

Comix Epidemic

Bhitti Chitra

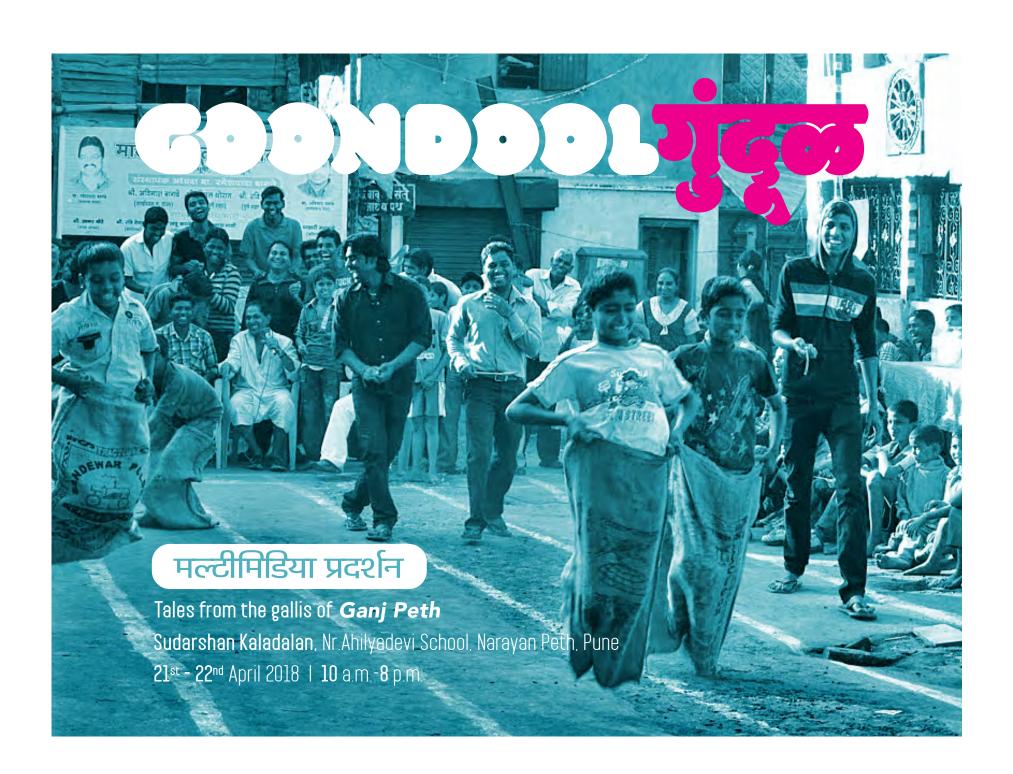
Goondool

Goondool is a culture and anthropology research project that culminated in an audio-visual exhibition highlighting the stories of language, people, and their lives in an alley in Ganj Peth, Pune.

An outcome of visual research, interviews, and writing by the galli's young residents 'Goondool" showcased spaces and lives that are rarely perceived in the dominant imagination as Pune or Puneri.

Conceptualised and co-curated with anthropologist Madhura Lohokare, this project and exhibition was supported by the "Engaged Anthropologist Grant" sponsored by the Wenner Gren Foundation, New York.

Click here to read a feature on the Exhibition in The Times of India, Pune Mirror





"गुंदूळ" or 'Goondool' literally translates into mesmerizing chaos.



The narrow alleys of Ganj Peth are like a beehive. Bidis, receipt books, tin trunks, wooden toys, garlands and veni, shirts and ...



school uniforms, dairy, khari, and rusk are all born in its nooks and dingy one-room establishments.



All the sweeping, stitching, stringing, baking, hammering, and cutting metal, wood, and cloth that keep the city running.



The range of eateries in the alleys of Ganj Peth reflects the cosmopolitan mix of communities that make up the eastern part of the city.



Food from Telugu-speaking Padmashalis, Matang community from Solapur, Muslims in Mominpura and so on....



... that create a radically different "food map".



There are 26 words unique to the language of Ganj Peth. Visitors listened to recordings of native speakers pronouncing these unique words along with their meaning and usage in sentences







Food Corner, wooden toys, visitors at the exhibit

CREDITS

Stories - Research, Photography, Recording

Angarki Thorat, Ashwini Kadam, Pranita Kamble, Priya Kamble, Rekha Thorat, Surekha Shinde, Mayur Thorat, Pawan Jadhav, Rakesh Mali, Rupesh Shinde This project and exhibition was supported by the "Engaged Anthropologist Grant" sponsored by the Wenner Gren Foundation, New York.

Concept and Curation

Madhura Lohokare, Chaitanya Modak

We are deeply grateful to Laxman Keru Jadhav (Dada) and family, without whose support this exhibition would not have been possible.

Exhibition Design

Chaitanya Modak

Our heartfelt gratitude to Aarti Nanaware, All the residents of 586 Ganj Peth, Sandhya and Arun Lohokare.

Translation

Anagha Bhat

We also thank Maharashtra Cultural Centre,
Anannya Dasgupta, Shivani Kapoor and
Shubhasree Bhattacharya (Centre for
Writing Studies, JGU)

Technical Assistance

Chris Mary Kurian



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How do you convert a street into an art gallery, which people can interact with as they walk past? How do you reclaim a Hussain, Souza, Raza, Kahlo, Miro from the innaccesible space it has disappeared into and put it back to where it belongs, among people, life-size?

To find answers to these questions I teamed up with the Rotary Club Of Bombay -Seacoast to plan and make the **Bhitti Chitra** | 'Movements in art' wall painting. On the sidewalk of the Lokhandwala back road in Mumbai, the project recreates works by great artists from different ages and continents.

I led a group of 60 people—residents of the neighborhood, students from J.J. School of Art, Rachana Sansad, Reliance AIMS Digital, and children from local schools—in the creation of a 1500-square-foot mural featuring chosen works of art from the 18th century to the 20th.













This activity was then carried forward in the form of workshops in low-income group areas in the city. The youth centers of ngo SNEHA, in their program areas in Kalwa, Kandivali were given a fresh look. The young adults and children - who would use the center to study and indulge in cultural and extra-curricular activities like music, singing, and theatre and dance classes – painted the youth activity centers in the neighborhood using themes of education, gender and slices of everyday life.







Bhitti Chitra | "Painting wishes and dreams", SNEHA Community Center Kandivali (West), Mumbai | June 2017



Bhitti Chitra | "Migration Stories", SNEHA Wadala, Mumbai | October- November 2019

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As a mentor artist, I led a series of graphic narrative workshops with people in Dharavi over the course of two years (2013-2015) as part of the Dharavi Biennale. These workshops led to the release of Comics Epidemic - an anthology of tales from Dharavi.

The book has 43 stories by 65 people from Dharavi, who are between the ages of 14 and 60. Under the main topic of health, they cover a vast range of subheadings such as the body, injuries, nutrition, depression, suicides, puberty, adolescent relationships, and so on.

The initiative was organised a part of the Dharavi Biennale, in association with SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action), and financially supported by the Wellcome Trust.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALES FROM DHARAVI

A DHARAVI BLENNALE PUBLICATION

SUPPORTED BY SNEHA (SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION, EDUCATION AND HEALTH ACTION)

EDITED & CURATED BY WON-TOLLA



Comix making - sketching, writing, subject inputs, feedback at SNEHA UHC, Sion Hospital

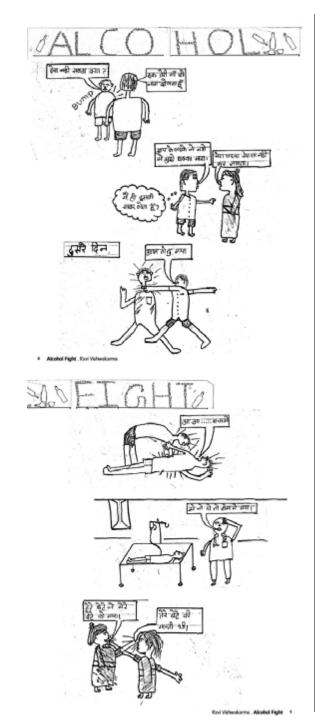


Comix Epidemic | Comix making at KEM Hospital, Byculla and at the Colour Box, 60 feet road, Dharavi



Comix Epidemic | Display and dissemination







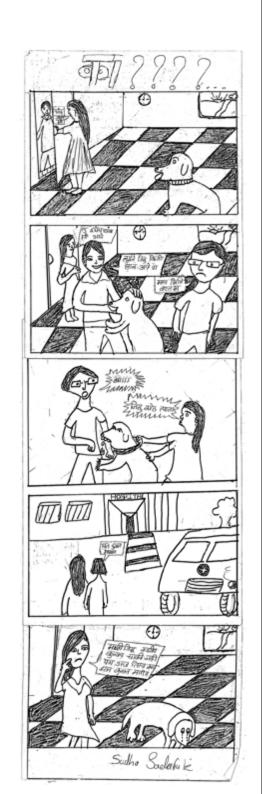














KARUGA !!

Patishad ... Shod





Comix Epidemic | Launch at the hands of advertising veteran Shri. Gopi Kukde

CREDITS

Comics Epidemic Participants from Dharavi:

Akhturnissa, Mangal Shinde, Suryamala, Komal Kale, Sita Waghmare, Komal Vhatkar, Ashwini, Shubhangi Sonawane, Surekha Tapase, Priyanka Tapase, Ganesh Joshi, Vaibhav, Pramod, Bhavesh Devaliya, Kaushik Devaliya, Sana Shaikh, Naina Sawardekar, Pooja Vhatkar, Sonali Sonawane, Sushma Shinde, Tinku Jha, Jyoti Katke, Misbah, Sachin Jaiswal, Sudhanshu Sharma, Pinku Jha, Akshay Shinde, Sudha Sadhaphule, Laxman Mane, Rupesh Sable, Raghvendra Pol, Nilesh Pendurkar, Manoj Jaiswar, Kisan Salbul, Kanchan Gore, Ravi Vishwakarma, Avinash Jadhav, Sunita Laxman, Pooja Vaish, Saraswati Bhandare, Naushad Sheikh, Sanjay Jaiswar, Aniket Bagde, Navita Chitkindi, Tushar Kamble, Reshma Shaikh, Suraj Kale, Saiba Shaikh, Gudiya Pandey, Aarti Kori, Swapnil Kadam, Bhagyashree, Komal Kale, Komal Vhatkar, Nirant Kondave, Santosh Vishwakarma, Manish Sonawane, Darshana Dhawale, Jyoti Yadav, Dilshad Shaikh

Workshops Conducted @ The Colour Box, Dharavi

Dharavi Biennale Project Directors

Nayreen Daruwalla, David Osrin

Mentor, Curator, Editor

Chaitanya Modak

Health Experts

Dr. Hemal Shroff, Sarika Salunkhe, Dr. Vineet Kumar, Pradeep Pawar, Sumit Pawar, Dr. Anil More, Sneha Kupekar, Reshma Jagtap

Logistics

Dipesh Thakker, Sitaram Kharat

Photo Documentation

Benita Fernando, Glyn Alcock

The Priya's Shakti Artbox

Ram Devineni, Tushar Prakash

Mozilla Foundation's Maker Party, Nashik chapter

Omkar Walimbe, Mayur Patil, Vishal Chavan

• The Making of Comics Epidemic in Dharavi was presented as a part of the CASP (Council for Arts and Social Practice)

Conversations Series on 16th December 2017 at TIFA, Pune



- Mohile Parikh Centre's Visual Arts forum: Comics Epidemic was presented as a part of a panel discussion on the Dharavi Biennale at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, on 4th February 2015. The discussion featured the Dharavi Biennale project co-directors, Dr Nayreen Daruwalla and Dr David Osrin, and comics epidemic curator Chaitanya Modak.
- Priya's Shakti, 10th–13th September 2014: A layered narrative project and augmented reality comic book, follows a mortal woman fighting gender-based sexual abuse in India with the help of the Goddess Parvati. Priya's Shakti worked with Dharavi teens to develop gender-based violence graphic narratives during the Comics Epidemic. Tech mentors from the Mozilla Foundation's Maker Party Nashik Chapter taught enthusiastic comics creators Popcorn Maker animation skills to bring sound and movement to 2D comics in Dharavi. The comics were exhibited at the IFP Made in NY Media Center, Brooklyn, NY, United States



• Comics and Medicine: From Private Lives to Public Health: Comics Epidemic was presented at an international workshop hosted by Graphic Medicine and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Department of Art as Applied to Medicine, 26th - 28th June, 2014.

This curation has led to a long term association with SNEHA that continues till date with a series of workshops planned every year across their program areas in Dharavi, Thane and Kandivali.



Coming full circle! Comix Making at KEM Hospital, Byculla where workshop participants from the comics epidemic taught doctors how to make their own comics...