

## **Artist statement**

Vigyaapan Poster Workshop was a three-day media literacy workshop, which took place in Khirki Masjid and Khoj Studio. In this didactic endeavor the kids were given the challenge to create an ad campaign on their very own Khirki Masjid with the help of professional cameras and a session in Photoshop. The objective was to interact with this neglected structure in order to elevate it beyond its drawbacks, just like the false representations in many commercials.

On the first day, the children were shown many examples of advertisements. They were taught to observe the way in which the professional imagery manipulates the subject's representation to suit a certain selling point of the product. They were given concept sheets to plot their own ideas for their campaigns accordingly and then on the next day they shot the Masjid with a Canon 5 D Mark II.

During this three-day session, the children brought back well crafted concept sheets. The younger children chose to represent the mosque in a more literal fashion. Whereas, the older kids wrote slogans like "The Brand New Khirki Masjid". Owing to the short duration of this workshop, some children who had brought back their concept sheets did not come for the photo session, therefore, it was a big mix of authors appropriating the original concepts of their friends. Yet throughout the workshop they got to exercise their imaginations to the full extent because we were making an ad campaign after all. And Photoshop helped us cross many visual boundaries.

On the last day we spent most of our time on the computer, downloading the images, editing, heavily retouching and changing colors etc. The kids learnt how to use the clone stamp to remove imperfections, stitch images together as well as explore various fonts that were befitting to the various concepts.

In the end we had 5 strong ad campaigns which were astonishingly witty, elaborate and visually pleasing. We were all very proud of our achievements considering the short duration in which these ideas were mapped out, photographed and designed.

The location of Khirki village being a small rural pocket abutting the enormous Select City Mall was the primary reason for conducting a workshop of this sort with its young residents. I was interested in disrupting the illusion of the aggressive commercial signage on the mall and its fast encroaching capitalist culture, in the minds of the kids. If the kids knew how to make a campaign themselves by fabricating truth with the use of expensive technology, then they would read the billboards across the street with a more subjective and critical eye. Apart from this objective, the final campaigns helped the children express their feelings about the Masjid, which is neglected, and abused by some older residents. Hopefully, these campaigns will help the community rethink its true value as a recreational place.

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