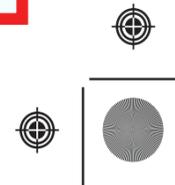
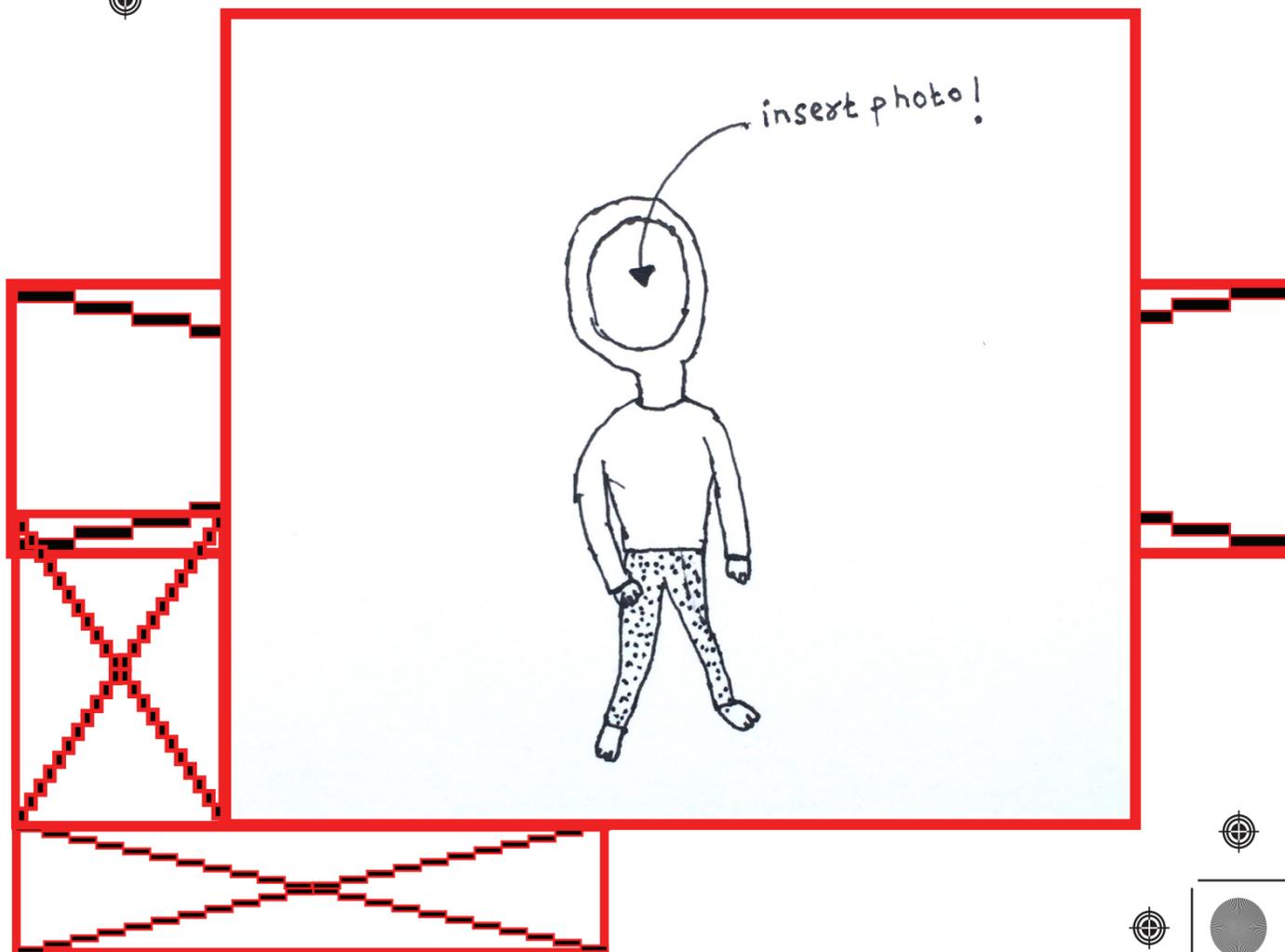
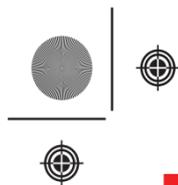
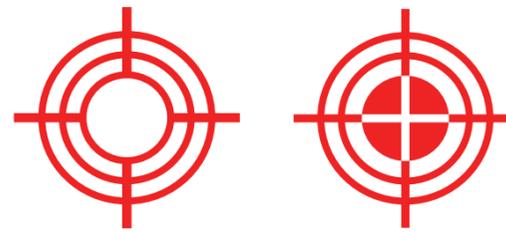
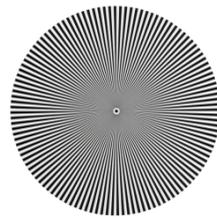


GAGAN SINGH

INTERVIEW Q&A



Pulp Society

Gagan Singh (b.1975) is a Delhi based artist working in the medium of drawing. Through research in neuroscience, psychology, humour, eroticism and cognition, he explores certain key aspects of seeing, material and state of mind. Everyday activities play a significant role in his way of thinking & drawing.

His practice has been with site-specific works, interventions, making short duration films and artist books, along with sketchbooks and exploring how we think through them. He also looks at drawing as a form of conversation and provocation through works like the How to Do series.

Singh earned a Masters in Fine Arts from Kent Institute of Art & Design, Canterbury in 2005. His works have recently been exhibited by Foreign Objekt (2021) and Chatterjee and Lal, Mumbai (2020 and 2021). He has also conducted talks and workshops in Gallery Ark, Baroda (2021), School of Environment and Architecture, Mumbai (2021), Nottingham Arts Mela (2020) and many more. He was also a resident at Rote Fabrik, Zurich in 2019.



What's inside your packet and how do you want people to engage with its contents?

My packet contains line drawings, instructions & possibilities. I would like people to write down and question the content of the packet. I feel questioning is the most important thing.

What was your thought process behind creating your work for The Print Out? How did you approach this medium?

What happens when someone prints the sheet out? What can they do?

What is possible only through the Printed option? I kept the printer in mind, and of course the things which matter to me in the medium of Drawing. Over the past 5-7 years, I've been intrigued by how memory functions, the immediate memory, the distant memory. The fact that there is a sense of loss and addition at every stage.

Which means, from the moment I draw something, take a photo, and place it as part of a folder for a printer to print out, to the stage where a human being again draws a line on the paper, or enacts something with it there is a constant communication. It's this communicating passage which interests me.

To me, drawing refers to the way we make a line, a mark, along with how and what goes into producing this line. It's the mind / brain of the machine which receives a command to print the lines and executes the task, it is its quality as a printer. I am interested to see how a similar play will occur between the parcel / packet, the printer and the viewer.

What is the significance of 'Site' in your practice? How have you negotiated the same in your packet for The Print Out?

The idea of a Site is something that confuses me. So maybe I can share my confusion. I sit to draw, and that changes how I experience the site / location. Or is it that a Site changes my state of mind, which reflects in what I draw.

In the packet, in one exercise, we take the cut out and place it somewhere. We are free to print this at any size. Whether a few centimetres or average human height. Then you leave it and someone encounters it, discovers it. Even on a daily basis, to find the cut out at home or someplace else, left in the Delhi metro for someone to discover perhaps or left in one's bank locker; to go there for years and years to visit the locker and find the cut out. The whole meaning of the bank locker as a site will change for you. There will be jewellery and other valuables in other lockers, but in yours, a paper cut out.

Site creates change, as sometimes you can not figure out if it's your state of mind which perceives a site or the site creates its own perception for every person. But then there is also a sense of time, of revisiting the place or places.

Most of your drawings have a sense of humour. When working through drawings, is this something you consciously search for or do these just happen?

It has become a habit, or a part of my routine. The outcome helps me feel good. It is what I want to say. So I keep saying it in the boundaries of a certain expression which here is humor. I will do a reportage drawing. I will draw a chair. I will trace the contours of the car parked outside. I will go on drawing in my sketchbook through sequential thinking and get to the right combo of words, text, drawing and stop! The sketches express how I feel in that moment, answer questions I am thinking about, showcase questions I am creating (like 'how to climb stairs?').

There is an interesting juxtaposition between site, objects and drawings in your work. Can you tell us more about how this visual language came to be?

When I was left on a site, I would visit it often and when I look at objects they shift in and out of the physical three dimensional space and the two dimensional space; appearing, disappearing and moulding into forms. When I draw on a site, depending on where I sit, different things come out in the sketchbook. They appear as a visualisation of something when drawn and disappear if you let the thought pass you by. You can't make something out of every thought, but even that which disappears

remains with you as a motif or a form.

A site is invisible. It doesn't say anything. It is empty but filled with something, for example a tree outside in the park and a table or furniture inside a room. So, I highlight, I bring out, I pull it out, I DRAW OUT. The meaning of drawing is to DRAW / PULL out from somewhere. So now where is the site? Is it my mind, my different states, psychic energy within? Yet the external also influences me. Places I find myself at rest. Like for me crossing a bridge in the city holds something, but sniffing metro train tracks while the train is coming does not! All of these ponderings find their way into my visual language.

What role does technology play in your practice? How has its role evolved over time?

Having a mobile phone, and the possibility to easily record something, replay it, share it and project it interests me. The fact that even live drawing can be done through media today, which was all the more important in the pandemic period and the ability to share videos with many online is significant to my practice.

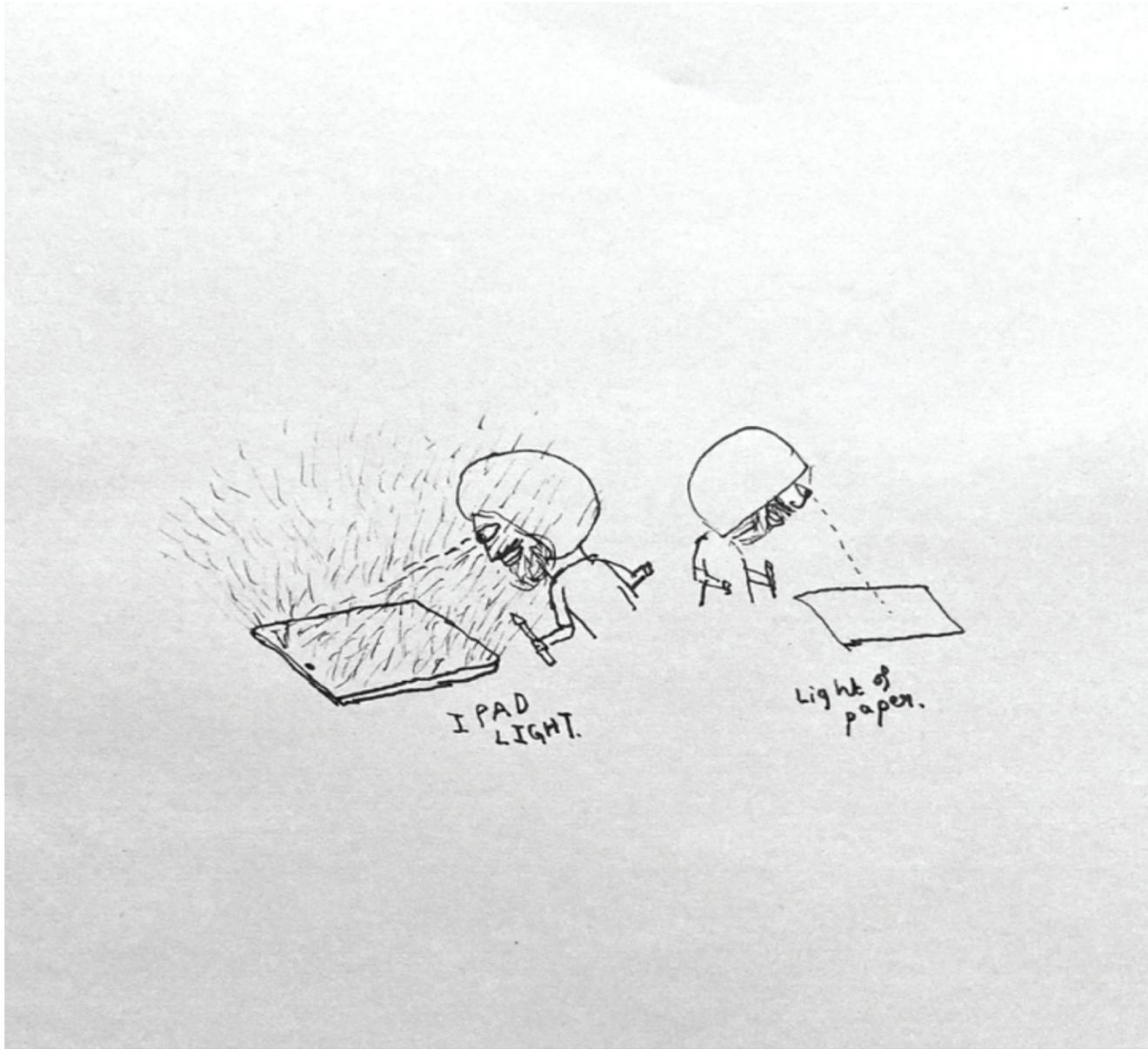
I also just bought an Ipad and an apple pencil, but these tools are still new to me.

I look at Technology with a keen interest. For me it's about the connection between how a device can change my way of thinking, especially when it comes to working with a pen tool. A pen tool on photoshop, how the change happens when you draw with a mouse, you are looking at the screen and not your hand and the mouse. And the line is being drawn somewhere else. You are seeing the line being drawn.

Almost 10 years ago. I started by raising a mobile phone(black berry phone)into the sky and drew in space through waving the pen and imagining I am drawing. Now, I drew a line on a mobile phone(I PAD) connected to a projector which projects the line on a wall as I draw it.

Here I am watching things in the balcony. The pillar, the walls, the door and by seeing these constructed objects, I start to draw on the screen of the I PAD. But earlier I was

seeing through the screen of the mobile phone.



How did the lockdown affect your drawing process? Can you also tell us more about your project Drawings made during lockdown 2020?

I was stuck in my balcony for months. So these were my expressions during that time. Again, the site of the balcony, the meaning of bedrooms, bed, kitchen, everything changed. Living in a home for 20 years and I would not stop at the balcony to sit. I just put on my shoes and left but now it was my studio, my home, something to come to in the morning. Someone to say good night before I sleep. I did not kiss the balcony but I would if I could. The bed was no longer the bed I knew. The bedsheet was something I was caught staring at very often. It was all about survival and suffering.

What's the role of intimacy in your work?

Everything I guess. The size of the work, the pen I work with and what I draw is all intimate, personal. Also, the words I write out are all intimate questions, riddles and conversations.

What does collaboration mean to you?

Collaboration has meant everything for me. I see this printed packet as a form of collaborating.

If it was up to me, I would call my Solo show as a Solo show in collaboration and then have a list of people I collaborated with. I feel I need the other to provide me with a stimulant, but over the years, collaboration has taken on different forms. I still remember, and my eyeballs enlarge themselves as I recall, as a matter of fact, the neurons in the brains are firing themselves as I write this, that in the lawns of a farmhouse in the years 2000-2002, a Sikh camp was organised, KAURS & SINGHS and about 200 kids drew collaboratively in it with black ink, brushes and a canvas roll opened up on the ground (having tears of joy remembering). Then in 2018-19 I was in Orissa with about 200 students from 5 different Art Colleges and again we all pounced on a large scale paper lined up on the floor with about 75-100 students drawing madly over each other's works. It was not a sex orgy but a DRAWING ORGY. A horniness of a different kind. You can erase someone's work faster than they would draw. There were more people intersecting into a line than ones who were drawing. Nothing made sense after a point of time. That point was a point.

Collaboration has also meant you can have coffee and draw in the same sketchbook with another person. Here it can be a conversation over a recipe of making butter chicken and drawing as you go along making the chicken. And one sees the others work, and draws into it. And it's more gentle and friendly leaving a group sketch with no hierarchy but a drawing conversation which may not be possible in text.

This act of collaboration has also extended to setting up a drawing conversation table. Where people come and draw on a single sheet of a sketchbook.

THE PRINT OUT

Perhaps, more than 2, 3-4 people engage in cross firing, text, lines, figures, scribbles, smudges, stories, messages, cutting into the other's work. I had set up a drawing conversation table in 2017 during a residency in Goa. The opening was in the evening and goa was humid and sweaty with the portugese mansion having high ceilings, and a fan swinging not to far from us. It was how people were turning the sketchbook to have their say. Who wrote what and said what, and this form brings out a spontaneousness only seen amongst wolves playing when not hunting or staff working inside a departmental store selling stuffed teddy bears. It's when no one is around that you want to play. These are after hour things meant to drown the tension of the sun which is setting because it wants to. Have a sunny day.

