

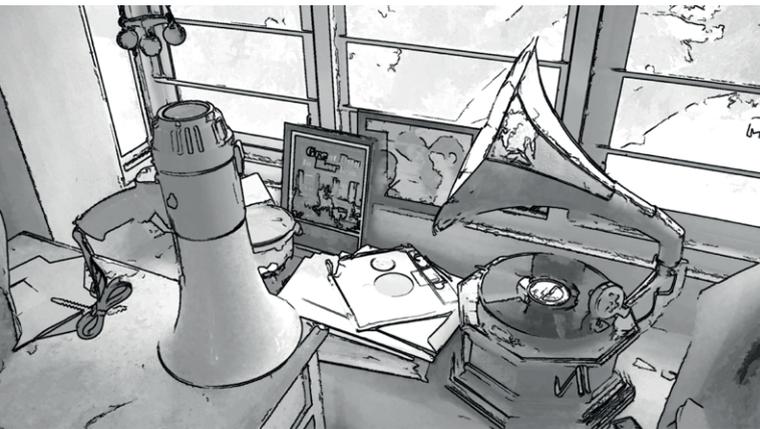
The Megaphone Guerilla

Performed in Bangalore, 7th October 2017

A project by Gabi Schaffner and maraa



Introduction



‘Megaphone Guerilla’ is a sonic public space experiment conceived of by Gabi Schaffner, an interdisciplinary sound artist and curator, who came to Bangalore on invitation of maraa and as a resident artist of Goethe Institut’s BangalOREsidency program. An exploration of voice in relation to geography and urban space, this book presents a first draft of some of the writings by the students and participants in the Megaphone Guerilla’. Together, these writings offer excerpts from our journey. The writings travel across ‘here’: geographical, emotional, political and psychic. They converge and depart, along the contours of identity.

In the future, I live here will continue to exist as a space for critical discussion and collaboration between young people in the city. As a space that is large enough to accommodate many renditions of ‘here’, yet quiet enough to pay attention to each particularity and contradiction. A proliferation of voice, not as a token of diversity but a political imperative, toward new articulations and imaginations of identity.

Angarika Guha, maraa

I live here is a creative lab initiated by maraa, for students and young people in the city, outside the purview of institutional contexts of college/work. We hope to produce versions of identity that are attentive to its inherent flux and yet conscious of its histories. To learn to listen more closely to what we hear: the silence within the clamor, the noise in our own heads, what is left unsaid when we communicate. In the process, we hope to create our own politics, of practice and being, which acknowledges difference, as it deepens understanding.

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The Megaphone Guerilla / I Live Here



The electronic market confused me. There were stalls just for hairdryers, just for TV stands, antennae only, exclusively LED garlands. The sky between the houses was tied into knots of wires and geometric patterns that might well serve as daily oracles. Yet our aim yet was to buy megaphones for the **Megaphone Guerilla Walk**.

When I conceived of this street performance within the frame of mara's ongoing creative lab **I Live Here**, I had no idea about the acoustics of an Indian metropolis. No conceptions about my students and fellow poets alike. We found each other anew in each meeting.

How would our bodily voices mingle with different urban surroundings, will they, can they be heard? And who will hear them and stop to listen?

After my arrival in India, the killing of Gauri Lankesh was all over the media. In terms of working with Maraa's students, I could distinctively feel how her murder had changed their perception of politics, the public sphere and its spaces. Some of us went to Freedom Park to listen to and record the speeches held. The notion of "sound and identity" became transparent for wholly new and very individual interpretations.

I was surprised to find an open-mindedness and readiness for the project, in spite of the more work its realisation required. Last minute poems were conceived of, personal archives searched, shyness overcome; what was mute scripture on paper became voice.

Shining red and white, the megaphones emerge from their boxes. So this is what we are going to use. I had learned that the Bangalorian metro was certainly not built with the consent of all people. Especially in the poorer quarters like Halasuru, ancient urban structures, traditional houses and much-loved streets had to be torn down to build it. Why not choose exactly those metro stations as locations for our Megaphone Guerilla!



Swami Vivekananda Metro Station. Everybody admitted they were excited. Yet, our audience liked us: "More songs, more songs, please!" Often, surprise hides in progress: megaphones cannot be taken into a Bangalore metro station unless they are covered up. The naked object "scares passengers" and might "cause panic". Our group spent about 40 minutes discussing this fiercely at S.V., in the end we were allowed to take them with us - without batteries.

Performing at the **WorkbenchProject** space at Halasuru station was comparatively easy, high-tech nerds and a cluster of parents and school children staring at us in half surprise, half appreciation.

Each session had a poem about Gauri Lankesh in its line-up. Each session started (and often ended) with a song. Our languages were Kannada, Hindi, Tamil, French, English and German. We also received three enormous black trash bags to put the megaphones in. The "black magic" worked. None of the metro staff objected after that.



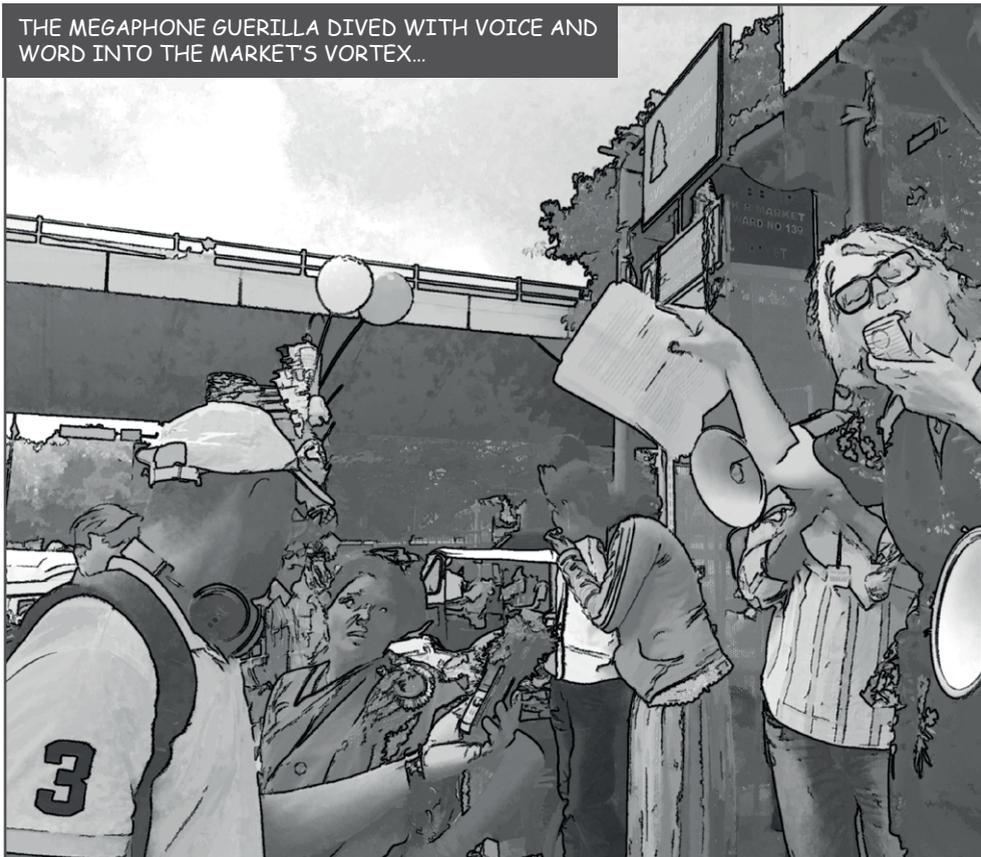
In **Cubbon Park** our group gathered under one giant tree. The scenery was beautiful - red earth, branches reaching over our heads into the space. There were benches with adolescent lovers, passers-by and families drawing close, elderly people, too. Our words travelled to them from under the green canopy. I live here. Who are you? Stories from the Ivory Coast, about strangers and streetdogs.

After Cubbon Park at last we started to feel our bones. But we moved on, back to the metro. At Majestic, change to the Green Line. At **Krishna Rajendra Market** a hard rain came down and we had to wait, mastering breath and strength.

Among my first experiences with traffic in Bangalore, **K.R. Market** impressed me most with its incredible hurricane of car noise raging under the metro fly over. Ironically, our location was an out-of-use police stand, just there at the fringes of the market... Sound and environment, voice, noise and song, they all live in us and around us, they shape our perceptions of social life, locality, of feeling at home or estranged.

The Megaphone Guerilla dived with voice and word into the market's sound vortex... and evolved from there feeling strangely elated. Something had changed for each of us. It's hard to put into words but after this each of us felt "more complete" – as if the very market's sphere had added a secret ingredient to our minds and bodies, a spice that might be called "**I live here**".

THE MEGAPHONE GUERRILLA DIVED WITH VOICE AND WORD INTO THE MARKET'S VORTEX...





RAJESHWARI AT MARAA



ANGARIKA AT HALASURU

Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy

ತಯಪರ್ಪ ತೆನೊನಲಯ ನರಾನಯ ಕರೊಲರೆ ಮರಾಡಯವಯದಲಿಲಾಲ.

ಗಂಜಿ ಕಯಡದಿವಯ ಪರ್ರೀತೆಸಯವರೆ.

ಪರ್ರೀತೆಯಿರಿಂದ

ತಯಪರ್ಪವನೊನಯ ಸರೊಹರೊದತೆಯ ವೆಚರಾರಕರ್ಕರೆ ತರಲಯ ಪರ್ರಯತೊನಲಿಸಯವರೆ.

ಫರೇಸರ್ ಬಯಕರ್ ನಲರ್ಲಲಿ

ನರಾನಯ ಸತೊತ ಮಯದಯಕೆಯ ಹರೆಣವಪರ್ಟರೆ...! ಂದಯ ನಲೀವಯ

ಪರ್ರತೆಕರ್ರೀಯಿಸಿದೊದಲೀರೀ....

ಆದರರೆ

ನನೊನ ವೆಚರಾರ ಚಿಗಯರಿದ ಬರೇರಯ....

ನನೊನ ಸರಾವಯ ನಲಿಮೂಮುಂದ ಆಗಿದರೆ.

ನಲಿಮೂಮು ನರಾಶ ಹರೊರರಾಟದ ಸರಾಗರದಲರ್ಲಲಿ ಕರೊಚರ್ಚಿ ಹರೊಗಯವ ಕರ್ರಲಿಮಿ

ಕಲೀಟದ ಹರಾಗರೆ ಆಗಯತೊತದರೆ.

For Gauri

Resistance against those who killed you,
is expressing itself through the enraged cries of a thousand hearts.

The lines pouring out of the pens from the thousand hearts say,

I am Gauri.

Gauri is not dead

She will never die.

She now, is the life that breathes through all our hearts.

She is the star that never sets.

She has become the light of an ideal.

She has surrendered to immortality.

She has become a soul mate.

Für Gauri

Der Widerstand gegen die, die dich töteten
Offenbart sich im wütenden Aufschrei von tausend Herzen

Fließend aus den Federn von tausend Herzen sagen die Zeilen

Ich bin Gauri

Gauri ist nicht tot

Sie wird niemals sterben

Sie ist jetzt das Leben, das durch all unsere Herzen atmet

Sie ist der Stern der niemals untergeht

Sie wurde das leuchtende Vorbild

Sie ergab sich der Unsterblichkeit

Ashwini Kumar Chakre

Two poems taken from his theatre play **“Justice for Rocky”**

I

Gutter water half a bite
Mango chutney stale meat
Deep darkness the night's black
Starts a story short and trite.

The road's traffic warm winds
The sand's smells lazy prayers
Cheap living the night's thirsty
Show you what the eyes have
seen.

Father's small and money's big
Itchy scalp ta di da di dum
Dry bones hunger's on
Four gluttons frantically dig.

A rubber ball a tall pole
A car tyre on the road
A blind colony empty pockets
Listen to the story told.



Straßenverkehr warme Winde
Der sandige Geruch fauler Gebete
Das Leben billig die Nacht durstig
Zeigen dir was die Augen sahen

Gossen Wasser ein halber Bissen
Mango Chutney fades Fleisch
Tiefes Dunkel schwärze der Nacht
Erzähl die Geschichte kurz und banal

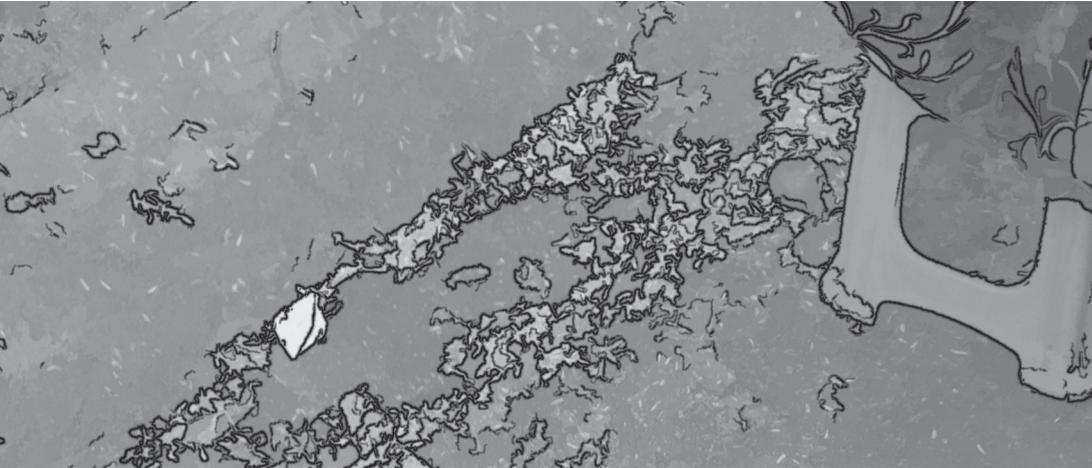
Vater ist klein das Geld ist groß
Mich juckt der Kopf Ta di da di dum
Trockene Knochen der Hunger kommt
Vier Fresssäcke graben verzweifelt nach

Ein Gummiball ein hoher Pfosten
Ein Autoreifen auf der Straße
Eine blinde Kolonie leere Taschen
Hör Dir die Geschichte an

II

The rats of the cupboard are covered in dust
The table drawers are full of green notes
The three legs of the chair keep turning
It's time for a break, just move away.

The officers' tea is in their pockets
The papers in the files in a joyous mood
Floating in the grooves of the paper-weights
You wanted to piss so where do you go



Die Ratten im Schrank sind mit Staub bedeckt
Die Tischschubladen sind mit grünen Noten voll
Die drei Beine des Stuhls drehen sich weiter
Es ist Zeit für eine Pause, Zeit einfach wegzuziehen.

Der Tee der Offiziere ist in ihren Taschen
Die Papiere der Akten in fröhlicher Stimmung
In den Nuten der Briefbeschwerer schwimmend
Du wolltest pissen gehen, wohin also gehst du?

Ekta Mittal

ಜೋರಾಗಿ ಓದಿ

Read Aloud

ನನಗೂ ಕನ್ನಡ ಬರುತೆ, ಯಂತದಕ್ಕೆ ನಗ್ಗೀರಾ?

ನಾನು ಸಪೂರ ಇದ್ದೇನೆ, ತೆಳ್ಳಗೆ ಅಲ್ಲ.

ನನಗೆ ನೀರುಳ್ಳಿ ಇಷ್ಟ, ಈರುಳ್ಳಿ ಅಲ್ಲ.

ನಾವು ಬಟಾಟೆ ಪೋಡಿ ಅಂತೀವಿ, ಆಲುಗಡ್ಡೆ ಅಲ್ಲ.

ಕತ್ತಲೆ ಆಯಿತು, ರಾತ್ರಿ ಅಲ್ಲ.

ನಾನು ಸೌಕ್ ಇದೇಯೇನ, ಅಂತ ಹೇಳಿದ್ರೆ, ನಗ್ಗಾರಪ್ಪ!

ಮುಂಚೆ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ನನಗೆ ಕನ್ನಡ, ಮಾತಾಡಲಿಕ್ಕೇನೆ ನಾಚಿಗೆ ಆಗ್ತಾಯಿತ್ತು

ಮಾತ್ರ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಜನರತ್ರ ಹೇಗೆ ಮಾತಾಡ್ತೀಕು ನಾನು?

ಆಯ್ತು , ಆಯ್ತು ಪಧಾರ್ಥ ಒಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಉಪ್ಯಾರಿ ಇದ್ರೆ ರುಚಿಯಾಗಿ ಇರ್ತದೆ.

ಅಮ್ಮಾಸ ಯಾವಾಗ್ಲೂ ಬೈತಾ ಇರ್ತಾರೆ.

ಛೀ, ಊರಿನ ಕನ್ನಡಸ ಸರಿ ಮಾತಾಡ್ತೀಕೆ ಬರುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಎಲ್ಲಿಂದ ಕಲ್ತಿದ್ಯಾ, ದೇವಿಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತು.

ನಾಚಿಗೆ ಆಗ ಬೇಕು ನಿನಗೆ. ಅಸಹ್ಯ !

ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಇದೆ ಅಂತೇ.

ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಉಂಟಂತ ಹೇಳು?

ವಾಸನೆ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಪರಿಮಳ ಹೇಳು.

ಗೊತ್ತಾಯಿತಾ?

ಮಲ್ಲಿಗೆಯ ಪರಿಮಳ ತುಂಬಾ ಚಂದ ಉಂಟು.

ಮಲ್ಲಿಗೆಯ ಪರಿಮಳ ತುಂಬಾ ಚಂದ ಉಂಟು.

Gabi Schaffner

A kiss blown to Emily D.

I don't live here: I am a stranger in this city. There are many shades to the concept of a stranger; the visitor, the intruder, the guest, the immigrant, the ex-pat, the traveller, and more. Strangeness is a fruit with many tastes, shapes and colours. From bitter to sweet. From carcass to cake. From black or brown to white or yellow... or orange for this instance.

Hello. I am nobody.
And who are you?
I am nobody too.

The first "strange" things I noticed in Bangalore were the fleshy orange flowers of the tulip trees that covered the pavement almost everywhere. The second was the omnipresent ear piercing sound of car horns in the roads, and the third thing that struck me as very unfamiliar were the piles of waste sitting patiently, trodden on, kicked over, picked at and awaiting further processing in any corner, of any corner. After that: the great number of very peaceful dogs and cows.

Hello? Hello. Moo!

In Germany we know that the cow is considered sacred in India Yet it is the mix of sacredness and indifference that gives these apparitions their strangely surprising presence. Being a traveller, identity is no great issue to contemplate. Being a traveller one knows about distance and difference. It is what our eyes, minds and souls feed on and it is totally relative.

Who is I? Where are you from?



If one would go crazy for example, in a foreign country: you'd notice? Stripped naked in a foreign country, who would know who you are? Otherwise, without knowing about "the other" there is no "me". They are interchangeable. Then again, identity can be a burden. As much as it gives you something you belong to, at times you don't want to belong. The number of things that seem "strange" diminishes until – eventually – all of them have faded into familiarity.

Mam? Excuse me. Do you know who I a-m? Where are you from?

"I live here" is a statement I would apply to any place, where I can be at ease with myself and my perceptions. Where my fingers rest comfortably on a keyboard and nobody threatens to take me away. Where I am safe for the night. Yet here in Bangalore, there are things I dearly miss. Most of it being the perfume of first autumn days in Middle Europe, a mixture of hoar frosted, rotting leaves and sweet apples. So while I live here at the moment, in my dreams at times, I live in a different place. knowing that this place is not for real.

Hello? Hello. Where are you from?

Identity, I think, cannot be regarded as something that is fully "whole". It has flaws. missing bits, embedded particles that reflect the sun like fools gold. It changes and grows, it might even shrink. There are hollows, some of them even containing soil and seed pods. Identity is sometimes rained on, especially in the monsoon season. And sometimes it loses all weight and sense of self and place, for example when one is falling in love. In death it is accomplished. But probably not before. And this pair of eyes behind the looking glass. Maybe we should take the mirrors down.

Mam? Hello? Do you know who I am?



Tao Daniel

They Called Me French Speaker

Music from Africa.....a song from my village.

I never went there, but someone showed me. You can ask ; why did you never go there ?

I'll say, because my parents don't allow me.

"Daddy, I want to go to our village, to learn our mother tongue, to know more about our culture." "No, Daniel, What you need, learn french that's all and be good in that. You will get a good job"

Like you, I'd like to make my father proud of me. Not for biscuits and toys, but only to see him, watching me with smile and say, Daniel, I'm proud of you.

So I started learning French, I am very good in writing and speaking French. Years passed away, I'm still alive, People have died around me.

And that time, that day, when I went to the burial, I felt the pain. People who were there spoke, but not in french but in our mother tongue. And when I asked them to translate, they were surprised.

"Really, you don't speak your mother-tongue ? Yes, I don't but I'm good in french.. Bro, we are not in France here, we are in Ivory coast, go to France!
Then they called me, french speaker. Like a curse.

Even my mother, sometimes she wants to talk to me, to warn me, but in front of guests, she can't speak in french- (you see, everybody will understand). I could see through her eyes.

Why God, didn't we teach our mother-tongue to him? Where are you father? You are proud of me but not my people. They called me french speaker.

Yes I speak french but before they came and colonized us, we had our mother tongue. They taught me french but who will teach them our mother tongue?

I like seeing my people in the evening under trees, singing songs. These songs are emotional because they are from our blood, our heart. You can speak French, English, Arabic, Spanish. But you can never speak like the people for whom these languages are their mother tongues.

I will travel through the world tell to people, Yes it's good to learn others languages, others cultures, but never forget yours. It's your identity. Like me, if you don't know your native language, start learning..it's never too late to do the right things.

They called me french speaker,
But I'm not a french speaker, I'm a cultural speaker.



AFRIQUE !
LES TOITS DE TES CASES
GRIFFENT LE CIEL
À L'ANXIÉTÉ DE LEUR
MISÈRE
MA PRIÈRE DU MATIN DU
SOIR...

Tasneem Lohani

Gujarati Kavita

Kutro che maaru naam
Pyaar baantvanu che maaru kaam
Itle main nai machchi, murghi ya gai khais,
Par main tamne shayad kaantis
(majak karu chu have)
Mara paase che mitro Ghana pyara
Ane ehna dil che bau sara
Pan mane pakdi sakta nai,
Mara jem bhagi sakta nai,
Par che eh bau nadaan
Aave che mane bau kaam
Kutra ne mai ye dost banayu
Mara vaaste ehye Kheer pakavi
Eh ye mane ek kahani sunavi
Mili ne apne ek lori pakavi
Pachi ek sapnu che mane aayu
Aah kahan aavi gayo main Bhaiyo?

Translation: Tasneem Lohani

Doggie I am called
To spread love is my job
That is why I eat no meat
I only bite (just kidding)
I have friends very lovely
Whose hearts are filled, jolly
But they can catch me not at last
As they run not as fast
Innocent they are very
To me dolls they are really
I made a friend the doggie
Who made me a sweet khaki!
He spun for me a story lovely
Together we brewed a dream, lovely
After the dream had, I
Wondered where and what really was I.

Gujarati Kavita



TASMEEN AT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA METRO

Nithila M.K.
Chill

I can feel my head buzz. There's a steady vibration that I can feel but not hear; I imagine it sounds like a hum. I can feel it spreading it down my body, all the way to my toes. It's making me rock gently back and forth, and making my feet feel like they shouldn't be touching the cold tiles on the floor.

I had two discussions with two friends about two different topics but my mind feels like it's slowly falling apart in infinite directions. Each thought a particle, each idea a dot buzzing away from each other and not coming together coherently. It frustrates me and makes me wish I could hold my hands to my head and push the pieces back together again.

I'm still rocking back and forth. I like the sound the anklets on my feet make as I move; the sound of the bells makes my movements feel more graceful than they are. The anklets and the rain outside, they go together, they resonate, somehow.

I feel light headed. There isn't a brain in my head, there are infinite little vibrating particles that I wish I could put together. But at the same time, I feel heavy. Heavy with the burden of having to decide, heavy with the burden of holding my stance, heavy with the burden of having a stance.



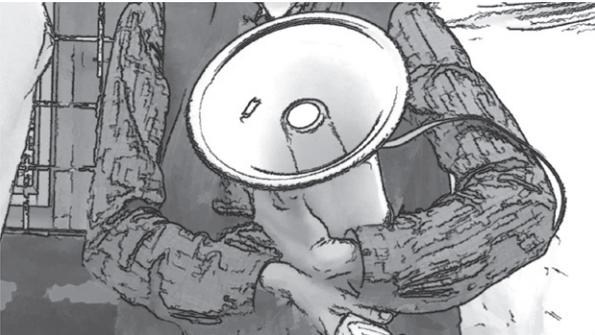
Frösteln

Mein Kopf brummt. Da ist ein stetes Vibrieren, das ich zwar fühlen kann, aber nicht hören. In meiner Vorstellung klingt es wie ein Summen. Ich spüre wie es sich in meinem Körper verbreitet, von oben bis nach unten zu meinen Zehen. Es macht dass ich mich sanft vor und zurück wiege, und es gibt mir das Gefühl als sollten meine Füße anderes tun als die kalten Fliesen des Boden zu berühren.

Ich hatte zwei Diskussionen mit zwei Freunden über zwei verschiedene Themen, doch mein Geist fühlt sich an als ob er langsam in unendliche Richtungen zerfällt. Jeder Gedanke ein Partikel, jede Idee ein kleiner Punkt, der sich vom nächsten entfernt ohne Vollständigkeit zu erlangen. Es frustriert mich und erweckt in mir den Wunsch ich könnte meine Hände an meinen Kopf legen und all diese Teile dorthin wieder zurückstoßen.

Immer noch wiege ich mich vor und zurück. Ich höre das Geräusch meiner Fußkettchen wenn ich mich bewege; der Klang der Glöckchen, der meine Bewegungen graziöser erscheinen lässt als sie sind. Die Fußkettchen und der Regen draußen, sie gehören zueinander, sie klingen zusammen, irgendwie.

Ich fühle mich als ob mein Kopf schwebt. Da ist kein Gehirn drin, sondern unendlich viele kleine vibrierende Partikel, die ich mir wünschte zusammen zu fügen. Zugleich fühle ich mich schwer. Schwer mit der Bürde eine Entscheidung zu treffen, Schwer mit der Bürde meinen Standpunkt zu wahren, schwer mit der Bürde, einen Standpunkt zu haben.



German folk song performed simultaneously
at K.R. Market

Ekta

Ich habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
ich habe Durst!

ich habe Durst!

Ich habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,

Daniel

Ich habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
ich habe Durst!

ich habe Durst!

Ich habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,

Ich habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
habe Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
Hunger, Hunger, Hunger,
ich habe Durst!

Ashwini

मैं भूखा भूखा भूखा
मैं भूखा भूखा भूखा
भूखा भूखा भूखा
मैं प्यासा



Angarika Guha: Angarika is learning the meaning of "lost in translation". She works at maraa, a media and arts collective.

Ashwini Kumar Chakre: Ashwini is a theatre maker who is trying manage his life, trying not to react much to things happening around. Ashwini is the founder of Mashaal, a theatre group based in Bangalore.

Ekta Mittal: Ekta wonders if something is uttered, out loud, will its essence change? She works at maraa and makes films on labour, cities and ghosts.

Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy: Rajeshwari lives with her girlfriends. She often ponders about the chaos around her. Gauri and she used to dance together. She recently graduated from Bangalore University, and is an active member of the Karnataka Vidhyarthi Sanghatane, a student union in Karnataka.

Gabi Schaffner: Gabi works as an interdisciplinary artist and curator in the field of visionary documentation, ethnography and sound art. Her media are radio, text, story telling and photography. Her own radio project is called Datscha Radio. She lives in Berlin.

Nithila M.K: Nithila lives in Bangalore and studies Science in St. Joseph's College. As a part of the "I"-**"LIVE"**-**"HERE"** lab, she is interested in exploring ideas of identity as a young student in these chaotic times.

Tasneem Lohani: Tasneem is an observer. She quietly absorbs everything around her; good or bad. This makes her also, a teller. She speaks when she most certainly must. She graduated with a Bachelor's in Visual Arts from Chennai and is currently engaged with all things creative.

Tao Daniel: Life is like a book where everyone wants to write. Daniel wants to write his page, to make the world better. To share his talent and give people happiness. He believes we cannot change the world, but we can change someone in the world, who will change someone else. And so the story starts, and so the story continues. Daniel is from Ivory Coast and is currently a radio jockey and artist based in Bangalore.

maraa

maraa is a media and arts collective based in Bangalore and Delhi. Founded as a charitable public trust, maraa's work is centred around a political yet creative practice across three domains - strengthening people-centric media platforms, democratising usage of urban public spaces and deepening rights-based campaigns.

Goethe Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach.

„We promote knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information about cultural, social and political life in our nation. Our cultural and educational programmes encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. They strengthen the development of structures in civil society and foster worldwide mobility.“

BangalORE residency

The bangalOREsidency programme has been conceived as a long-term collaboration between the Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Bangalore and various innovative and discerning contemporary art/cultural spaces and partners in Bangalore, with a view to offer artists from Germany a space conducive to creative output and the opportunity to interact with Indian artists/experts, in the challenging context of Asia's fastest-growing metropolis.



Thank you, Ekta and Angarika for inviting me to Bangalore and for sharing your work and inspirations with me!

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A walk with poets and megaphones along the metro rail tracks of Bangalore.

Parallel to bird song, market buzz and traffic roar the poets reclaim the air space for their poetry and songs.



Identity is sometimes rained on, espe

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