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A HERO GROUP INITIATIVE

School of
Liberal Studies

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| FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

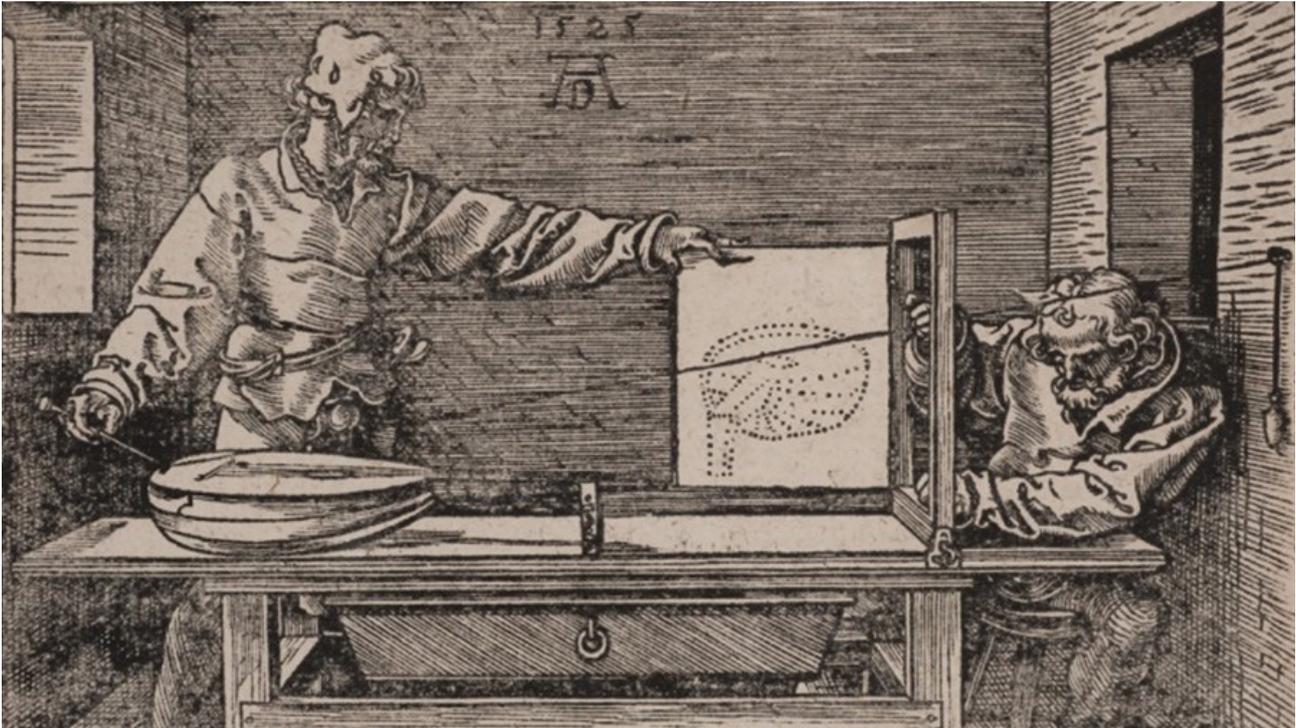


Image: Durer's Image of Perspective

We, on behalf of the School of Liberal Studies (SoLS), BMU, are delighted to bring to you the second issue of our newsletter *Ru-Ba-Ru*.

We all know that a newsletter does not merely enumerate the achievements of an institution but offers a perspective. A perspective, as we well know from visual arts is not just any vision but a particular type of vision which gives a subjective angle to any objective view. In that sense, a newsletter seeks to capture the vision of the institution in question but in a particular way which is equally subjective as well as objective. Moreover, the perspective that any newsletter expresses is always a bit Janus faced. It's a doorway which while showing what has been achieved in the past year secretly anticipates what the institution is capable of achieving in the coming years.

While SoLS as a school has been a key player in extending the spirit of the university through its outreach programmes and the seminars and conferences, we have never forgotten the very essence of liberal studies which SoLS has been trying to advocate: to form an idea of pedagogy, which is universal and foundational without being closed or limited to disciplinary boundaries. In other words, we seek to exist between disciplines experimenting with knowledge without losing our rigour or sincerity.

We hope that the newsletter reflects this spirit of the School.

Idrees, Anandini, Soumick



| DEAN'S MESSAGE

The School of Liberal Studies (SoLS) has endeavored to connect with a world which is not only rapidly changing but also increasingly more volatile in terms of ideas, technology, policies, and moral norms. It is critical that we make sense of this flux in a reflective manner, without getting trapped in usual binaries, such that the teaching and research can touch the lives of our students and create an enduring impact beyond the University. Thinking beyond the traditional disciplinary canons and researching the past, present, and future through diverse approaches help us understand and address complex problems that afflict the lives of people today. At the same time, multifarious expressions of our collective knowledge and perspective also reach out to diverse segments of society.

The SoLS newsletter encapsulates these initiatives at the School. I wish the very best for the newsletter.

PERSPECTIVE I

School of Liberal Studies: A look back

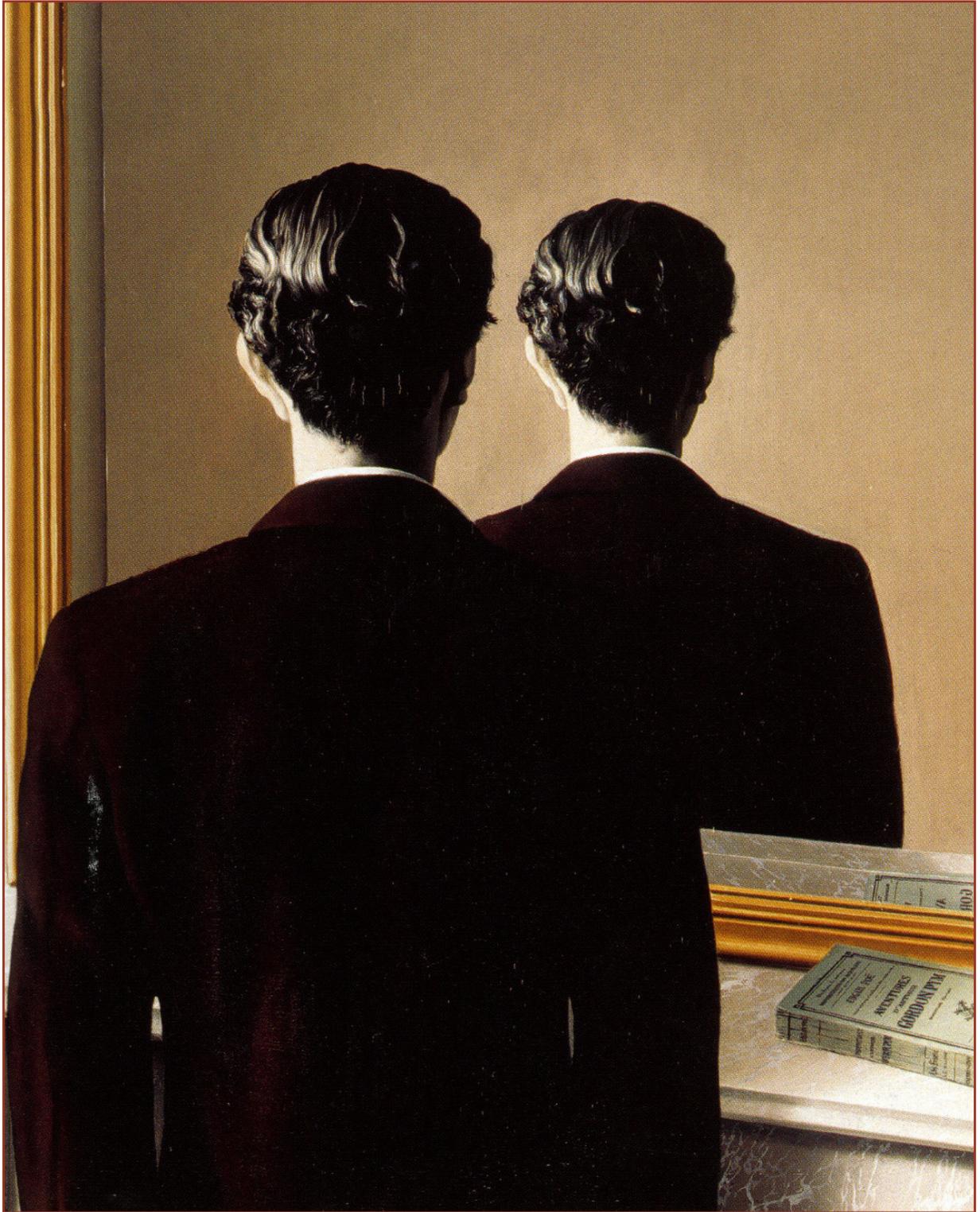


Image: Not to be Reproduced by René Magritte

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATIONS

The SoLS Conversations represents a forum for deliberating and engaging with complex issues and evolving situations in the contemporary world. In an increasingly polarized and fast world that we live in, it is felt that there is a need to nurture spaces where one can patiently engage with the nuances of various social and human issues. It is with this perspective that the SoLS Conversations have been launched. The Conversations traverse the diverse world of economy, society, culture, politics, and the psyche. Through this medium, the idea is to explore the interconnectedness of these apparently independent spheres. In a rapidly changing world with novel challenges for humankind and nature, we aim to participate in and contribute to public discourses on the most important issues of our times.

In line with this thought and purpose, three events were held over the past academic year: 2024-2025. On 30th August 2024, the School organised its 3rd SoLS Conversations titled “Academic Freedom Globally: Its Present and Future.” The event was held at India Habitat Centre and included three panelists:

Prof. Ajay Skaria, (University of Minnesota, US), Prof. Nivedita Menon (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi), and Prof. Apoorvanand (University of Delhi, Delhi).

The panel discussed how academic freedom is presently situated in the current global scenario, both from a theoretical and empirical perspective, while deliberating on the evolving challenges that it faces and its criticality for a future humane society. The discussion was followed by a Q&A session with the audience raising important concerns and questions that were variously addressed by the panelists.

The 4th SoLS Conversations titled “Bridging Design for a Better World and Liberal Studies” was organised on 27th September 2024, at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi. The event was well attended and featured the renowned Prof. Don Norman (University of California, San Diego) in conversation with Prof. Suchitra Balasubrahmanyam (Nirma University, Ahmedabad), Prof. Shyam Menon (Vice Chancellor, BMU) and Prof. M.S. Farooqi (Ambedkar University, Delhi). The discussion explored how humanistic social design, and liberal studies can collaboratively address pressing global challenges such as poverty, climate change, and social inequity—particularly in the Global South to foster innovative, socially inclusive solutions for sustainable development and social justice.

The 5th SoLS Conversations titled “Is Consumption A Black Box in Public Policy?” was organised on 7th November 2024 at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi. The discussion examined the affluence in India and its connection to three key crises: environmental sustainability, extreme inequality and psychological wellbeing. The other discussants included Prof. Aseem Srivastava (University of Massachusetts, US), Dr. Chirashree Dasgupta (JNU, Delhi), Dr. Anup Dhar (BMU), and Dr. Soumyajit Bhar (BMU). The event was well attended and much appreciated by audiences who valued the concerns raised by the speakers by asking relevant questions.



Photo (from left to right): Professor Charnjib Sen (BMU), Dr. Anup Dhar (BMU) and Dr. Soumyajit Bhar (BMU) as part of 4th SoLS Conversations: “Bridging Design for a Better World and Liberal Studies”

COMMITTEES, CHAOS, AND CAMARADERIE: THE STORY OF AISC 2024

Sometime in July 2024, despite Dr Manu Mathew and my misgivings and rather feeble protests, SoLS was entrusted to host the Indian Sociological Society's 49th All India Sociological Conference (AISC), where both of us were tasked as the organising secretaries. Any national-level conference is always a massive undertaking in terms of logistics, with participants often numbering in the hundreds. We were apprehensive and knew we were doomed, for neither did we have the faculty nor the student strength to pull off something this huge. But we were comforted by Prof. Maitrayee Chaudhuri, who promised us unconditional support from the ISS's side.

We started preparing early by designing and disseminating our publicity materials, including brochures and a webpage. Confident that a teal and grey aesthetic would impress the world, we carried on to create our registration portal. We knew participation was going to be high, but we were hoping, for once, the remote location of BMU would play to our advantage in keeping numbers manageable. And we couldn't have been more delusional. We received 1,500 registrations from all over the country. India runs on chaos, we know that. This country, at any given point, is basically managing people, resources and tempers. This conference, in a nutshell, was going to be about that and some more. Our country is perennially running elections, railways, weddings and all of it amounts to some form of disaster management. The AISC, ostensibly an academic congregation, we soon came to realise, was pretty much a big fat Indian wedding. Much before the actual conference commenced, we were inundated with special requests over accommodation, food preferences, transport, the temperature of the water, and some more. Of course, like all good hosts, we persevered to answer them diligently. Our public university education had made us adept in one thing, and that was whenever there was any event, the first thing one had to do was to make committees. The more, the merrier and sometimes, messier. So, with a Transport, Communication, Book of Abstracts and Certificates, Registration, Travel, Events, Food, Venue, and Stationery Committees,

we thought we were prepared. Sixty student volunteers (mostly undergraduates), overseeing around 2,500 people who graced the three-day event, with about twelve faculty members.

Preparing in anticipation is one kind of labour, and facing the junta, that is India, on the D-Days of the conference is another piece of work. We do not think we or the students have ever faced predicaments like this, be it a midnight complaint about not being served water in a bottle in the hostel room or refusing to vacate rooms way past the checkout time! Our students saw it all and handled every grumpy and disgruntled guest with the utmost grace, patience, and humour. A big fat Indian wedding is not without its complaints, but it is also one that is full of camaraderie, enthusiastic well-wishers and lots of space for catching up and enjoyment. The 49th AISC at BMU made our students grow up overnight, and it also gave us a glimpse into what teamwork truly meant. For our undergrads, it was less an academic event and more a crash course in people skills: negotiation, diplomacy, endurance. They figured the art of being polite, as someone complained about the mattress or how to tactfully exit a conversation in the face of personalised room service demands.

Retrospectively, we were proud to have pulled off a feat like this with such a minuscule but highly efficient team, leading to people marvelling at the capabilities of our undergrads. We say all's well that ends well. So, the sociologists came and debated, the committees were successful in their execution, and our undergrads emerged unscathed and are still with us. Most importantly, much to the relief of our campus security guards, SoLS had returned the campus and the hostels to them intact without any dent or damage.

- *Dr. Suchismita Chattopadhyay*



KEYNOTE AND PLENARY SESSIONS CONDUCTED DURING AISC, 22-24 DECEMBER 2024

Session	Speakers
Keynote Lecture	Ms. Urvashi Butalia, Zubaan Books
Plenary I Debating Development and Democracy	Chair: Prof. Bandana Purkayastha (Vice President ISA) Speakers: Prof. Surinder Singh Jodhka, Prof. Virginius Xaxa, Prof. Amites Mukhopadhyay, Prof. Uma Rani, Prof. Rajesh Mishra
R K Mukherjee Memorial Lecture	Chair: Prof. R. Indira Speakers: Prof. Swapan Bhattacharyya
Plenary II Sociology, Democracy and Development	Chair: Prof. Dipankar Gupta Speakers: Prof. Geoffrey Pleyers, Prof. Rajni Palriwala, Prof. Prahlad Gangaram Jogdand, Prof. Arvind Rajagopal, Prof. Tanweer Fazal
Special Lecture : Overcoming social prejudices through education: Possibilities and limitations	Chair: Prof. Amman Madan Speakers: Prof. Satish Deshpande
Student Panel: What does Sociology mean for us?	Chair: Dr. Deepali Aparajita Dungdung Speakers: Azeem Ahmed (PhD Candidate, Delhi University) Esther Anne (PhD Candidate, UMass Amherst) Niki Rai (PhD Candidate, Ambedkar University, Delhi) Shilpi Shikha Phukan (PhD Candidate, JNU)
Plenary III-A Sociology of the Region (NCR)	Chair: Prof. Ravinder Kaur Speakers: Prof. Sanjay Srivastava, Dr. Jagmiti Sangwan, Dr. Shamsheer Singh, Prof. Ravinder Kaur
Plenary III-B Sociology of the Region (Haryana)	Chair: Prof. Khazan Singh Sangwan Speakers: Prof. Prem Kumar, Mr. Ravindra Singh Sheoran, Dr. Bhup Singh Gaur, Prof. Desraj Sabharwal

THE CENTRE FOR CHILD AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS (CCYT)

The Centre for Child and Youth Transitions (CCYT) was established in 2025, as a one-of-a-kind centre that brings together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and activists who work with and study issues affecting children and youth in the Global South and beyond.

CCYT aims to fill the existing gap in teaching, research, and policy/advocacy in the area of childhood and youth past, present, and future. Grounded in an interdisciplinary ethos, this Centre aims to identify key and emerging areas for research, plan, and carry out teaching programmes through SoLS and engage with non-state and state actors in informing policy decisions and supporting advocacy programmes initiated by young people themselves or their allies.

Objectives:

- Identify, conduct research, and build an archive in key innovative and significant areas of research on childhood and youth in India and beyond.
- Invest in contributing to policy decisions related to young people, and support advocacy programmes of/for young people on key issues that affect their lives and futures. Bring children and youth into conversation with the Centre as experts and as key stakeholders.
- Build collaborations & partnerships with other collectives, NGOs, artists/ youth, research centres in India and abroad for research and to exchange learning.

Achievements

1. Launch of a Minor in Childhood and Youth Studies as part of the BA (H) Liberal Arts programme, in 2025, with the first course on offer in January 2025 on “Understanding Children’s Rights and Childhood”, taught by Dr. Anandini Dar.
2. Launch Event of the Centre was organised around the theme of “Aspirations, Agency, and Rights: Engaging with Childhood and Youth in India” on 03 May 2025

CCYT Team

Director: Dr. Anandini Dar, Associate Professor, School of Liberal Studies

Dy-Director: Dr. Suchismita Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Studies

Post Doctoral Researcher: Dr. Therese Boje Mortensen, Lund University, Sweden

Office Manager: Ms. Meghna Sharma, Deans Office, School of Liberal Studies

THE FIRST LAUNCH EVENT OF CCYT

The first inaugural Conversations of the Centre for Child and Youth Transitions was held on 03 May 2025 on the theme of “Aspirations, Agency, and Rights: Engaging with Childhood and Youth in India”.

Children and youth occupy a central location in our societies today. They are at once the hope for our futures, as well as the most challenged and vulnerable population group. Yet, their issues and concerns do not occupy a critical space in academic discourses and institutions. In government and policy discourses young people and their concerns are largely framed from an adultist and top-down approach. In this Conversations Session, Centre tried to flip the narrative and engage with the aspirations and rights of young people from a bottom-up perspective and deliberate on the

meaning of agency in the context of individual and community identities within which children’s everyday life worlds are embedded.

This session addressed the following questions: How do young people make sense of their own identities and rights in the context of contemporary India?

Can we imagine children and youth as rights bearing and agential individuals in a society that is ageist and hierarchical?

What are young people’s aspirations for their futures, love, employment, and education?

How does their capacity to aspire conflict with/or support their capacity to achieve?

What kinds of empowerment programmes, particularly for girls, offer possibilities towards strengthening their rights?

The following esteemed panellists shared their research and work:

BMU | **SoLS** | **CCYT**
 BMU Munjal University | School of Liberal Studies | Centre for Child and Youth Transitions

Inaugural Conversations

ASPIRATIONS, AGENCY, AND RIGHTS

ENGAGING WITH CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH IN INDIA

SPEAKERS

- R MAITHREVI KHPT
- PRABHLEEN TUTEJA TYPF
- SUJIT BARLA PRAYATN
- RUNAL TOPPO PRAYATN
- MANISHA PRIYAM NIEPA
- SHANTHA SINHA NCPDR
- REKHA WAZIR ICDI
- ANURUPA ROY KATKATHA
- SANTOSH MEHROTRA U OF BATH
- MONA MEHTA AHMEDABAD U

3rd MAY 2025 | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM | INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, SEMINAR HALL 1, 2 AND 3

RSVP

BMU | **SoLS** | **CCYT**
 BMU Munjal University | School of Liberal Studies | Centre for Child and Youth Transitions

ASPIRATIONS, AGENCY, AND RIGHTS

ENGAGING WITH CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH IN INDIA

3rd MAY 2025 | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM | INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, SEMINAR HALL 1, 2 AND 3

INAUGURAL CONVERSATIONS OF THE CENTRE FOR CHILD AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS (CCYT) SCHOOL OF LIBERAL STUDIES (SoLS), BML MUNJAL UNIVERSITY (BMU)

Programme Schedule

INAUGURAL SESSION		
10:00 am - 10:15 am	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Anandini Dar, Director, CCYT, Associate Professor, SoLS, BMU
10:15 am - 10:25 am	Vice Chancellor's Address	Prof. Shyam Menon, Vice Chancellor, BMU
10:25 am - 10:35 am	Dean's Address	Prof. Arindam Bannerjee, Dean, SoLS, BMU
10:35 am - 10:45 am	Introducing the Day	Dr. Suchismita Chattopadhyay, Dy-Director CCYT, Assistant Prof, SoLS, BMU
10:45 am - 11:15 am : Tea Break		

Programme for 03 May 2025

PANEL 1

Chair: Prof. Ashwani Saith
Moderator: Dr. Anandini Dar

Time	Speaker	Topic
11:15 am 11:35 am	Santosh Mehrotra University of Bath	Are India's Children And Youth Prepared To Take India To Viksit Bharat By 2027?
11:35 am 11:55 am	Manisha Priyam, NIEPA	Fluid Geographies And Precarious Futures: Everyday Lives Of Youth In Coaching Centres In Patna.
11:55 am 12:15 pm	R. Maithreyi, KHPT	How Much Is Too Much? Participation, Protectionism And Paternalism In Developmental Agendas With Children
12:15 am 12:35 am	Prabhleen Tuteja The YP Foundation	Know Your Body, Know Your Rights
12:35 pm - 01:00 pm : Q & A Session		
01:00 pm - 02:00 pm : Lunch		

PANEL 2

Chair: Prof. Ashok Nagpal
Moderator: Dr. Suchismita Chattopadhyay

Time	Speaker	Topic
02:00 pm 02:20 pm	Sujit Barla & Runal Toppo Prayatn	Akhra For Education
02:20 pm 02:40 pm	Shantha Sinha, NCPCR & Rekha Wazir, ICDI	From 'Mother Theresa Group' To 'Crazy Girls Gang Of Thanda': Adolescent Girls As Agents Of Norm Change
02:40 pm 03:00 pm	Anurupa Roy, Kathkata	The Power Of Puppets: From Crises To Conflict Zones
03:00 pm 03:20 pm	Mona Mehta Ahmedabad University	Herding Aspirations: Pastoralist Youth, Rockstar Shamans And The 'New Pastoralist Ethic' In Urbanising Gujarat
03:20 pm - 03:50 pm : Q & A Session		
03:50 pm - 04:00 pm : Vote of Thanks		

THE CENTRE FOR CHILD AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS (CCYT)

SOME PHOTOS FROM CCYT EVENT



Panel 1



Panel 2



SoLS Students

FACULTY RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM (FaRC)

The Faculty Research Colloquium (FaRC) at SoLS offers a forum to present and discuss ideas and issues that are mainly scholarly in orientation but may also have significance beyond the confines of the academic community. Much like the previous academic year, in 2024-2025 the FaRC presented an interesting array of speakers who deliberated on a wide variety of themes across various scholarly fields and disciplines. Overall, we had twenty-one presentations during this period covering domains such as social and economic inequalities, gender justice, education, youth issues, politics of history writing, Islamophobia, capitalism, labour relations, media freedom, etc.

While the FaRC was initially conceptualised as an avenue for the internal members of SoLS to present their ongoing research work in anticipation of receiving some useful feedback in the process, in time other people from 'outside' have also been invited to speak in the colloquium. With the result, FaRC has slowly garnered a certain amount of repute and visibility within the academic circles of Delhi and even beyond. Of those who spoke in the FaRC over the last year mention can be made of Santosh Mehrotra (University of Bath), Bhri Gupta Singh (Ashoka University), Avishek Jha (University of Melbourne), Divya Kannan (SNU), Ruchira Sen (O.P. Jindal University), Raziuddin Aquil (Delhi University), Ashwini Deshpande (Ashoka University), Amir Ali and Soumyabrata Choudhury (Jawaharlal Nehru University) and Tanweer Fazal (University of Hyderabad). The themes, as mentioned, were varying and interesting, offering titles like: Leisure as Self-Care for Dalit Women in India; The Saliency of Inequality; Al Khwarizmi and the Algorithms of Islamophobia; Philosophical Perspectives on the Uniform Civil Code; Female Labour Force Participation in India; Youth Employment: What is the Crisis and What to do?, etc. Other than the academicians, the FaRC invitees also included Mubashira Zaidi and Areesha Khan from the

Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), who in their presentation spoke about the unionisation of workers and the dynamics of labour relations in the garment industry in Delhi NCR. Similarly Pamela Philipose, a well-known media practitioner and a reputed journalist currently associated with The Wire, deliberated on media freedom, especially during the premiership of Indira Gandhi that coincided with the Emergency in India. In each case the presentations were followed by interesting discussions and question/answer sessions.

Among the SoLS faculty, those who showcased their work in the FaRC include Pranav Trigunayat, Nazia Amin, and Ashwani Saith. Nazia's, the last in the series, was an interesting presentation that reflected on the "Ethics of Collective Memory in Germany" situating the theme in the context of Antisemitism and Islamophobia. The other interesting feature of the FaRC is the Book talk. A couple of authors and academicians who have recently published their monograph/book have found a very receptive audience at the FaRC and have benefitted from their comments. Divya Kanan's book talk based on her monograph *Contested Childhood: Caste and Education in Colonial Kerala* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) provided an exciting discussion on the interplay of caste and education in reshaping ideas and norms of modern childhood in colonial Kerala.

More faculty members from SoLS are expected to present their research in the forthcoming sessions of FaRC much as we are keen to ensure thematic diversity as well as maintain gender disparity among our speakers. More importantly, the Faculty Research Colloquium will continue to serve as a medium to strengthen the research initiative at the School, representing in the process one of the core objectives for which the school was initially set up.



Photo: Ruchira Sen (O.P. Jindal University) presenting her paper titled "Leisure as Self-Care for Dalit Women in India" at FaRC

EXCHANGE PROGRAMME: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. NAZIA AMIN

In 2023 Dr. Nazia Amin, assistant professor of psychology at School of Liberal studies, BMU visited Ruhr-University, Bochum, Germany as part of an exchange programme. The following conversation took place a few months later between Nazia and Soumick De who had just joined the SoLS faculty.

S: What was the nature of the exchange programme?

N: The Hans Kilian and Lotte Kohler Center (KKC), Ruhr-University, Bochum, Germany advances interdisciplinary research in social and cultural psychology and psychoanalysis.

S: What was the basis of the collaboration?

N: Driven by the desire to enable mutual learning and conversation between scholars embedded in diverse cultures, the KKC and SoLS, BMU entered a collaboration in 2023. The main axis of the collaboration is a scholar exchange programme which facilitates immersion of scholars into diverse cultures and experiences. As part of this exchange programme, the KKC hosted me for a period of four weeks in November 2024.

S: How was the experience both personally and intellectually?

N: It was a delight to meet Pradeep Chakkarath, the co-director of the KKC, who gave me a warm welcome on my first day at the Centre by bringing me a flask of hot coffee which he had made himself. One of my most memorable experiences at the Ruhr University was the conversation I had with him as we went on a long walk in the university botanical garden. It is mostly through my informal conversations with him that I began to understand and appreciate his interest and a long-standing intellectual investment in the work of culture which found an academic holding space at the KKC. While I may not be fully convinced about the Center's critique of "Western" thought and the use of "conceptual categories" in making sense of experiences, I do see value in how the Center has been creating a space for the "non-Western", challenging the hegemony of the West.

S: This interests me a lot. I also think this logic of "alternative" or "non-western" point of view which has saturated much of post-colonial scholarship finally perpetuates a logic of dualism which sneaks in the old binary structures of power which they sought to abolish in the first place. I would want to know more about your thoughts on this problem of the "non-western" and how it figures in your research.

N: Though I am not personally invested in the idea of "non-western" thought, there is one "non-western" thinker—Muhammad Iqbal (among a few others) whom I have lately become interested in because of his work on questions of freedom and anti-colonial struggle. I presented a paper at the KKC (titled "Adam in Kashmir: Paradise, Disobedience and the Forbidden Fruit") in which I engage with Iqbal and put his thought in conversation with that of Freud's. Iqbal's concept of *khudi* (selfhood) generated some interest among the audience.

S: Clearly when you bring in a psychoanalytic framework to look at such a theological problem the focus changes to a more structural analytical understanding of transgression within monotheism. But apart from a specific critical approach how did you engage with the students?

N: I also screened the film "Fandry" at the KKC for a small bunch of Masters and PhD students. The idea was to engage with them while using the film to generate discussion on India as a "non-western" culture and the deep cultures of resistance against it which emerge from among its marginalised peoples and cultures. It was interesting to see how the students responded to how the film depicts gender, adolescent desire and the persistence of caste in India, and related it to some of their own experience of collective history of racism and migration in Germany.

S: In your last presentation at FaRC you had mentioned your visit to Germany as the triggering point for your current interest in the problem of memory. What had stood out in your presentation was your rejection of a method of memorialization of a national trauma which has a certain cathartic function. In a kind of Kleinian

psychoanalytic gesture you had called it a process of reparation. What is fascinating is your highlighting the cathartic function of such a process of reparation and its political implication. This is especially interesting in light of the fact that at the very genesis of the concept of catharsis in Aristotle there is already a political implication although the concept belongs to aesthetics. Could you elaborate a bit on this tendency and how you stumbled upon this line of thinking?

N: One of the things that struck me as remarkable during my visit to different cities in Germany is the investment it has made in building museums, particularly, the museums of its Nazi history. Unlike most countries that seek to craft a triumphant nationalist history by conjuring nostalgia about their ancient glorious past postwar Germany has made the remembrance of its genocide of the Jews the axis of its national history. It seemed to me to have achieved a remarkably self-critical and self-reflexive view of its more recent Nazi past. And yet I felt that there was something excessive about this memorialization which paradoxically seems to enable it to support Israel's genocidal violence in Gaza. I am in the process of writing a paper to reflect on this paradox. I recently presented a draft of the paper in the SoLS FaRC which carries the working title, "Remembering" Antisemitism, "Repeating" Islamophobia: A Reflection on the Ethics of Collective Memory in Germany.

S: This is fascinating. I hope you are able to put these ideas together in a more substantial way may be as a book. Thanks a lot for agreeing to this conversation.

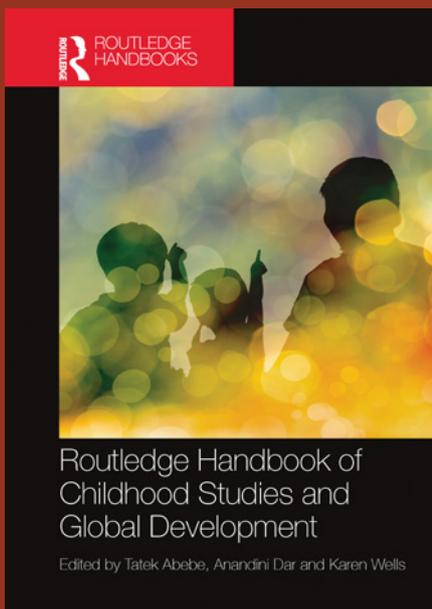
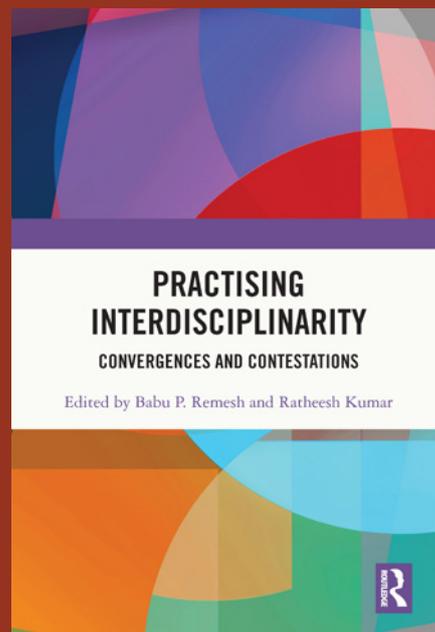
N: Thanks.

FROM THE SHELVES:

From the shelves invites you to glance at some of the authorial achievements of the faculty at SoLS. Although the faculty at SoLS is constantly engaged in research activities and contributes to a substantial number of journal and book publications on topics ranging from pedagogy to economic development to psychoanalysis, we are able to only highlight the books (single authored or co-edited) faculty members published in the last year. Here are three important books published since last year which are either authored, con-edited or offering contributions by SoLS Faculty members.

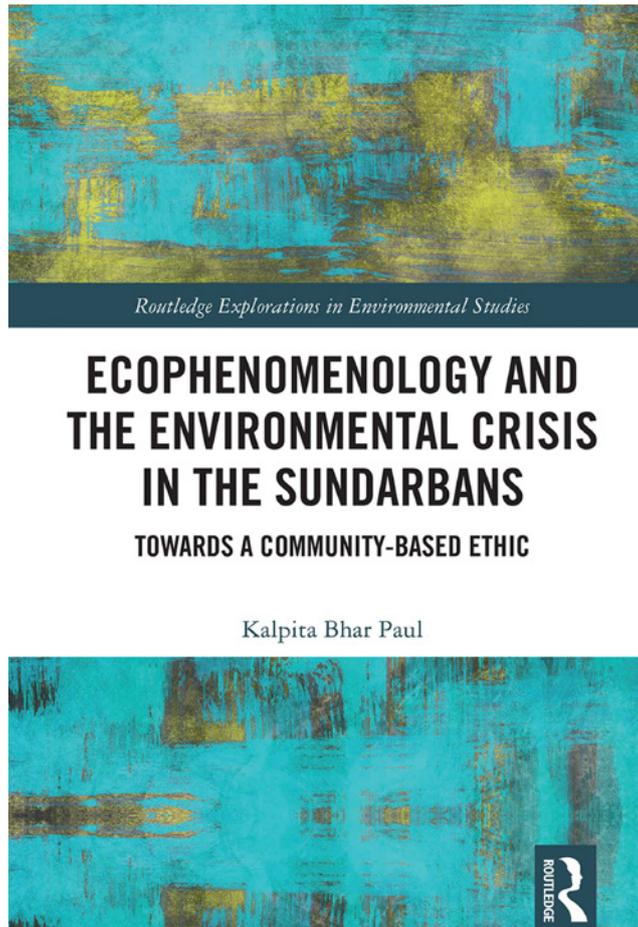
1. **Practising Interdisciplinarity: Convergences and Contestations:** The book examines the epistemological, social, and political dimensions of practising interdisciplinary approaches to enhance knowledge, pedagogy, and methodological aspects of research in the South Asian context.

With Contributions from Dr. Anandani Dar
A new “discipline” or a “conversational community”: Reflections on doing and building Childhood Studies



2. **Routledge Handbook of Childhood Studies and Global Development:** The book explores how global development agendas and economic development influence children’s lives. It demonstrates that children are not only the frequent targets or objects of development but that they also shape and influence processes of development and social change in diverse and meaningful ways.

Co-edited by Anandini Dar along with her introductions to the sections: **Researching Childhood and Development and Migration, Children, and Development**



3. **Ecophenomenology and the Environmental Crisis in the Sundarbans: Towards a Community-based Ethic** by Kalpita Bhar Paul: The book offers a philosophical analysis of the environmental crisis in the Indian Sundarbans, drawing upon phenomenological narratives. It nuances the present understanding of the crisis by introducing plurality in our metaphysical understanding of the environment and epistemological understanding of the human–environment relationship

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS:

THEATER WORKSHOP WITH PROF. SOUMYABRATA CHOUDHURY

On 16th April 2025, a theatre workshop was organised for the BA 2nd Semester students as part of the Theatre and Performance Course. Prof Soumyabrata Choudhury, who teaches at Theatre and Performance Studies, School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU was invited to take a day long lecture workshop. Prof Choudhury, who has been a theatre practitioner for over three decades, was particularly interested in introducing the students to the idea of theatre which cannot be thought of without its practical side. It was more an exercise of a theoretical practice which the students enjoyed for its non-scholastic approach. Prof. Choudhury, rather than lecturing on the history of theatre and drama, spoke and later demonstrated the crucial value of 'situation' in any kind of theatrical imagination and practice. Later, through various physical as well as voice exercises introduced the students to the idea of scene-work and how any development of a scene on stage is related to the construction of an image belonging to a 'situation'. The students particularly enjoyed this practice when they had to imagine and develop a scene as a situation for themselves from the play "Exception and the Rule" by Bertolt Brecht.

MUSIC AND VOICE WORKSHOP WITH DR. ANUBHUTI SHARMA

A music and voice workshop was also organised for the same group of students conducted by Dr. Anubhuti Sharma, who teaches at the Centre for Education, Azim Premji University, Bhopal. Dr. Sharma is a trained Hindustani classical singer and an activist. She not only brought a fresh perspective to the idea of music for the students but also opened a universal perspective on music bringing in tunes from as diverse as remote places as the north Africa to the folk and baoul sangeet of Bengal. What was particularly enjoyable for the students were the vocal and rhythm exercises that they did in workshop which led to more nuanced exercise on putting old tunes to self-composed lyrics. What seemed unique about the workshop was Anubhuti's constant dialogue with the political meaning of music and its social and existential function which she managed to open for the students.



PSYCHOLOGY GUEST LECTURES



Photo: Dr. Meenakshi Banerjee with the Psychology major students

Three guest lectures were organised for the Psychology Major students for the course “Thinking About Childhood”, “Clinical Biopsychology” and “Listening Receiving Communicating- II” on 27 March, 22 April, and 23 May respectively.

The first guest speaker was Nupur Dhingra Paiva who’s a psychoanalytically oriented clinical psychologist specialising in psychotherapy with children and adolescents and the founder of Family Tree: Child & Adolescent Mental Health Team, New Delhi.

The students found the lecture quite engaging. What they particularly liked was a small activity Paiva had them do in groups. She handed each group a short children’s story book and asked them to reflect on their reading experience. The activity made the students pay attention to the language and metaphors used in the stories and how those could help them understand different feelings and anxieties which constitute the inner lives of children.

The students had already read two chapters from her book titled *Love and Rage: The Inner Worlds of Children* (2018). The idea was to have them interact with the author who also has years of experience of doing clinical work with children so that the students begin to appreciate that to understand the child inner life is no child’s play.

For the second lecture we invited Dr Meenakshi Banerjee, a clinical psychologist with a specialization in Affective Neuropsychology, for a guest lecture for the course, “Clinical Biopsychology” on 22 April. Dr. Banerjee teaches at O.P. Jindal University in the Jindal School of Psychology & Counselling. Her lecture mainly focused on the neuropsychology of depression and how the latter palpably alters both the structural and functional capacities of the brain.

What was particularly interesting in her lecture was how she linked neuropsychology with events happening in real socio-political contexts. For instance, one of the questions she asked in her lecture was, how might we understand through neuropsychology the vicarious pain we feel at seeing the images of people from our “in-group” dying and the indifference we may feel for pictures depicting the killing of “out-group” persons? In other words, might there be an explanation for the friend-enemy distinction that lies in the neural activity? Her answer, based on the findings of studies done in neuropsychology, is that the partly the clue lies in whether on seeing an image “neural synchrony” is triggered in the brain and whether the brain in turn triggers the chemical oxytocin to release or not.



Photo: Sankalp Batra lecturing to 3rd Sem psychology major students

For the third Lecture we had invited Sankalp Batra, a practicing psychotherapist who is currently training to become a psychoanalyst. Sankalp spoke to the psychology major students on the techniques of psychoanalytic listening, particularly on the question of free-floating attention of the analyst and its relation to free association of the analysand. What the students particularly appreciated was his narration of his own case studies and the way he connected some of the problems he has encountered in his time as a therapist to the more theoretical as well as technical question of psychoanalytic listening. A unique point he brought out through his lecture was the temporal experience of listening as a process of waiting and the uncertainty of the moment of breakthrough which the analyst might have in regard to the analysand.

PERSPECTIVE II

Students' Voices



Image: Not to be Reproduced by Rene Magritte

“TELLING STORIES WITHOUT WORDS”

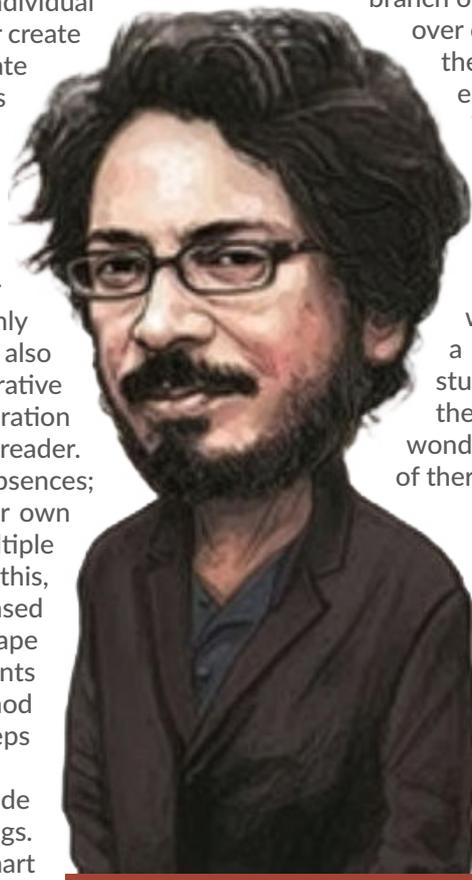
– Comic-Making with Mr. Sarnath Banerjee

The Comic Disposition:

The students in the Liberal Studies programme (Batch 2023-27) explored a unique and powerful art form: comics as storytelling. Led by renowned artist Sarnath Banerjee, the class focused on how to express emotions, ideas, and social realities through drawing. No matter how simple the style the effort was never to abandon the comic disposition of art.

Here is what Mr. Banerjee has to say about it:

In August 2024, I began my course at BMU, teaching second year humanities students of the class of 2023-27. I began with two introductory lectures on the grammar and structure of visual narrative - how text and image do not lose their individual denotative functions but together create meanings that neither can create by themselves. I told the students that beneath what can be seen or read lies yet another phantom narrative. Using examples, I demonstrated how the language of comics is intuitive, fragile, and ephemeral, and a better understanding of the form can only be achieved through practicing. I also told them how reading a visual narrative is participatory - a collaboration between the writer and the reader. Comics is about exclusions and absences; it requires the reader to use their own cognitive skills; this results in multiple readings of the same text. After this, we shifted to a more practice-based approach. The course took the shape of visual mapping. The students were told that mapping is a method of inception of ideas, the first steps towards forming a larger concept. Theory was taught alongside practice, mostly while 'doing' things. Students were encouraged to chart



out their own path, but as we progressed, they were motivated to try different things, often outside their comfort zones. They were urged to look at drawing as a means of philosophical inquiry, a process to weigh in multiple possibilities and points of view. The aim of the course was for the students to apply the thoughts they have accrued from other subjects and give them shape. It was to give legs to their ideas. To make their notions portable and communicable to others. Before my course, the students went for a field experience, and a lot of them veered towards that.

Comics have the option of cross-referencing - one can go back and forth through the timeline. Because of its inherent simultaneity, comics can quite easily portray multiple contexts and plotlines, they can branch out of the main narrative to ruminate over other topics. The course highlighted the complex nature of stories that are emerging in our society and examined its diagrammatic and cartographic possibilities.

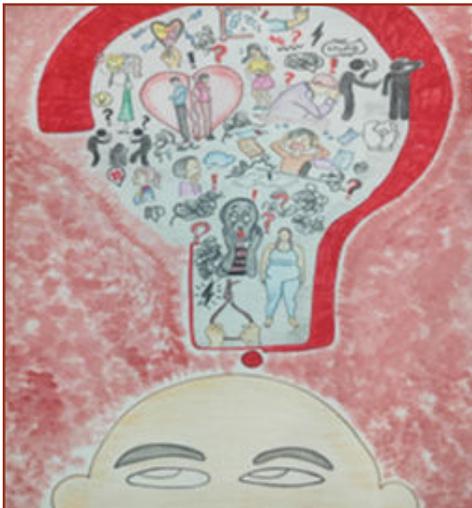
We also addressed some of the most pertinent questions of our times, tried to make sense of the world, and locate the individual in a collective consciousness. A few students attempted to investigate the self through comics, making me wonder if comics could be used as a form of therapy and healing.

This course is relatively new, more things would reveal itself as we continue our journey.

- Sarnath Banerjee

ART FROM THE HEART: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

From topics like *body shaming, domestic violence, and self-image*, each student created a comic that was personal and meaningful. The results were honest, emotional, and thought-provoking—proof that even a few sketches can tell deep, moving stories.



Mr. Sarnath encouraged us to *draw with honesty, not perfection*. We learned that comics aren't about how well you draw, but how truthfully you express yourself. For many of us, this class unlocked a new creative voice—one that doesn't rely on words at all.

"Every drawing tells a story—even with just a few lines."

What We Learned

- Comics can be serious and socially powerful
- Expression > Perfection
- Art can be a tool for thinking and healing
- Everyone has a story to tell

A Page We'll Never Forget

By the final class, our notebooks were full of more than sketches—they were filled with reflections, confidence, and creativity. What began as a course turned into a journey of personal storytelling, and many of us left with a new favourite medium: comics with meaning.

*Curated by: Meher Rehman
BA (Hons.) Liberal Studies Student*

ONE-ACT, MANY VOICES: BRINGING BRECHT TO LIFE



(Poster of a production of Brecht's Baal)

Students of BA (Hons.) Liberal Studies (Batch: 2024-28) transformed the classroom into a vibrant stage, presenting select scenes from Bertolt Brecht's iconic play, "The Exception and the Rule."

They were divided into small groups, with each group performing a different scene from the play. This allowed them to explore various styles, emotions, and interpretations, from intense courtroom dramas to silent, expressive moments, all conveying Brecht's powerful social messages.

Expression Over Perfection

Whether delivering sharp dialogue or performing without lines, students discovered that theatre is more than words — it's body language, timing, emotion, and presence. Mistakes turned into moments of laughter, improvisations sparked creativity, and group spirit made it all memorable.



What We Learned

- Collaboration is key: Each scene depended on teamwork, trust, and communication.
- Theatre = Life lessons: Listening, reacting, adapting — all skills we carry beyond the stage.
- Art with a message: Brecht's play reminded us that theatre is a mirror and a movement.

A Standing Appreciation

The performances ended on a high note with applause, insightful feedback, and a sense of accomplishment. Our professor encouraged us to carry these lessons forward — as performers, creators, and critical thinkers.

*Curated by: Meher Rehman
BA (Hons.) Liberal Studies Student*

STUDENT FILM SPOTLIGHT- 'WHO CARES?'

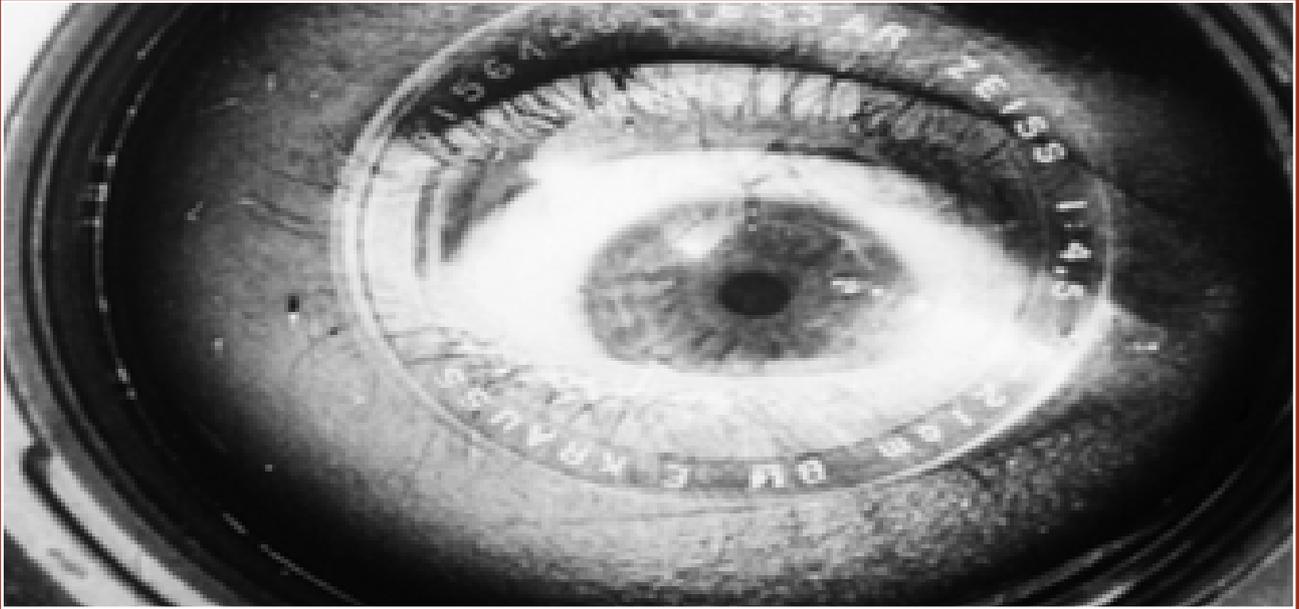


Image: The Keno-eye from Dziga Vertov's Man with the movie Camera

This semester, the SoLS students took a bold leap into the world of film by creating 'WHO CARES?' - a gritty, emotional, and deeply honest portrayal of youth caught between social and academic pressure, peer dynamics, and identity crisis.

Crafted with powerful performances, sharp writing, and emotional intensity, the film explores themes such as bullying, broken relationships, substance abuse, and silent suffering. It pushes boundaries and makes viewers uncomfortable - in all the right ways.

"It is a film that does not sugarcoat. It says what others are afraid to. That is what makes it real," said one of the student creators, reflecting on the raw honesty and emotional courage that shaped WHO CARES?



Scene one: Tension brews at the party as Maya confronts Ananya and Veer. Betrayals surface, and loyalties shatter.



Scene Two: A haunting scene that captured the audience - visualizing the emotional breakdown in its rawest form.

The cast and crew of WHO CARES? - celebrating after weeks of scripting, rehearsals, and an unforgettable performance.



Credits and Context

WHO CARES? was created as part of the Writing Seminar II assignment by students of Batch 2024, BA (Hons) Liberal Studies, BML Munjal University. The film was directed by the whole team (batch 2024), with the screenplay and performances collaboratively developed by the class. This project was not only a creative exploration but also a powerful academic exercise in storytelling, empathy, and critical reflection.

Produced by: ANJEL MINJ, SHIVANI BISHT AND UPASANA SHARMA

Screen play team: HRIDAYA TYAGI, KASHISH KHAN, AND KAVYANSHI

Cinematography: ABHISHEK, KSHIRJA KAPOOR, AND RASHITA RAWAT

Edited by: VIDYA, ABHISHEK, AND KSHIRJA

Cast: ANJEL MINJ, KASHISH KHAN, VIDYA NEGI, ANSHU VERMA, CHARVI JANGID, MANOJ HR, KAVYANSHI, MONIKA RAWAT AND ABHISHEK PATIDAR.

Props Department: ADITI KUMARI, MONIKA RAWAT, KHUSBOO JAN, AND CHARVI JANGID

Sound & Music department: MEHER REHMAN, ADITI KUMARI, KANCHAN GUPTA, AND ANJALY

LIVING AND LEARNING: OUR IMMERSION AT BODH



BMU embarked on a transformative field immersion at Bodh Gaon, nestled deep within the Aravalli hills of Rajasthan. What awaited us there was more than just a visit; it was a shift in perspective.

The immersion was designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world engagement, and it did just that. Through hands-on experiences in rural education and community-based living, we learned the power of humility, collaboration, and empathy. Guided by the team at Bodh, a grassroots organisation dedicated to reimagining education, we observed a model of schooling that thrives not on rigid structures but on flexibility, inclusiveness, and compassion. The group interacted with children, parents, educators, and community leaders. These interactions brought to light the lived realities of rural India, and how education in such spaces must serve not only as a tool for literacy but as a vehicle for empowerment. We sat in classrooms without walls, walked through

dry riverbeds to reach schools, and gathered around bonfires under the stars to reflect on our experiences.

Our cohort bonded not only with the Bodh team and the communities but with one another. From sharing meals on mud floors to playing games with the children, every moment was rich with purpose. This immersion reminded us of that education, in its truest form, is not about information, it is about connection, transformation, and care.

As we return to our structured campus life, we carry with us stories, questions, and a renewed commitment to learn with an open heart. The Bodh immersion was not just a field trip, it was a living classroom, and each of us came back changed.

“Bodh taught us not just to observe the world but to feel it.”

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

 BMU | SoLS



ANJEL MINJ

Bodh Gaon taught me that true change begins when we listen deeply, act collectively, and realize that the power to transform lies within us.

 BMU | SoLS



KAVYANSHI

We didn't just visit Bodh—we grew through it.

 BMU | SoLS



SHIVANI BISHT

At Bodh, I discovered that the deepest lessons aren't found in books, but in friendship, service, and the joy of learning with heart, hands, and purpose.

 BMU | SoLS



HRIDAYA TYAGI

Watching the senior students serve food to the younger ones. In Bodh Gaon, I saw education in its purest form—not just in lessons taught, but in kindness shared and community nurtured.

 BMU | SoLS



ANSHU VERMA

Bodh taught me that sometimes, disconnecting from the world helps you reconnect with yourself—and that the journey, with its laughter, lessons, and friendships, can be even more beautiful than the destination.

*Curated by: ANJEL MINJ
BA (Hons) Liberal Studies (Batch 2024)*

However, all this not without ...



Image: Laughing heads by Yue Minjun



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