

**Ajit Kumar**

**A multidisciplinary workshop with the students of College of Arts and Crafts, Patna**

**Interpretation: Improvisation: Intervention**

**September 18 - 20, 2016**

**Resource person: Samudra Kajal Saikia**

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*An existing work from the Campus*

During September 18, 19 and 20, 2016 a workshop was held in College of Art and Craft, Patna. Twenty five students participated in the workshop and they developed two artistic projects for their post-workshop engagements. The workshop was a multidisciplinary one and largely based upon understanding performativity in contemporary creative practices.

Focusing on three key terms, **Interpretation**, **Improvisation** and **Intervention**, the workshop aimed at developing a collaborative or collective working environment within the campus. Based on the 'ways of documenting' and 'learning by doing method' the workshop instigated two major public art projects where participants would execute and explore a performative experience under a given circumstance.

The three words Interpretation, Improvisation and Intervention were a guiding force. The participants were asked to look around and re-look their own works and the happenings around the site. As a visual artist, making a formal analysis was the first step. How and why was it happening, who were doing it, what kind of communication it was addressing- these were the points of interest. At the second stage, we need to improvise the circumstance according to our creative imagination. The third stage was intervention where the artist placed the position of the subject, enforced rethinking, insisted a debate or a different futuristic thinking.



*Students at Group Discussions*

**September 18, 2016**

**Day I | Session I**

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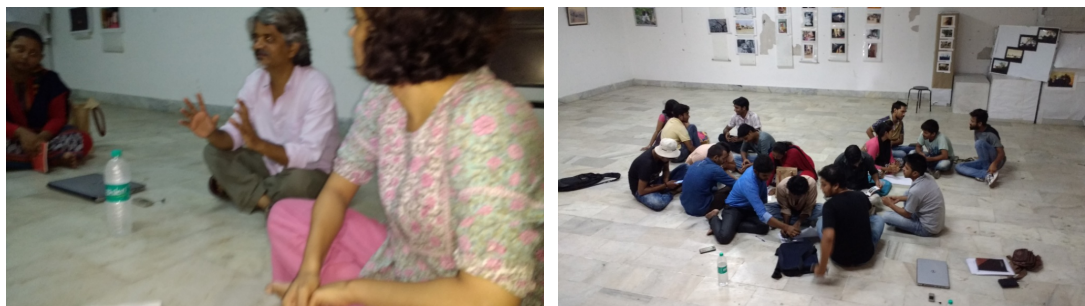
**Warm up with participatory discussion sessions**

The first day first session, which was introductory one, started with some basic concerns like the interrelation of 'form' and 'content' in artistic practice. From some examples from linguistic uses in everyday life it was explained – how the methods and 'ways of sayings' are important along with the subject matter or 'what is sought to be said'.

Art viewing is a meaning making exercise.

With the help of some participatory games the role of improvisation in art making was introduced.

**Keywords:** *Form and Content, Improvisation, 'Breakthroughs' of forms and norms.*



*Students interacting with Artist Babu Ishwar Prasad*

## **Day I | Session II**

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The students were also asked to put forward some queries that they might have in their minds regarding their own practice. We then developed some strategies to meet their questions in the upcoming exercises in the workshop. Through this session the participant students gradually opened up their minds and started interacting with the resource persons.

A brief summary of the raised questions:

Why one needs to break an existing form and up to what extent a form could be 'broken'?

Why one needs to develop a particular individualistic style and is it necessary to always have a style?

What makes a trend in art world, and at present what 'trend' is dominant in the contemporary scenario?

With a series of group discussions we tried to discover the best possible answers.

**Keywords:** *'Breakthroughs' of forms and norms, Style, Trends*



*An existing work from the Campus*



### Day I | Session III

Video presentation.

#### Discussions around the inter-relationship of multiple disciplines.

Discussions with example started on how literature, visual art, theatre or film making – different paradigms share something common in their essence.

A brief talk took place on the past events within the campus of the college of arts and crafts during the political protest. Then a discussion started on how a recent memory can instigate certain kind of artistic practice.

**Keywords:** Memory, Political Art, Politics in Art, Protest

### Day I | Session IV

#### Art as Documentation

In this session some examples were brought where students can find some materials to exemplify the methods and perceptions on translating a memory into creative engagement.

**Keywords:** Campus, Performativity, Protest, Memory, Experience, Paradigm shift



Students at work

**September 19, 2016**

**Day II | Session I**

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Discussions started with the students' presentation where they showed their current works.

A group discussion started on the ways and methods of art appreciation. The students were introduced to the various methods like formal analysis, social and historical methods of appreciating art. This session targeted to develop a practice around building up a discourse along with the practices they are already engaged in.

**Day II | Session II**

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**Documenting and Process Documenting**

A creative book making project was initiated in this session following a presentation of the students regarding their ongoing works. Talking about various kinds of narrative styles, we talked about narratively at large. As a precise exercise, the students took up a short duration task of making a story-board with an instantly given one-liner-storyline.



**September 19, 2016**

**Day II | Session III**

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Borrowing elements from third theatre and other interactive performance traditions the students were engaged with some physical games. These games helped them to understand the spatial relations, the essence of collaboration and the value of mutual supports in campus activities.

**Day II | Session III**

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The theatrical exercises led to a tentative literary text, a poetic piece of writing based on an Assamese folktale titled as “Tejimola”. This was to make the students understand the methods of adaptation. Keeping the memory of the students’ protest all discussed some other literary sources including Paash, Garcia Lorca, Safdar Hashmi and Bertolt Brecht. Adopting those literary texts the students started an exercise where they used ‘found objects’ within the ambiance and improvised them according to their performative modes.







*Students exploring sites, found objects and performativity*

**September 20, 2016**

**Day III | Session I**

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**Material Outcome: Project II**

The day started with talks around the book-making exercise, or the talks around narrativity in art and a concrete plan around the proposed artists book was made. The artists book will contain every students contribution exploring diverged formal and mediumistic exercises having only one theme in common. Keeping in mind the Eighty Day Long students protest the book will be named as “80 Days” and the students would continue this exercise to achieve a material outcome. This book would be curated, edited and designed by the students and they would come up with a spatial planning for displaying the book for public viewing.

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**Day III | Session II**

In the second session the students were asked to roam around the campus for ten minutes and within those ten minutes they were asked to develop a performative work at any place they like. Within a very limited time the students developed some site specific performances as a part of their exercises. Total four groups of the students explored four different sites within the campus and they tried to improvise with found objects out there. They developed some theatrical dialogues and tried their best to materialise some of their observations in last two days.



*Students exploring sites, found objects and performativity*

### **Day III | Session III**

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#### **Material Outcome: Project II**

Following a discussion on the relationship and debates between 'Art' and 'Craft' the students developed a project of making an outdoor installation borrowing reference from a traditional craft called "Madai". The students generated a lot of questions around how a traditional craft could be adopted into an art practice and what sort of difficulties they may face during the process.

### **Day III | Session IV**

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Summing up of the three day workshop and a group discussion regarding the students' further engagements.





*Some sites within the campus*

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