



Drawing and Visualisation Research

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Drawing In-Situ

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EXERCISES IN DRAWING

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INTRODUCTION

I chose an outdoor public garden space to understand my own process of drawing. I wanted to work in nature and observe how drawing helps me experience my surroundings or what ought to be the reality of inhabiting this place for a duration of two weeks.

I applied methods such as sketching through observation, study of light and the environment, placing cut outs, drawings, performing and documenting. I was interested in the interaction and responses from the audience and how that would affect me in the process of creation.



WORKING WITH CUT OUTS (THE STORIES)

This place had benches, trees and a surrounding boundary and was open to the public. Initially I came with my bag carrying paper, pens and other basic art material since I could not leave anything overnight. For a day or two I chose to read a book, have tea and soak in the environment. I visualized the trees, boundary walls, the hidden places, birds dropping

in for fruit, the gardeners working in the area, cars passing by as scenes of a story. All of this triggered my imagination and creativity as I had all possibilities to work around the space of the tree. I could see this place from many points. I could move in any direction and my perception of the garden would change.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945) writes on spatial perspective

to look at an object is to inhabit it, and from this habitation to grasp all things in terms of the aspect which they present to it.

...the house itself is not the house seen from nowhere, but the house seen from everywhere. The completed object is translucent, being shot through from all sides by an infinite number of present scrutinies which intersect in its depths leaving nothing hidden. (Maurice Merleau-Ponty)

I sat on the bench, moved around and concentrated my eyes on knowing that this tree or the garden could be seen from infinite positions. It was like it had no center. I could make any place the center or many centers. I could focus into anything from anywhere.





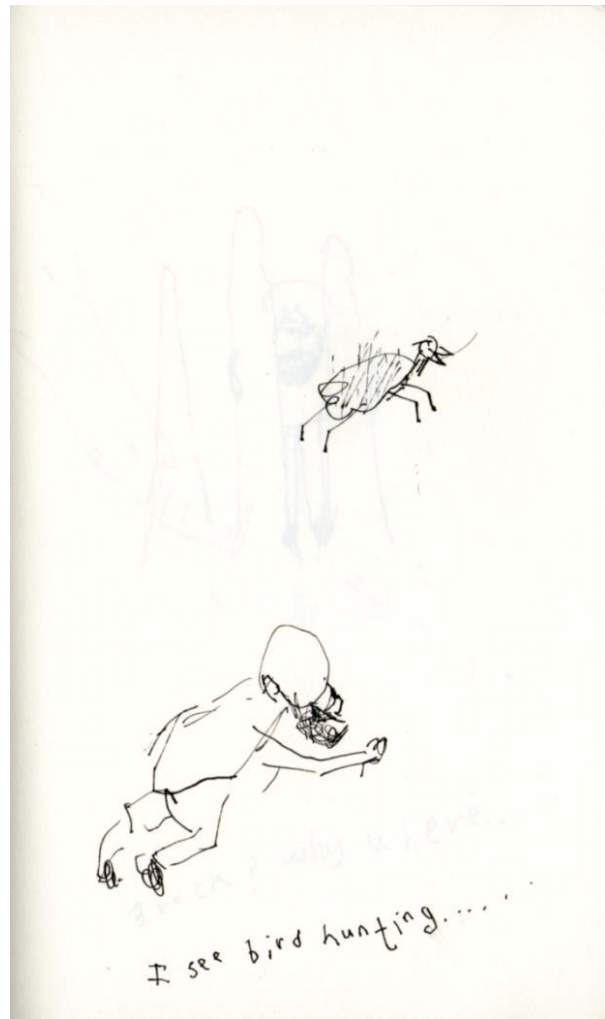
CLOSE UP OF THE CUT OUTS.

I was interested in the movement of the people watering the plants, filling up the pond, me imagining a chase of the dog (I'm not sure why I always chase this dog) huddling of people in a corner of the garden for some sunshine and a smoke. I would notice the difference of sitting in the shade and the sunlight as if I was hidden under the tree.

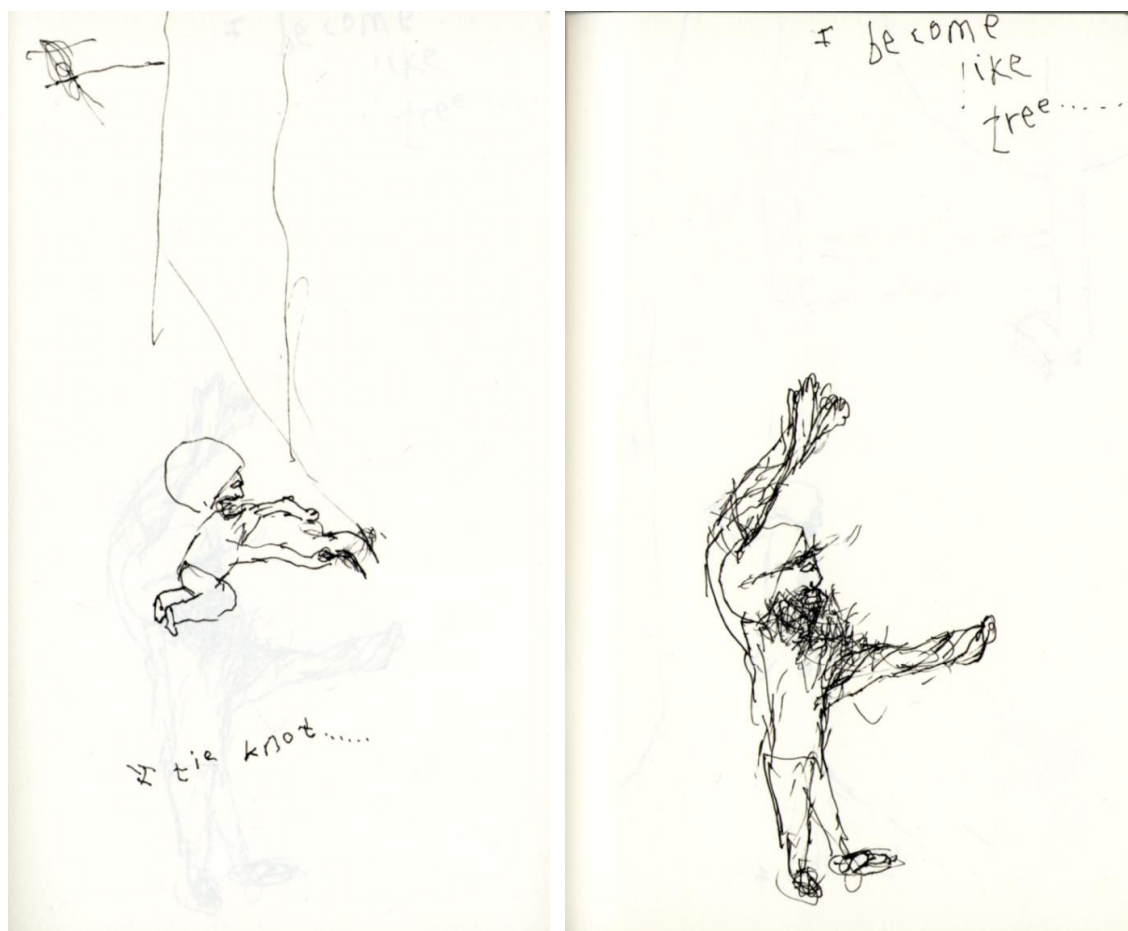


DIGITAL TECHNIQUES (NEW MEANINGS)

The work started to change every day as I would discover some of the cut outs went missing and were found in the stack of grass collected by the gardener or either slipped down because of the rain or someone decided to take it with them. This particular cut out above had a fruit stain and because I saw the gardener cleaning the manhole, I imagined myself being stuck inside and a dog is there wondering what to do? I used images to draw with the brush tool in Photoshop software.







THE SCANNED IMAGES FROM MY SMALL (A 6 SIZE) SKETCHBOOK. I USUALLY WORK WITH A .01 ROTRING PEN.

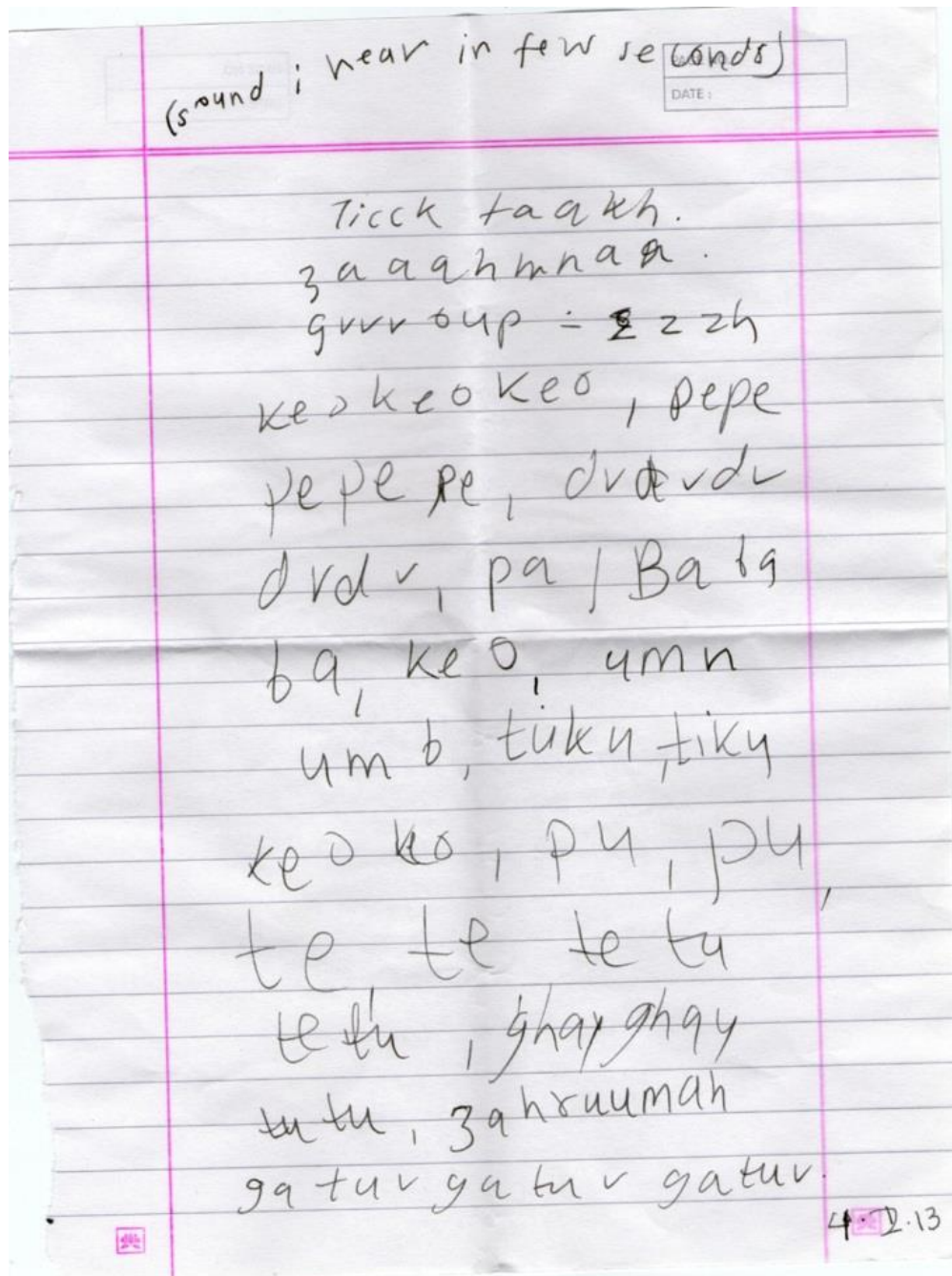


SKETCHING THROUGH OBSERVATION (SKETCHBOOK STORIES)

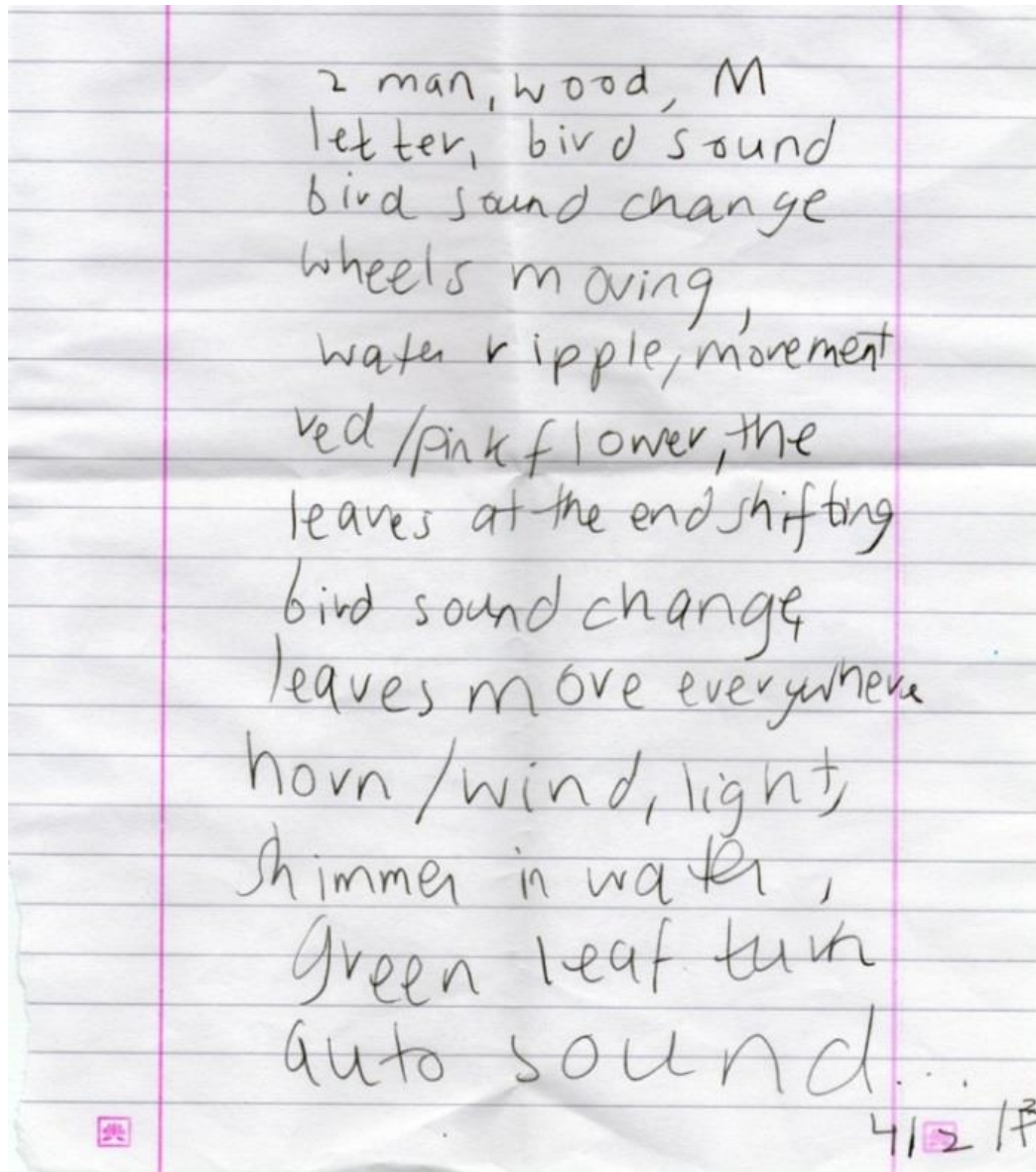
I also brought a small sketchbook and wanted to experience the process of drawing from observation in comparison to drawing in my studio. This made me more aware of what I was seeing. I found it distracting to draw from the mind as well as bring in elements which I

was seeing, because I noticed details, sounds, the changing light, the plants in the garden; small insects around me, what was flying in the air, the insects in the pond. I took breaks to have tea but realized I omitted, edited much of this when I drew.

I began by drawing the buildings in front of me but later avoided seeing and became involved with looking only at the sketchbook and the imagined images in the mind. So there was conflict in few sketches in the beginning where I drew what I saw where as I always draw from the mind. What was this difference? I wanted to surprise myself in my works.



I scribbled the sounds being played around me. The auto rickshaws behind me, cars entering the complex, buses passing by, horns, bird sounds and anything I could transfer into words. I didn't feel like drawing, or drawing a representational form, which is me doing something, me in the auto rickshaw, me jumping in the garden.

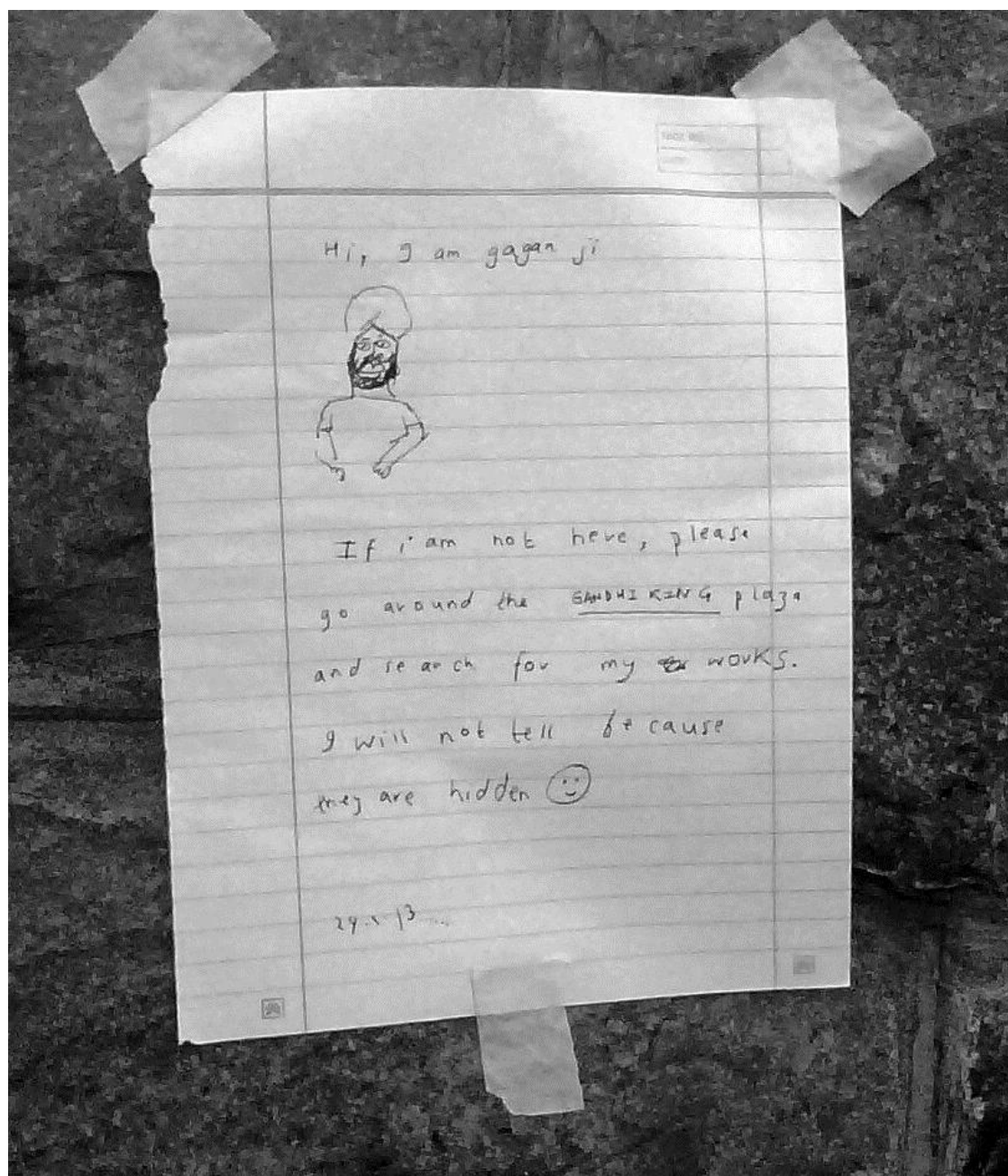


I experimented with writing the drawing. I experienced a different sensation when I altered the drawing by writing whatever was around me. I didn't wait to see what I should or should not see or write. The distance of where I sat and what I was seeing shifted abruptly as if someone is adjusting the focus lenses of my vision. I did not force myself to see something.

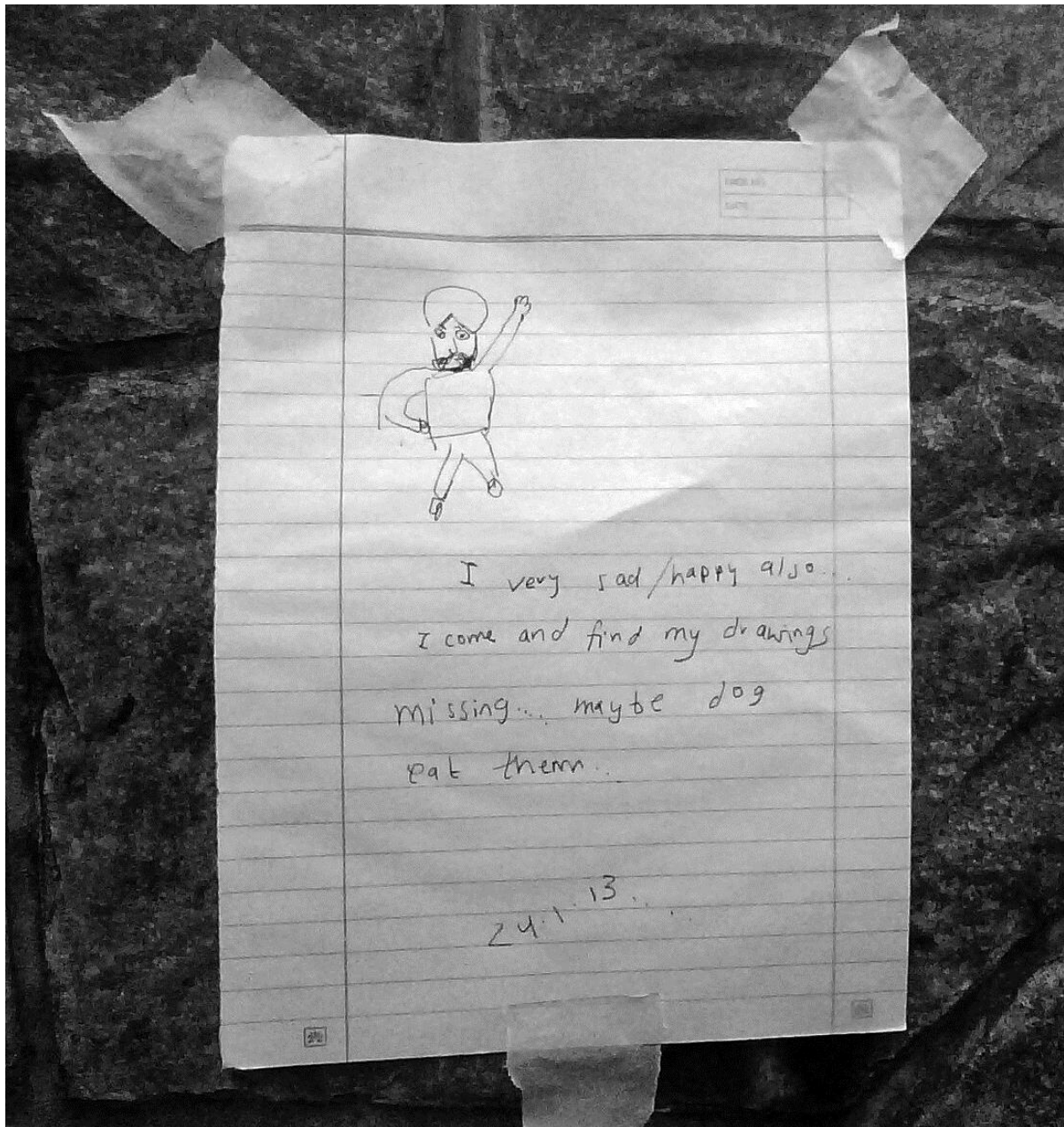




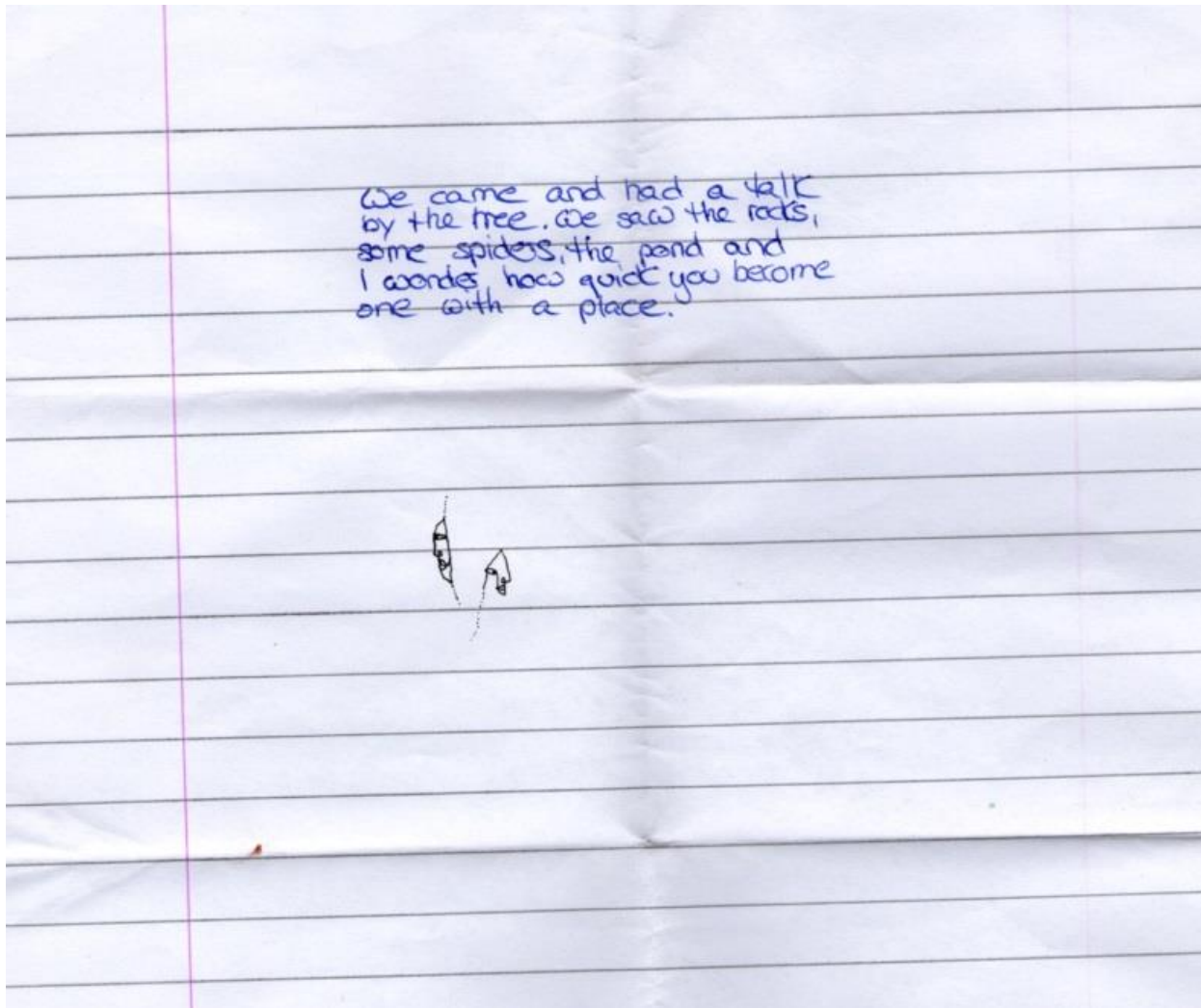
I scanned the drawings from the sketchbook and created a small photocopy artist book and decided to place it inside the tree. I was drawing, folding it and hiding inside the gaps. In my absence the audience would search for the work or be surprised to find a work and search for more like a treasure hunt. It was a mix crowd of people who came. For some the scale was an issue of being too small. For others they left the place without seeing, finding a single work. I imagined it to be like mail boxes with letters which I wrote each day of my experiences, stories.



I put up a piece of paper outside the venue as an invitation for the audience.



The next day the invitation paper was missing and along with this some cut outs too. The story is that one of the staff got entangled in the fishnet wire and decided to clean up the area. I realized that I had no control over such events. And so I created a drawing narrating the story.



The audience started to read this as a game and left messages for me inside the tree. This is a scanned image of a note left by someone. I read it and drew two faces on it and put it back. So now drawings placed inside the tree became interactive. There were no such instructions that the audience could participate or also create a drawing, note and insert it into the project.



The public garden spread itself in all directions and after going around the place, I found myself drawn to a corner with a bunch of bamboo trees.

I started to experiment by floating the cut outs on a fishnet wire as I imagined myself navigating like a fish through this place. Unlike the other trees, I would often find wires loosened because of the flexible nature of the bamboo.



I placed my drawings inside a cut bamboo stick.



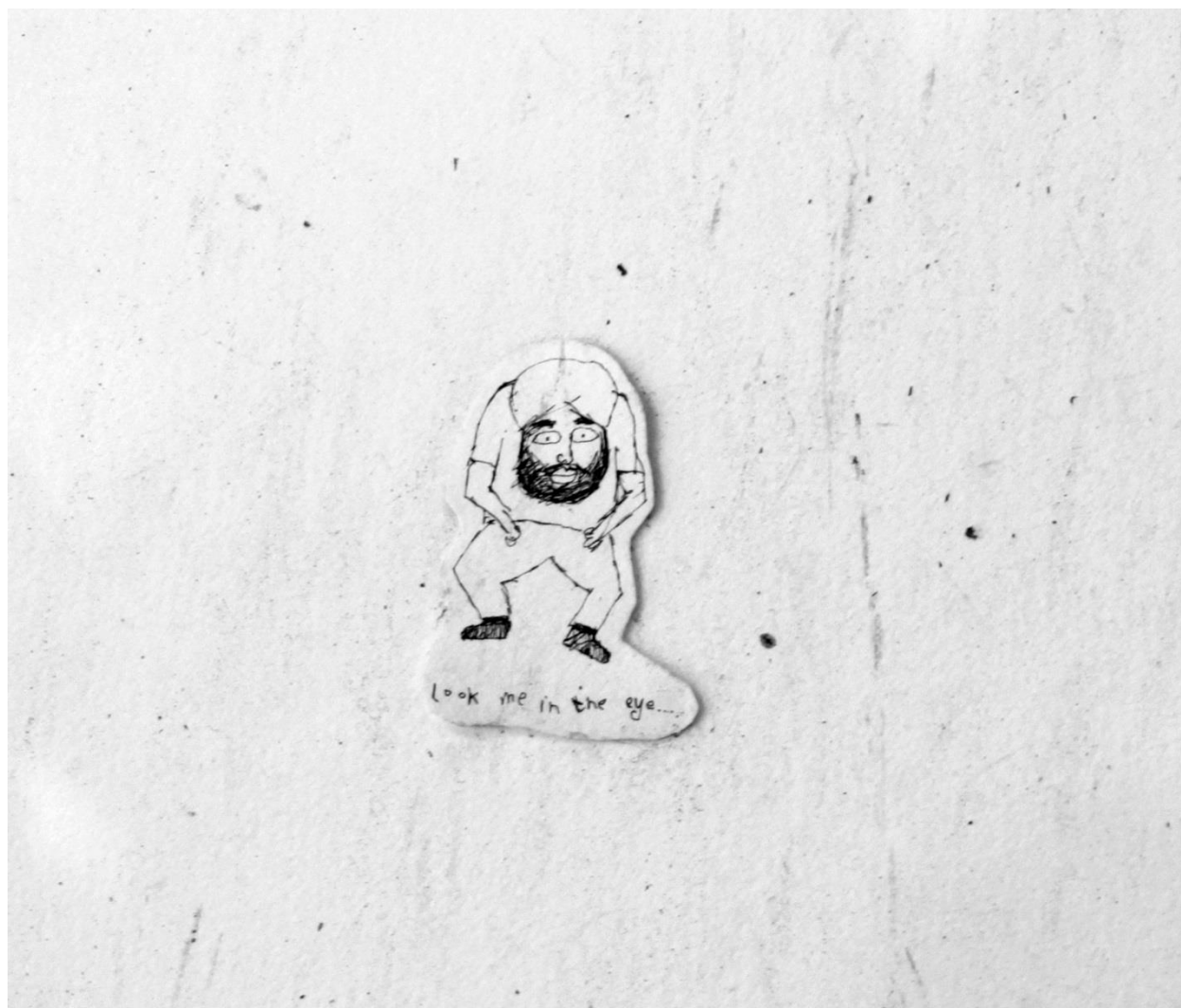
At another location of the garden, I wrapped a sheet of paper around the tree and watched it change shape over a period of two weeks. I felt like covering the whole tree with paper or wanting the paper to take shape of the tree. I predetermined a result of this exercise, imagining it to be in such a way, or thought that this is how it should happen. The visualization sense, process was as such that this exercise was conceived in the mind with a certain sense of how it would shape up. So did I think of the conclusion and therefore experimented with how it would externalize?



I also pasted a cut out on a piece of paper and tied it around a tree. The weather affected the paper, creating changes on a day to day basis. I started to document this process. Because of regular wind and rain, the wires would often break making the work entangled inside the branches but the audience would find their way to view the work.

This format was a change from pasting the cut outs on the tree to having a space around it, an empty space to give them space, a place to expand into something. I wanted to enlarge this space around the cut out even further or even if I did not do it, I would see it occurring in my mind.

In the process of these exercises, I sometimes would not know what I was doing. Climbing the trees, looking for points which I could not access, (where I would need a ladder to suspend wires or too high areas in the tree) visualizing how it would be in the night, how the lights would illuminate the trees, picking up the fallen seeds, leaves, fruits, trying to integrate them into the drawings, cut outs. I felt I had more exercises going on in my head than what came out for others to see. So the process of creation was mental and physical and sometimes the exercises were thought of and discarded in the mental process itself.



CLOSE UP OF THE CUT OUT PASTED ON PAPER AND SUSPEND ON THE TREE WITH NATURAL MARKS OF BEING IN AN OUTDOOR SPACE.



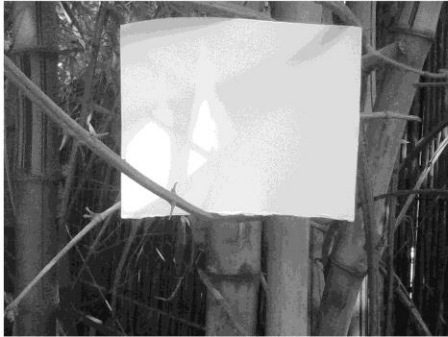
A drawing kept enclosed inside a tree. All of the drawings were made sitting here in the public garden.



Traces of the dirt from the wind and the light and shadow affected how I would see the work in the public place.



I also observed the projection of light and shadow on the drawings floating in the air. The work changed as the background changed. I could see possibility in exploring the nature of being outdoors and the sense of movement, animation in the drawings.



STUDY OF LIGHT (DISCOVERING SUNLIGHT)

I tried a similar experiment of placing the paper between the bamboo trees. The play of light and shadow was interesting on the blank white paper but I had not drawn or pasted a drawing on the paper. I wanted to see the drawing, the black strokes, Lines on paper to

have any meaning. Why did I lose meaning without the drawing? I am separate from the paper since I did not create it. The creation is the drawing drawn by me.





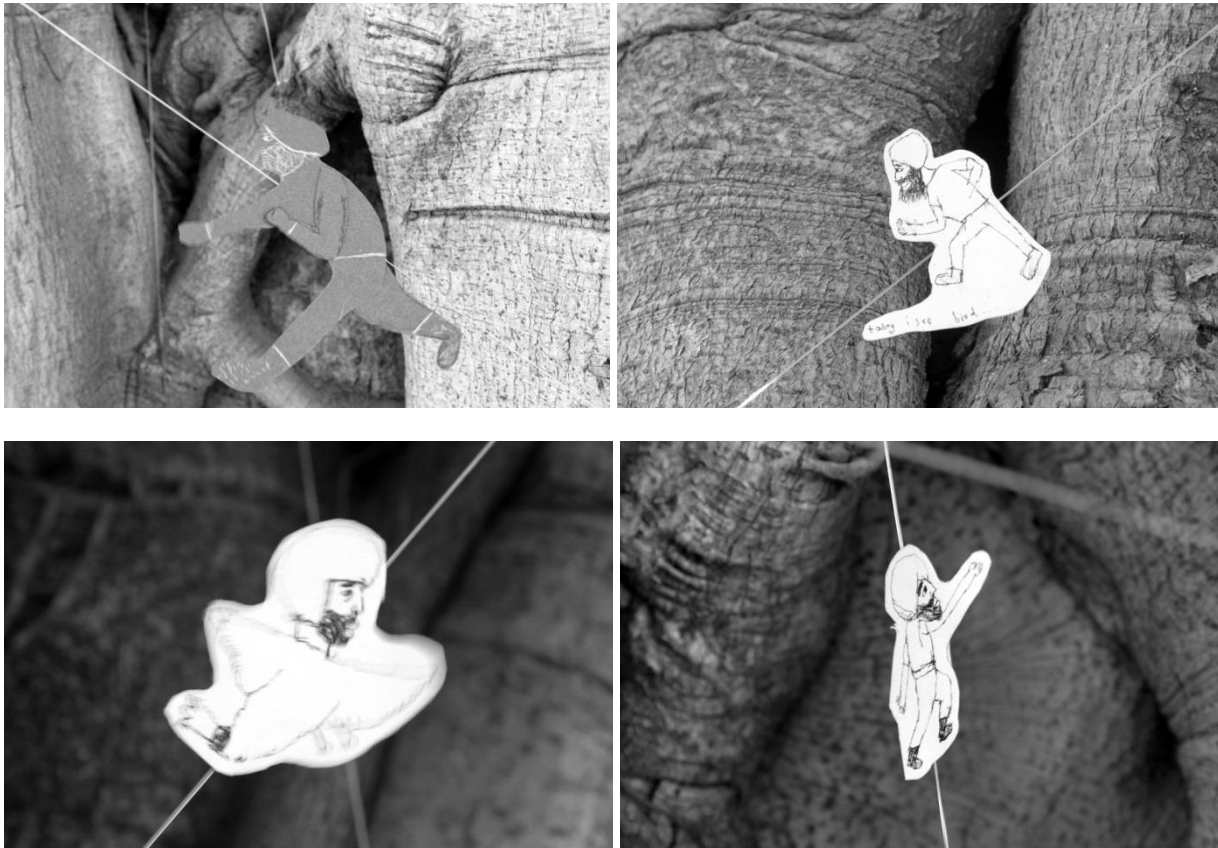
PERFORMING (INHABITING THE SPACE)

Most of the time I was documenting the process with my digital camera and for this performance I chose to perform my drawings. I realized I was enacting the fictional characters I drew and now I had started to run, jump, do push-ups and play in the public garden. I was like a cut out on an invisible wire.



Towards the end of the two weeks, I experimented with creating a cluster of the cut outs in a narrowed down space. Earlier my drawings were scattered and now I felt the need to create a web of cut outs. Maybe I was seeking more attention from the audience since my works were hardly visible and often people would go without ever discovering a work unless I specified. I felt I could fill up the whole tree with such cut outs and explore scale, form and material. I did try a khaki colored rope, wire but then decided to use the fishing net wire.

During the process of creation, I wanted to create an animation, a stop motion video which formulated itself in the mind – (I visualized myself working with a tripod, placing it in front of these cut outs and moving them bit by bit and taking photographs of each movement and compiling it as a stop motion video) When I brought the tripod, I faced physical discomfort in working. I could not get anything right. The cut outs would not move the way I wanted them to move, the tripod was not easy to work with (I could not get the photos that I wanted and it took too long to change the height and angle, slowing down my process of creating the movie) and I lost interest in the making. I wanted the same flow of speed in creating, cutting the drawing in shape of a cut out, tying the fishnet wire, pasting the work (I had glue drops which were easy to paste on the back of the cut out without getting any glue on the hands) So eventually I could not create the animation and felt at ease while holding the camera in my hands to document the images.



CLOSE UP OF THE CUT OUTS IN A CLUSTER.

CONCLUSION

I wanted to do this... that and keep on extending these exercises, removing, tearing the cut outs, changing the scale, documenting, bringing in live animal, more audience, layering a route on the grass for the audience to follow, climbing into the tree and beyond. The mind kept on imagining new exercises. After few days I would see less of the cut outs pasted and more of the skin of the tree, the rich colors of the leaves, the shade, Water in the pond. It was more of the exercises which were in the mind, not fully executed, only imagined, tried partially, traces of what I could do or even what I had done but now removed. It was a ritual of coming, spending time and going back to the studio. It was a ritual, a habit to come and draw out thoughts, ideas and concepts. It was a way to perceive a space, a place by being mentally aware, which I felt was possible through engaging with the process of drawing.

REFERENCES

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945) Experience and objective thought, Phenomenology of Perception: Routledge