

# Risteyz

— (FINNISH) : CROSSROADS —

EDITORIAL TEAM - PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

RAGINI NARANG



It's ironic that I have a lot to say, yet words keep curling into themselves to leave only perfect silences behind. But what is more apt than silence, the kind that makes a conundrum come down to its knees, to introduce you to this milieu?

Because, dear reader, it is precisely these conundrums that we speak of in the Annual Newsletter of the Department of Psychology, Gargi College—**Risteys**. A word that stands for **intersection or crossroads** in Finnish, Risteys, gives perfect meaning to the theme of this issue: **Identity, Intersectionality, and Art**.

"In the wake up of multiple realities, who are we?"

"What can define us and what can not?"

"Does the world have space for holding us in our truest sense?"

"Does our Art have space for refuge, for expression, and moments of safety? "

Answers to these pivotal questions are tucked away in the pages that follow. My wholehearted gratitude extends to each person who chose to share their story. Whether in verses, photographs, paintings, or articles, it was a privilege to see.

As a team of twenty artists, we've strived to excavate the unsaid, conjure what remains coveted. And with the last issue of our tenure, we've done the same. As my team and I sign off, until a new one takes the reigns, I can only hope that this edition gives you something to think about.

# EDITOR'S NOTE

**ANAHITA AHUJA**





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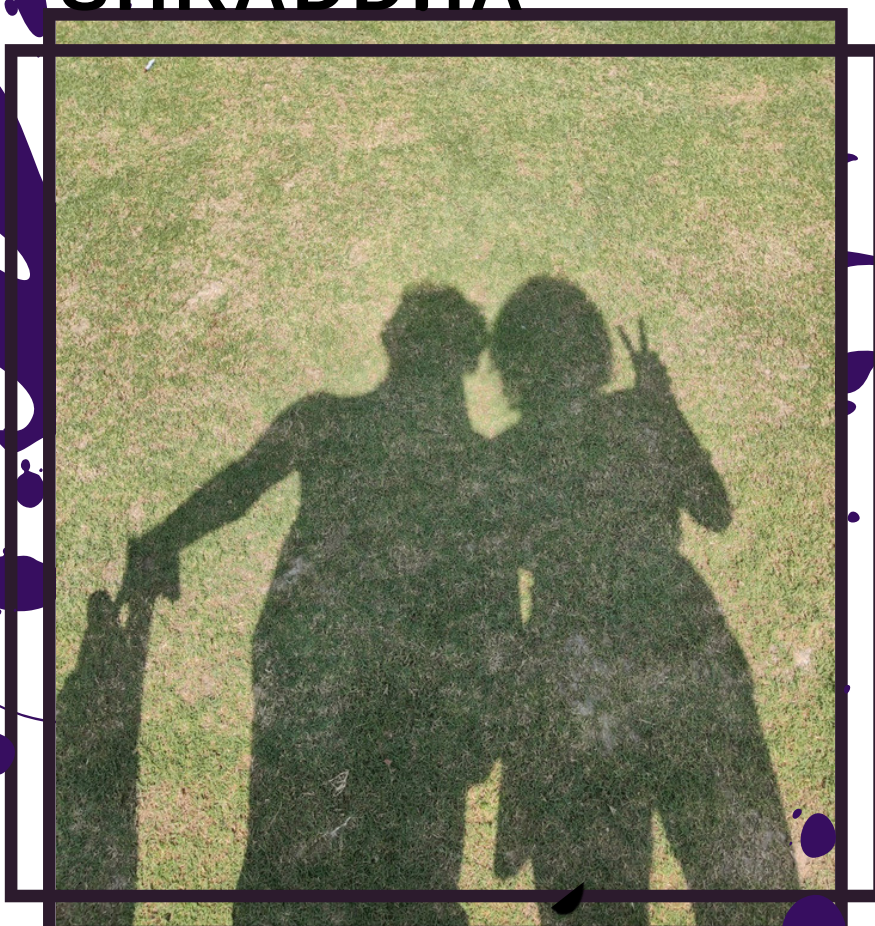
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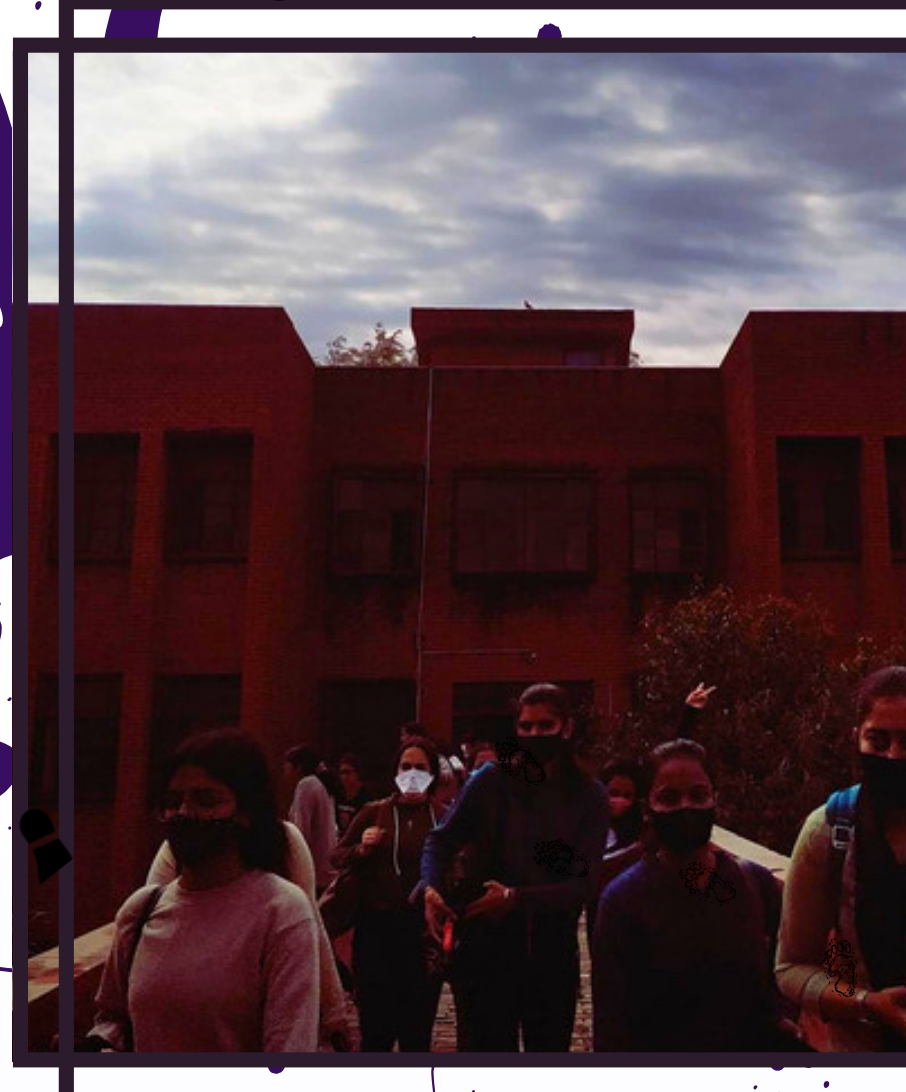
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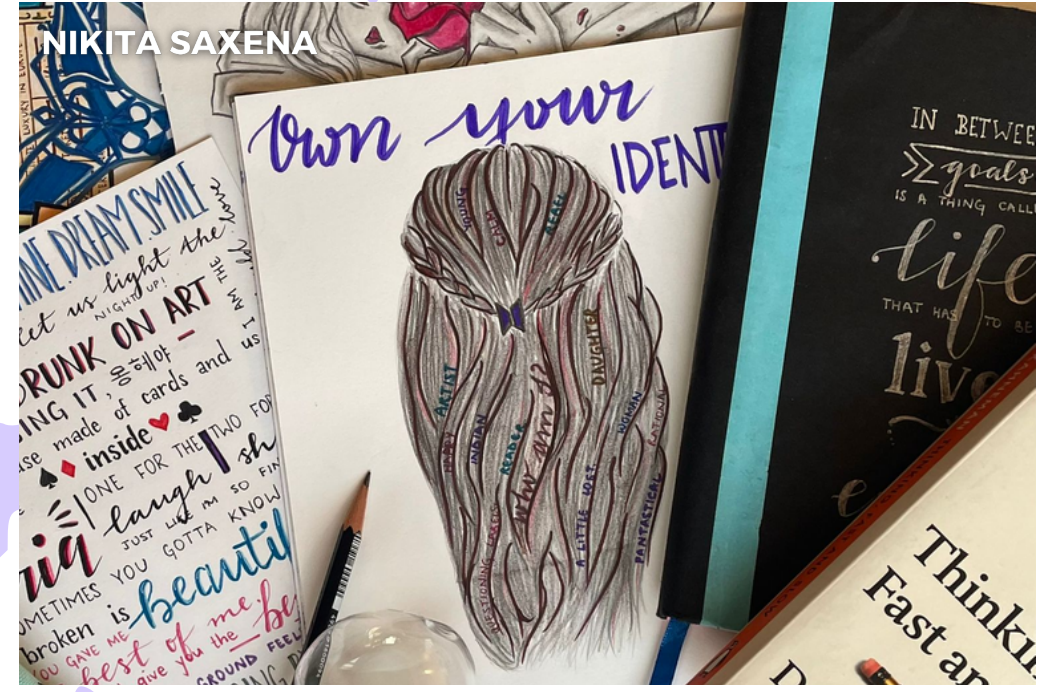




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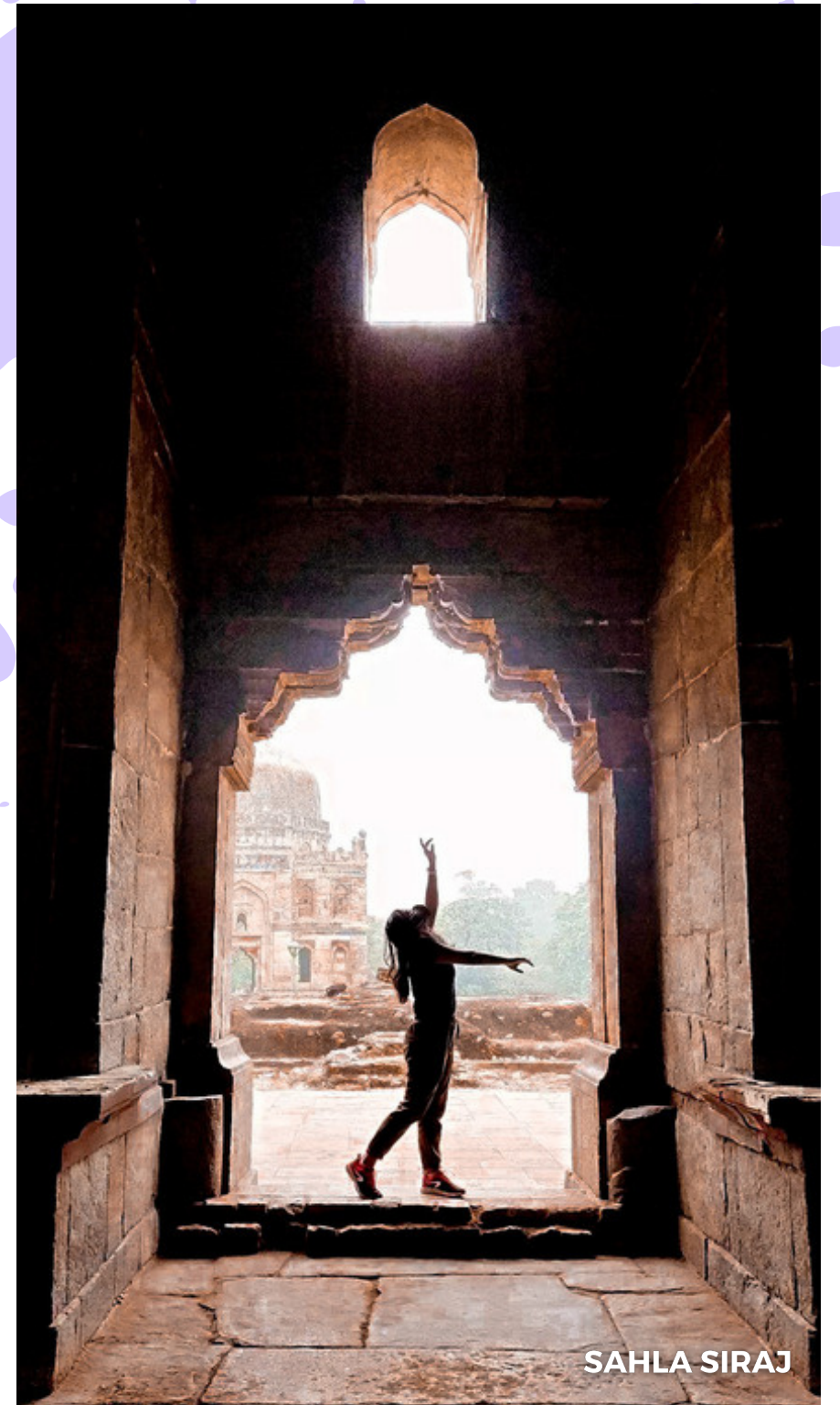
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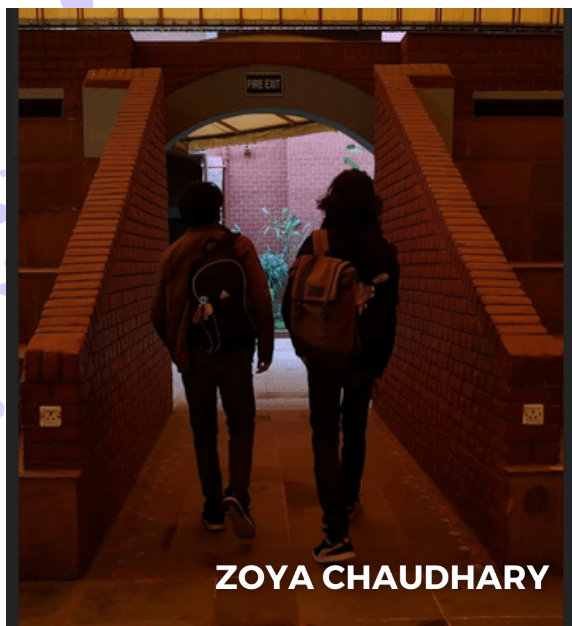


SAHLA SIRAJ

# Identity, Intersectionality, & Art



SAHLA SIRAJ



ZOYA CHAUDHARY



SAHLA SIRAJ



NIMISHA SHAH



SAHLA SIRAJ



SAHLA SIRAJ

*-Kiran Goswami*

Age 16

I keep my pen name as 'Krystal Green'- K.G.

'Indian authors, don't sell'

They told me.

I write in a language, my mom cannot speak  
and my grandmother doesn't know, exists.

She, on most days, struggles to talk to me in  
Hindi,

because Bhojpuri is the only colour I have seen  
her skies filled with.

I understand but never dip my paintbrush in  
that colour

I am ashamed, I know.

My classmates often ask me,

"You are a Bihari? You don't look like one"

I know, I don't.

I gave up my mom's dew-filled eyes and the  
aroma of her pedas

to wear the glitter of Delhi eyes and the  
fragrance of a 'Delhi-ite'.

I erased my grandmother's 'hum' and her sunset  
worships

to tattoo a whiter shade on my face that is 'less  
Bihari'.

I am the daughter

who doesn't want to become like her mother.

My Korean accent is stronger than my Bihari  
one;

I know words in that language I don't even know  
in my own.

I could never become an outsider to this  
outside city but only to my own,

I bloom in the pot I was not planted in.

Most flowers have fibrous roots.

I am a petunia,  
the one with shallow roots.

But when I speak, I breathe the fire I was  
not there to witness at Nalanda.

I smell like mom's litti-chokha,  
that she learned to cook from grandma.

I describe myself in a language I was not  
conditioned to speak in,

but memorised every day.

I am tired of looking at mom like I am not  
her 'product'.

I am tired of looking at my grandmother  
like I pity her oily hair.

I am tired of signing myself off in a  
language whose speakers led to the death  
of my great-grandma.

So I am slowly learning to dip my brush in  
water

before dipping into that colour.

Age 20

I change my pen name to Kiran  
Goswami- K.G.

'Indian authors, don't sell'

They told me.

I am not here to sell.



-Arya Mallik



Src: The Milkmaid, Johannes Vermeer, c. 1660

We are in a room, in the middle of which stands a woman. She occupies most of the picture, despite her feet being hidden. She wears a faded yellow cardigan, a red skirt, a blue apron, and a white headscarf. On the table before her, there is a cooking pot into which the woman pours milk from a jar with her right hand. Her posture is not quite relaxed, but not hurried either.

Quite obvious? Well, the purpose of the text is to show that the portrait, like a wide majority of fine arts, uses the body to say what it wishes to. The human body in art – through painting, architecture, sculpture, or film – has been expressed in myriad ways. Gods as humans; be it the chiseled, monumental blue of Shiva, or Apollo's perfectly-proportioned, imposing built. Women less as themselves and more as objects of men's desire: either a lithe, voluptuous, enticing 'apsara' gazing shyly at her admirer or a homely handmaiden, her arms and legs rough, red and swollen from housework and birthing children. Such art has championed the notions of a body perfected by the hands of white masters like Botticelli and Michelangelo.

Such art is not passive; in fact, it has been actively influencing human perception and behavior for millennia (where did the craze for tight-fitting, waist-clinching, rib-crushing corsets, or the glorification of unfeeling, domineering, Zeus like men come from?). The silver lining, however, is thanks to the so-called anomalies, deviants, and sore thumbs – people who blatantly reject conventional artistic representations to redefine and assert what they think is true art. The 1960s saw social movements against colonialism, racism, slavery, and patriarchy, which in turn reflected in the art and culture of the times. Since then, Asian, Black, indigenous, women, and queer community artists have reclaimed global spaces by using their bodies to question gender norms and convey how intersectionality defines their experience of identity. Where once it was a vessel for the fancies of society's power, the body in art has now become the strongest medium of expressing identity, sexuality, and ethnicity.

In the history of art, we have seen the body idealized, either made into the portrait of a very powerful emperor or sculpted into the form of a beautiful naked woman. I, for one, find very little interest in such representations. The body for each of us is our first habitat, our first space – the first place in which we live. We are so used to seeing art from a distance: from the other side of a glass-walled panel, up on a pedestal, or within a grandiose museum (I'm looking at you, David). While art seeks to unite, it is also a personal, intimate, and humane experience. Its representation of the body then must also be so.

Before it is a temple, my body is a home. And I worship it, not because it's special, but because it is the only bit of the material world I live inside. It is my first home. My body is far from something grand or golden, like men from the Renaissance crafted it to be. My body is a flawed, open, irregular, honest, and ever-changing place.

And what is the body, if not the truest work of art?

*-Shivangi Dhiman*

You'll hear the sound of my last name  
You'll see the colour of my skin  
You'll witness the way I pray  
You'll only see the parts of me gone grey.

That's all I'll ever be to you:  
Just a broken concoction  
Of name, colour, and religion  
There's more to me  
More than you can ever imagine.

The day you'll wake up  
You'll hear the sound of my first name  
You'll see the shine across my skin  
You'll witness my faith in supreme  
power  
You'll see the parts of me dipped  
in colour.

That's when I'll be human to you  
Not a toy to mess around with for fun  
You are the mindset paving our  
life's path  
Society, it's time to take a bath.





# मंथन

-Nupur

नारी जीवन तेरी यहीं कहानी  
दिल में दुख-दर्द आँखों में पानी ।  
सीधी-सादी, भोली-भाली,  
लाती जीवन में खुशहाली ।

बेटी बनकर माता-पिता का नाम रौशन करती  
बहू बनकर ससुराल का मान-सम्मान बढ़ाती  
समय बीता, दौर बीता और नारी की रूपरेखा बदली....  
रूपया, पैसा, शौहरत इन सबके पीछे दौड़ी भागी,  
महानगर है स्वप्न की दुनिया, रूपया-पैसा, शौहरत है लुभाती।  
घर की बगिया भूल, प्रलोभन की मृगमरीचिका भाती,  
समस्याओं के व्यूह में उलझ, अंत में तू ही पछताती।  
है सृजनकी तू अधिष्ठात्री । निज कर्तव्य को जानो,  
युग सृष्टाहै कर्म तम्हारा, मूल दायित्वो को पहचानों ।

किंतु रुक, किंतु मुड़,  
पनघट काल से जो चली कहानी,  
तिरकिट ताल से मैं बदलू कहानी ।

निर्बलता की केंचुली उतार, बन जा अब सशक्तिमान,  
किसी भी क्षेत्र में न हो, हरण अब तेरा सम्मान।  
अबला नहीं सबला है तू, जान जाए सारा जहान,  
अपना जीवन खत्म न करेगी तू लगने न देगी दामन पर निशान  
अब न कभी सुनेंगे हम किसी नारी का क्रंदन  
हम सब मिलकर करें तेजस्वी शक्ति का अर्चन  
हम सब मिलकर करें नवीन नारी का सृजन ।



# LESSONS I BRING TO THE HOUSE I MARRY INTO

-Saumya Rai

Baba tells me that every woman is a blank canvas, painted by the mistakes she makes, in colours, she can never wash off.

He tells me, "Be careful beta, be careful of where you look and how you walk because God is a cynical parent who holds grudges only for daughters and punishes them for having vices when they least expect it."

So now, I am a woman with two fathers, both of them have created me and hold my fate in their hands, and like every woman I know of, they are my Achilles' heel.

No, this God Baba thinks of is not a mother, because, in this world, women are somehow wired to suffer, bleed and give, their scars don't become stories of bravery, they become lines of shame; mothers would never be so cruel.

I have stopped looking at the boy I used to like, he liked to tell me what to do, and one day I saw his nose look a lot like Baba's, and realized that the Oedipus complex is God's warning for women who forget their morals.

I am told that my future is better than that of women who wear lipsticks and laugh a little too much in bazaars, and I listen as I try to identify the shade of black Maa has under her eye.

Now my clothes have become verses of holy books and my will is invisible like my mother's name in my report card. I think it will burn the same way too, now that Baba has chosen a groom who sits like him and believes in God like him.

I see my better future now in the mirror, a much older, bagged eye looks back at me and tells me that this is a world of men and fathers, and women are melting in the background in pots of dal and kheer, becoming oil paints to colour a story of how they were not enough.



# INTERSECTIONALITY AND PSYCHOLOGY

-Manasi

“Intersectionality and the recognition and confrontation of our privilege can make us better people with better lives.”

— Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want to Talk About Race

Intersectionality is present all around us; it has seeped into the entirety of our lives as an amalgamation of the omnipresent and dynamic identities that we, as individuals embody. The paradigm of intersectionality becomes of paramount importance, especially in a country like India, where diversity is the norm and plurality is entrenched as a way of life. We live through a myriad of identities in our lifetime, which affects our lived experience and perception of different aspects and facets of our constructed reality.

Intersectionality, originally a theoretical concept, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, proposes that the cumulative effect of a person's various social identities can lead to unique forms of injustice. These social identities can be racial, ethnic, sexual, socioeconomic, or any combination of the above. Their intersection at the individual or micro-level is mirrored in macro-level oppression and privilege systems (Bowleg, 2012). As a result, the overarching goal of taking an intersectional approach is to promote socio-political equity. Thus, in the contemporary era, especially with regards to academic spaces, the idea of intersectionality is fundamental; every discipline gains immensely by giving due space to identities of individuals associated with the discipline, and by learning from alternative perspectives.

Psychology, well, is no different. In fact, the uniqueness of this beautiful discipline stems from the fact that the heart of contemporary psychology lies in the celebration of individual differences. All identities, no matter how they are constructed or perceived, find a place in the expansive subject matter of this discipline. In India, this becomes increasingly relevant, as there exists diversity in terms of one's gender, religion, region, caste, creed, class, and across several socio-economic and cultural parameters.

The primary way in which intersectionality pans out in the mental health space in India is through the call for accessibility, affordability, and equality of mental health services across all sections of the society, which is in tandem with the essence of socio-political justice. Lack of adequate mental health services, and gaps in infrastructure, along with inequality of access, is a failure of our healthcare system and must be addressed. The training and education in the field is another matter of grave concern. Individual contexts matter and mental health practitioners must be well equipped to provide support to people across identities and contexts. However, ineffective training and limited exposure to practical aspects have created a void in terms of the quality of available services. Working with vulnerable populations, marginalized communities, in high-risk spaces, and conflict zones requires a lens that is lacking in professional spaces, even today. Adding to that is the concern of repression of identities; as majoritarianism prevails, the minorities are further pushed to the edge of the society, which again defeats the cause of socio-political justice.

Therefore, in today's world, where often, we see pluralities being condemned or repressed, as budding psychologists, you may wonder how we end up gatekeeping the intersectional spirit of our subject? How can we ensure that the intersectionalities we live and breathe through are represented in the discourse of our subject matter? How can we safeguard and uphold the integrity of our subject matter?

Well, the answer(s) to that, I leave up to you.

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# UNTITLED

-Ishani



as i sit down to write this, i have successfully chugged 3 cups of darjeeling tea. on the metro ride to college this morning, i had listened to music by my favourite artist who happens to be american. i started my day with Om Namah Shivaye and will end it with urdu poetry by rumi.

i am not a one-dimensional entity. i am made up of so many tiny little things. i exist in so many places. my ukulele. the solitary laugh on watching the same hilarious bollywood scene over and over. the flowers i have dried in journals that matter so much. the occasional breakfast i make for myself. the words i scribble everywhere i go and never visit again. my fingerprints on pages of books. the millions of ballads that i started writing but never finished. i also like to think little parts of me exist in the rain that falls from above and the cold gush of air that blows through my hair in the auto.

i come from so many places. i carry so much within me. i am all this and more and i exist.

as abstract as this is, maybe humans don't have to be just one simple being at all, but an amalgamation of a lot of tiny moments and memories and instances that they carry in their bones. it is as simple and as significant as this - maybe we're all so tiny and so astronomical all at once.

# OTHER GIRLS

-Aditi Kaushik

*"You're not like other girls."*

It was a phrase I heard often while I was growing up. One, I'm sure many women have heard and thought about themselves at some point or the other. And one that served as one of the highest compliments I could once receive.

It was the basis of my entire identity. It was my inner mantra. I am *not* like other girls. I am not like other girls. I am not like *other girls*.

Why?

Because I was 12, and I was playing basketball. I was not like other girls.

Because I was 13, and I had short hair. I was not like other girls.

Because I was 14, and I wasn't interested in fashion. I was not like other girls.

I knew, or I thought I knew, what I wasn't. But who *was* I then? Society taught me that I didn't fit the stereotypical standards of a girl. Society told me I was 'like one of the boys.' Society convinced me to hate my gender, and therefore my own self. Society gave me an identity I *didn't* identify with.

I was 15, and I had dreams, hopes, and aspirations. I couldn't be like other girls.

I was 16, and I wanted to be my own person.

I didn't think I was like other girls.

Or was I?

The more I sought answers, the more I questioned what I was taught, the more confused I became. What I thought I knew came tumbling down.

And the façade I hid behind started to crumble. And then, suddenly, before I knew it;

I was 17, and I didn't know who I was.

Maybe I was like other girls.

It was other women then, who taught me to value myself. Other women who helped me combat the years' worth of internalized misogyny and self-hatred. Other women who pried my eyes open, and other women who stood by me, every step of the way.

I was 18, and I knew I was a woman. I was just like the 'other' girls.

So when the time came; a new city and a new life- with open eyes, an uncluttered mind, and a fresh start, I embraced myself and accepted who I was.

I was 19 and I was one of the girls; I was home.



# THREE STROKES AND A SPLATTER: ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

- Vanya Tandon

‘Abstract Expressionism’ is an art movement that started in the 1940s. As the name suggests, it’s the kind of art that is *abstract*— not thought through, and spontaneous— consisting of those paintings with seemingly random brushstrokes, gestures, scribbles, and at times, geometric shapes. It’s the art that you may look at and go, “Hey, I could paint that. My *dog* could paint that!” But that’s the specialty of Abstract Expressionist art— no one *but* the artist can paint it. Unlike other forms of art, it doesn’t focus on depicting what can be seen, rather, it shows all that is unseen— emotions, desires, thoughts, and other invisible entities. Some of the most prominent works in this field are those of artist Jackson Pollock, whose “drip” or “action” paintings did not have any underlying message or depiction. He simply used brushes or stirrers to drip paint on canvas while moving around it. Pollock described his works as direct imprints of his mind and subconscious— an *event* on canvas and not a simple painting. Another example is Cy Twombly’s “Blackboard Series”, portraying only semi-erased scribbles on a chalkboard; the series aims to depict how one feels when they’re in a position of almost understanding something, but haven’t yet understood.

Like Impressionist art (for example, sceneries), Abstract Expressionism, too, was initially mocked and called meaningless. It was gradually accepted as the art world came to realise that it was not meant to portray anything tangible— it represented the psyche of the artist and was meant to induce emotions in a viewer that were exclusive to them. Every viewer perceived the art differently.

Works like *Comedian*, in which a banana was taped to a wall and called Abstract Expressionism, are mockeries and not the art itself. It still sold for \$120,000. Unfortunately, even this piece was subject to a market ruled by the wealthy— it was unnecessarily, excessively exuberant.

However, monetary flaws should not inhibit one’s ability to appreciate the art form itself. Abstract Expressionism has a certain uniqueness and freedom to it. While anyone may be able to do it— it can only, truly belong to the person who made it. It has a special place in the art world and hence, it rightfully deserves to be appreciated.

# UNTITLED

*-Vasudha Singh*

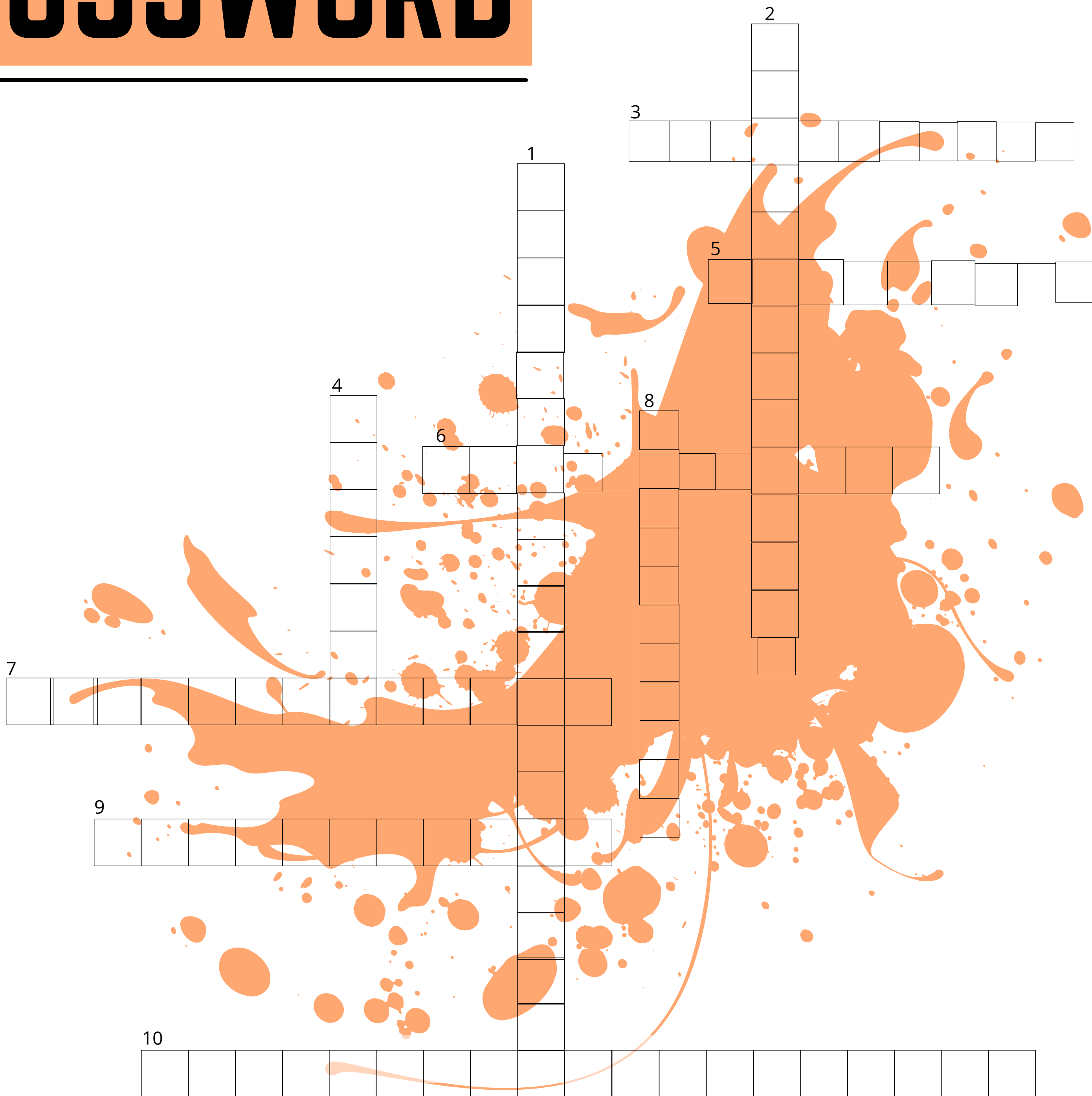
I was a child when I dipped my arms and legs  
Tiny fingers and toes felt colours crawl up the limbs  
Through the dedicated years  
Drawing patterns all around my body  
I carried it with a new-found sense of pride  
Arrogant enough to believe that the art I possessed  
Was too entrenched to ever fade  
Making little attempts to retrace or further the designs  
Now my body is grey, with smudged  
neglected outlines  
Unadorned.





## KEY

- ANSWER**
- 2. Identity Crisis
  - 1. Dissociative Identity
  - 9. Inez Prosser
  - 10. Community Psychology
  - 4. Calkins
  - 5. Diversity
  - 6. Critical Race
  - 7. Francis Sumner
  - 8. Sarada Menon
  - 3. Karen Horney



## DOWN

- 1. THIS DISORDER WAS DEPICTED IN THE MOVIE BHOOL BHULAIYA.
- 2. A PSYCHOSOCIAL CONFLICT WHICH IS OFTEN SEEN IN ADOLESCENCE, INVOLVING CONFUSION ABOUT ONE'S SOCIAL ROLE AND A SENSE OF LOSS OF CONTINUITY TO ONE'S PERSONALITY.
- 4. 14TH PRESIDENT OF APA AND THE FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE IN THAT OFFICE.
- 8. THIS PSYCHOLOGIST WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE SCHIZOPHRENIA RESEARCH FOUNDATION AND THE FIRST WOMAN PSYCHIATRIST IN INDIA.

## ACROSS

- 3. THIS PSYCHOLOGIST WAS THE FIRST WOMAN TO PRESENT A PAPER ON FEMININE PSYCHIATRY.
- 5. WHAT DOES THE 'D' IN APA'S EDI FRAMEWORK STAND FOR?
- 6. KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW IS KNOWN FOR THIS INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT THEORY.
- 7. FATHER OF BLACK PSYCHOLOGY.
- 9. FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN TO RECEIVE A PH.D. IN PSYCHOLOGY.
- 10. THIS BRANCH OF PSYCHOLOGY DEALS WITH LEARNING OF RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SOCIAL ASPECTS THAT CONSTITUTE A COMMUNITY.

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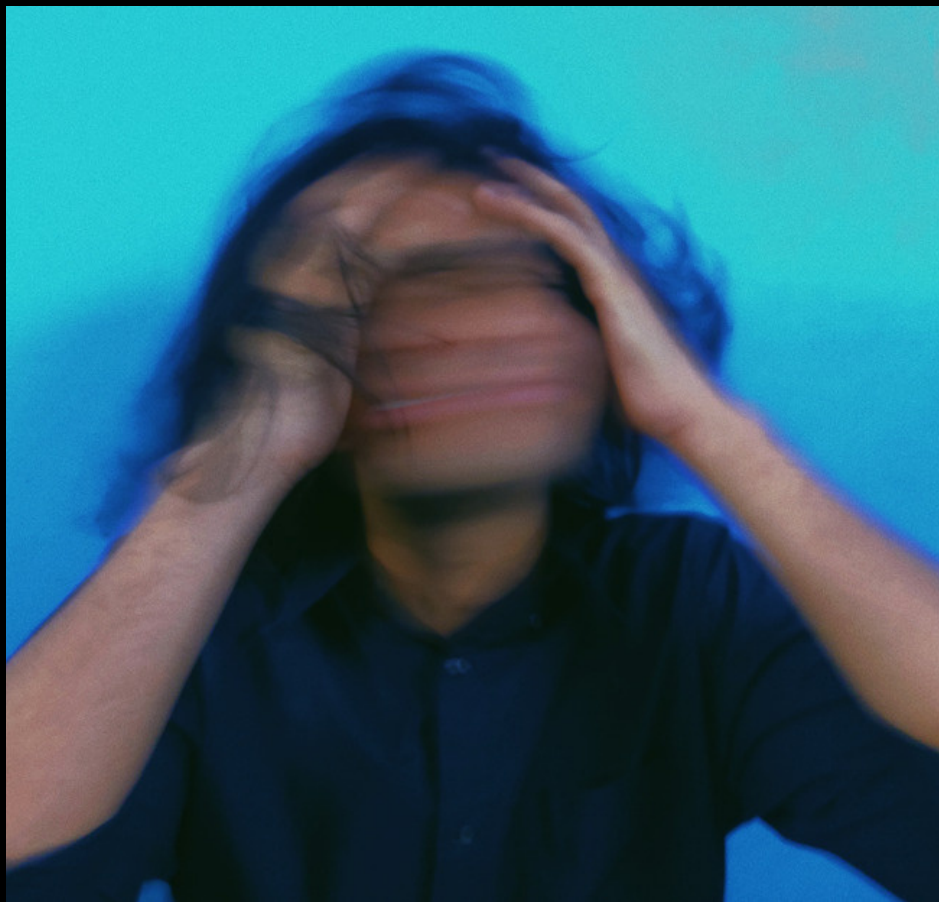


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*"I am, myself, three selves at least."*

**-Mary Oliver**



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