

eye contact

an insight into autism



Curated by **Sneha Joshi**

5th / 6th / 7th April
11 am to 7 pm

Rangoli - Metro Art Centre,
MG Road, Bangalore

In association with /
Colours Centre For Learning

How do we look at disability? And how do we represent disability in visual and social culture? Why do some stories exist outside of mainstream narratives? And how will the visibility of such marginalised narratives affect and contribute to collective thinking?

Colours Centre for Learning in collaboration with *The Be A Smile Project*, a research project investigating autism and society, presents Eye Contact; An insight into autism.

Eye Contact; An insight into autism is an art exhibition of students works that questions how our gaze as a society is informed, and what it means to be human. It aims to mark a shift towards inclusion and breaking down the boundaries that society willingly and unwillingly places on those who are differently abled.

Running alongside the exhibition is a public programme of events such as discussions with members of the local community and is open to all. There will also be performances in the gallery space.

Discussions (schedule to be announced)

- How can we facilitate the inclusion of marginalised communities in society, through the tools of art and media.
- In conversation: life and growing up with a differently abled sibling.
- Accepting autism: everyday people who have opened new doors.

Performance

(schedule to be announced)

Art Exhibition

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Rangoli - Metro Art Center



The
BE :A: SMILE
project

Artists

Dattaprasad Sawardekar
Kajal Ashar
Sachin Joshi
Tanisha Lahiri

Curator and Artist

Sneha Joshi

www.eycontactartexhibition.wixsite.com/bangalore

This exhibition addresses two issues, one focuses on how we look at disability; the other pays attention to a particular characteristic of autism. Growing up with an autistic sibling, I watched his existence become a spectacle for public consumption. This prompted the question of what people with disability see in our gaze.



Staring, Watching, Staring.

Disability exists as a form of visual consumption, in most pop culture references. What we are shown and what we “see” is a problem and not the person. “Our gaze” informed in this way reduces the individual into “the other”.

Most autistic individuals face difficulty in making eye contact. As non verbal communication plays an important role in how we interact, society fails to see eye to eye with them. Hence we carry on misunderstanding, misrepresenting.

Through the years, I’ve caught myself looking at people looking at my brother more times than not. Whether he expressed pure joy as ecstatic laughter or threw a disapproving tantrum, little seemed to miss the attention of passersby. In a public setting his existence became a spectacle for the public, as it questioned and challenged the societal idea of normalcy. Largely for me, it has been a journey of discovering abilities alongside challenges, and learning that this is a universal phenomena that applies to all individuals equally, whether “able” or “disabled”.

The exhibition also presents a look inside a school for autism. As there is a need for our understanding of autism to evolve, a need for educational reform for autistic individuals in India has also been a primary concern. The same has been slowly evolving as best practices are coming to light. Documenting the work being done in the schools is significant to begin writing a new history of autism and autism education in India - and also to record the same for the generations to come. The process of archiving is most valuable, which is the next step.

This exhibition portrays autism in its present standing and brings that to us through the students works on display. It also acts as a form of activism through its very existence, as it aims to spread awareness about autism. My own work is also presented to compel the audience to further consider their own attitudes and behaviour towards disability.

Overall, I am trying to throw a light on what it means to be human. And breaking down the boundaries that society willingly and unwillingly places on those who are differently abled. I want to end by asking a pertinent question of how we can break the boundaries “our gaze” can form between “us” and “the other”.

- Sneha Joshi (artist and curator)