

Karan Vohra
May/June 2015



WHAT
DO YOU
DO WHEN
THE
WORLD
IS YOUR
OYSTER

MIT VISIT

ISHAN KHOSLA DESIGN

EDUCATION PROJECT, KHUN

AGASTYA FOUNDATION





Walk Walk Walk

The Boston airport may not be the most exciting of airports but the trip ahead was to be. The airport was dull and generic, it could be the airport of timbuktu and one won't notice. Beautiful people all around me, it's an understatement to say that Boston was a fit town. We saw people jogging, exercising as early as 7am to as late as 12 in the night. Most people were physically fit as well as well turned out. This abundance of beauty was accompanied with a strong sense of isolation in the citizens or so I felt. Existence as a single entity or isolation? I ain't sure as yet. I came back with a lot of sketches from Gadchiroli, I went there without expectations, however with US, the weight of expectation led me to look for things than absorb. This was to change. At the Sunday brunch on 3rd May hosted by Nevan, I came across a beautiful mural near the cafe. It dawned on me 'There is so much to see, so little time, so walk.', this idea was followed by the visual of Prof Alka's mail; the last lines of which read 'WalkWalkWalk'. This report is about the walk. :)



over the world and made the first museum of it's kind in America. Her will is such that it doesn't allow art to be shifted from the place she set it. StORIES are being told in the way art has been placed. John Singer Sargent's Ell Jaleo has been placed in an erstwhile orchestra hall in a way that the decor matches that of the painting, almost inviting you into the dance performance that the picture depicts. Art is shown respect whether it is street art or Hokusai, At MFA, Boston, the exhibit on Hokusai was a marvel in it's own right. An animation borrowing from various stages of woodcuts was displayed on a 4 by 4 screen grid such that elements would enter and exit much like the closing and opening of Japanese screens. The collection was supplemented by appropriate colour schemes and information.



MoMa, IGM and MFA greatly altered my perspectives of artists. I used to love Starry Night because of it's texture and rich color, in person however the texture didn't live upto my expectations and the scale altered my perception. Hanry Rousseau's Dream however, invoked a great sense of awe in my mind, the composition is soothing and the color combination is very stylistic, it is the scale that greatly enhances it's effect, moreover Rousseau's back story adds drama to the painting. Same goes for Rothko, whose painting titled Black does not have the shade black however gives the illusion of Black. Rothko argued people to look at art up close rather than from afar. There is harmony in his work that is clearly been achieved through years of experience. Lichenstien's work has a very strong graphic quality which he shared with Warhol. Monet's lilies truly allow you to enter a japanese garden, it is dreamy. I had read about Miro and Klee but their works have drama and harmony like no other, there is a lot to be learnt in balance and form in their works. Dali, Duchamp and Picasso do not hold the same level of wonder as they did once though. Klimpt and Seargent have made their place into my heart though. The price to performance factor may be

Numbers - Every building is a number at MIT, this obsession is not only cute but also leads to consistent, clean and beautiful signage. These numbers crop time and time again on doors, reports and presentations albeit in different contexts. This attention to detail wasn't limited to MIT however, one would feel it whilst walking in the Boston Commons, visiting a museum or in the unlikely situation of getting lost. Speaking of 'getting lost', you can't in New York, it's a grid of avenues and streets, so well planned you thank the planner at least once every day of your visit. 'Don't feed the Birds', a signage in the Boston commons was followed by a diagram explaining reasons for it. Not an order, rather a message that respected the intellect and reasoning of the public.

At the Isabella Gardner Museum one could find a chair and table with papers and pencils for visitors to write their thoughts on, along with guards who could, if you asked them, give you 'gyaan' about artworks and artists on display. Isabella Stewart Gardner was a visionary, she collected art from all



improved yet, the performance is incredible though.

There are two sides of a coin, isolation exists together with love. To love someone and show it is permitted unlike India. It is heartwarming to see LGBT couples with their children and couples in general holding hands, kissing or making almost invisible gestures of affection. Speaking of love, one thinks about humanity and in turn racial stereotyping. It disturbs me to admit that sometimes stereotypes come true right in front of you, in times like this one has to look at the bigger picture. New York was an amazing place with MoMA, the incredible larger than life times square and the feeling that here was a city that redefined itself constantly. At MoMa I saw an exhibit 'One way ticket' on the struggles of African americans through the migration series paintings of Jacob Lawrence. Living in Queens I had to go through Jamaica, a rather infamous area, hence there was a curfew. Coupling together my personal experiences on the streets and the trains at night with the exhibition I realised that there is 'some' truth in stereotypes. It shouldn't however, cloud one's judgement. Food! we shouldn't forget, Japanese and Italian food at 'The Loniuous Monkfish and Carmelina's respectively was amazing. I can't say the same for american or mexican though, lumps of meat in a bun hardly qualify.

Walter Bender's session was memorable for two reasons, one for the persona he exuded and two he had practiced the design principles he preached. Thomas Lipoma from Rest devices exhibited the confidence of a person who was sure of triumphing all odds. Among the tata fellows, Sagar Chakraborty, a PHD fellow, did an impressive job of the project (Creating biofuel from waste) as well as of presenting it. Most other fellows however were

unimaginative as far as presenting is concerned. The work process was explained when the solution was withheld owing to patent approval. However, there exist project presentations where neither was the case and yet there were communication gaps. I do feel that MIT students use the resources of the university judiciously and are much like IITians. MIT Media Labs was a different story altogether, it was a place like no other, surreal. Media Labs employs an excellent strategy they put on going projects in a constant state of display. This allows for more dialogue, which held true in my case as well, the displays allowed me to discuss projects not only with Prof Michael Bove Jr, but also other students from the Social media and Design fiction groups. MIT holds its motto true, build, test and think is done iteratively, especially in the prosthetics group at Tata Centre. Having said that there were projects in which 'what after this' didn't seem to have been given enough thought to. I was unsure if my feelings were too leftist however technology should be altered and adjusted to fit human needs rather than the other way round. The politics of a nation does influence the way it's citizens, universities and students think.

The trip has allowed me to think more deeply about things, given me the opportunity to meet incredible people and visit phenomenal sites. I have a better understanding of myself and I owe thanks to Tata Center for Technology and Design for the opportunity, Shekhar for organising the trip, Prof Alka for not only having faith in me but also guiding me and finally IDC the reason for it all.

TATA CENTER
TECHNOLOGY + DESIGN



THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM
WORKED! WHEN THERE
WOULD BE AMPLE
SUN AND ON CLOUDY
DAYS
IT WON'T BE NEEDED

Water

speakers RAMCHANDER, RICKS, KELLER
date 4 May 2015

How do you solve the problem of water irrigation and purification? There were three approaches, one that was truly imaginative (Ramchander's) and perhaps a long way in being implemented. A new filtration method using xylem cells from the bark of the tree to filter protozoa. It would require high pressures because of small filtration area. It's not scalable, however the sustainability angle and metaphor therein is 'nice'.

The second approach was of mending that which isn't broken. Sean Ricks believes that the Tata Swach team has done a 'Jugaad' of sorts in the realisation of their project and thus tries to remedy it. Seems that more trials are required to justify the claim. Katie Keller's project on irrigation using solar panels was most impressive. The irrigation system WORKED! when there would be ample sun and on cloudy/rainy days it won't be needed. Win-Win. Moreover this project was a class project that took precedence over her tata project. It's success however worked in her favour, so much so that she plans on starting a company; entrepreneurial training for which will be provided by Tata itself.



Electrification

speakers DR REZA AMATYA
date 4 May 2015

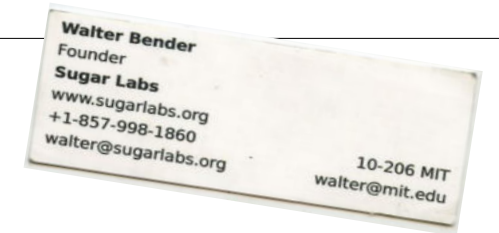
The presentation by Dr Reza Amatyia focuses on electrification problems in India. Power consumption, number of households involved and the economics of it was retrieved with the help of google maps and census data. A system design approach was followed in the Peer-to-Peer electrification project which aims to implement a revenue sharing model. Installation of a device capable of powering several households in the house of a 'riser' is however, a culpable idea. India is fraught with people who exploit others when they have monopoly over resources, the perceived poverty of resources is one of many reasons responsible for this. To redress this potential problem students of Dr Amatyia have been working on an algorithm that analyses power consumption and in turn controls the power released. This software and data obtained thus may prove helpful to policy makers. Considering the emphasis on Solar Energy by the Modi Government the project is timed well.



Housing

speakers JOHN OSCHENDORF
date 7 May 2015

India has a serious housing problem along with the significant carbon footprint associated with construction activities. Moreover, the top soil layer is depleting fast. An alternative to soil has been proposed involving a proprietary mixture of sodium hydroxide and other reagents along with boiler ash to enhance the quality and mechanical properties of bricks. There are 30 million people involved in the brick making industry of India, what of them? A labour intensive economy should progress to a 'skilled' labour intensive economy, yes. The question is whether the students designing these projects have thought about them, after all social entrepreneurship aims at benefitting the people of India not the industrialists. Moreover there are risks of cost, disposal of chemicals and regular supply of boiler ash feed. On enquiring with local brick makers in India I found that the cost of transporting boiler ash would add to significant cost.



SIMPLICITY HINGES AS
MUCH ON CUTTING
NONESSENTIAL FEATURES
AS ON ADDING
HELPFUL ONES.

Sugar Labs

speakers WALTER BENDER
date 5 May 2015

Walter Bender from Sugar labs was delightful. Bender's life story is a lesson in it's own right. Bender lists out pointers for good design. 1) The product should not be free, a certain responsibility needs to be inculcated in the user lest it won't have value. 2) The products – in his case laptops should be designed in a way that consumers can repair it themselves, unlike Apple. 3) Provide means not only to improve and repair hardware but also software. The success story of Linux under it's general public license isn't unheard of, that being said 50% patches are edited by children in Sugarlabs OS. Incredible!



SHARED EXPERIENCES



Prosthetics

speakers JESSE BRENNEMAN, KATHY, MURTHY A
date 5 May 2015

The projects on design of prosthetic knee and foot contributed to previous lectures given on prosthetics by Prof Chakravarthy and Amos Winters (MNG 629). The entire process from start to present was interesting, that the solution hasn't been arrived at hasn't deterred the students from their goal. High performance for the same price is the goal. Race against time, Kathy made several 'quick and dirty' prototypes. It's concerning however, that the loss of employment from mechanisation of the production of jaipur foot hasn't been noticed by the students. If it has been noticed, it's not evident.



Media Labs

speakers MICHAEL BOVE JR.
date 6 May 2015

I contacted Prof. Michael Bove Jr.'s (Leader, Object Media Lab) and Prof Sputniko (Leader, Design Fiction) in order to discuss my project work. Prof Bove, helped me look at history and information in different ways. Information is easily available owing to the internet, there is a need for shared experience though. Celebration of individual histories is essential but so are shared experiences. Sir also showed me the work done by his students to enable dialogue. It wasn't possible to meet Prof Sputniko, however I was able to see the exhibits of projects done by her students and talk to one of them. A little awe-struck; I decided to linger longer and talk to other students, Ivan Sysoev from Laboratories for Social Machines for instance. Ivan's application was to teach Hindi using stories which had a very colonial appeal to them. It was disheartening to see that there were several misguided notions that were driving the app.

Entrepreneurs

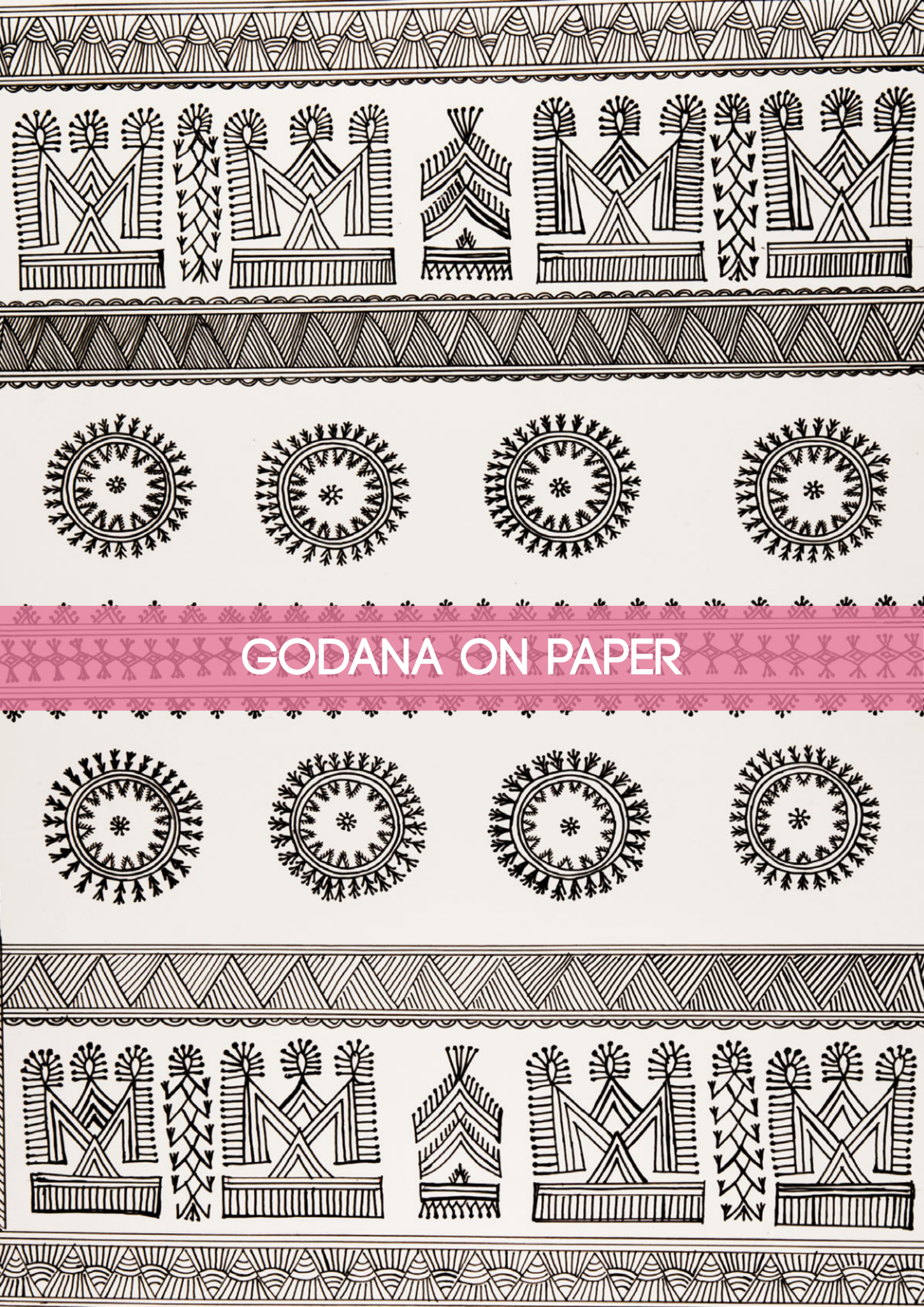
speakers THOMAS LIPOMA
date 8 May 2015

Thomas Lipoma, CTO of Rest devices showcased his device MIMO, a product for monitoring infant sleep. Thomas talked of the importance of business majors in a start up. Delivering better and faster, investing earlier on and the importance of saving cost in at-first-glance unimportant things (replacing labour involved in packaging with oneself) were some of the aspects he touched upon. It's true that Carson Darling is more gorgeous but Thomas did an incredible job at presenting, he was impassioned and knew what he was talking about.





पानी लेक हाली आबे
तोर घर आवाले पहुना
जल्दी आबे मै जाहूं बाजार
बाजार से चिक्कन, दारू लेके
जल्दी आहूं
फिर खाए पीके,
फिर झमा झम नाचवो
रात भर सब मिलके।



Godana

artists RAMKAELI PAOLE, SUNITA PAOLE, SUMITRA
date 15 May – 12 June '15

Artists Ram Kaley Paole, Sunita Paole and Sumitra are Gond artists from Jamgala, Chattisgarh. They have been practicing the tattoo art of Godana for a long time. The art form started as a way of decorating the body when people didn't have the means to procure gold and silver ornaments. This necessity paved way for the belief that godana tattoo was superior to metal ornaments for they would accompany the bearer into afterlife and act as a purifier. The beliefs have penetrated so deeply that several households consider a daughter-in-law without the tattoo to be impure. Most motifs aren't site specific, some are associated with procreation and marriage, however. At Ishan Khosla Design, an attempt to preserve art forms is being made via project Typecraft. As an intern I helped manage and ideate the creation of a font that may inculcate the visual language of godana art.

INTERNSHIP CONTRACT

Dated: May 1, 2015

RE: KARAN VOHRA INTERNSHIP

This is to confirm that Karan Vohra from IDC, Mumbai, has been offered an internship position at Ishan Khosla Design, from May 15 – June 12, 2015. The following are a list of conditions for interns:

- I. There is no leave given to interns, however interns can take leave without pay by giving 1 month’s notice on when they’re taking time off.
- II. Interns do not have any paid leave. Interns are not allowed to take more than 2 consecutive days off, with prior consent, except in an emergency or for circumstances beyond their control.
- III. The office will be closed on the following 12 gazetted holidays: January 1, Makkar Sakranti (January 14), January 26, Holi, Shivratri, August 15, Rakhi, Dussehra, Diwali, October 2, Christmas Eve, Christmas. If you prefer to take a different holiday as per your religious needs, you can exchange with one of the above holidays with prior notice.
- IV. The office is open M–F from 930 am to 630 pm. Interns should be prepared to be called on to work late hours and even on Saturdays if the work load so demands. There is no policy of overtime for interns.
- V. All work related expenses such as commuting for meetings etc., should be filed in a challan/receipt for reimbursement with the job number clearly mentioned.
- VI. Karan has agreed to not take a stipend for the internship.

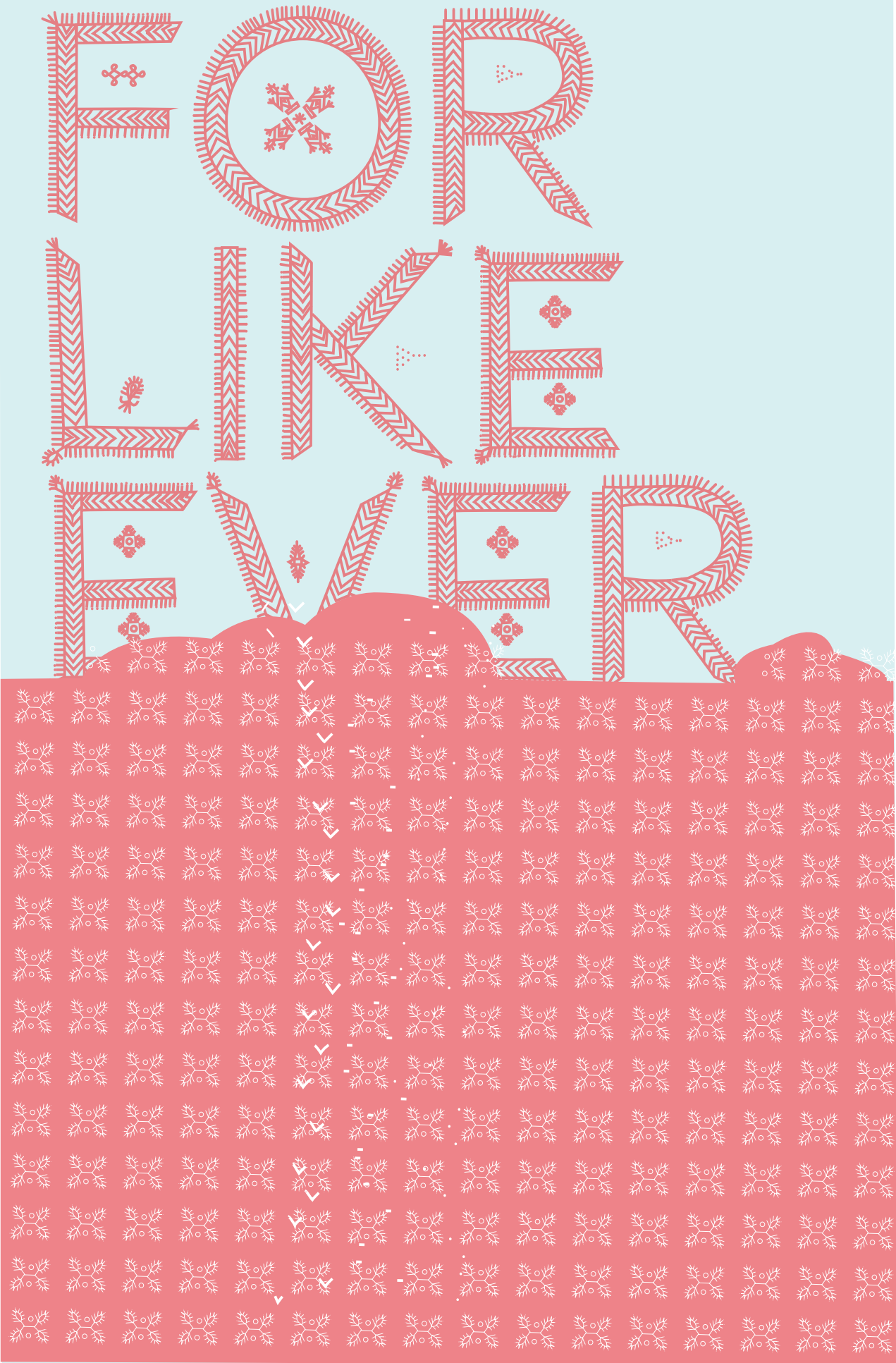
Code of Conduct

- 1. IPR: Intern agrees that it will not copy designs from others or otherwise infringe in any way on any other person’s intellectual property during the course of the intern’s internship with IKD. IKD will not liable in the case of an infringement of IPR by an intern, and all responsibilities to the client or a lawsuit, as the case may be rests with the intern. None of IKD’s materials such as typefaces, resources, vectors etc can be used by the intern. These would be considered as infringement of IPR. Any violation in IPR would mean immediate termination of the intern with no pay. All work done at IKD including client projects, Typecraft etc., is Property of Ishan Khosla Design. The intern can display that work with prior permission but not use it or sell it.
- 2. Confidentiality: Intern agrees to keep all information of IKD and its clients strictly confidential and will return any IKD or client materials given to the intern during the course of the internship. For use of materials as “portfolio”, consent from IKD is to be sought. The intern is also liable for all NDA clauses IKD has signed with a client, if the intern is working on the same project.
- 3. Ishan Khosla Design will not be liable for any crime committed by the intern including but not limited to drug usage, theft etc.
- 4. Ishan Khosla Design is not liable for the health care of the intern while the intern is at Ishan Khosla Design or otherwise. IKD will support the intern to get good health advice.
- 5. Leave of Notice: the intern must give IKD one months notice if they need to end the internship prematurely else they will not be paid for their entire internship.
- 6. Late/Absentee Notice: If an intern is running late or is going to be absent they need to inform the staff at IKD. If an intern comes to office after 1030 am it will be considered a half-day. An intern is permitted to have only three, half-days a month. An exception to this is an emergency and/or health related issues
- 7. An intern agrees to help with office related tasks like typing notes or archiving files.

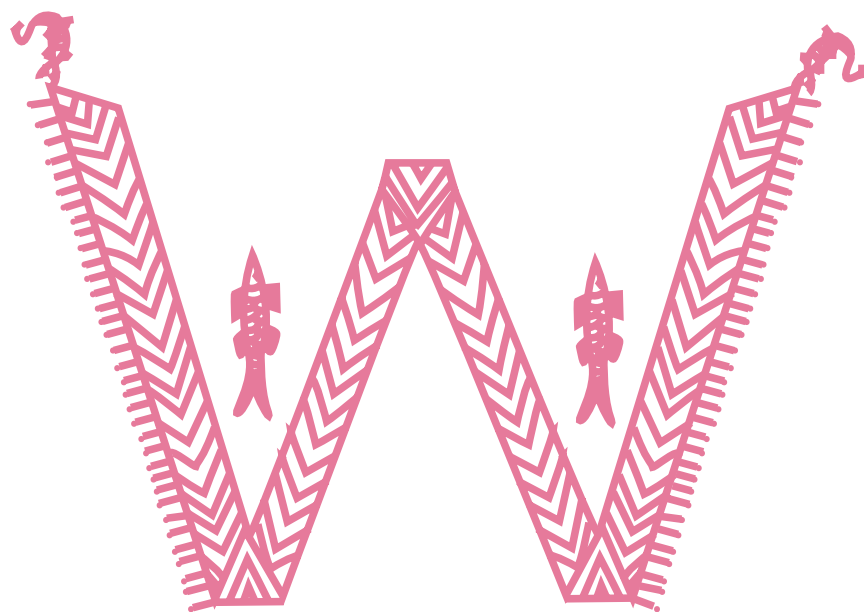
The intern accepts these points as binding by signing below:


Ishan Khosla

Karan Vohra



REPEATING UNIT The Artists were comfortable drawing compositions using their motifs, however it was unclear the repeating unit wasn't clear. In order to get clarity on this I persuaded them to create all the motifs used in the art form on a single sheet. Another reason to do this was to enable better recall during the creation of forms. One can keep only 7 things at a time.



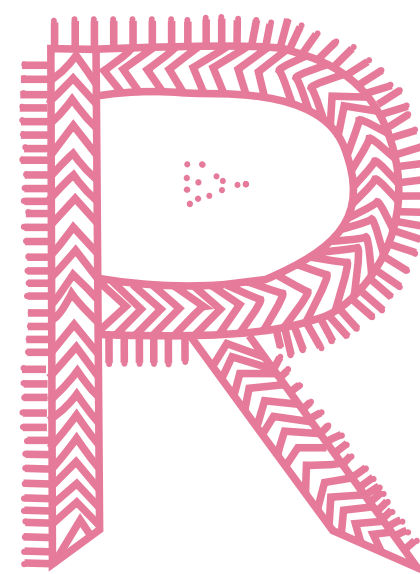
GOTHAM The artists were script illiterate hence printed letter forms were shown to them. Two fonts, Futura and Gotham were shown in order to show that there wasn't one way of doing it. Initially only root letters A K W B R G O S Q were introduced and they were asked to make the same

IMITATION We observed that the artists were simply filling the letters with their motifs instead of using the grammar of their art form, the reason for this was a poster hanging from the wall of a previous typecraft project Chitara. It was later removed for they had started to think of it as the ideal.



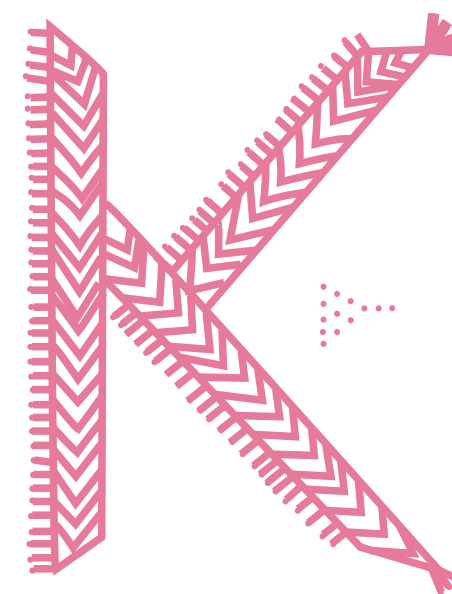
ORGANIC The concept of a letter was almost alien to them, hence I tried to explain it to them with the analogy of a human being. The more experienced artists continued on the previous track more or less however Sumitra the youngest of the three started experimenting with bolder lines and elements of the motif to make the letters. We switched mediums from markers to inks for bolder more organic lines.

REGIONS There were three regions of the letter - Inside the outline of the letter, the border and accompanying motif. We identified two styles possible for inside the letter, 3 possibilities for the border and a number for the motif. After trying out 6 iterations, decided on 3. These were derived from 2 G's done by Sumitra and an R done by Sunita.

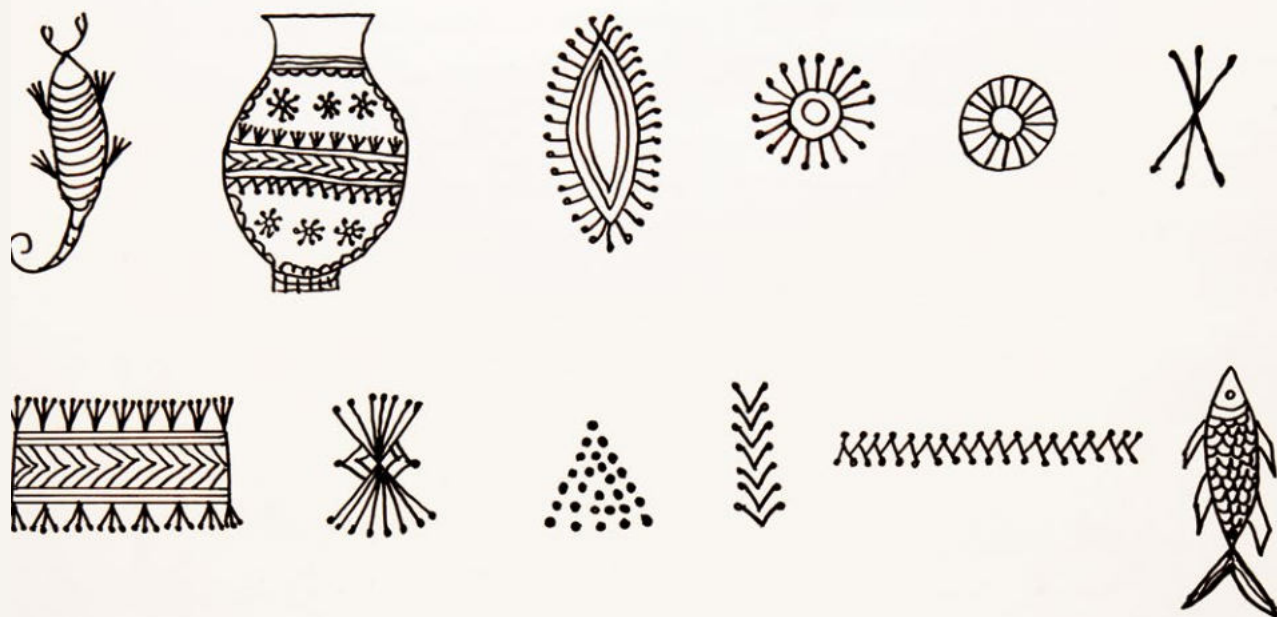


GUIDES Gotham font was used as a base font and guides were given to make it easier for them to make the forms. Owing to the complexity of design it had to be made on a large scale, hence guides were necessary. Initially very basic outline was given, however they were struggling and copying the same lines so we offered more concrete guides. The height of each character was around 11 inches.

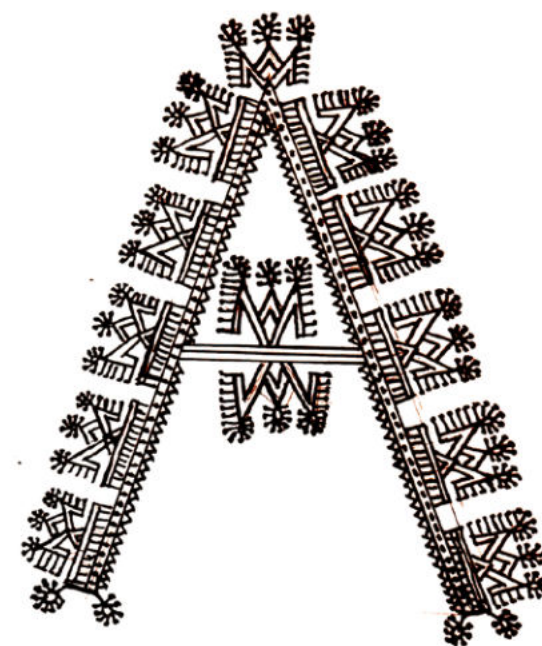
ANGLE CUTS Another issue that needed sorting was that the base were being drawn in an angular fashion, for some letters the angles faced inside while for others they faced outwards. We did two iterations for each letter to see which was more balanced and arrived at a rule of all cuts facing inwards.



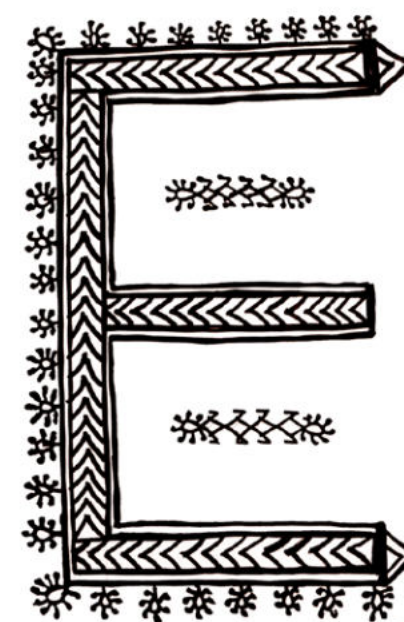
UNIFORMITY Sunita was more skilled of the three. We decided that only one artist works on one style in order that there is uniformity in all letters from the family. Finally Ram Kaley's version was selected to be worked on digitally. Characters, punctuation marks, numbers and certain symbols were made by the artists. The font was then vectorised in the time available for bolder more organic lines.



GODANA MOTIFS



FILLING UP ONLY



BOLDER FORMS



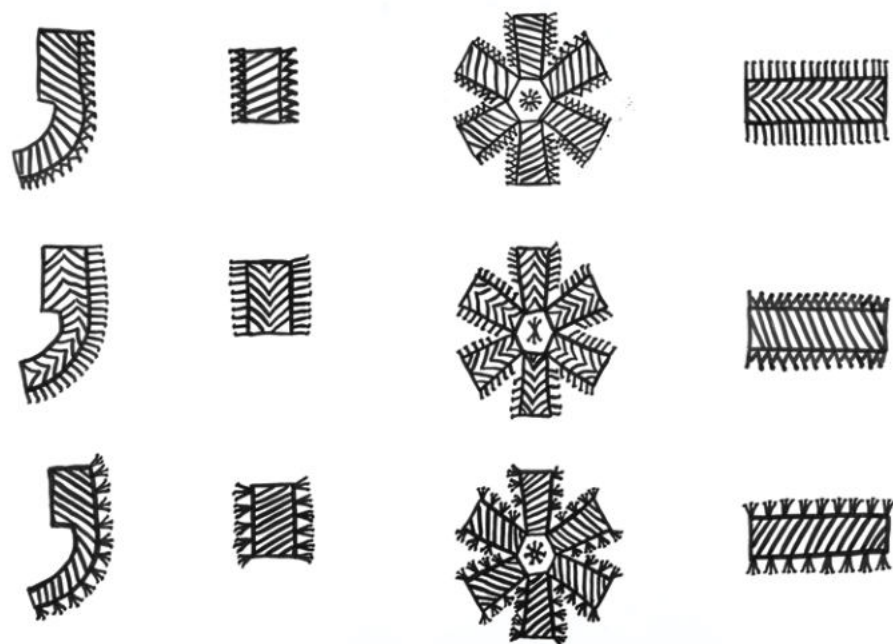
CHANGE MEDIUM



DEVNAGRI

BETI

JETHANI







Learn English Through Stories

location G.S.S KHUN, HIMACHAL PRADESH
dates 13 – 22 May 2015

When the landscape is painted in water colours, mauve water lilies invite you into the valley and the sky presents to you miracles that make you believe in God you know you are in the valley of Khun. The Education Team at Tata Center for Technology and Design including Prof Alka, Ms. Aarti Latkar, Ms. Ruchi Shah and I visited G.S.S Khun school in mid july in order to conduct a baseline study and engage students in art workshops among other things. Mr Rishabh Dviwedi accompanied us in order to video document the entire trip. Learn English Through Stories, L.E.T.S is an application that has been created by the education team with the help of sensibol technologies, which includes animation videos of stories accompanied by subtitles that change color as the audio goes and allows a person to record as well. The application borrows contents from book box as of now, we would like to bring in stories that are illustrated as well as written by students of Himachal. This would bring in context as well as generate interest amongst the children.

Through immersion we would like to see if by allowing students the means to create animations of stories written and illustrated by them would facilitate English language learning.

Our baseline study had three steps 1. A student would go to Ms. Aarti where she would choose a storybook and read from it as Aarti observes 2. The same story is heard in the form of animation and later recorded by the student as supervised by Ms. Shah. 3. Finally the student is allowed to have almost unsupervised time with the app and tablet, free to listen to the other stories and record the same multiple times as well hear herself. This activity was conducted by me. Every day after 3pm Ruchi and I would conduct an art activity greatly aided by Prof Hingorani, Aarti and Rishabh. The activities included making rainbow fish out of paper plates, portrait from found objects, infinite doodles, print making and pebble painting. Furthermore we obtained stories written by students and decided to



have two of them illustrated by multiple students. We noticed that there was a typical way in which they drew most things, this style was driven into them by the drawing teacher 'DM Sir'. In order to widen their horizons we had to push them to depart from 'DM sir' way of drawing, this I did by taking them outside to draw from life or to imagine all sorts of exaggerations possible with a form. To show us what we haven't seen. There was a remarkable change from then on, while several did stick to 'scenery' and drawing only with pencil, several started playing with washes and abstract forms. It is remarkable that students could retain their sense of humour and creativity in such constrained environment. Some students were gifted not just in terms of language and art but also in their capacity to give love and show kindness for each other. There would be children who'd offer me fruits from their farm every other day or invite us over for tea. Some went as far as to drop us or bring flowers. The best start of the day was meeting little kids on our way to school and playing games of addition and subtraction with them :).

I am in touch with some of the children and hope to offer whatever little form of guidance I am capable of. At the end of the day, we learn more from them, the children.

CHILDREN MANAGED
TO KEEP THEIR
CREATIVITY AND
SENSE OF HUMOUR
ALIVE IN THESE
CONSTRAINED
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Agastya Foundation

SHOE ART WORKSHOP
dates 28 JUNE -2 JULY

Agastya International Foundation is a Bangalore based non-profit educational trust that seeks to transform and stimulate the thinking of economically disadvantaged children. Agastya does this by bringing innovative science education to the doorstep of Government schools in various states in India. Ms. Latkar, Ms. Shah and I went to Agastya Foundation, Kuppam in order to understand the way this incredible foundation works as well as to conduct some workshops. Agastya brings students from schools in the vicinity and exposes them to technology, art and multiple perspectives. We had the chance to see the discovery centre, library and IT centre as well as the Vision Centre. Science models that explain concepts in a fun way, along with art installations can be found at the discovery centre along with an art lab which is delightful. The IT centre has a media lab which has been doing amazing work so far, teaching children film,

photography and animation among other things. The Library has a good collection of books in english and telugu and a breath taking view. Vision works is the cherry on top where science models are made from an array of machines. Low cost models that explain concepts of vaccum, optics and centre of gravity in ways that make you want to go to school again. We also had a community visit where Jayshree, one of Agastya's employees setup a small library entirely from the funds and efforts of the community, a commendable feat. I got the oppurtunity to carry out a shoe art workshop with 9 girls from an all girls resedential school in Kuppam. Children were asked to make things that they loved and in some ways defined them. Students used some incredible colour combinations and learned to use textures and patterns to aid their design. It was a fun filled acitvity which gave me insights into organising workshops better.

