

CARPE DIEM CHRONICLES

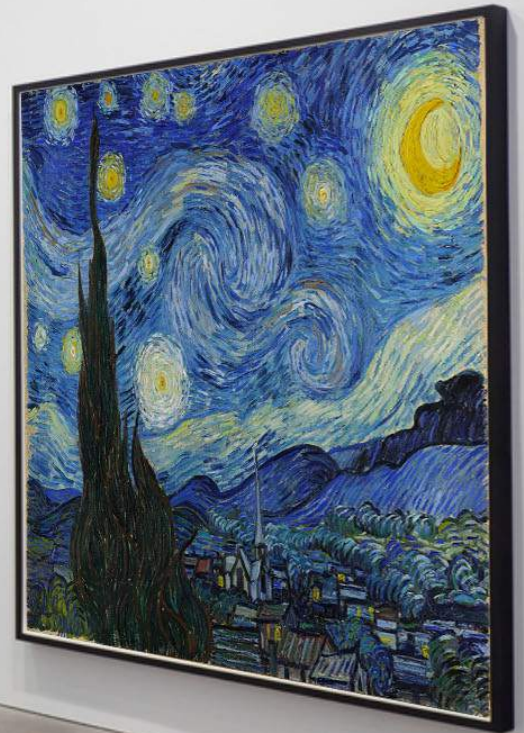


DECEMBER 2021



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Dear Readers,

As with all our issues this year, you'll find each one of our articles bound together by a unifying theme. However, this time it might be a little difficult to notice at first glance.

Art imitates life. Life imitates art. And both of those things mean something different to each and every one of us. So we asked our writers to each choose a piece of visual art and write something inspired by it. In this issue you'll find matters of current affairs, science, poetry, and even a glimpse at the kind of hopes, dreams, and fears some of us share. Through each piece of art, and through each of our writers' words, you'll find different ways to look at the world around you, but also glimpses of what we want the world to look like, because art doesn't just work as a mirror to our world, but a means by which to shape it.

If there's anything we've learnt from art while bringing this issue to life, it's that there's so much for us to appreciate in this world, but also so much that we need to change. So as you dive in to this composition of colors, words, and thoughts, we hope you're able to appreciate the beauty that art reveals, but also, recognise the urgent need for change that art lays bare.

Best,
The Editorial



Artwork: Starry Night Artist: Vincent Van Gogh

By Sakshi Singhal

In this millennial age today, almost everything comes at a price,
Culture is compromised and nature is met with strife,
Hail the era of modern tech and digitisation
Cell phones et al – does Art find a place in this civilisation?

For troubled minds a soothing balm,
Amidst turmoil brings in a sense of calm,
A holy grail or a place to retreat,
A piece of art is always a treat!

Cuts across shades of moods and emotion,
Captures poignant and happy moments in motion,
Brings about a smile to counter every tear,
A ray of hope to balance every fear.

A medium to drive home strong messages and pieces of history,
Of hope, aspiration, love, war, passion and many a mystery,
An inspiration to music, dance, poetry, theatre and other art
forms,

"Starry night" inspired the creation of Vincent –
something to learn from!

ABORTION RIGHTS OR ABORTION WRONGS?

Written by : Neha Srinivas

It's been over a month since a controversial law, known as the SB8, or more popularly, the Heartbeat Bill, went into effect in Texas. This law gives anyone the right to sue doctors who perform an abortion past the short span of six-weeks of pregnancy. Many people might not even realise that they're pregnant within this period. The law also allows for a 10,000 dollar reward to any civilian who sues the person getting the abortion. In addition to that, it doesn't cater to any exceptions - not even those of rape or incest.

Over time, there have been a lot of sustained debates on abortion. A question that's always been pushed back and forth is at what point does the foetus' life become worthy of protection?



PRO-CHOICE

Pro-choicers set forth the argument that because the time period to decide is so limited, it might not be sufficient for the would-be-mother to perceive what's happening, before they have the chance to decide if they can take on the paramount responsibility of bringing another human

being into the world. Before they can even process what's taking place, this life-altering decision is made for them by an estranged policy maker. Victims of rape will have to live with a constant reminder for the rest of their life.

"You took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my safety, my intimacy, my confidence, my own voice."

No matter how hard they try to move on, they won't be able to because this decision, that's going to affect the course of their lives, is going to be made without a second of hesitation, by a complete stranger.



However, a lot of arguments also rise, regarding the large number of pro-lifers simultaneously working to punish, imprison or execute people for attempting to access safe abortion care. Some of them play a significant role in viciously tearing babies away from their so-called unfit parents and locking them up in foster cages with no real plan to reunite them. It's these same people who deny affordable healthcare coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions, cut programs that feed hungry children, and even block access to HIV testing and treatments.

Some do argue, however, that these are a whole different set of people, who fall under the "pro-birth" category, but at the end of the day, forcing the birth of children, especially upon people under drastically poor socio-economic conditions and in no state of mind to nurture a child, isn't any less than torture. "Worse than aborting is birthing in instability," writes Abhijit Naskar, famous feminist icon and author. According to the USDA, more than 11 million children in the US live in "food insecure" homes. Kids who are unable to access proper meals, especially during their first 3 years, begin life at a serious disadvantage. They're likely to face more health conditions like anaemia or asthma, and even be hospitalized due to exhaustion. Life for them is most likely to be suffused with struggle.



A child shouldn't have to come into this world enduring forms of deprivation and a woman mustn't be stripped of her right to make her own decisions, especially when it comes to her body. That being said, an innocent fetus shouldn't have to be denied its right to live, just because of the mistakes of its parents. The road to a brighter future for women has taken a turn and we need to set it back on the right path : towards compromise.



India is one such country where the legislators have come to a compromise - there has been a new amendment introduced which has raised the upper limit of MTP (Medical Termination of Pregnancy) from 20 to 24 weeks for women: including rape survivors, victims of incest, differently abled women and minors. Failure of contraception is also acknowledged and MTP is now available to “any woman or her partner”.

The new law is empathetic and looks at a very sensitive issue with a human face. Now, with the popular Roe v. Wade under scrutiny, countries must embrace this middle ground and reverse the further tightening of the over-restrictive and disputed legislation.



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Artwork: [photographed for Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man] Artist: Gordon Parks

DEMOCRACY DIES IN DARKNESS

Mrunmayi
Kamerkar



If you picked up a copy of The Washington Post on February 22nd, 2017 you'd find a new addition to its masthead - a masthead that had remained largely unchanged for the 140 years since its first issue was released. The words "Democracy Dies in Darkness", would now strike you every time you picked up a copy of The Post.

In reference to the slogan, Jeff Bezos, who owns The Washington Post, said, "Certain institutions have a very important role in making sure that there is light". And long considered the fourth pillar of democracy, the media arguably plays the role of illuminating society. Undoubtedly, the information we get through the media empowers us, helps us make decisions, and keeps us free. But what happens when the relay of information starts getting censored? What happens when the dissemination of information engineers emotional outcomes? And how vulnerable are democracies today, to succumbing to this darkness?

Into the surge black fissure

What is the darkness that threatens democracy? "It's about the dangers of secrecy in government, which is what I worry about most", explains Bob Woodward (Associate Editor of The Washington Post), who brought the slogan to the newspaper. Whether it's Saudi Arabia, China, or Eritrea it's not difficult to find countries across the world who are already victims to this in the form of censorship.

Under Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's high repression of the press has suffered a significant increase. Anti-terror and cybercrime laws along with specialized courts have given authorities free rein to imprison journalists who deviate from the pro-government narrative.

China has the world's most extensive and advanced censorship framework. Both private and state-owned news outlets are under the authorities' supervision, and those who fail to follow the government's directives are suspended or punished. Since 2017, no website or social media account can provide news service on the internet without the Cyberspace Administration of China's permission.



Huge vapours brood above the clifted shore,
Night on the ocean settles dark and mute,
Save where is heard the repercussive roar
Of drowsy billows on the rugged foot
Of rocks remote; or still more distant tone
Of seamen in the anchored bark that tell
The watch relieved; or one deep voice alone
Singing the hour, and bidding "Strike the bell!"

Furthermore, citizens are blocked from foreign search engines, news websites, and social media platforms by the Great Firewall.

All is black shadow but the lucid line
Marked by the light surf on the level sand,
Or where afar the ship-lights faintly shine
Like wandering fairy fires, that oft on land
Misled the pilgrim - such the dubious ray
That wavering reason lends in life's long darkling way.

In Eritrea, all independent media has been shut down since 2001. Article 19, of the 1996 Press Law conveys the requirement that the media must promote "national objectives." The government retains a legal monopoly of broadcast media and alternative sources of information like the internet or satellite broadcasts of banned radio stations, which are restricted through signal jams and by the poor quality of the government-controlled internet.

While each of these countries are ruled by authoritarian governments, legislation and restrictions of this type are not far from infringing upon our own lives.

Like wandering fairy fires

In 2018, Roya Ensafi, a professor at the University of Michigan launched Censored Planet, an automated censorship tracking system. Her team used it to collect more than 21 billion measurements over 20 months in 221 countries. They found that censorship is increasing in 103 of the countries studied, including Norway, Japan, Italy, Poland, Israel and India—countries which are rated as some of the freest in the world by advocacy group Freedom House.

Although the study didn't find nationwide censorship policies like the ones in China, it identified an increase in restrictive activity in these countries. Most of this activity was driven by organizations or internet service providers (ISPs) filtering content. And essentially with legislation that allows ISPs to block things that are uncontestably frowned upon, these countries now have infrastructure that governments can use to block anything they want covertly. For example, in 2018, Norway passed laws requiring ISPs to block certain gambling centered content but Censored Planet found restrictions on a broader range of content, including human rights websites like Human Rights Watch.

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That wavering reason lends in life's long darkling way.

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons -
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes -

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us -
We can find no scar,
But internal difference -
Where the Meanings, are -

A certain slant of light
Governments can also increase their influence over the press through measures like government-backed ownership changes or regulatory and financial pressure. Some have also offered proactive support to outlets through measures such as lucrative state contracts, favorable regulatory decisions, and preferential access to state information, in exchange for influence. In Israel for instance, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, amongst other corruption charges, was indicted in 2019 for offering regulatory favors to two prominent media firms in exchange for positive coverage.

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons -
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes -

Optics
To preserve democracy, we need media that serves the public rather than those in power. It's the power of media, and journalism, and even art, like Gordon Parks' photography, that plays a vital role in protecting democracy from the darkness. Because it shows us the things we need to see to be empowered, to make decisions, to keep us free.

When it comes, the Landscape listens -
Shadows - hold their breath -
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death -

fissure.

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons -
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes -

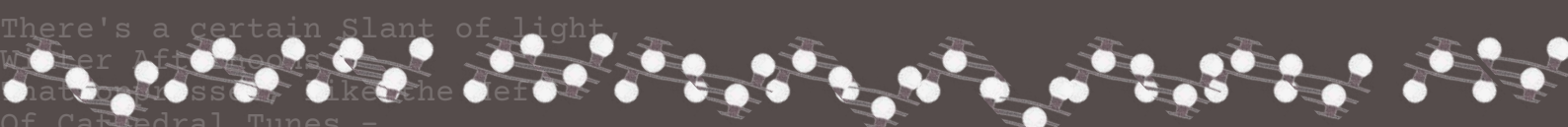
Heavenly Hurt, it gives us -
We can find no scar,
But internal difference -
Where the Meanings, are -

None may teach it - Any -
'Tis the Seal Despair -
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air -

When it comes, the Landscape listens -
Shadows - hold their breath -
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death -

fissure.

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons -
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes -



Eight Years Forth, Seventy Years Hence

On July 21, China appeared to erupt in celebration. Huge crowds gathered to celebrate the centenary of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party). The country's strongman, Xi Jinping was at the helm of all the celebrations. The crowds cheered as he stood on the podium donning a Mao jacket and made (thinly) veiled threats against China's adversaries, boasting of the country's greatness, and as an extension the greatness of the CCP. However, the CCP of today is drastically different from the ideals of its founders. Xi seems to want to rectify this. His jacket might not only be a simple ode to the founder of the party, but also a looking glass into the future of how he will shape the policies of the country.

In the 1970s, then President of China Deng Xiaoping implemented a series of reforms that changed the nature of the country's economy. The manufacturing and real-estate sectors in particular saw monumental growth.

China was not only integrated back into the global economy after decades of isolation, but it became an imperative part of the system. It was catapulted into the position of foremost manufacturing destination for major MNCs (multinational companies), and became the single largest goods exporter. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that China's current status as an economic powerhouse and a growing "superpower" is attributed to these reforms.

However, these reforms required some compromise on the CCP's communist ideology. Leeway was given for private sector companies to grow. Hence, the Alibaba's, Tencent's and Evergrande's of today. We also saw the income gap widen. Income inequality in China is among the worst in the world. And economic and social mobility is at an all-time high. The CCP's talk of Maoism and collective prosperity seems to only exist in Maoist literature.

Xi Jinping, as the current Premier of China has taken some drastic measures to counteract some of the side effects of Xiaoping's policies. The starting years of his tenure saw a more mellow approach, but he has become more aggressive as time goes on. This year, we have seen some of the most drastic changes.



Private sector enterprise faced the first blow. Real estate agent Evergrande and Jack Ma's Alibaba are some of the most notable targets of the government's crackdown. Even private education and tutors have faced the brunt. Considered to promote inequality in education among the poor and rich, these institutions have been under close scrutiny.

Social media has been another major target. China's most popular platform, Weibo, has seen severe censorship. Another popular platform, Didi, has been banned altogether. Social movements originating from social media have also seen a major pushback. The most popular example being the MeToo Movement. The hashtag itself is banned from usage (although the users seem to have found a way around it by using the Chinese symbols Mi-Tu, which funnily enough means "rice bunny").

Famous celebrities have been no exception to this government exercise. Actors Zhang Zhehan, Zhao Wei and Zheng Shuang are a few prominent names amongst many who have faced the wrath of the Chinese government. From de-platforming to arbitrary fines to removal from campaigns, the Chinese government has used all the tricks in their arsenal.

The Chinese state's motive behind their actions can only be speculated upon. But one thing is certain, these new reforms are on course to increasing state control in China and in turn strengthening the choke hold of the CCP and its leader on the people. A clear sign of a more authoritarian and communist state in the making.

Xi seems to have a fantasy of taking China back to the prosperity of the 18th century Qing dynasty. This fantasy is clearly emulated in his foreign politics. China's expansionist tendencies are well known. Whether it be border disputes with India or tussles over islands with Japan, China clearly seems to have a policy of territorial expansionism.

In my opinion, this same fantasy of Xi's is now being seen in his domestic policy as well and these decisions are a consequence of it. He believes he is the man for this job and exercising an iron control over the state and thwarting everyone else's influence is the way to accomplish this far-fetched fantasy. Whatever be the cost.

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Artwork: Life Jackets Artist: Ai Weiwei

SAFE *By Kabir Burman* PASSAGE

A closer look at the evolution of the perception and treatment of refugees.

Around the globe, there are approximately 82.4 million people who have been forced to leave their homes to escape war, violence, and persecution. The majority of them have become internally displaced persons, which means they have fled their homes but are still within their own countries. Others have crossed a border and sought shelter outside of their own countries. From being the subject of the latest political debate to yet another scapegoat for politicians to cover up their own failures, refugees today have often become an extremely polarising topic to discuss. But what exactly does it mean to be a refugee in the 21st century and who's responsible for them?

The piece *Safe Passage* inspected this very question and sought to highlight the plight of the refugees. Although centred around the emerging European refugee crisis way back in 2015, this timeless piece continues to present an important argument even today. Created by revered Chinese artist and activist, Ai Weiwei; the piece originally consisted of a total of 14,000 life jackets that had each been utilized by various refugees and were attached to the columns of Berlin's Konzerthaus concert hall. The very location of the piece was also symbolic as it brought back public attention to the dire situation on Europe's southern border when the wider fast-paced media had slowly begun to disengage with the topic.



Konzerthaus Concert Hall, Berlin, Germany.



Although the piece has since been moved to several other locations, such as the Minneapolis Institute of Art in the United States due to the state having the highest number of refugees per capita, the life jackets themselves have remained the same. These jackets were not only used to demonstrate the number of lives risked in search of peace but also had an interesting history attached to them. These very same pieces were collected from Lesbos, a Greek island often used by Syrian refugees travelling to various parts of Europe as the middle point. This middle point is where most refugees are often forced to decide to either jump ship or proceed with their long and challenging trip. As such, Lesbos acts as both a beacon of hope and a sign of instability for all the involved refugees.

Today, roughly half the world's refugees are children, some of them unaccompanied by an adult, a situation that makes them especially vulnerable to child labour or sexual exploitation. Having already travelled several hundreds or thousands of kilometres, enduring a long and perilous journey with limited access to shelter, water, or food- these individuals are often met with shut gates and tall walls designed to keep them out. Whether it's Trump's border wall or Erdogan's security apparatuses, families are often broken apart at these points leaving a permanent unseen scar on these youngsters- a mark that will likely shape their future as well.

With the fast-paced nature of our news sources, it is often too easy to simply forget about refugees. These are problems that are "miles away" and "do not warrant our attention" for there are always "bigger problems" to face. Just this year, screens around the world projected horrifying images from Kabul airport as the United States completed its withdrawal from its longest war. We saw people clinging onto the sides of aeroplanes and falling to the ground as these jets left the tarmac. Yet, once again, within a few weeks, the world had stopped paying attention and had left the Afghanistan people to their fates. The very same fortune endured by those Syrian refugees half-a-decade ago that Ai Weiwei was trying to raise awareness for.

Nevertheless, many assume that a refugee attains refuge once they reach the foreign nation they intended to travel to. This is far from the ground reality that many such individuals face. Host countries have several duties towards the people they have recognized as refugees, like the guarantee of a minimum standard of treatment and non-discrimination. In reality, however, refugees are frequently the victims of inconsistent and discriminatory treatment. Furthermore, they are increasingly obliged to rebuild their lives in the face of xenophobia and racism that prevents them from effectively re-assimilating back into society.



It is true that each refugee's story is different, and many must undergo dangerous journeys with uncertain outcomes. Regardless of whether it is a Syrian child seeking a new home or if it is a Rakhine woman seeking to build a new home, at their core they are individuals just like us. As humans, we are conditioned to always seek the better alternative, if not for ourselves, then for our children. If you go back to your own family history, chances are you will discover that at a certain point, your ancestors were also forced to move away from their homes, fleeing unknown dangers.

It would be good of us to remember their stories when we hear of refugees currently displaced, clutching to life jackets in their search for a *safe passage*.



WOMEN IN WAR

SIA THILAKAR

War. It's a terrible, terrible thing. The destructive weapons, the devastating bloodshed, and the entire world turning upside down. War wreaks havoc on us and leaves not even the slightest bit of hope.

Of course, that's the normal way to look at it. But, if we dig a little deeper and truly understand the effects of war on all kinds of people, then perhaps we can find that war does lead to some improvements, and sometimes, changes the world for the better. In fact, did you know that World War I actually resulted in an increase in job opportunities for women at the time?

During World War I, men were sent to the battlefield to serve as soldiers and fight for their countries. This meant that a lot of the jobs that were previously occupied by men were suddenly vacant, and needed to be filled up.



This is where the women came in. As the men left their jobs, women began replacing them. The need for women workers was urgent, and the British government hired women through recruitment drives and campaigns. These women were already allowed to work, but compared to their male counterparts, they were under several restrictions and never truly had as much freedom.. Now, they were able to work in positions that were generally reserved for men. In Germany, women were barely employed before the war. However, by 1917, a nationwide total of 1.4 million German women were part of the war labor workforce.

Women started working as ticket collectors, railway guards, bus conductors, police officers, firefighters, medics, postal workers, and clerks. Some women started operating heavy machinery and drove horse carts on farms.

One field that was primarily occupied by women was in munitions factories, as weapons became crucial due to the war. They had to handle poisonous substances such as TNT (Trinitrotoluene), which turned their skin yellow, leading to the nickname "canaries". Women risked their lives in munitions factories, as they had to handle hazardous materials without proper protective gear, or adequate safety measures.



Women's employment rates increased during the war, but their victory was short-lived. They were paid less than men, and this created the assumption that employers would continue to employ women even after men returned from the war. Unfortunately for women, this did not happen. Instead, they were either fired from their jobs so that the returning soldiers could take up their occupations once again, or they continued working alongside men, but at a lower salary.

Evidently, these were unfair terms to the women, who refused to work for lower wages. They went on strike and demanded an increase in pay. The strikes spread across town, and they were the first equal pay strikes in the UK. The strikes were eventually won by women.



After women demanded equal pay, a committee was set up, and it produced the “Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry”, which discussed the question of changes in women’s wages. However, the report and the government had some sexist perspectives, and they believed that due to “lesser strength” and “health problems”, women were not capable of producing an equal output to that of men. Despite the evidence that women took up previously male-occupied jobs and performed very effectively during the war, the government’s perception did not change.

After reconsideration, the government declared that the women who had fully replaced skilled men would receive equal pay. This was a win for the women, but it would only last till the end of the war and would be reverted once the soldiers came back.

We can see that despite the bloodshed and violence, the war also had a few positive results on the world, and opened up job opportunities for women, who were now motivated to fight for their beliefs and equal rights. While the war came with heavy challenges for women, such as low wages, and poor working conditions, it also was an improvement from the pre-war era, where women were prohibited from working. The war also helped women learn more about and fight for their rights, which gave them stronger mindsets. However, there is one question that is yet to be answered: Do we really need something as drastic as a war to give women more job opportunities and equal rights?



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THE BIKINI ATTOL NUCLEAR TESTS

WRITTEN BY
DIYA KAKKAR

Bikini Atoll

Bikini Atoll is an island in the Pacific Ocean that includes 23 small coral islands within its reefs. It is a part of the Marshall Islands (between Hawaii and the Philippines). The United States of America acquired Bikini Atoll from Japan.

Between 1946-1948 the United States of America conducted 23 nuclear tests at Micronesian atoll, Bikini, resulting in the radioactive contamination of the entire island systems; Hence the area is known as the Pacific Proving Grounds. The government relocated all of the inhabitants to the USA, and in 1968, after the tests, they were returned to the island. A lawsuit was filed by the Micronesians against the USA which resulted in the country having to pay \$100 million, as the radioactivity levels were dangerously high. Today, the islands are a sovereign nation, free of the United States.

Operation Crossroads

On July 1, 1946, the first nuclear bomb was dropped. This was the first time since the 1945 attacks on Japan that a nuclear weapon had been deployed. The ultimate goal was to see what would happen to warships when a nuclear weapon is fired.

According to Alex Wellerstein- he studies the history of nuclear weapons, he is also the creator of NUKEMAP, more than 42000 people were involved but they were not the test subjects. The test subjects were ghost ships filled with animals: to study the effects of the nuclear blast and radioactive fallout on animals. The bomb missed its target, starting the “tradition” of nuclear tests on Bikini Atoll.





Since the islands were very close to Australia, they believed the tests “might split the earth in two, or cause earthquakes” due to the nuclear radiation ; The earth did not split into two after the tests. The Australian site served to keep the USA’s enemies in check and attain one of the Pacific testing program’s objectives: deterring future war.

Biological Effects

The exposed Marshallese developed symptoms of radiation poisoning: birth defects, leukaemia, thyroid, and other cancers. 4 of the 21 small islands that surround Bikini Atoll, were soaked in the bombs' snowlike fallout. Hence these islands have become subjects of a medical research program or atomic refugees.

The Marshallese returned to the atoll for a decade before the American government removed them again when they realised their previous claim that the island was safe (1968) was false.

The USA moved its operations to Eniwetok Atoll, to ensure additional safety as Eniwetok was more isolated and the winds were less likely to carry radioactive particles to different areas.

After-math

A UN resolution stated that the USA was to stop testing. The events of 1954 dispelled the notion that atomic waste was safe and could be contained. The problem of radioactive fish travelling into Australian waters highlighted new dangers. The USA finally stopped testing in the Marshalls in 1958.





In the 1970s, American atomic waste was collected under the Runit Island Dome, (part of Enewetak Atoll about 3,200 miles from Sydney). It is a dangerous structure, due to sea water inundation and storm damage.

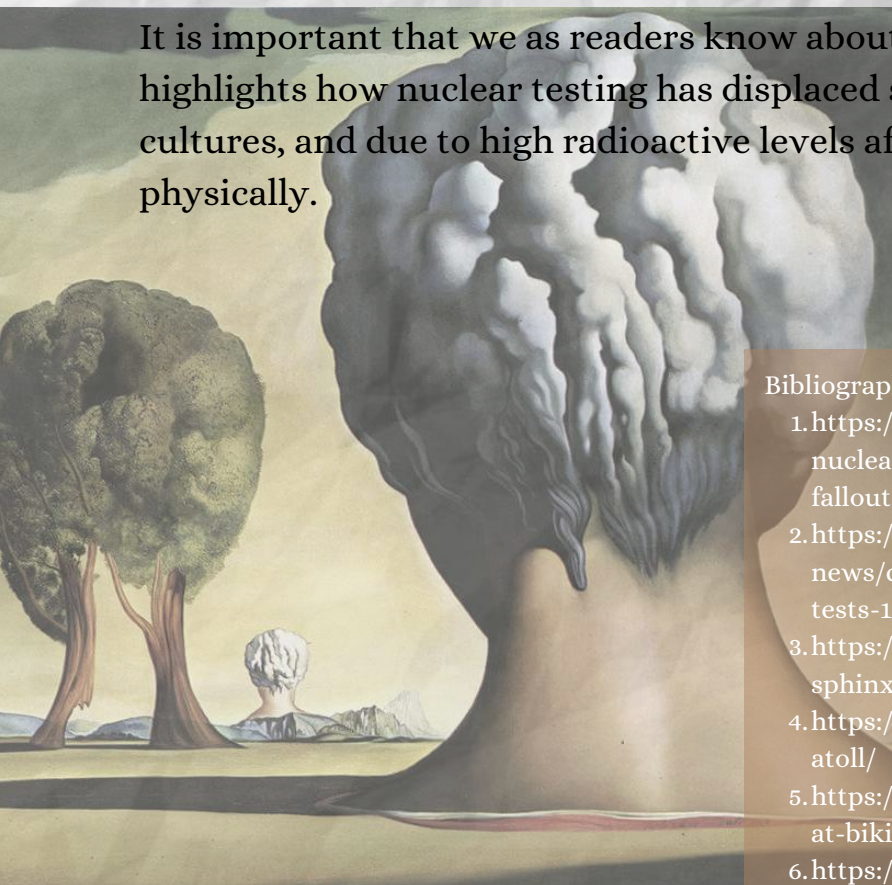
The Biden administration's ongoing renegotiation of the "Compact of Free Association" with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, along with its action to combat climate change prioritises Runit Island.

The administration presents an opportunity to "rewrite" history, and reduce the discrimination against the Pacific Islander communities.

Significance

The events at Bikini Atoll catalysed the need to develop laws on nuclear testing and production. Along with that scientists have developed strategies for land reclamation post nuclear bombs.

It is important that we as readers know about the events at Bikini Atoll, as it highlights how nuclear testing has displaced several people, destroyed cultures, and due to high radioactive levels affecting the body mentally and physically.



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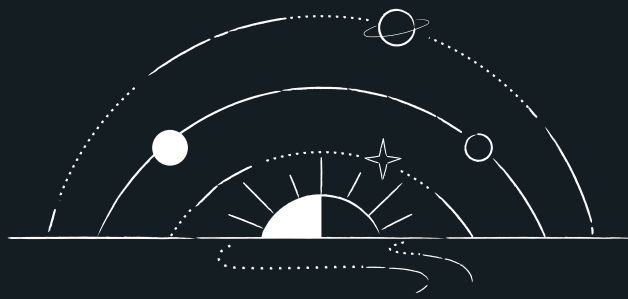


Artwork: Moonwalk Artist: Andy Warhol

WHY HUMANS HAVENT BEEN TO THE MOON SINCE 1972

DEVASHREE GUPTA

Eleven Star Wars movies made, ten American presidents elected, and one raging pandemic that left the world in catastrophe - a lot has happened and yet, humans have not been back to our friendly neighborhood satellite. After six missions, you would think the Moon would already be an offshore civilization. Alas, the last manned mission to the Moon was Apollo 17 in 1972. The reasons for not returning to this celestial object do not stem from technological setbacks. In fact, we have made tremendous progress in space exploration in the twenty-first century. Years of research went behind the space race, but the financial consequences were astronomically misjudged.



What Was The Space Race

The Space Race was a technological contention between the USSR and the USA that led to some of the most exciting engineering accomplishments in history. In 1955, the race began with both countries announcing the launch of artificial satellites to orbit the Moon. USSR bagged the first win in 1957, by launching the world's first orbiting satellite: Sputnik 1. However, the USA was the first to reach the moon in 1968, with the Apollo 8 mission - a moment in history viewed by millions of people on Earth. Since Nasa had completed the goal of reaching the moon before Russia, the company faced major budget cuts from the government. Twenty Apollo missions were lined up for collecting data and conducting research. However, the last three missions were canceled. It was clear research-based assignments were not as important in the minds of politicians and the political statement this moon landing created was more than enough.

Money Matters

NASA, a monopoly when it comes to space exploration, has been lacking the funds to support manned missions to the moon for the past few decades. Their funds from the government peaked in 1965, at 4% of the total federal funds. However, with the change of times, the proportion of money the organisation received fell well below 1%, even reaching 0.4% in the last decade and a half. All the Apollo lunar missions cost 28 billion USD in total. Today that amount would be 280 billion USD.

The one giant leap for humanity cost a giant sum of money!



Political Problems

Being as expensive as they are, missions to the moon could only be achieved again by an economic superpower like the USA. In the last decade though, elected presidents have constantly made changes to the missions set out by the presidents before, resulting in a lot of wastage of time and resources. A mission to the moon, even an important one to space, requires a lot more than 8 years, so continuity amongst presidents and their ideals would be crucial.

In 2004, while Bush was in office, the constellation program was to land humans on the moon. 9 billion USD and 5 years of engineering were derailed due to how vague the estimates of the total cost for this mission were. Obama scrapped this mission and hoped to send humans to a nearby asteroid instead. This progress was yet again hindered with the presidency of Donald Trump, who changed the mission to humans landing on the Moon to them going to Mars instead. It seemed like an overly ambitious goal, one that would take years to achieve all so that the former president could one-up his predecessors.

This is where NASA's Artemis plans come in. NASA has a five-year plan to launch humans to the moon in 2023. Three trips have already been scheduled with the initial one, finally calling for the first woman to land on the moon. An Artemis base camp is also to be built, to establish that this time, humans are here to stay.

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Artwork: The Last Supper Artist: Leonardo Da Vinci

Renaissance: A Partial Rebirth

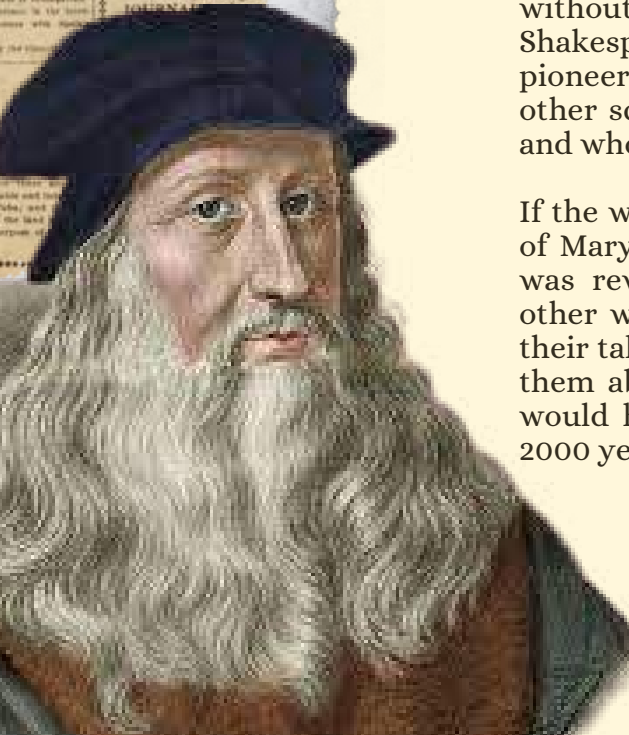
SARAH PAVTHIWALA

As we exist in an unprecedented era of metamorphosis for classical feminism and gender rights, breaking past many stereotypes and challenges while identifying the next set of milestones, I believe that now might be a perfect time to look back and closely examine our history.



I will be elucidating on a classical myth that profoundly impacts what the West has historically argued to be the role of a woman in a theologically martinet society. To do so, I will be using The Last Supper, by Leonardo Da Vinci, a revered figure who sat at the acme of individuals from the Renaissance. This piece of art is significant to the West's theological understanding of Christianity. It forms the scriptural foundation for the Holy Communion where Jesus shared a final meal with his apostles in Jerusalem before his crucifixion. However, this work of art chronically symbolises a deeper connection between the West and Christianity's repression of feminist ideals.





The inconspicuous yet idiosyncratic detail in *The Last Supper* is one marred by the systematic patriarchy championed by the church during that era. How? It all revolves around Mary Magdalene. According to the church, she was just a faithful follower of Jesus, but some historians claim she was his wife and the mother of his children! The story remains the same in the case of many other Renaissance women whose work and position in society were either erased into oblivion or lack acknowledgment.

While this article doesn't aim to focus on the controversial theological deliberations regarding Jesus' relationship with Mary Magdalene, it seeks to analyze the inchoate status of women in Renaissance Europe. The Renaissance symbolized the rebirth of Europe's cultural, economic, political, and artistic character. However, as the Europe of the Middle Ages ceased to exist, one thing remained stagnant: women's rights and status in society. So isn't it the Renaissance - a partial rebirth of society?

In a period where the cultural enlightenment broke men free from the shackles of the church, women continued to be the property of men. Mary Magdalene, an original companion of Jesus, was subdued by the same church in the name of Jesus. While the works of artists like Raphael, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Shakespeare, Galileo, and Copernicus revolutionised almost every aspect of man's life, the contributions of Nelli, Properzia, Anguissola, and Fontana were unheard of and suppressed. This begs for questions: Was one of the most celebrated periods of modern history confined to just one gender? Was there ever a Renaissance for Women?

So what? It happened 500 years ago? How does it matter? How is this about feminism?

Those are the questions you might be asking, so let me help you - imagine physics without Newton, imagine art but without Da Vinci, imagine literature but without Shakespeare. Who were these people? Were they just pioneers, or are they also the inspiration for thousands of other scientists, artists, and thinkers who came after them and who will come later?

If the works of great women were popularised, if the status of Mary Magdalene was recognised and the role of women was revolutionised, it would have inspired thousands of other women. It would have encouraged them to embrace their talents and chase their dreams. It would have educated them about their rights and equal status in society and it would have probably empowered them much earlier than 2000 years after the Last Supper!



ART IS STRONGER THAN WAR

BY MANYA DUBEY

Artwork: Death to Darkness Artist: Shamsia Hassani

“Nightmare, Afghanistan 2021” wrote Shamsia Hassani, 33, on facebook back in August.”

Shamsia Hassani is Afghanistan’s first female graffiti artist, confronting and challenging the intricate despotism of the patriarchal society around her, through her numerous works. Her art features a woman protagonist, often accompanied by a musical instrument- “to represent self-expression and ownership of her voice,” the 33 year old has said. Over the years, she has inspired countless women to take control of their destinies, allowing them to be able to overcome biased, overwhelming situations and be able to better contribute toward their own individual potential.

When US Troops retracted from Afghanistan, ending a 2 decade long presence of the US coalition in the region, the Taliban began seizing vast swathes of territory. Toppling a government in Kabul in the wake of a foreign power withdrawing, by August 15th, the Taliban were once again the ruling power in Afghanistan. Through observation of the similar pattern they follow today in choosing their targets- journalists, artists, peace activists, judges, women in positions of power- they have proven their extremist ideology remains yet unaltered. As history repeats itself, many fear that the progress made in the country over the last 20 years is now lost. The greater extents of freedom that girls and women had come to know are now lost. The possibilities for aspiring women especially, that the sunrise brought with it, are now lost. The independence to imagine, create, and collaborate is now lost.

“I don’t think anyone will be able to oppress these women, this generation is different,” said Fawzia Koofi, Afghan Politician, in an interview with CNN’s Chief International Correspondent, Clarissa Ward. As the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, Shamsia Hassani shares powerful artwork on her social media. Standing upto inevitable risks, this may bring to her and her family, Shamsia has inspired many across the country to stand with her in their own ways. “There are small acts of resistance. A 16 year old girl studying in her room. A woman driving a taxi. A woman going to her office everyday,” Ward, the Correspondent revised.



“Art cannot change anything directly,” Shamsia says. “Art can only change people’s minds, and then people’s minds can change society. That is what I hope for.” She draws on her resilience and beliefs to uphold her freedom of expression while many other artists wholly delete any relevant traces of discussion via messaging, and all their social media accounts, fearful of violent, bloody stigmatizations from the Taliban. “Publishing the images is a bold move. Female artists face a doubly dangerous position as women and as creatives doing work that the Taliban has considered in the past to violate its strict interpretation of Islamic law,” stated an article by The Wire.

This is not the first time Hassani has used her art to respond directly to the Taliban; a year ago she created images searing of pain and loss, to convey her grief, post an attack on the Kabul University where she was a professor. “She paints to express a broad spectrum of emotions: longing and defiance, hope and heartbreak, freedom and fear”, art critics have said. Today, as she continues her work, she continues painting and sharing and propitiously influencing the hearts, minds, inner strength, and resistance systems of those oppressed, across the nation under siege.

The significance of art in Afghanistan has translated into hope and development and individualism for not only artists, but also for passersby and admirers. “We chose to portray Afghan heroes, we wanted to inspire the next generation, and the Taliban erased it,” says an escapee Afghan artist. As many Afghani artists in exile now choose to be identified only as Muhajir (‘refugee’ in Dari), the evolving environment for art they had come to know and helped build up over the last 2 decades, is now washed off, tatters of chipped paint fly through the wind where another artist wouldn’t dare restore much less create anew, faded graffiti is now the head rest for guns and whips and boxes of bombs. An ironic juxtaposition perhaps.



Representation matters. And despite ever depleting convictions, art has informally become a symbol for resistance and solidarity and the hope of a return to the developing community many had come to believe in, over the last 20 years. In an interview with The Guardian, Shamsia noted, “I used to believe that art is stronger than war, but now I realise that war is stronger, and everything we built over 20 years could be destroyed within minutes by its darkness. But I am still painting.”

Artwork: Longing to see myself before I see me Artist: *Ron Hicks*

Rhea Chaudhary

Beauty

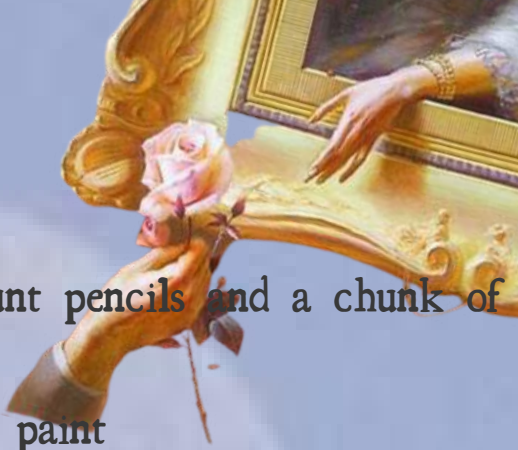
I have unceasing words to describe it
But none I can depict with shades of warm dandelion or a light amber
And even if I did
It would be black and white

Love

Your sweet words leave me lovestruck
Honey and lavender like a dream would convey
The grace in her expression and kindness
And all the different colours she makes me feel

War

The gloom of heartbreak would eclipse my soul
“First the colours
Then the humans”
Death radiates the colour of chocolate but deeper, darker, less amiable
War wounded me with horrors
How do I inflict the same dread upon you
By packing these emotions perfectly into words

A painting of a hand holding a pink rose, positioned next to a golden, ornate frame. The background of the entire page is a soft, out-of-focus image of a large, glowing moon against a blue sky.

I keep a box with me
I call it my treasure trove
And on the cover it says
Survive with me
Seven paints, a worn out brush, a few blunt pencils and a chunk of
dried clay
A million colours soak my palette in sour paint
I use it to seek solace in a world of my own
Come with me and I'll take you there
A splash of color and a few flicks of the wand
Or a sketch with the same graphite I used to draw you yesterday
Devour it and find comfort in my strange land

My sculptures met your eyes today
No, you may not approve
It needn't be your flavour
But still here you stand
Dazed stupendously
By my sixth composition in the art gallery
Drowning in a bottomless pit of wonder

Artwork: Untitled Artist: Moliere Demache

PUNISHMENT IN PRISONS


Do Penitentiaries Hinder Reform?

Dhanya Kolisetti

prison

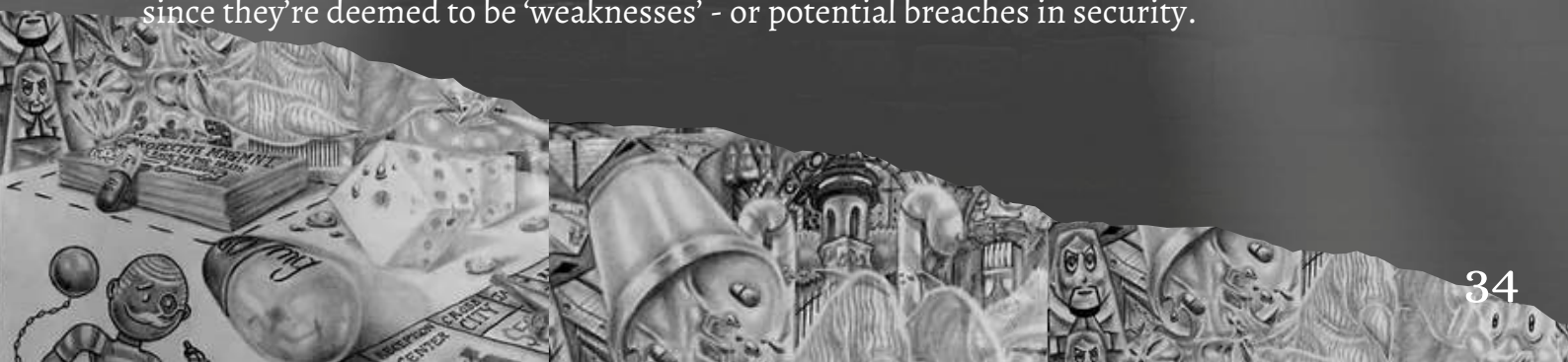
/'prɪz(ə)n/


derived from the Old French word "prisoun" meaning
"captivity and imprisonment"



Today and throughout history, prisons have been treated as somewhat of a taboo. Originally designed to influence rehabilitation and allow for character development in 1680 AD, prisons have now morphed into devastatingly gruesome tools that reinstate discipline with methods that some argue are 'inhumane'. For a long time, perceptions of them have been silenced under the guise of administering justice effectively. However, now, we're able to see the truth behind the bars - through democracy, we've finally been granted the freedom to craft a justified opinion on the conditions and impacts created by this barbaric form of "justice."

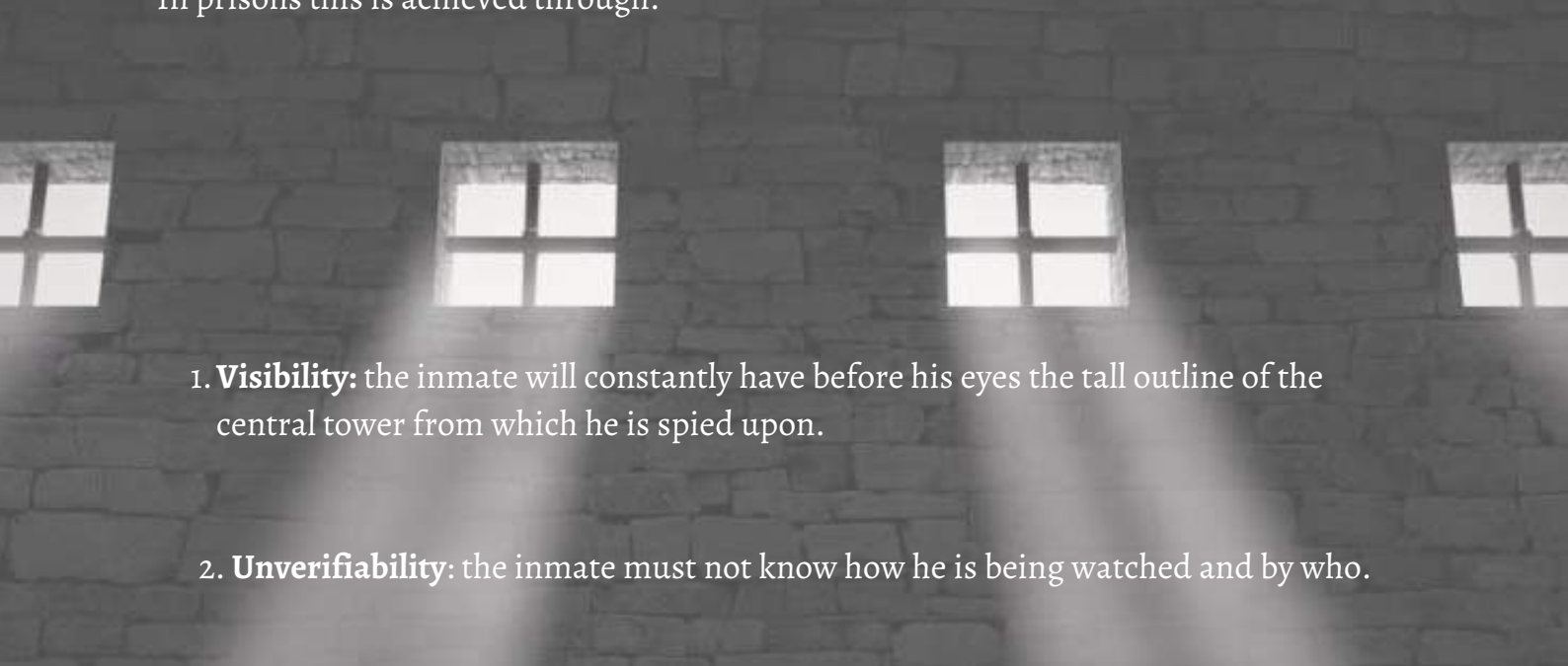
Prison designs show us how factors like architecture can be used to inflict oppression. With commissioners only focused on cost and security, the concept of basic humanity is forgotten in the process. Even beyond the harshness of the ringed razor wire and high cement walls that meets the eye, the barbaric interiors play a significant role in imposing suffering. Every detail is integrated to withstand tremendous abuse. As a constant reminder of pain and restriction, the infrastructure is framed by concrete, linoleum and steel- reflections of the strained sounds reverberating through the passages. Natural light is the driving factor of our concentration and sleep patterns, but prisoners are deprived of even this basic comfort! Caged in a grey building, inmates experience extremities of fluorescent light, switched on 24/7-which rupture their circadian rhythms, forcing them into a spiral of lethargy. Basic human needs such as windows and space aren't present since they're deemed to be 'weaknesses' - or potential breaches in security.





In addition, the typical interior color palette is just a few shades of monotonous, 'soul-crushing beige'- described as a significant sensory deprivation. Many prisons revolve around the core concept of Panopticon architecture, a concept executed via a central observation tower placed within a circle of prison cells. Panopticon architecture draws from the principle established by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, which states, "power should be visible and unverifiable".

In prisons this is achieved through:

- 
1. **Visibility:** the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon.
 2. **Unverifiability:** the inmate must not know how he is being watched and by who.

This separation from reality that they're compelled to tolerate is actually worse for their rehabilitation. In fact, research shows that isolation breeds violence and anger - so all merciless imprisonment does is impose indifference without a significant change in the prisoner's behavior.

Homo sapiens are social beings who depend on physical interaction to feel safe and comfortable. Isolation behind rusted metal bars strips them away from their family and the elements which define them as human. Due to this form of captivity, inmates experience high levels of anxiety associated with a lack of socialization, consequently falling into a state of social withdrawal. Parallely, each individual is tormented by their malignant thoughts which are suffocated with no outlet, illnesses such as dissociation and emotional withdrawal occurring as a result.

Over the past century, prison designs have undergone a shift to a more humane approach. Showcasing the potential of design to provide appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation. This has been implemented in the economically developed regions of our society such as Australia and the United Kingdom. Following discussions held at international prison conferences, architects have come to conclusions on how design can radically reduce recidivism rates, which express the tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend. Coming from a holistic viewpoint, these designs no longer focus solely on security and feasibility but on how to provide a normalized environment for the incarcerated through both infrastructural and non-infrastructural elements. Coming from a holistic viewpoint, these designs no longer focus solely on security and feasibility but on how to provide a normalized environment for the incarcerated through both infrastructural and non-infrastructural elements.

In 2020 the Dillwynia women's correctional center was built in Berkshire Square, Sydney. This center was designed to hold the increasing number of female offenders in the city. It was built on the core values of :

- 1) **Recognition of trauma as a primary design strategy**
- 2) **Urban planning that seeks to replicate aspects of familiar spatial organization, experienced in life outside the facility**
- 3) **A spatial organization & master planning strategy that maps a journey back to society**
- Inclusion of nature**
- 4) **Rehabilitation through best practice education design principles**
- 5) **Providing staff with a safe & secure facility that implements current workplace design practices**

Following the Australian correctional standard, they adhered to a 1 person per 8 sq meter room. They crafted a space that aids the process of rehab and transition rather than forcing isolation through a community environment that enforces socialization and responsibility.

Design has offered an innovative way of changing the way society looks at prisons. "The success of designs is measured by the degree to which they expand access to the fundamental human right to social justice, economic empowerment, and a healthy sustainable environment"

- Sharon Davis



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"WHAT DOES A LIFE FREE OF SOCIETY'S EXPECTATIONS LOOK LIKE TO YOU"

BY: PRAGYA BHATT

"If I could do anything for you, anywhere in Palestine, what would it be?" It's the question Palestinian artist and filmmaker, Emily Jacir centred her art installation around. Between 2001 and 2003 she posed this question to exiled Palestinians and then, with free movement granted by her American passport, fulfilled their wishes. From playing football in the streets of Haifa to eating Sayadieh in Gaza, she documented the wishes and the status of the people who expressed them and then what she did to fulfil each wish. Her one question meant so many different things to so many different people. And to us, her one question captured the pain and injustice imposed on the exiled Palestinians.

Jacir's subjects were prevented from returning to their country of origin, shackled by laws, restricting their movement. And when we turned to the people around us, looking for potential shackles they were living with, we thought of societal expectations. So inspired by 'Where we come from' we asked students at Inventure from grades 1-12, 'If you could do anything in the world, without the impact of societal expectations, what would you do?'

Grade 1

Watch TV! I get to watch one hour a day, but I would watch more without my parents telling me not to.



Grade 2

I would like to learn skating. I started some time ago, but I stopped now, and would like to restart.

Grade 3

I would create a meeting to talk to my friends instead of having classes since we don't get to talk so much in online school. I'd make it so we can play games and have fun.





Grade 4

I would have a huge party with all my best friends, and we would eat all our favourite food, dance and have a good time. Or, I'd buy an Xbox.

Grade 5

I would dance on a stage and have fun, just for myself, without taking anybody's opinions into consideration.



Grade 6

I would have fun with my friends, and somehow eradicate COVID, so I could meet them again.

Grade 7

I would wear something that I've been afraid of. There's always someone judging what anyone wears. I would just wear whatever I want to.



Grade 8

I would like to explore different telescopes and observe different stars, without the pressure from society to earn a lot of money and have a different job.



Grade 9

I would protest changes in the education system, to create a more alternative form of studying, without the standard lectures, essays, or exams.



Grade 10

I'd speak my mind out every single time, and not hide the truth or lie about what I feel and think, regardless of whom I'm addressing. I would speak out more on huge movements, including gender equality, racial equality, LGBTQ rights and climate change.

Grade 11

I would become a space entrepreneur. I can only go into space once I'm very successful in another niche. You need to have an established business in order to branch out into space.



Grade 12

I would just be more honest with myself. Since I'm going into a creative field, I would stop trying to take a 'safe' route, without the fear of being judged for my passions.



Teacher

I would just travel the world!

Ideally, the next phase would have been to execute these actions for them. And yet, unlike Emily Jacir who was free of the movement restrictions her subjects faced, we weren't - we aren't free of the shackles of society ourselves. So we leave our piece at proclamations - proclamations that could perhaps empower the subjects to chase their aspirations, or maybe even our readers. After all, we're fortunate enough to be bound by shackles that we can escape- if we have the courage.



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