

Taking a Line for a Walk

Communicating Through Lines

Rishabh Pandey
Sr. Communication Design

Project 2
Report

Prof. Raja Mohanty
Guide

IDC School of Design
IIT Bombay, 2015-17

Approval Sheet

This Visual Communication Project II

Taking a Line for a Walk: Communicating Through Lines

by Rishabh Pandey from M.Des. Visual Communication

2015-17 is approved as a partial fulfillment of requirements

of a post graduate degree in Visual Communication

(Communication Design) at IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay.

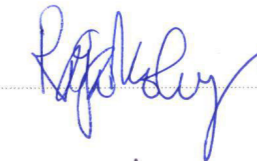
External Examiner:



Internal Examiner:



Guide:



Chairperson:



Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my idea in my own words and where other ideas or words have been included, I have adequately selected and referred the original source. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misinterpreted or fabricated or falsified any ideas / data / facts / sources in my submission.

I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources that have not been properly cited, or from whom proper permission has not been sought.



Rishabh Pandey
15625 0006

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following people:

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Swati Sharma, Ashish K. Thakur, Divyanshu Thakur, and Salik Ansari for patiently listening to my views about human life and actively discussing over my work.

The **21 students** who participated and gave feedbacks on my works.

My family and friends from childhood as well as all the people with whom I ever interacted specially IDC family—I believe they all share my works.

Abstract

The project borrows its title from the famous Swiss-German artist Paul Klee's line, "A line is a dot that went for a walk".

The project explores drawing with different media such as charcoal & pen as well as digital drawing tools. It attempts to understand the relevance of making image by expressing aspects of human life.

Over the time, around 40 images were created. Out of which, 21 selected have been showcased in the project along with an essay written on human life and happiness.

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The first writing of the human being was drawing, not writing.

Anonymous

Introduction

Man has been making images since the prehistoric era and the images have continued to inspire and influence mankind in many different ways; the images not only have shown the modern man the lifestyle of cavemen but also they've worked as a mirror of society and made man realize the good and bad things in life, in religion they guided man to focus on higher powers, they've inspired man to create what previously seemed impossible, and they've also opened up a way into our world where communication without use of words becomes possible.

Today when we look around we find out that our streets, television and

Internet is filled with images of animals where most of them being cats and dogs, people killing each other over some issues, places being destroyed, daily soaps spreading negativity and untrust within families and society, advertisements of self-promotion or to increase consumption of goods, and images spreading cultural values or religion, etc.

Now, with the advancements of technology in cameras, making images has become easier and accessible way more than five or six years back. Today everyone wants to click pictures all the time on the go.

The majority of the photos that have been taken in human history, have been taken in the last two years.

Anil Dash, 99U Conference / 2015

The sudden advancement of technology in mobile phones have made us the victim of clicking and seeing selfies of people around us all the time making silly and dumb faces and tagging themselves as 'cute' and what not! Another mental change that can be seen easily is youngsters considering themselves as 'photographers' and all they do is take selfies all day long.

Various successful artists and designers today are busy working on demand and supply basis, they seem to have drank all of their sense of wonder the next day they became successful, now nothing is left in the bottle... The rest of the artists and designers among them mostly students and the ones struggling to make a living and be seen someday are still awake

admiring the wonders of the world and the means of being a human and being alive. We while wondering about this fascination of ours silently look at our surroundings and thank to be able to understand and admire the beauty in it, we seek further to understand the mysteries of our existence as we discover and sometimes want nothing more but to create more wonders in return.

The Earliest Known Images Made by Human Beings



Left
A Cave Wall in Indonesia
At least 39,900 years old.



Above
Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, India
Around 30,000 years old.



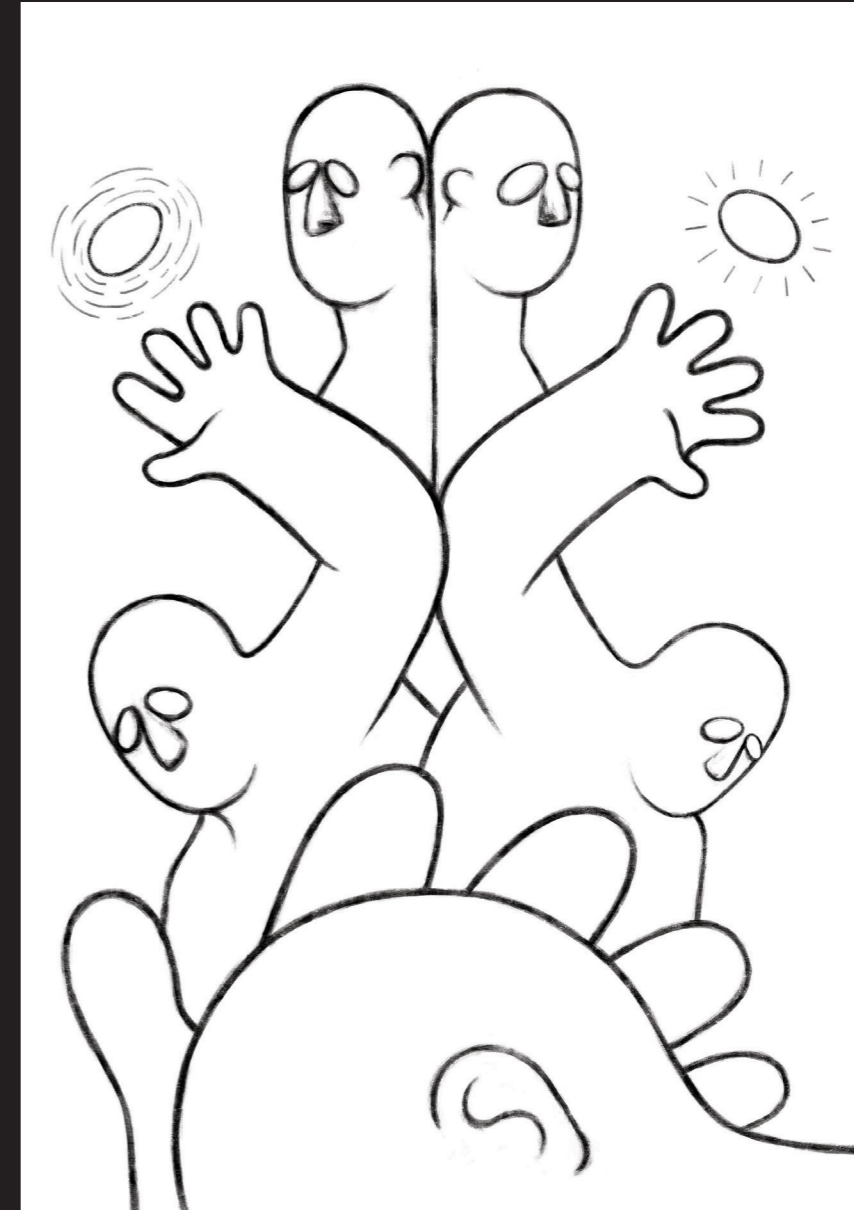
Above
Lascaux Cave Drawing, France
Around 17,300 years old.

The earliest known images made by human beings date back to approximately 40,000 years ago.

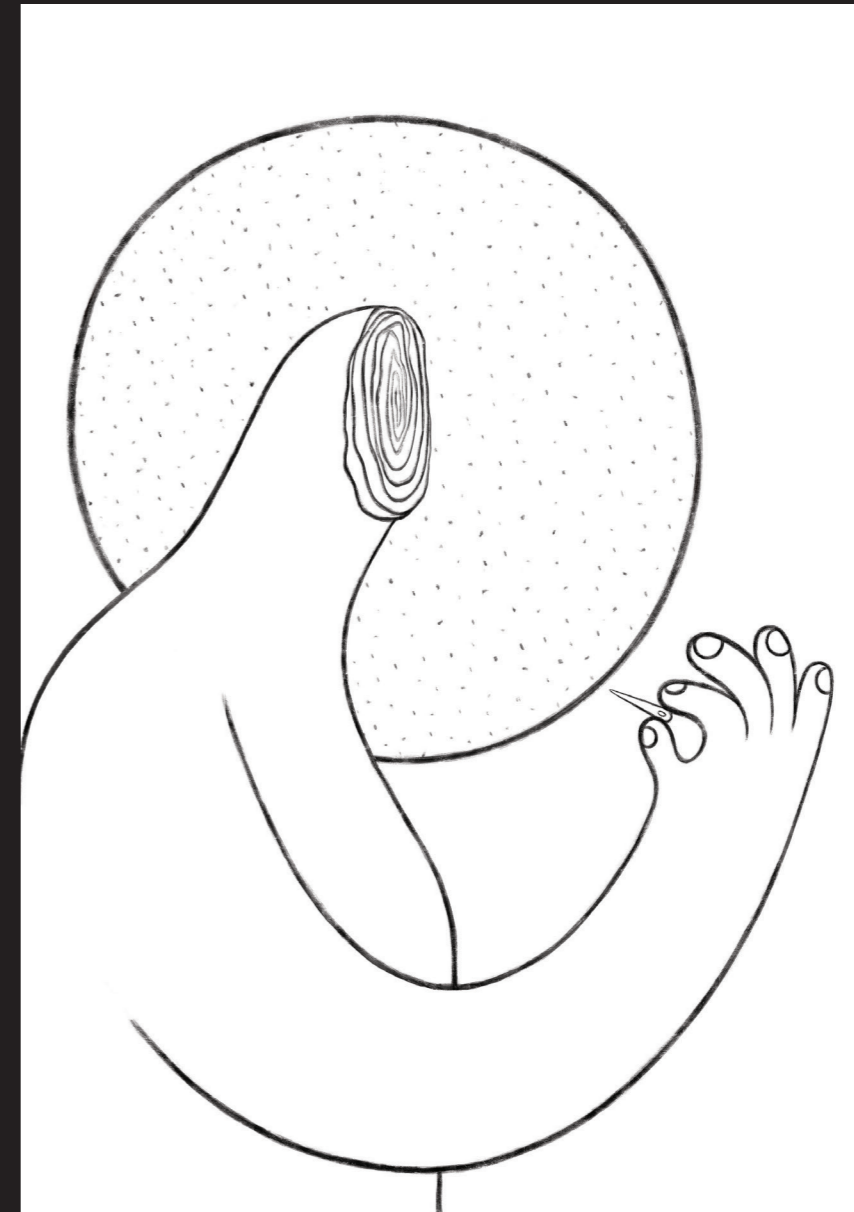
The exact purpose of the Paleolithic cave paintings is not known. Evidence suggests that they were not merely decorations of living areas since the caves in which they have been found do not have signs of ongoing habitation. They are also often located in areas of caves that are not easily accessible. Some theories hold that cave paintings may have been a way of communicating with others, while other theories ascribe a religious or ceremonial purpose to them. The paintings are remarkably similar around the world, with animals being common subjects that give the most impressive images. Humans mainly appear as images of hands, mostly hand stencils made by blowing pigment on a hand held to the wall.

Source: Images and Text from 'Cave Paintings Change Ideas About the Origin of Art' on BBC News and Wikipedia

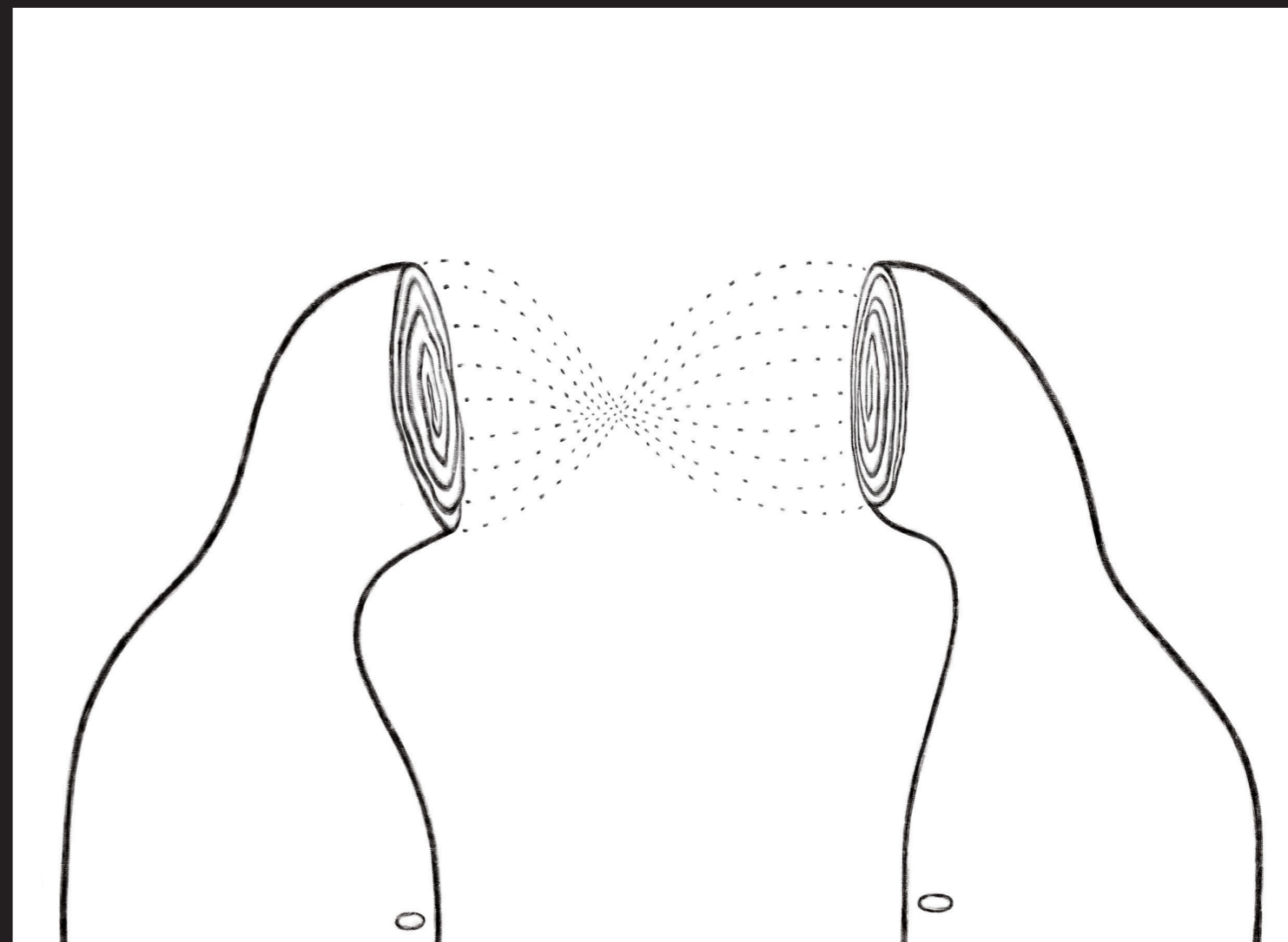
An attempt in keeping
alive a sense of wonder
in this world.



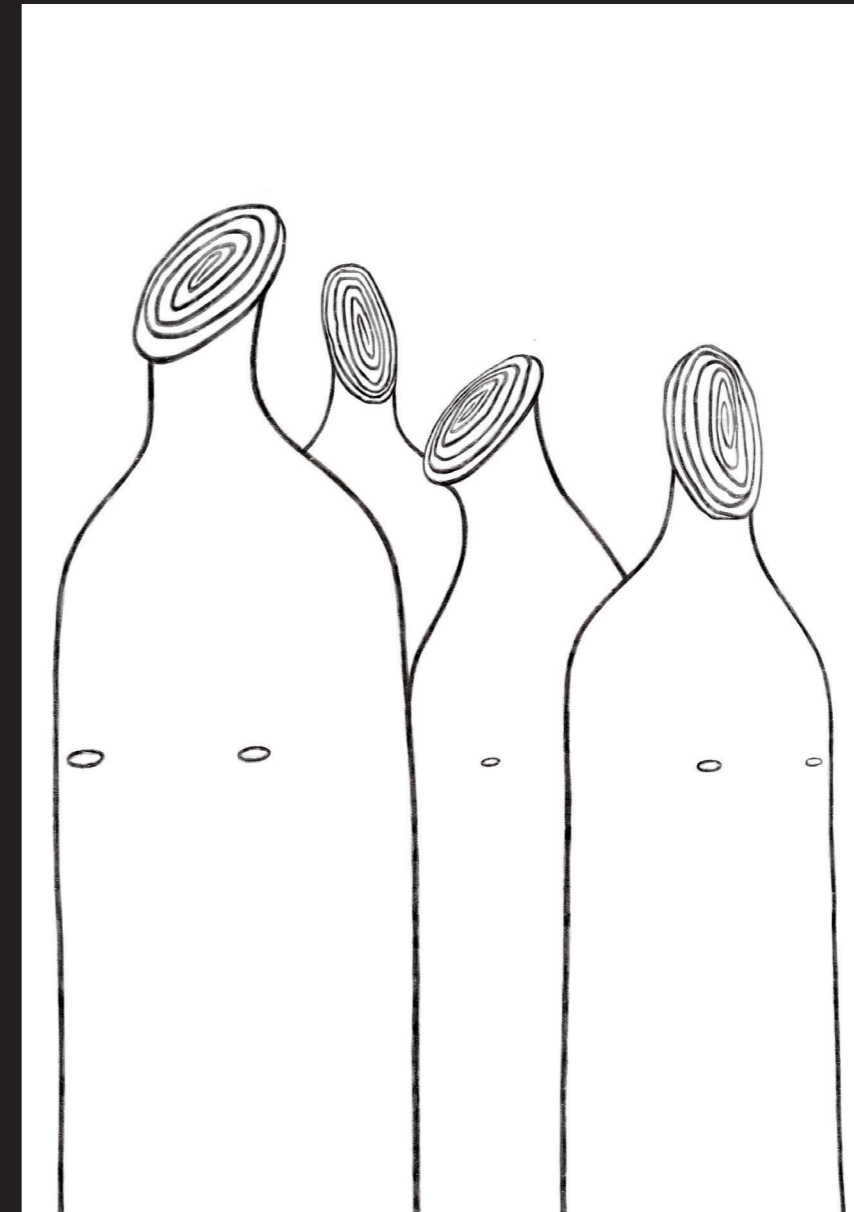
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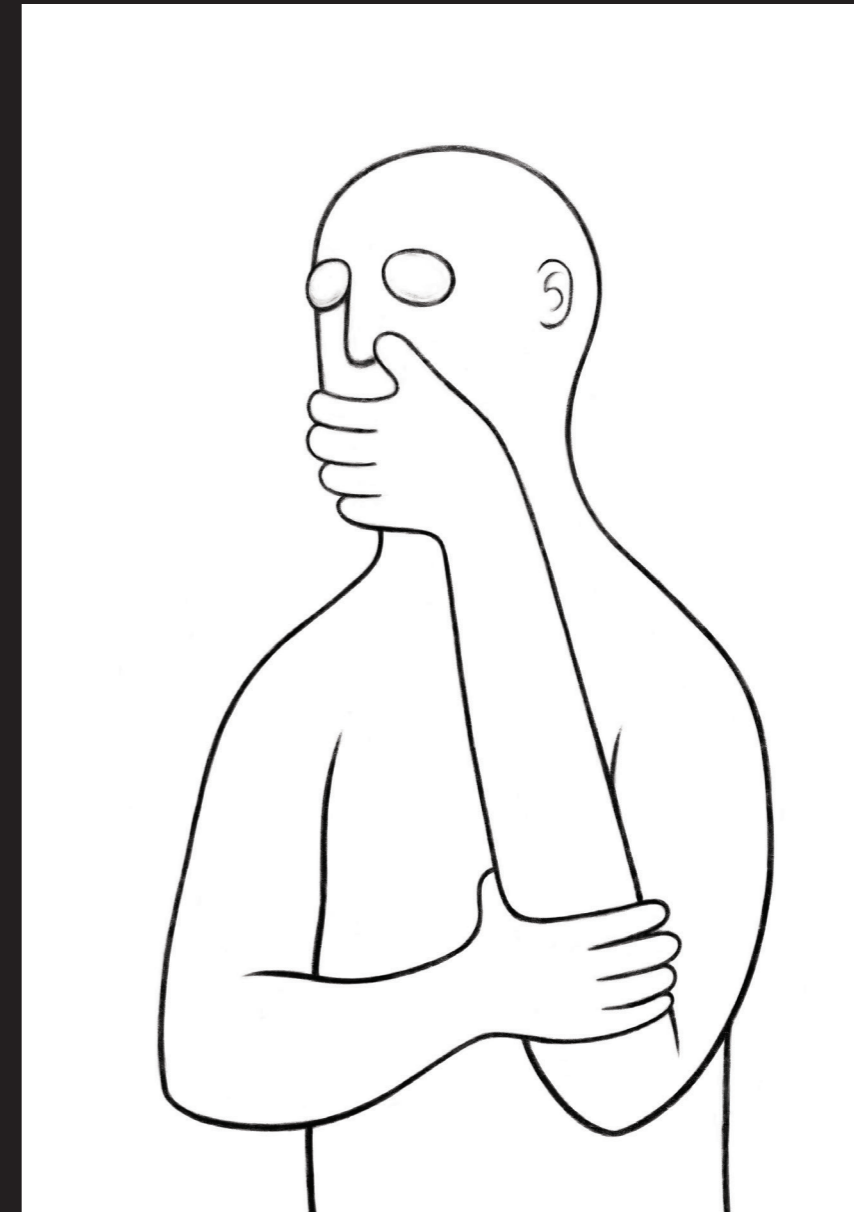
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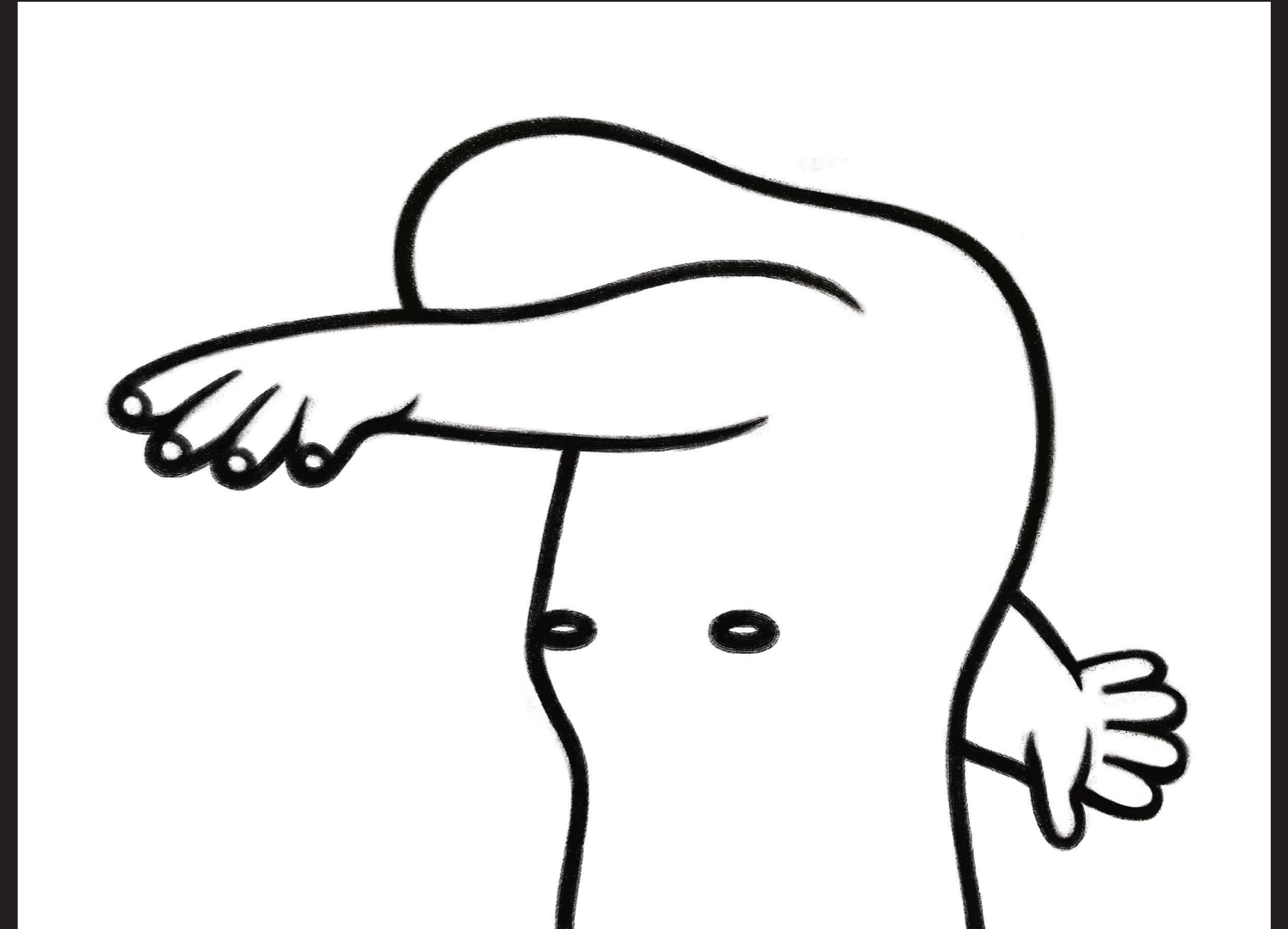
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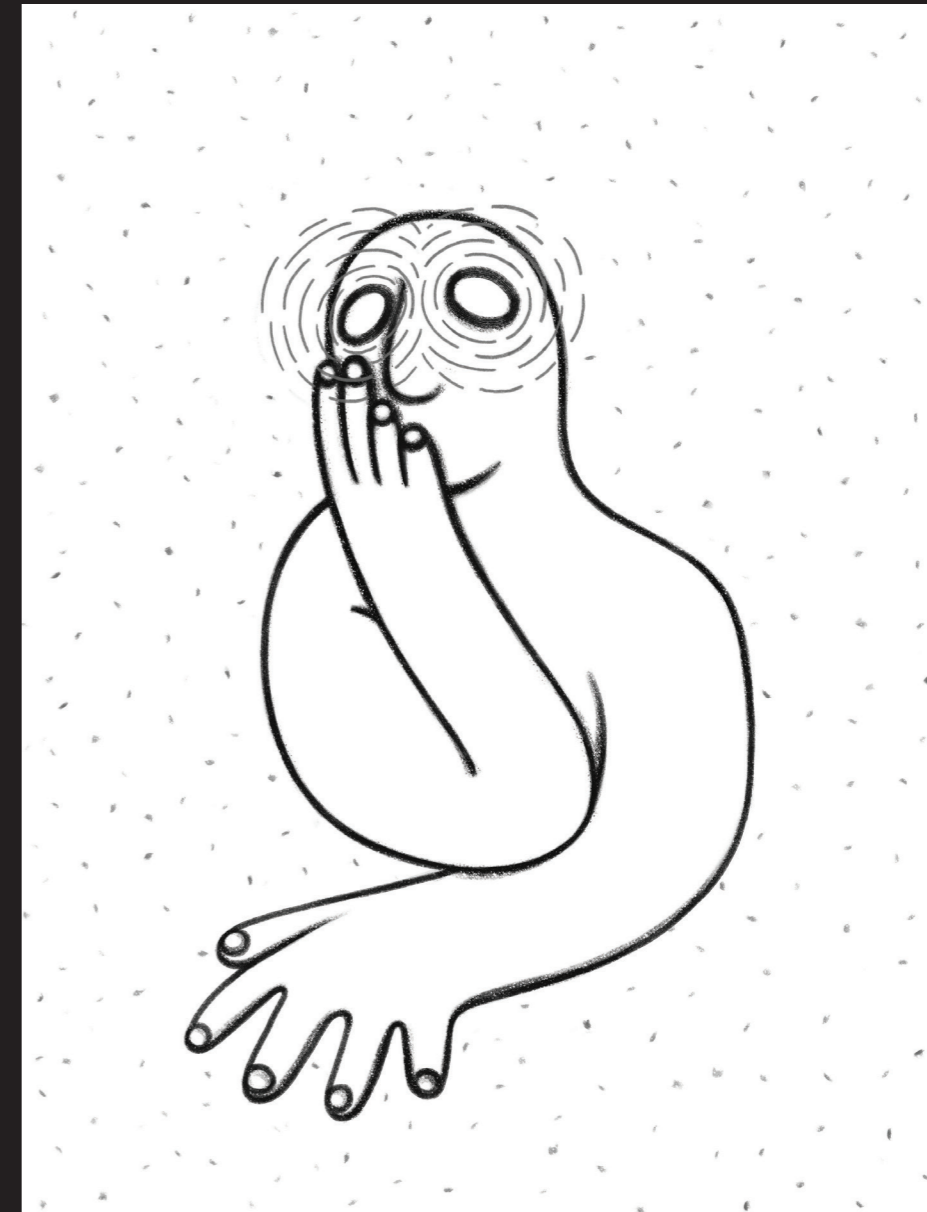
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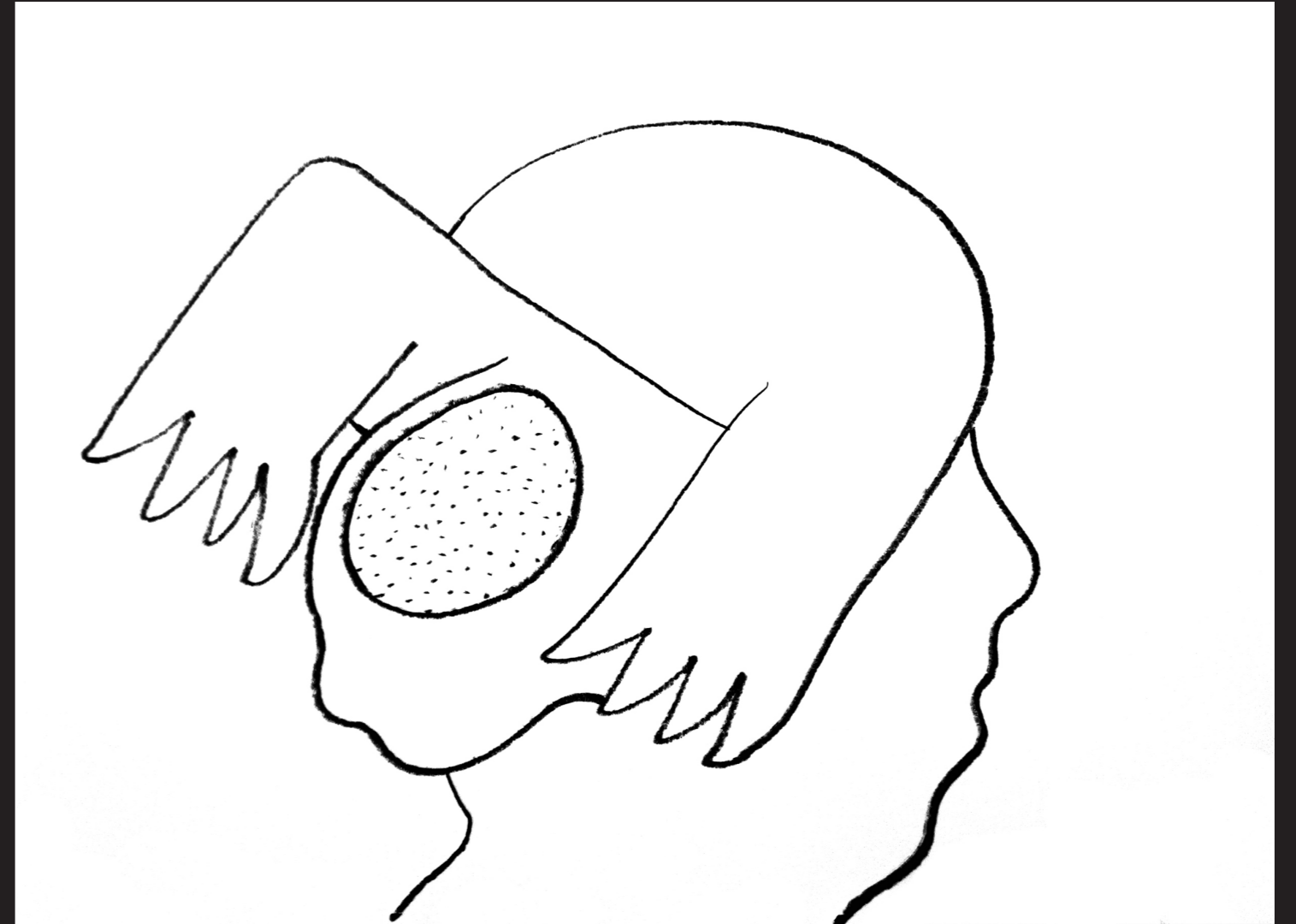
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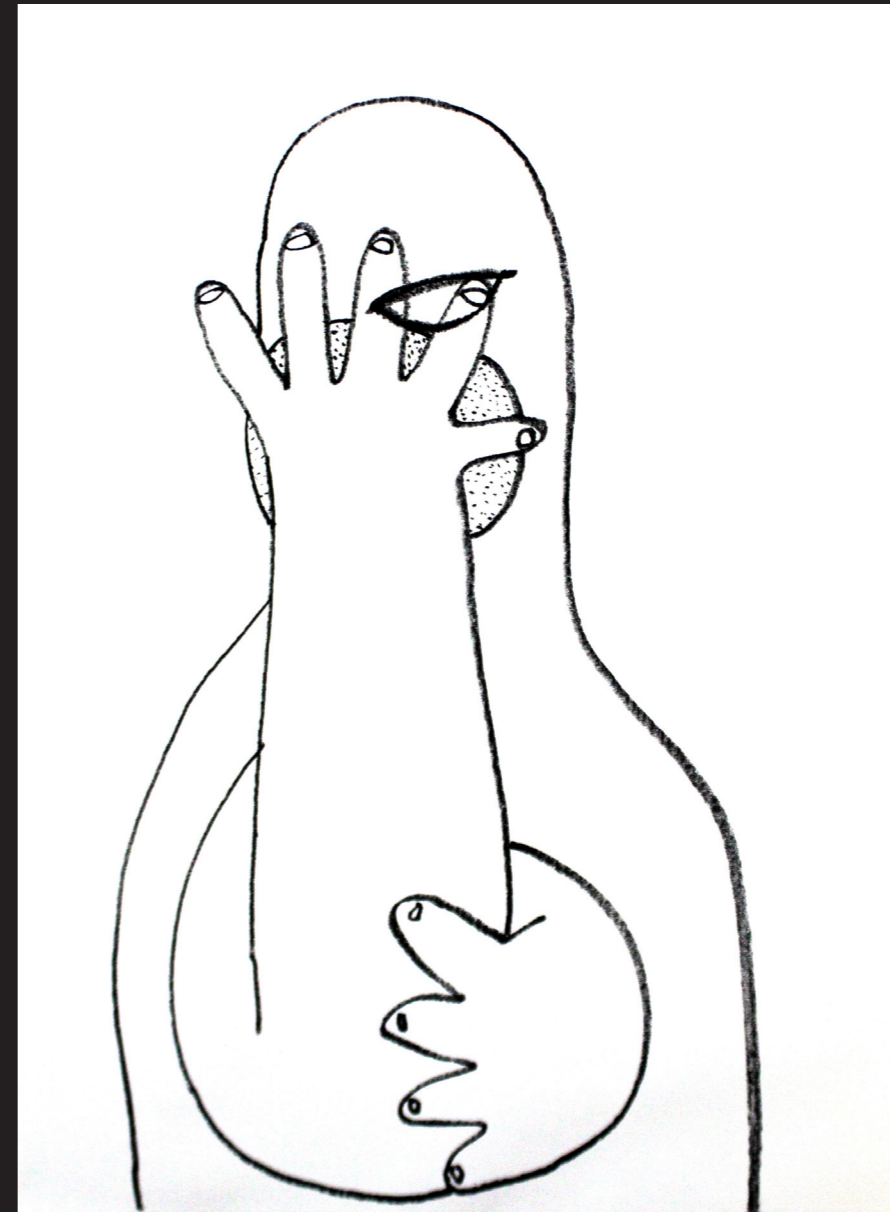
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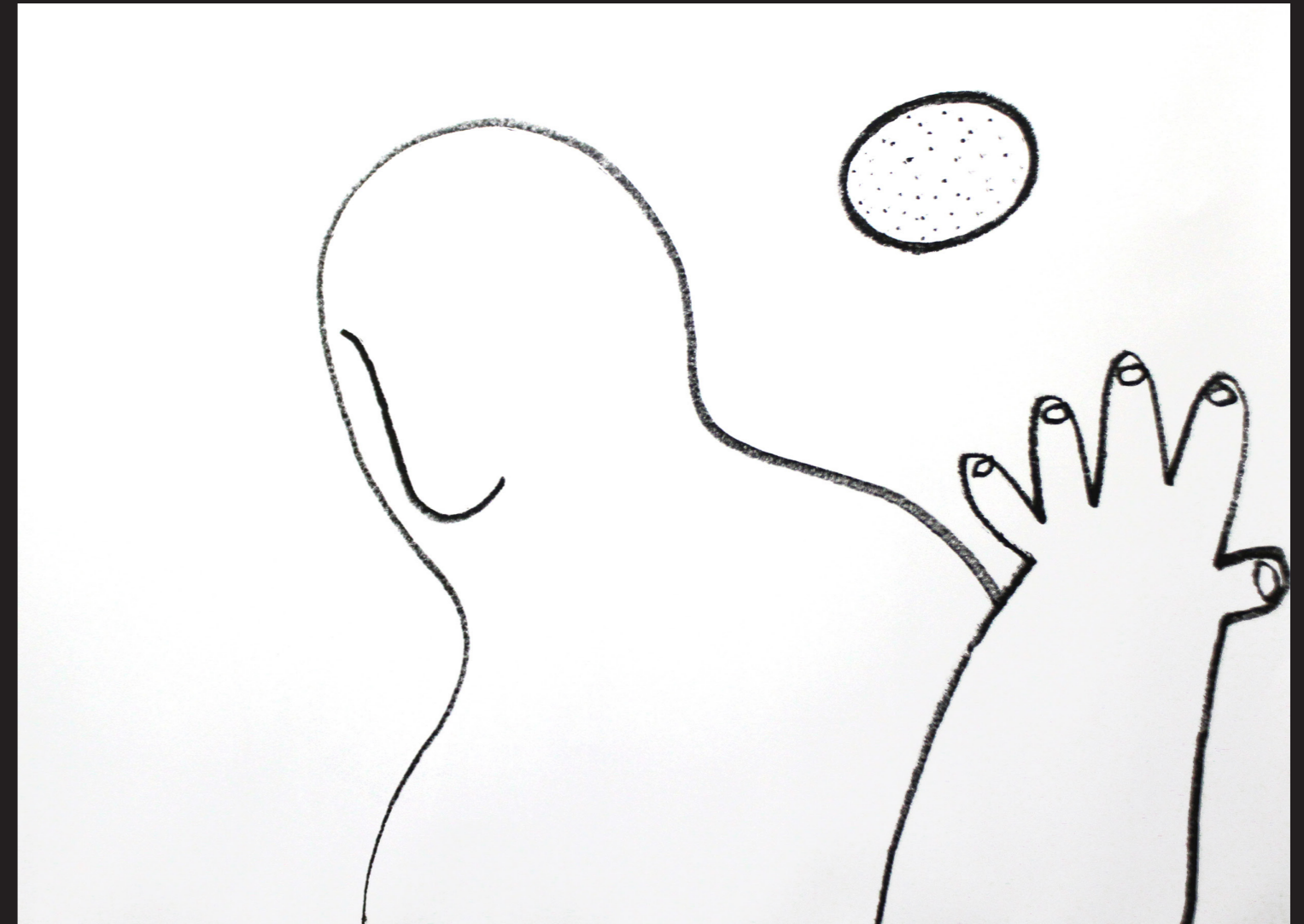
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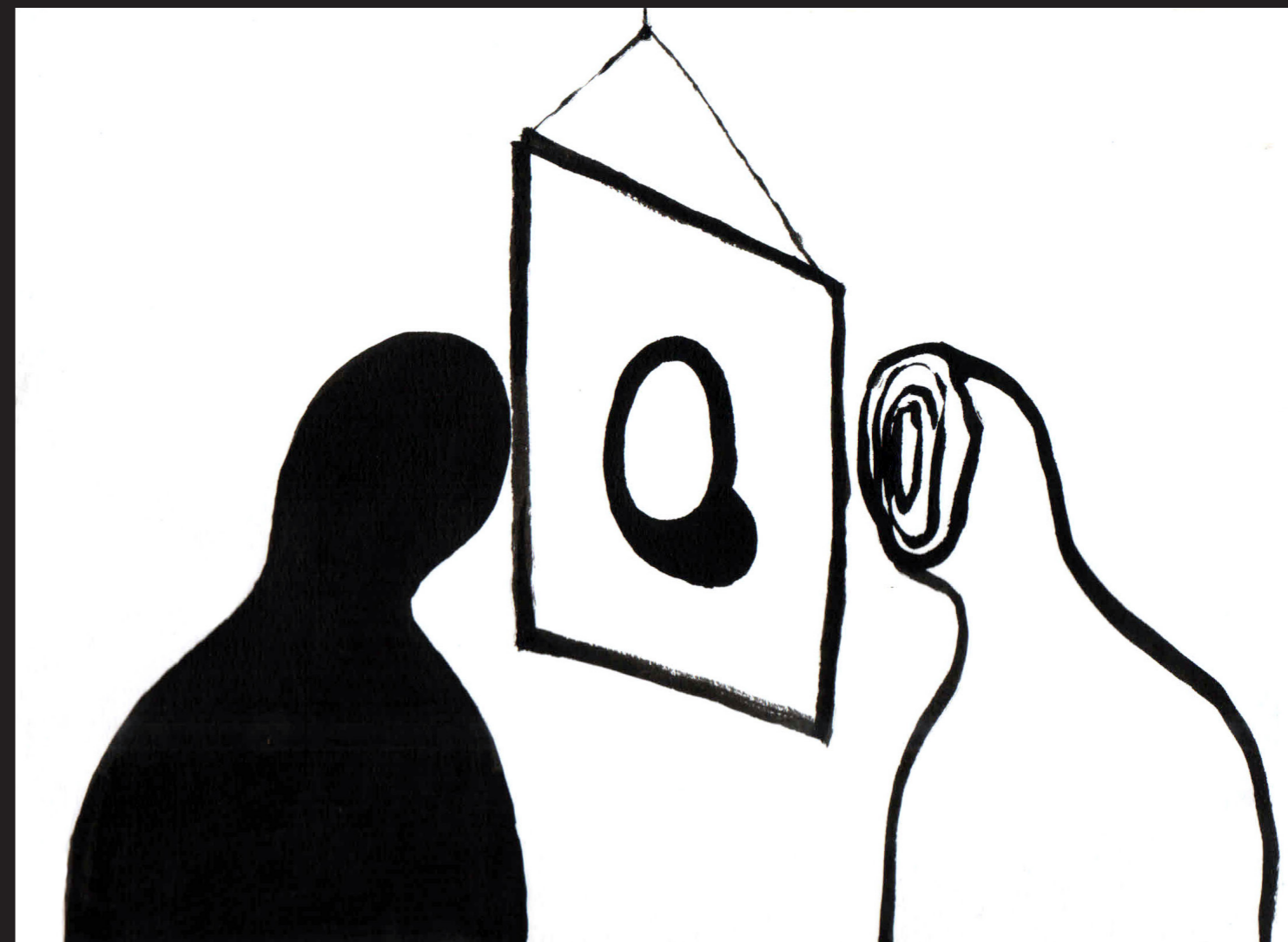
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Untitled
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29 x 21 in



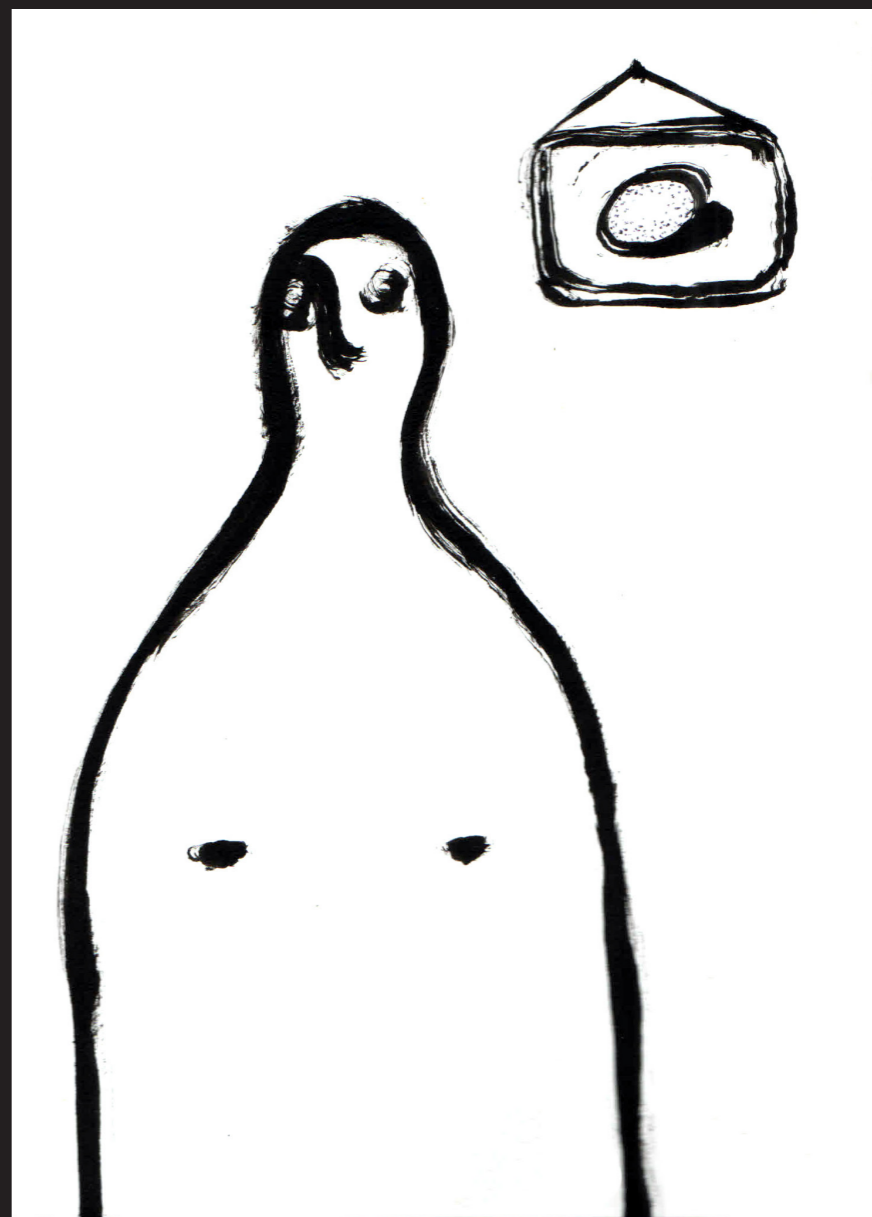
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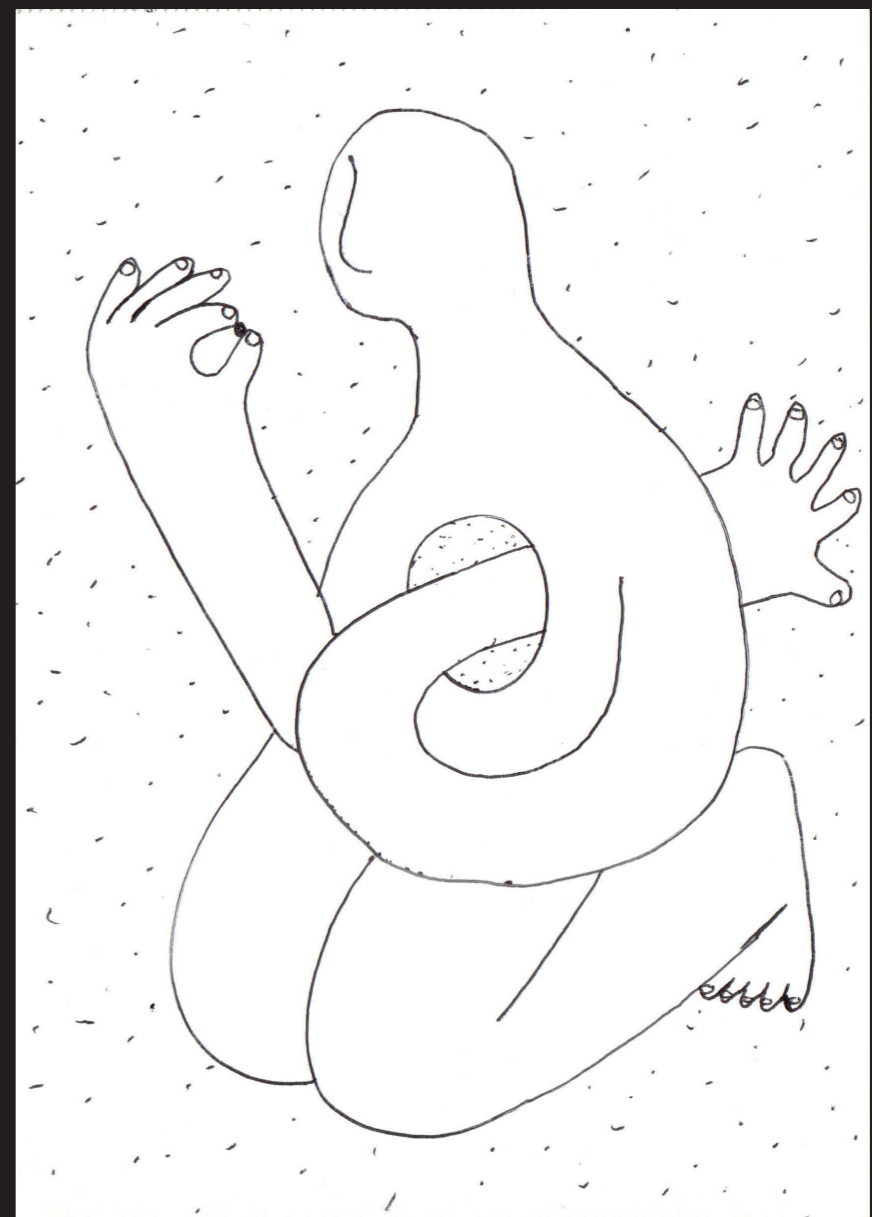
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Untitled
Pen on paper
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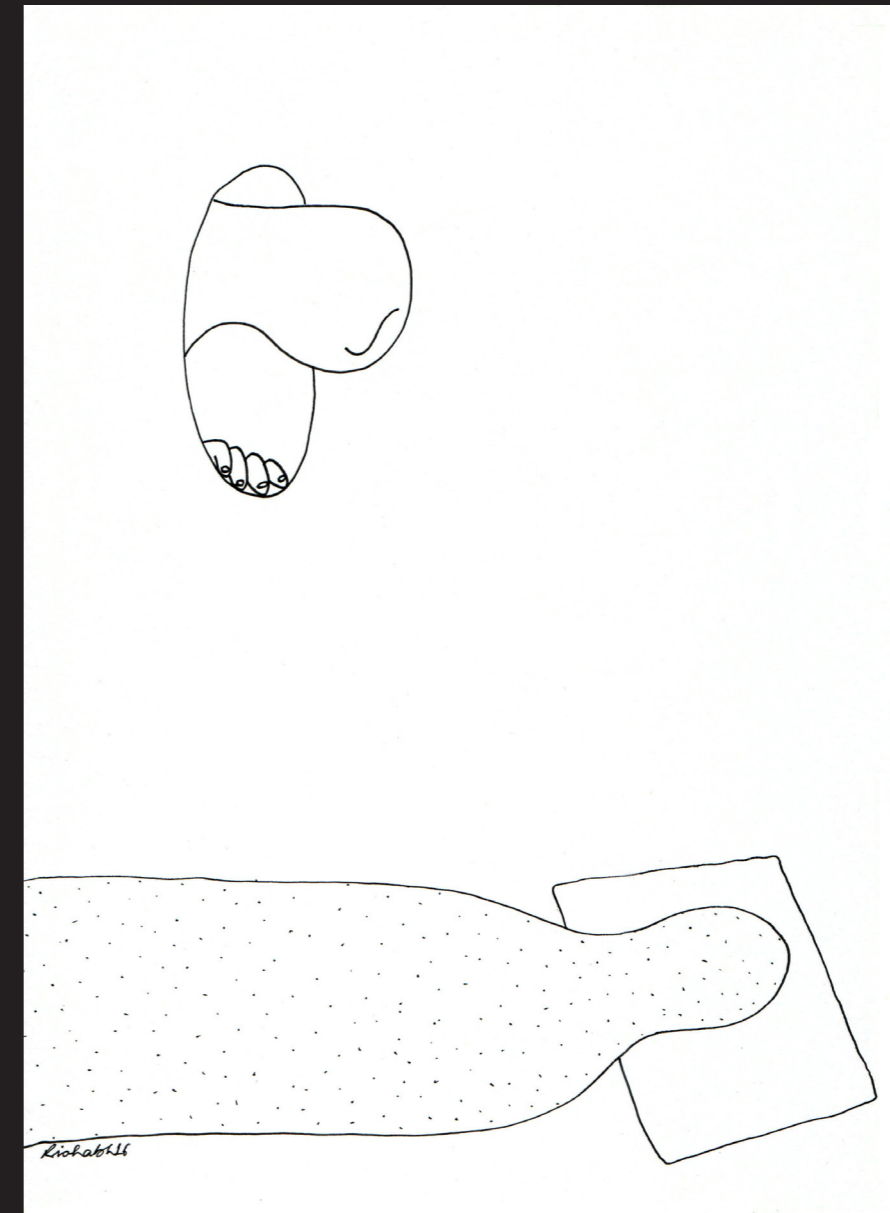
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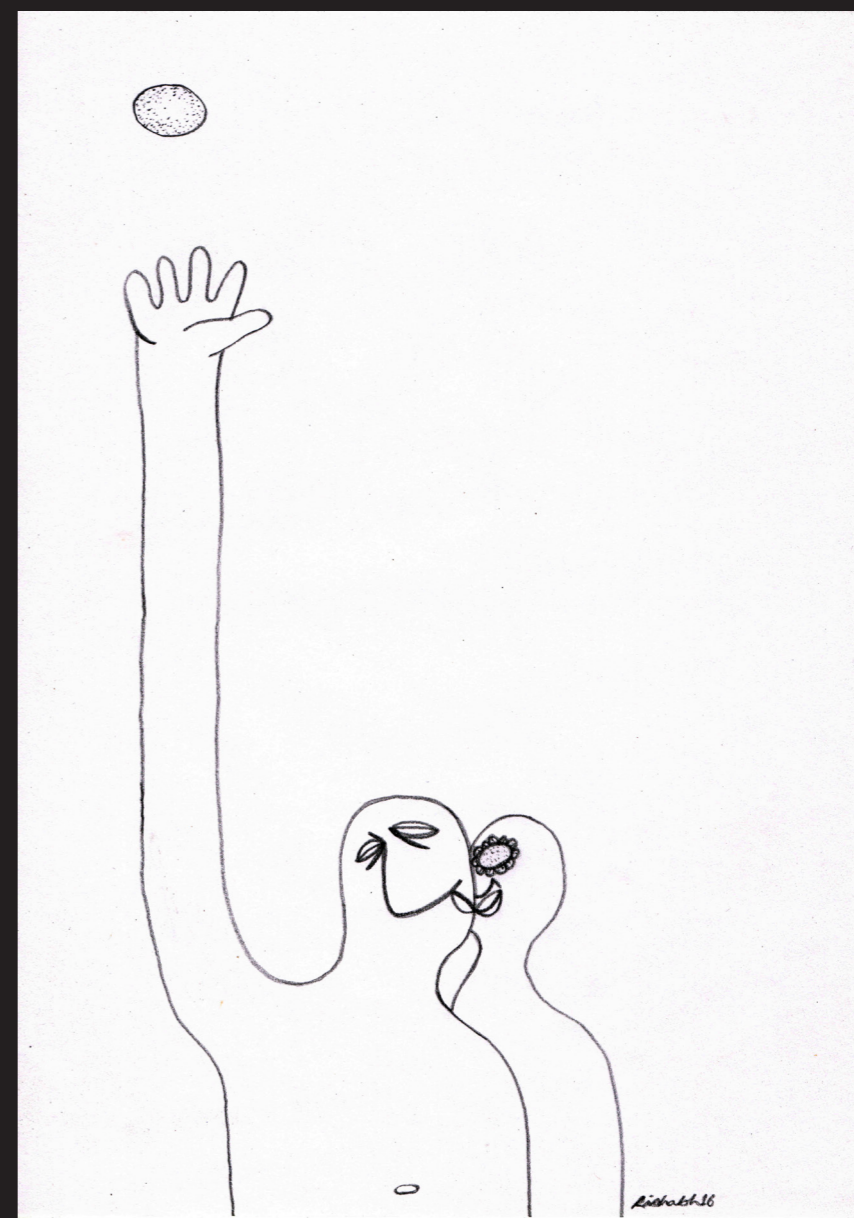
Untitled
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Untitled
Pen and Solid Marker on paper
A5



Untitled
Pen on paper
8.1 x 11.6 in



Untitled
Pen on paper
8.1 x 11.6 in



Untitled
Pen and Solid Marker on paper
A5



Untitled
Charcoal on paper
29 x 21 in



Untitled
Digital Painting
18 x 24 in



Untitled
Digital Painting
18 x 24 in

Human Life and Happiness

‘Human’—a title we choose to attach to ourselves and one we take pride in but what does it mean to be a human being? Why do we exist and what is the significance of happiness in our lives? Where do images come into our lives in contemporary times and how do they affect us? Some of these questions are new to me and some have been walking along since a long time and have been peeking into my life from time to time.

On one hand, I have always been fascinated by seeing how we as some sort of creatures have been able to accomplish so much until now in the world. This idea of being able to create or invent something

is remarkable and sometimes seems beyond reality. We live our lives being part of a society and yet stay individuals. Our lives are full of ups and downs and in between this struggle we love and be loved, feel compassion, imagine, create, reflect, care and nurture; when I think about all these things that we can do, it for me defines a human.

On the other hand, another reality is that in all parts of the world we currently are stressed, we constantly face and survive daily workload, emotional breakdowns, diseases, wars, natural disasters, and what not and yet we eventually die... The lives of the contemporary humans are full of negativity and

the fact is that we enjoy having negative conversations more than the positive ones.

Images today are everywhere, we continuously are engaging with them through mobile phones, social media, television, picture halls, newspapers, books, advertisements, signage etc. and they can be divided into two kinds at the beginning—narrative and non-narrative or in simpler terms, direct and indirect images. Out of all the images that we see though all these various channels a significant number of them are either directly or indirectly representing the death and suffering happening around the world today and if we think a bit more they are causing us more stress indirectly because we as a fact, human are emotional and we

tend to empathize. Sooner or later we realize that this negativity is affecting our lives and therefore, we tend to move away from these channels and keep ourselves isolated. We keep ourselves busy in our work in order to achieve what we aspire the most. Another fact is that the average time a human being is likely to spend touching his phone screens is 3 years and me & you perhaps would have at least spent 5 years of our life-time because we fall in the category of heavy users.

We now are communicating with another human being through all these communication apps, the number of words we say now to each other have decreased drastically and most of the time we are just sending emoji in the name of a conversation... It seems that in the

last 10 years or so we have forgotten the joy in actually talking with another human being while being physically present with him or her. This behavior which is common now-a-days in our societies in fact in a longer run it brings down our individual level of happiness and causes us severe mental illness—the human race now is a victim of depression all around the world. As David Carson has previously said, “Graphic design will save the world right after rock and roll does.” I believe that humans are in dire need of a different kind of images today more than ever to somehow help them pop out of this never ending cycle of negativity.

The world today is full of human beings. Our current population is above 7 Billion and to be exact we are 7,463,221,682 in number today with the daily increase of 226,359 as predicted by GeoHive's Global Population Statistics. In this human population around the world, India share is 1,384,508,986 at present with the daily increase of 16,190 human beings. Though this itself major issue, this raises another question, "How many kinds of people live in India today and what would their daily lives be like?"

Of the total population, a significant amount of people are power hungry and money minded. More than 75-80% would belong to the poor and middle working class with aspirations in life. Very few seem to have become Yogis or Aghoris

seeking nirvana. Among the middle class, about 60% work extremely hard everyday to earn for their daily living and provide for their family. The rest 20-25% people are not satisfied and are constantly looking for meaning in their lives. Thus large number of people face numerous kinds of mental health issues in their daily lives due to the extreme pressure in work culture and uncertainty in life. The ones who find meaning in lives and are actually very few in number and get away from these issues eventually but the rest are facing a big issue and are constantly struggling to match the aspirations...

Out of the 6 main emotions: sadness, joy, disgust, surprise, anger and fear only one is positive, the rest is either neutral or negative. It's one of the reasons we have a negativity bias—we enjoy negative things and hearing and reading about them much more than positive things. It's the reason why every attempt to make a positive newspaper failed after a week or two simply because we are not interested.

Stefan Sagmeister on Design and Happiness

Drawing to me has become a language which makes discovery and communication possible at the most genuine level and as a visual communication medium it bypasses the barrier of a spoken language.

Process **Discovering the Roots of Drawings in My Life**

Drawing came to me as something which I felt I already knew and always enjoyed as an activity in my childhood. While I was studying Applied Arts, almost everyday I would sit among people in canteen area or local tea shops in Delhi where people during lunch breaks or while returning from work would come. I would try to make sense of their expressions and behavior and I'd question myself what possibly might be going in their minds. Often I became sad or joyful by observing people around me as they resembled; I would drink my tea and I would draw.

Now when I think about it, I realize that I was somehow able to make a

connection which is why I was able to feel another human without talking to one at certain times. Drawing to me now has become a language which makes discovery and communication possible at the most genuine level and as a visual communication medium it bypasses the barrier of a spoken language.

I believe we need to start making images of the other kind—the kind that encourages curiosity, spreads love and happiness. My works are like puzzles—they reveal as one takes interest and often lead to a happier path.

Taking Feedbacks

Prof. Mohanty suggested that the project coming in a Public Art area, while I am creating images, I should also display my works and take feedback from people to understand what is it they are able to observe and understand by now.

I called for one to one 10-15 minutes session with IDC students to comment their observations on my drawings with no titles whatsoever or having a description about. They were only told the title of the project and its abstract.

21 students participated and commented their observations on selected 9 out of 15 images that I displayed.

Shreya Gupta Sr. IxD	Dideshwor M. Sr. CD	Mohit Mohan Jr. CD
Umesh Dinde Sr. MVD	Apoorva Savant Research Intern	Anuja More Jr. CD Prabhat Negi Jr. CD
Deepak Sr. MVD	Salik Ansari Sr. CD	Rajan Barnwal Jr. CD
Aswin Yogesh Sr. CD	Nayna Yadav Jr. CD	Malay Dhamelia Jr. IxD
Sachit Shyam Sr. CD	GS Pradeep Jr. CD	Udbhav Jain Sr. AN
Divyanshu Thakur Sr. MVD	Shrushti Rao Jr. CD	Nishant V. Sr. AN
Ashish Kumar Sr. CD	Sneha Chhatre Jr. CD	

Observations of Viewers and Evaluations

- Forms look like human beings.
 - Figures seem brainless or headless as if a chicken's head was chopped off. (Many of them related this to their friend circle or current state of society.)
 - Figures seem isolated or lost. (A emotion of sadness was evoked to many.)
 - Figure seems to be reaching out to something out of reach.
 - They are trying to make a connection / having telepathic conversation either with the self or another human being.
-
- These observations show that the images had been able to communicate a set of thoughts about the contemporary world and the human life with significance of happiness.
 - The level of abstraction in works was understood and was interesting to many.

For the artist drawing is discovery. And that is not just a slick phrase, it is quite literally true. It is the actual act of drawing that forces the artist to look at the object in front of him, to dissect it in his mind's eye and put it together again; or, if he is drawing from memory, that forces him to dredge his own mind, to discover the content of his own store of past observations.

John Berger on Drawing is Discovery

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Font Weissenhof Grotesk by Stefanie Schwarz & Dirk Wachowiak at Indian Type Foundry / indiantypefoundry.com

