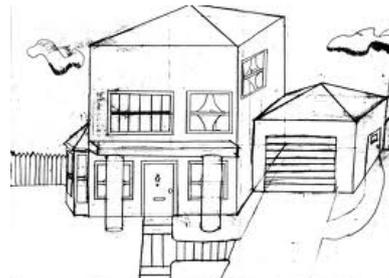


## Art and Life

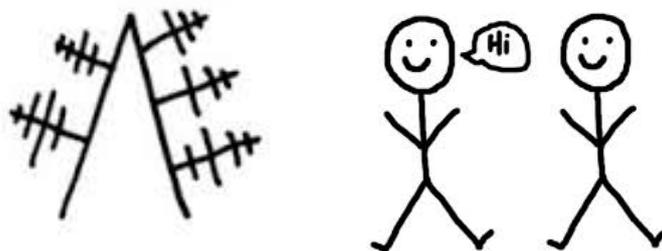
Found it quite amusing when I was asked to write about my views on art and life, rather the effect of art in our lives. Or, was it how life affects art? Now it seems, not only was I amused, I was also, thoroughly confused. Nevertheless, I thought, let me give it a try. Maybe I could write on what art has meant to me in my life. This much I could handle, as long as I did not have write about the Art of Living.

My amusement and confusion stemmed, mainly, from the fact that I have never been an artist. From my childhood, I have been exposed to high standards of artistic creations. Most of my family members are masters in, at least, one type of Art or the other, be it writing, drawing, painting, sculpting, singing, dancing, acting – you name it. I have been a master of none. I have tried my hand at quite a few of the above, though. I like to call myself a Jenny of all trades, so as far as the mastering of arts goes, I have been a complete zero.

When I was a child, I could not even draw a straight line or a circle properly. But as I grew older, I realized that there's no straight line in Nature. Contrarily, man-made structures are based more on straight lines. So, I took consolation in the fact that one did not have to be 'naturally' good in art.

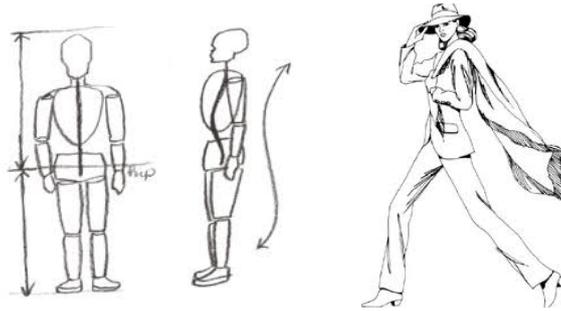


When we are young, we tend to draw with straight lines or use geometric lines, like this:



As we grow older, we observe more and add the curves and shades, like this:





In my case, even in my youth and old age, I could never mature to the artistic levels of drawing the figure of the girl in a hat, shown above. I am still most comfortable with my stick figures. However, there's a difference. I discovered that I could imagine and instruct others to draw what I wanted by using stick figures. I could tell the smirking artists exactly what was required, through my juvenile illustrations, to get a job done. For this, I will remain indebted to our school Art teacher who made us imagine and illustrate different scenarios, through stick figures, collages and stencils. (Actually, I am quite good with scissors and blades ... must have been a pickpocket in my last birth.)



I may not have graduated much from the stick figure stage but the realization gave me confidence that I did not need to be an artist to understand art. Appreciate art, in my own way. And for that, I need not follow the rules and guidelines laid down by the critics.

I started observing the different ways in which emotions were expressed – in writings, songs, instrumental music, dances, paintings, sculptures, photographs and cinematograph. The media was diverse, ideas were orthodox or radical, styles were distinctive and the artists were different. I opened myself to art forms of all genres, ages, from all countries and states. I did not restrict myself to any one style or form.

I saw Art in myriad forms – sometimes comic, sometimes emotional, at times tragic and depressing, occasionally phoenix-like. Art, where the simple straight lines and primary colours

of the innocent childhood mature into the complex curves and varied shades of adulthood. Is this not what life is all about? I understood that regardless of the mode of expression, the message conveyed was that of Life. Art celebrated Life and its creations.

I decided to capture this variety and eternity with my camera lenses. This photograph is my interpretation of Life.

**The corridor of timelessness** - where the old world (the cupboard) and the new world (the girl), share the same artistic yet complex play of light and shade of life; but stand at different ends with different thoughts and styles.



There is timelessness in Art, just as it is in Life. Art does not go out of fashion because fashion is temporary. Style is permanent. Art is called an imitation of Life but to the artist, Art is Life.

***Sravasti Ghosh Dastidar***