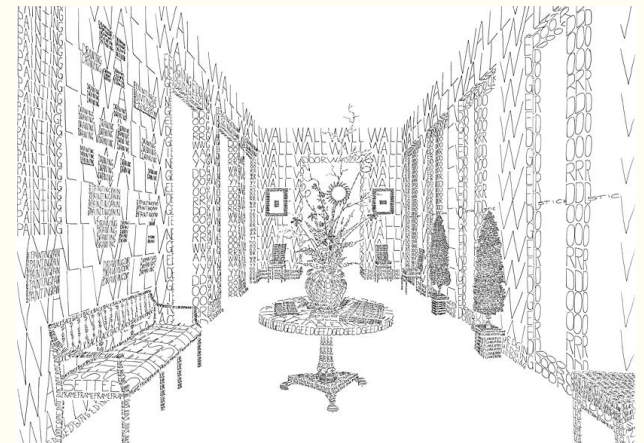
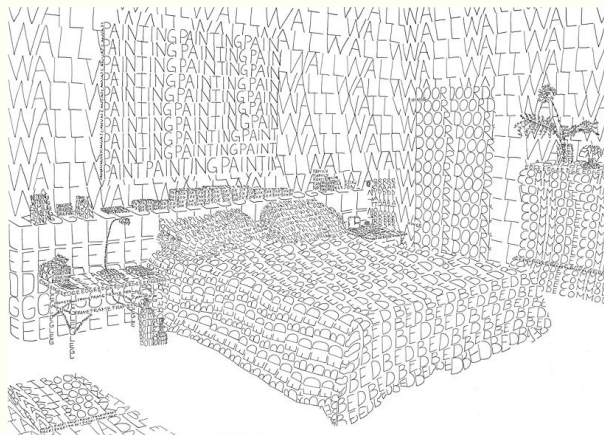
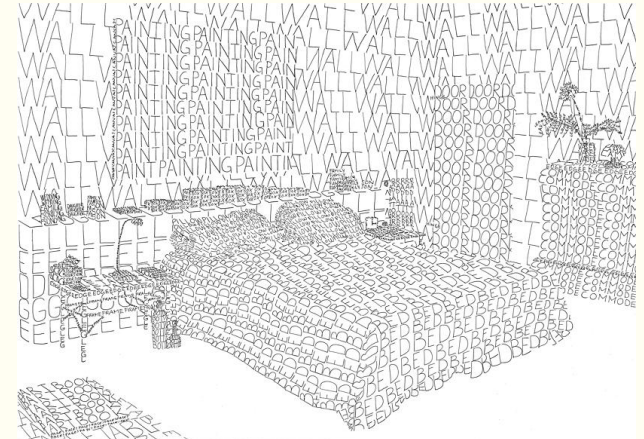
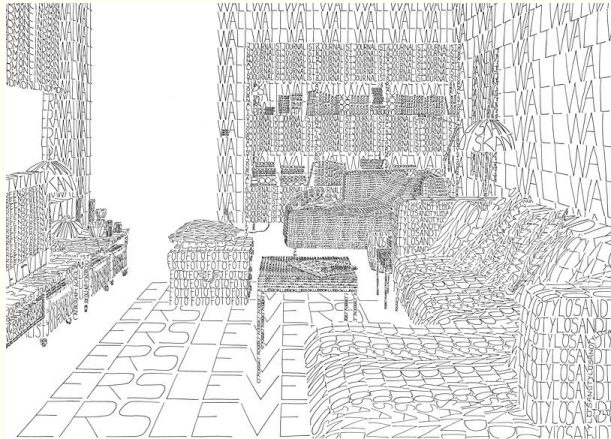
There therefore emerges a web of conversations if depicted visually with overlaps and interconnections between them

They may not be linearly perceived as one might witness many conversations at one time simultaneously

Paying attention to one, then requires consciously ignoring the rest. They are difficult to hold or capture

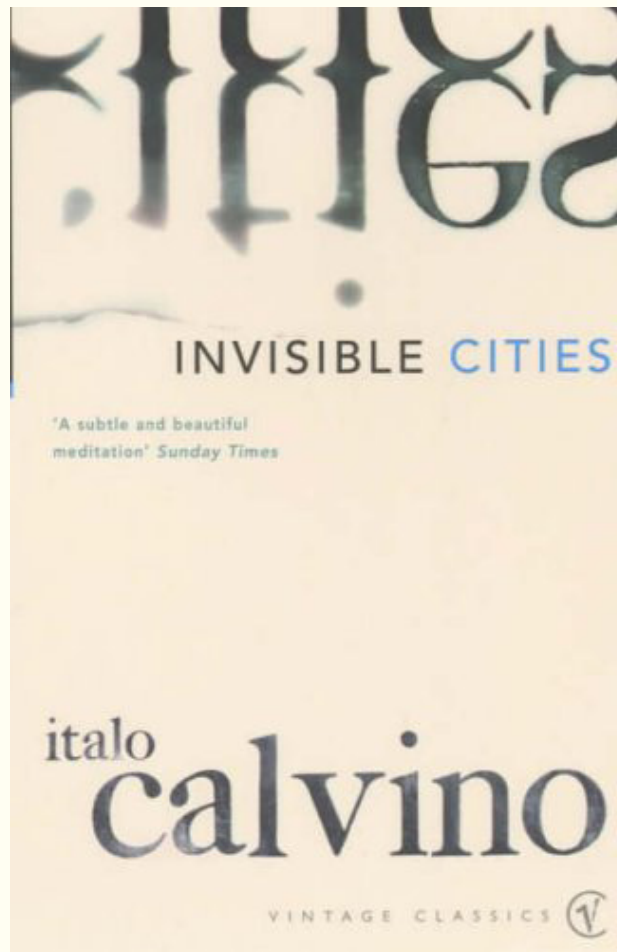
The content and nature of conversation, voice of the speakers, tone or attitude, clarity variations, overlaps, speed or tempo, pauses and silence

Examples of representations



Examples of representations

Invisible Cities
Italo Calvino



Palestine
Joe Sacco



Places considered

- 1 Places where people come together, sit, chat and especially catch up for a conversation
Conversations are a lot less related to the space itself
Different kinds of conversations
Cafeterias, parks, restaurants, Marine Drive, Staff Canteen
- 2 Places where people come together for a particular activity
Conversations are more or less related to the activity or the function of the place
Other subjects too
Places that allow activities like travelling, shopping, worshipping, posting

Conversations captured from the following places:
Crawford Market stationery bazaar
Dhobi tala roadside sellers
Ladies compartments inside a train

Place chosen Ladies Compartment in the train

Calligraphic explorations of Conversations

कवि कविसे? या न *english.*

१२ पास आहे
७ टक्के आहे

ये मुलीकी training, पण होत winding चा कामात ए म काय करू आगेत सकता है न?

મા તાકા ત્યાના પૈલન વેંચાયલા મુલકા માટે main ચિંતા હો જો ચીલમાચલી થર ઝોડે નાં ?

full time સાથે પાઠ્ય

Computer Computer कर

Computer पर किये गए आदेश का

Computer मास हायानेव कनययं आहे.

गमना के एक winding Co. आदिता ना? व ना? winding?

विषयना शेवट का नि पलन, कविचित्ती गुणना हां आहे. शिकलेवा शेकलेवा अनादे. विहिवा विषयना

त्याच। English च्यांगला देआहेत आओहेत आहेत। कसं कळणार आता पण चरण?

डोबि बलीगा डरे बापरे डरे बापरे डरे बापरे डरे बापरे

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ਜੇ ਵਾਸੇ ਦੇ ਲਾਨਵਾਹ ਆਏ ਰੂਪ ਲਿਖਿਓਗੇ ਰੂਪ -

अप अप नाब ओ

अरे पर वो जा सकता है

बोले। २

मलिका / तो माणूस विलंबी आहे तो मिमपून येईन

पामल समजून समजनि घेईत

R wind: 2 m/s

बिना

१५०७

address दे दो उनको।

110

७५% म्हणजे तो .

हैं पर काम करो आगे बढ़ सच्चा है नर.

સે જો ચીલિયાવાળાં વર અને નાં ?

१) हि वासस्थानी कर आहे ना?
 २) सध्या तो ४० लाख वासस्थानी आहे

उठे उठे उठे जदोश-वो? ओंनिवलीला

Handwritten signatures: [Illegible]










$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}} \right) = \frac{\partial L}{\partial x}$

ॐ
महोपाध्यायः
श्री २८
॥ १ ॥

ਜੀਐ
ਥਰ ਅਤੇ
ਬਰ ਤੇ
ਨਾ ਲਾਗ
ਥਰ ਜੋ

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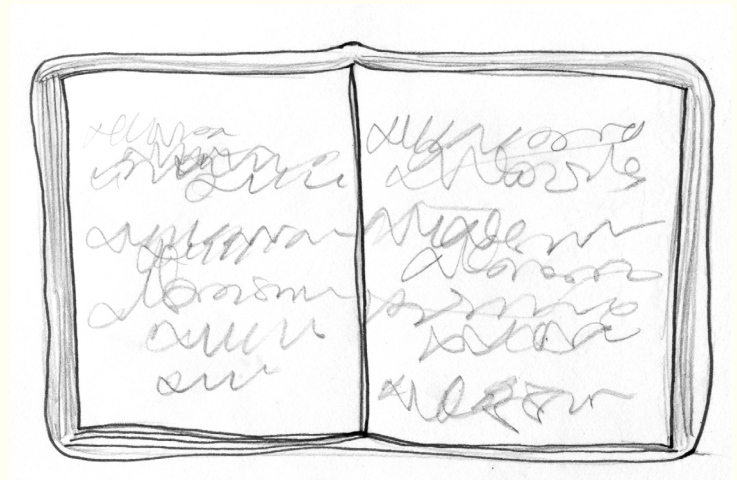
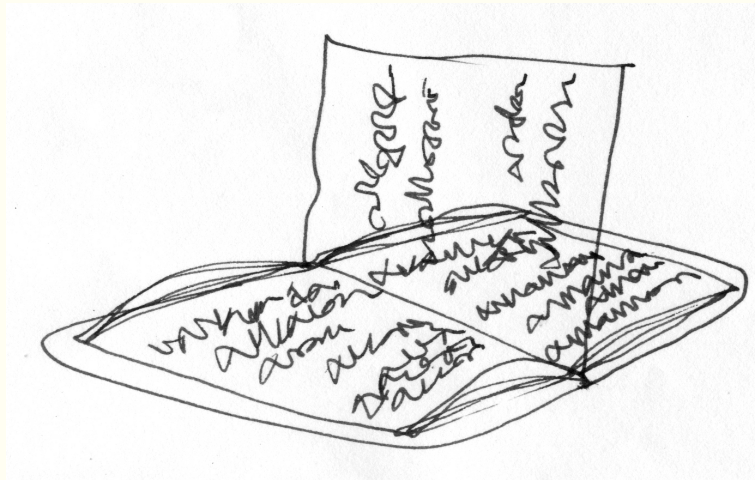
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

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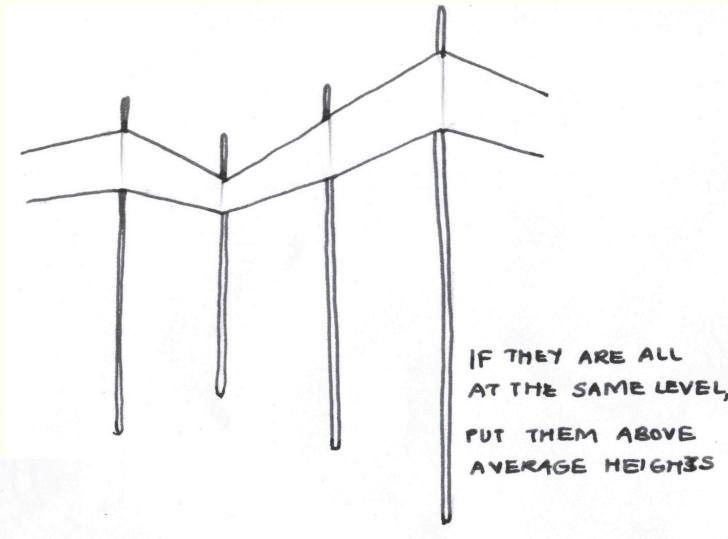
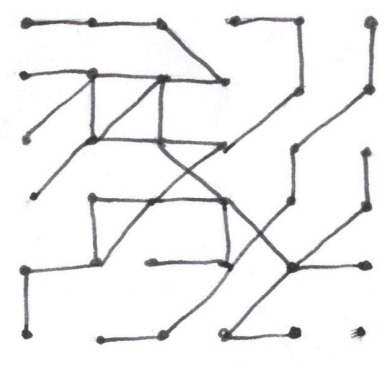
ह होता

का प्रवृत्ति होत

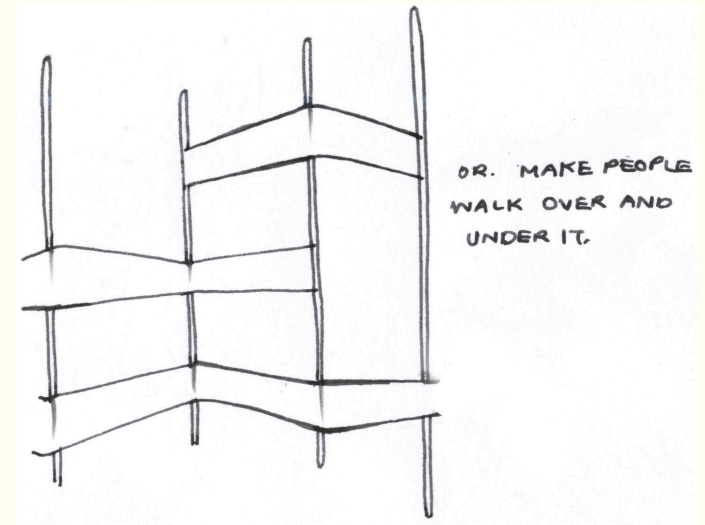
Compositions in the given space



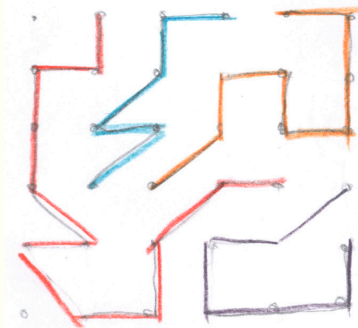
Compositions in the given space



IF THEY ARE ALL
AT THE SAME LEVEL,
PUT THEM ABOVE
AVERAGE HEIGHTS



OR. MAKE PEOPLE
WALK OVER AND
UNDER IT.

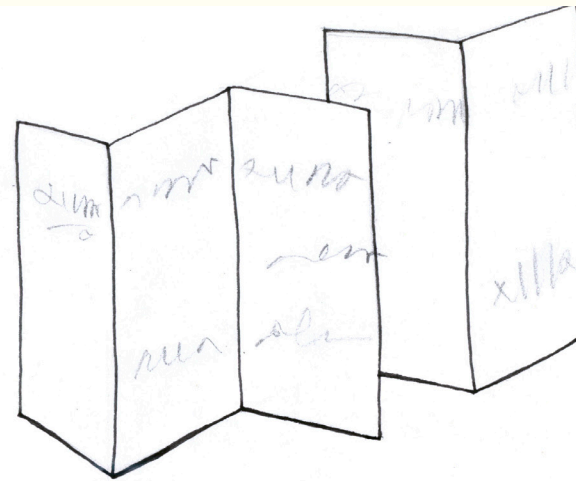
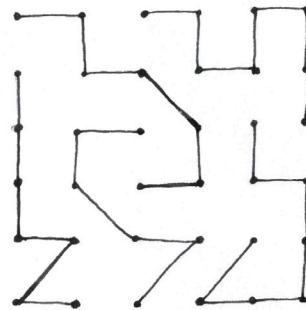


OR FIGURE
OUT THE
NAVIGATIONS
BETWEEN
THEM.

SO THAT IT
COULD BE AT
AN EYE LEVEL

MAKE SPACES FOR
NAVIGATION EXTREMELY
CRAMPED, OR
LIMITED.

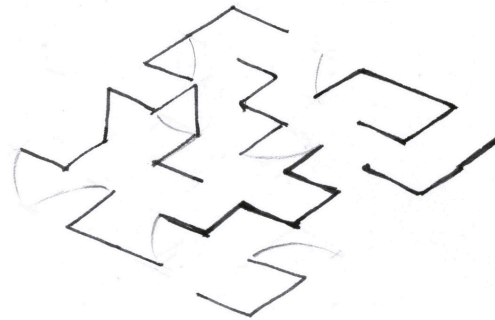
Compositions in the given space



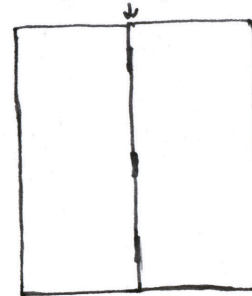
TRANSPARENT
ACRYLIC/GLASS
PANELS.

SCREEN PRINT,
VINYL STICKER,
PRINT ON TRANSPARENT
PAPER.

- MAYBE THE PANELS
ARE MADE OF
TRANSLUCENT PAPER.
(GATEWAY).

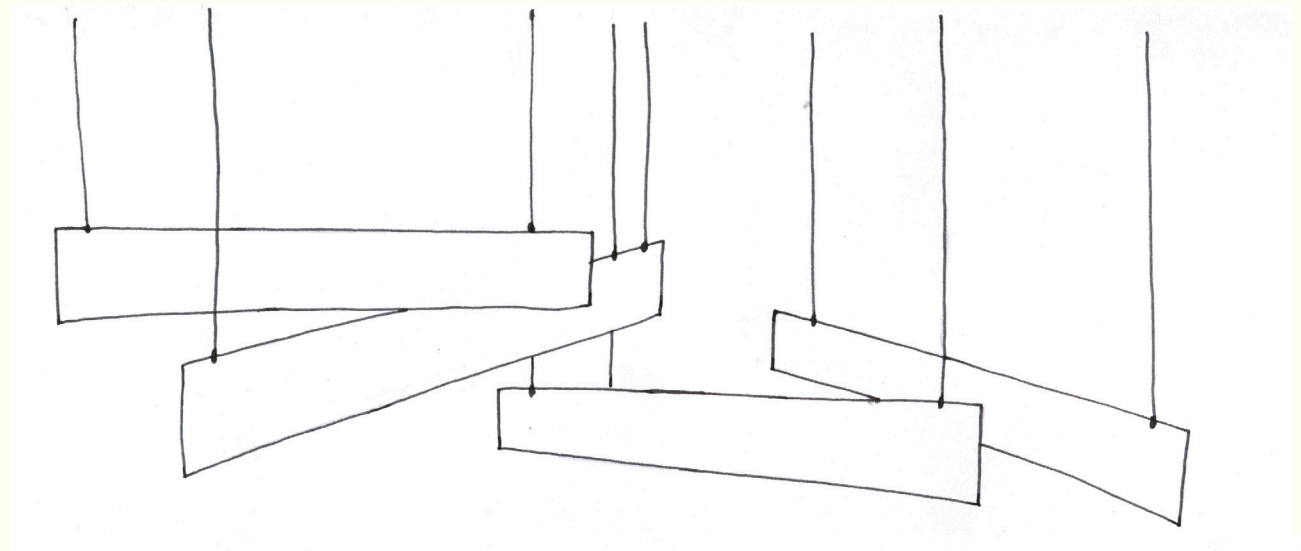


HINGED PANELS.



- Have conversations printed in white so that it becomes further invisible.
- and requires some background for reading. (a dark paper or something).

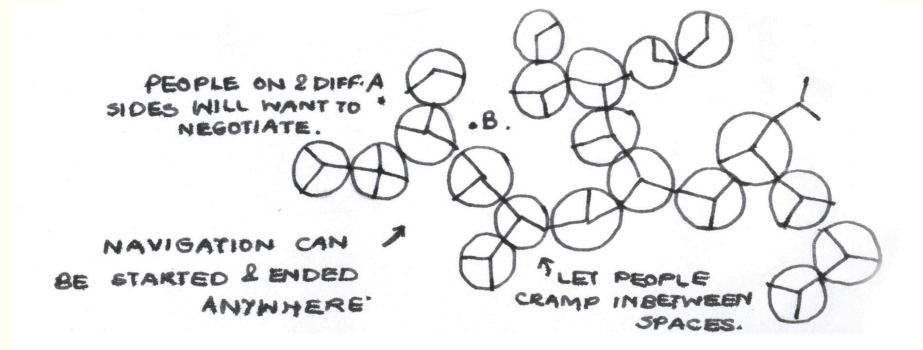
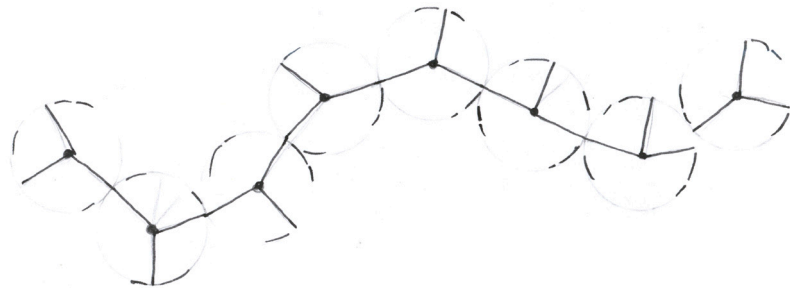
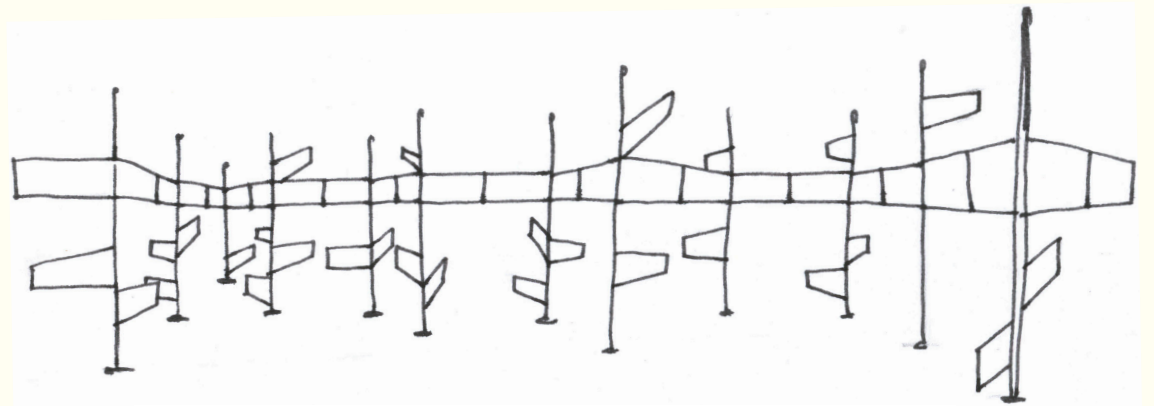
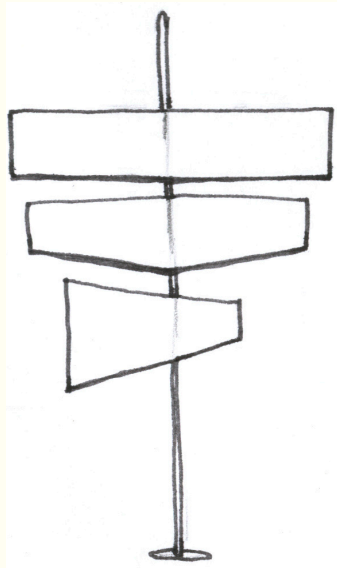
Compositions in the given space



Panels (paper) suspended from the ceiling at different heights.
or maybe at an average eyelevel.

(when at eyelevel and produced on transparent paper) translucent paper, it would also suggest people; that would add as backgrounds to the panel.

Compositions in the given space



Compositions in the given space

PROJECTIONS:

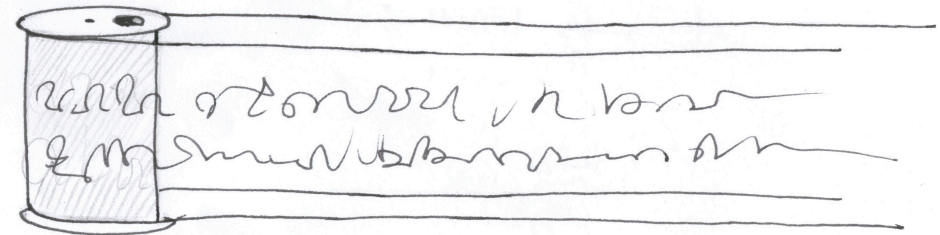
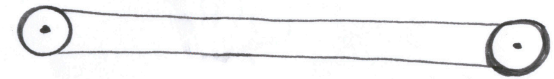
- Panels placed at various distances maybe at different orientations as well.
- Projections of conversations float on these translucent surfaces with the silhouettes of people the place contains.
- The orientation of these panels could be kept changing varying the light and shadows on the surface.

- The conversations could move / pan horizontally.
- Pauses could be represented both in time and space.



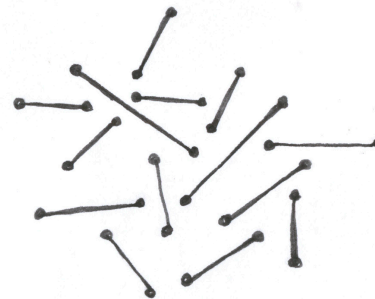
Compositions in the given space

WHITE PRINTING / VINYL CUT NEGATIVES

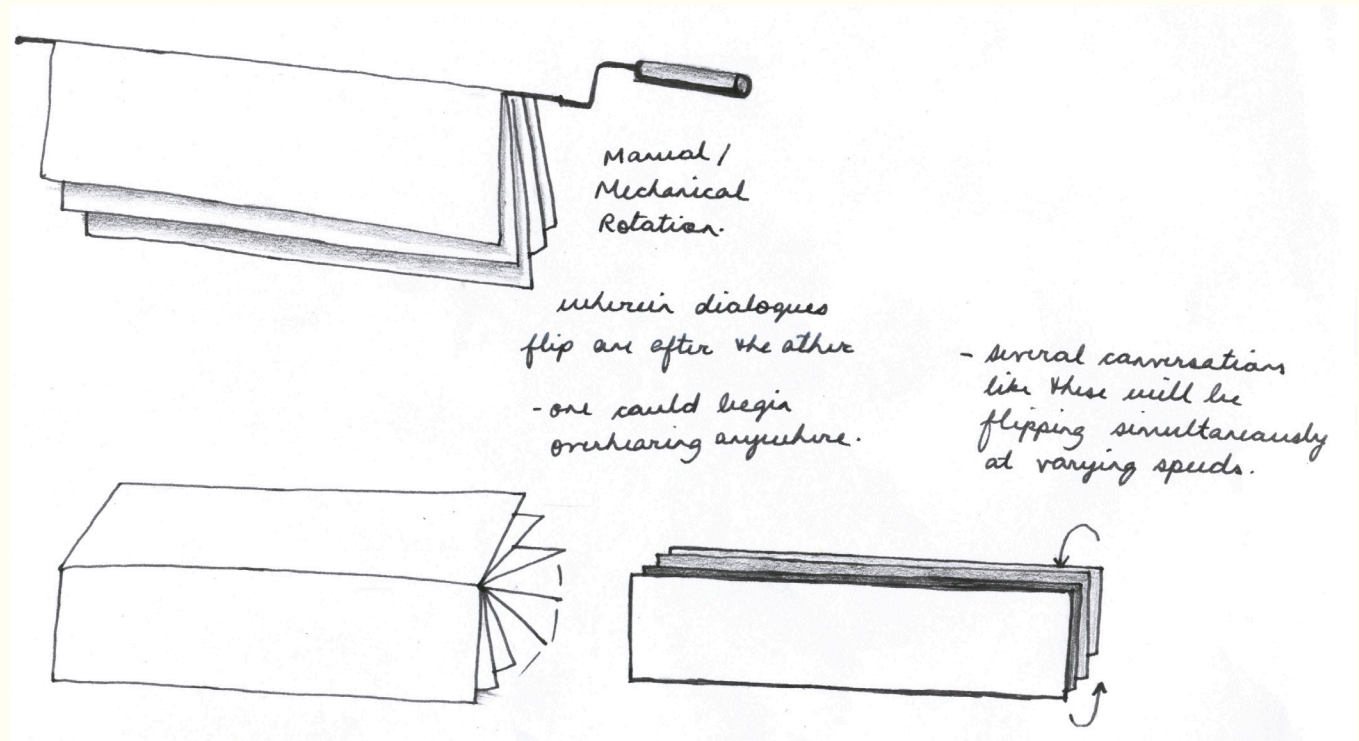


ends of a conversation
printed in white.
The distance between the end
lengths would depend on
the length of the conversation

These conversations are then
randomly placed.



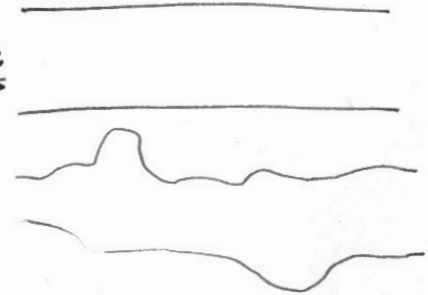
Compositions in the given space



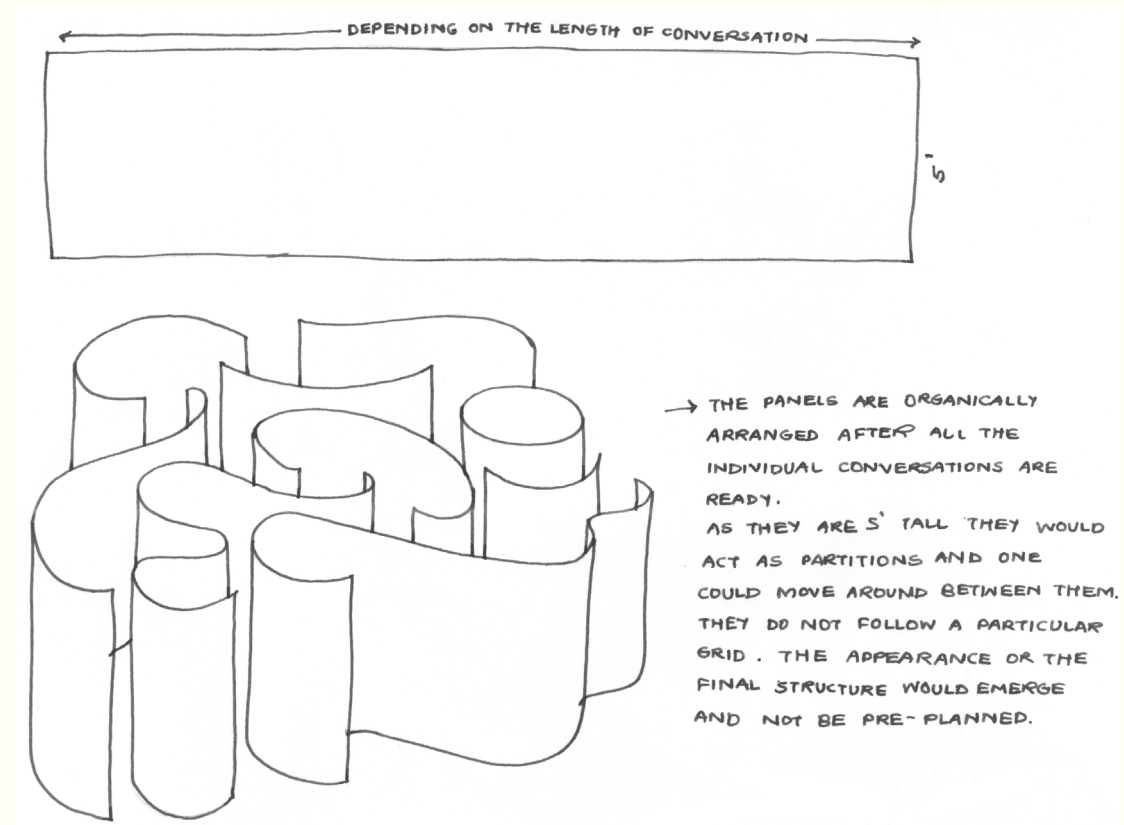
Compositions in the given space



INSTEAD OF
STANDARD CROPPED CANVAS,
HAVE THE CONVERSATIONS
ON ORGANICALLY SHAPED
BACKGROUNDS THAT
WOULD DEPEND AGAIN ON
THE NATURE OF THE
CONVERSATIONS.



Compositions in the given space



The final form



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Girish for introducing me to Arabic calligraphy

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Sachin, Hashim, Girija, Dipu, Pudi and the rest at IDC

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Mr. Navle, Mr. Kinny and the rest of workshop staff
for help in putting up the installation

