Creating Heroines - Comics Anthology: Pokhara Edition is published by the British Council as part of Creating Heroines.

This anthology has been created through the Creating Heroines: Graphic Novel Your Life workshop held in Pokhara between 20-24 December, 2018. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Nicola Streeten.

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Cover design and layout by Mrigaja Bajracharya
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In December 2018, the British Council organised a three-day comics making workshop in the lake city of Pokhara. The workshop was facilitated by award winning graphic novelist Dr Nicola Streeten. Post the workshop, eight participants worked on original stories to come up with comics shorts of their own. This book is a compilation of these stories.

**About Creating Heroines**
Creating Heroines is a collaborative international project initiated by the British Council. Bringing together female artists, graphic novelists, writers, illustrators and animators, the project explores the themes of overlooked heroines from the past and imagines heroines for the future. It explores the stories behind the sidelined heroines of history and mythology, and uses them to inspire new creations including zines and cartoons. Creating Heroines aims to spark debate, challenge stereotypes & share women’s stories.
One of the elements I love most about the comics form is its accessibility. I firmly believe it is unique in its potential to deliver a message quickly without the need for extensive drawing skills. There is also a growing variety of styles and applications of the form emerging, certainly in the UK, which is my area of knowledge and this seems to be increasingly the case globally. The Creating Heroines workshop was a way to nurture the group’s story-telling and drawing styles in the creation of short comics.

But why, you may ask, do I think the comic form is more accessible than other art forms? A 2005 psychological study by cognitive neuroscientist Mark H. Joyce showed that two dots and simple lines inside a circle are recognised as a human face by young babies. The implication of this research is that the more complex or stylized drawings of figures are less widely recognisable. In other words, the more culturally specific details that are included, such as clothes, hairstyles and body-shapes, the less we may see ourselves. Consequently, we become less interested in looking and engaging in the narrative. This theory is one I support in my preference for the power of comics drawn in the ligne claire ("clear line") style, pioneered in the West by Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi who, using the pen name Herge, created the popular European Tintin comics in the 20th century.

The aim of the Creating Heroines workshop was to introduce participants to some of the tools of comics drawing and I based the classes on ideas from some of the leading comics artists and educators in the USA, including Lynda Barry, Ivan Brunetti, Jessica Abel and Matt Madden. At the same time, the purpose was to have an enjoyable few days, and to give everyone confidence to pursue their comics stories. The following pages are testament to this. It is with pride and joy that I look through the variety of styles and tales that emerged. I congratulate and thank the contributors for this wonderful collection as well as the British Council Creative Heroines team for making this congenial and productive experience possible.

Dr Nicola Streeten is a speaker, teacher, writer and drawer of comics. The turning point in her life was in 1995 with the death of her child. She turned to drawing and the cartoon style she developed led to a career in illustration. Her graphic memoir Billy, Me & You (Myriad Editions, 2011) is about her process of bereavement. Nicola directs the international women-led forum Laydeez do Comics, that launched the first annual women’s prize for graphic novels in progress in 2018. Nicola’s immersion in comics reinforced her world view that gender equality and social acceptance of difference would improve the world. Her doctoral research on feminist cartoons and comics in Britain informed her co-editing of The Inking Woman (Myriad Editions, 2018) an illustrated history of women’s cartooning in Britain. Her book UK Feminist Cartoons and Comics: A Critical Survey will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2020.

The Creating Heroines Graphic Novel Your Life, Pokara, Nepal,

Dr Nicola Streeten

December 2018

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Dr Streeten has been heading the Creating Heroines regional workshops in South Asia since 2018.
REGRET!

Mrigaja Bajracharya
REGRETS!

HOW DARE HE DO SUCH A THING!!

I CAN’T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING!!

BY-MRIPAJAB
HE WON'T EVEN PICK UP MY CALLS!!!

DOES HE NOT LOVE ME NOW!!!

IT'S PROBABLY JUST ME!

I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SOO NEEDY

I WAS TOO INSECURE !!!
I was pushing him away!!!
If only I did what he wanted me to.
I am the reason.

He was right.
I couldn’t even make him happy.

I was stuck up.
I am ugly.
I am dumb.
I was too sensitive.

I am worthless.

I should just drown myself!!!
And die!!!
NO!!

WHAT WAS I THINKING!

I CAN'T BE THIS STUPID!!

WHAT HE DID CAN'T BE FORGIVEN!!

IT'S HIS MISTAKE!! I CAN'T BLAME MYSELF FOR THIS!!

I CAN'T BE THIS WEAK!!

I SHOULD JUST LEAVE HIM!!

HUUH!!

RING

RING

RING
HELLO!!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I AM SORRY LOVE!!

I WAS DUNK AND ANGRY AFTER OUR FIGHT!!!

YOU WERE BEING SOO INSECURE THE LAST FEW DAYS AND SHE WAS...

SHE WAS JUST A FRIEND AND YOU WERE PUSHING ME AWAY AND SHE WAS THERE FOR ME...

AND I WAS DRUNK AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT CAME ON ME... I'M SORRY... I REALLY AM... FORGIVE ME...

BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PUSHED ME AWAY YOU SHOULD BE LESS STUCK UP...

SHE WAS JUST THERE AND SHE HAD MADE DRINKS FOR ME... I'M REALLY SORRY...

SHE WAS TEMPTING ME AND I WAS SOOO ANGRY...

OK
I AM SORRY LOVE !!!

SHE WAS THERE AND I WAS DRUNK AND YOU WERENT'T THERE FOR ME !!!
I am really sorry forgive me... it won't happen again I promise!!!

OK... you promise...

Yes I do I love you!!!

Love you too...

Am I being stupid!

>Sigh<

maybe!!!

No! I won't be a fool!!!
Mrigaja Bajracharya is a multidisciplinary designer and illustrator from Patan. Her arsenal of Pen and ink, watercolour and digital tools have led her to produce works for Unicef, UN Women, Micro Galleries, and Room to Read, among others. She has exhibited in exhibitions held in Nepal Fine Art Academy, Taragaon Museum and Patan Museum.

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BEING HONEY

BINTI GURUNG
Hey bro! Look the ugly girl.

Yeah dude! She is ugly.

Am I ugly?

Look a Bhakundo playing Bhakundo? She is fat. How can she play at match?

Do I look like Bhakundo? Am I fat?

You're with me. Come soon.

Sweets? Has she looked at herself. She is so fat.

Thank you for the sweets aunty.

If I eat too much I'll be fat.

How do I do?

Honey. Eat your food or else it will get cold.
Bye mom. I'm still don't feel like eating.

I'm hungry.

It's clean.

Mom was sick.

I'll go home. I want to eat something.

Are you hungry?

But I don't want to eat something.

Thank you, but I'm not hungry.

Arch!!

Henry open the door. Let's talk.

Love. Please open the door.

Everyone calls me ugly.

Everyone calls me the ugly duckling.

We can talk about everything that is happening.

Honey. You are beautiful and loved. Please open the door.

I must be strong.

I must not feel bad.

We love you, honey.
LETTER TO MYSELF
I have been unknowingly punishing my body because of what other people called me. I starved, self-loathed, and didn't feel good. Other people's opinion on how I look is not who I am. I am not ugly, weak, useless. I am beautiful, strong, and I will love myself.

I was sad and confused. Now I choose to be happy. I prioritize my happiness. I will take care of my body, eat well, and not let negative opinions take away my self-esteem. I'm beautiful in my own way. I trust myself and will trust this process of loving myself.

Honey

POW
WEAK
USELESS

MOMO HOUSE
She looks better than yours.

FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS AND THINK THAT WILL MAKE/BUILD YOU

XYZ = ?

YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL

EAT WELL, HONEY

Thank you for the lovely dinner, momma.

9:00PM
Hey the sister name Handy is cool. She did.

Wow. She is super girl.

Wow. She is beautiful.

I would want people not being bullied.

After every storm there is a rainbow.

She is a girl. She cannot do anything. You can't unscramble & untrain.

You are ugly, fat, useless.
Binti a.k.a. Furki is pursuing her MBA degree and working as a freelancer in Pokhara. She loves arts & craft, traveling and all things creative. She maintains a blog about her travels, bullet journalling, and her opinions and ideas. Art is her way of bringing ideas and imaginations to life.

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THE SURGERY
RASHMI LAMICHHANE

WHEN I WAS 12, MUM UNDERWENT A SURGERY. IT WAS THE MOST FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE.

OUR ROWS KEPT RECURRING TO ME.

YOUR MUM HAS ALWAYS BEEN SICK.

don’t worry

PIR NAGARA

YESTAI HO

ILLNESSES

SHE IS STRONG

tarkari

LAIDECHU

THIS IS HER 5TH OPERATION.

NA-ATTIYA HAI

IT IS WHAT IT IS.

CHABI LAGAYERA JAU.

I WAS MORTIFIED.

HOLDING MY BREATH

BB INCENSE
I don't like it when people say Mum has always been sick.

To me she has always been a mountain of strength.
To me, she could never fail or be wrong. Her booming voice had everything in control.

All I wanted was to be like her.
But on the day of her surgery, I failed her. Terribly.

Mamu

WILL YOU GET ME THAT BOTTLE?

Which one Mamu?

I saw a frown. She looked away.
AND THEN I BLACKED OUT.
WE JOKE ABOUT IT SOMETIMES. ABOUT HOW BAD A DOCTOR I'D MAKE.

DID YOU EVER WANT TO BECOME A DOCTOR, KANCHU?

NO, MAMU.

THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE.
Rashmi is a 25-year-old art enthusiast from Pokhara. She is inspired by artists who stir people’s imaginations and address social issues through powerful art forms. Rashmi hopes to create works that are fun, educational and socially aware.
Rashmi currently lives and works in Hamburg but hopes to be back home to her niece and nephew who are her sources of inspiration along with the quote: “The only bad art is art you don’t make.”

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THE CHOICE

Nina Maskey
Who am I...?
a woman.

a woman?!!
I don't want
to be
a woman!!

a woman
is weak!
indecisive!
tardy!
disorganized!
her opinion doesn't carry weight!
Who said a woman are these things.....?

They said a woman are those things.
You don't have to buy what they say a woman is.

Aisle 3: Choice

- Air Head
- Insecure
- Financially Weak
- Overemotional
What do YOU think a woman is...?
a woman is a heroine!
I am a heroine!

a woman is brave!
I am brave!

Inspiring!

Dignified!

Dynamic!

Healthy!

Secure!

Assessive!

a woman is powerful!
I am powerful!

a woman deserves happiness!
I deserve happiness!
NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY....

YOU DECIDE WHAT A WOMAN IS!
Nina Maskay has a Master of Education from Australia and was previously a school teacher for 15 years. Currently she teaches pranayama. It took time for Nina to accept her cartoon style of drawing. Every few years arose the hope that her simple drawing style would take on a more realistic form. Eventually she realised that her cartoon style was not a passing phase but in fact the form of self-expression she was most comfortable with. Now, cartooning has led Nina to the discovery of a new world that is creative, joyful and always a great learning experience. She has also come to appreciate that cartoons can express more serious concerns and help raise awareness in society.

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PLUCKY HEROINES

Sony Rai
AM I ONLY MADE FOR THIS!

NO!!

[Character is reading a book and jumping in joy, holding a diploma.]
She was the smartest one and everybody wanted to be like her.
GOODBYE FOREVER!!

2 + 5 = 7
And comes the storm in their life.

Epilepsy
RETIRED

SINGLE MOTHER

EPILEPSY PATIENT

WE HAVE EACH OTHER!!

After Every Storm comes a rainbow.
When Sony Rai was introduced to printmaking, she fell in love with how final outputs through the media are uncertain, just as our lives. She finds joy in exploring varied media of art; to express and to tell stories. She believes that art makes our histories immortal.

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Hi Sanna!

I am ready with my book.

WOW! Your book is inspiring!

Thankyou! Congratulation!

ALIVE

AND

ALONE

Seetu Shrestha
This is me and my papa everyday!

Why can’t you act a man, Son?

Why doesn’t anybody accept me as I am?
I REMEMBER MY CHILDHOOD. I ALWAYS LOVED PLAYING WITH BARBIES AND PLAYSETS WITH MY ONLY FRIEND "SANNA".

AS I GREW UP I DRESSED MYSELF IN SANNA’S DRESSES AND USED TO PUT ON HER MAKE UP.

I like this skirt of yours! You look Beautiful!

I WAS BULLIED AT SCHOOL... BUT SANNA MADE IT EASIER FOR ME.

Look at him or her? Hahaha! yeah!

KEEPING A DIARY ALSO MADE MY LIFE BEARABLE.

Haha Why do they bully me!! Ignore them!!
5 YEARS LATER I DECIDED...

WOW!!

I look beautiful.
Why are they staring at me??

Look at him or her...
Hi Sanna!
I am ready with my book.

WOW! Your book is inspiring!

Thankyou!

Congratulation!
Seetu Shrestha is a designer by passion and a programme coordinator by profession. Currently, she works for Sattya Media Arts Collective and regularly takes up freelance design commissions. While her academic background is in Computer Engineering, her interests lie in creating doodles, sketches and DIY crafts.

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THAT'S IT!

Manju Sunwar
A Feminist is a person who believes in the power of women just as much as they believe in the power of anyone else.

Zendaya

I'm heading out...
How can I make any difference...

I'm turning 30 next month, I still got so much things to achieve...

I'm learning to love myself.

When we get married, we are planning to move into my house.

We Rock...
TONIGHT
HEADLINES
WORLD NEWS

BISHOP TD JAKES INTERVIEWING DR CINDY ABOUT WHAT IS IT TO BE A WOMAN.

Women are graduating from college at the rate beyond man today. They are primary breadwinners, going to work going to office, are mothers. They are on all those roles, how has your faith shaped your life, as women in leadership. What would you say to stress that man have yet they are woman...

- TD Jakes

Women always been shaping the world. Women was created to be a problem solver. I don't have problem considered 2nd, because the 2nd edition is always better than 1st. It's not about roles but identity, who God said you are...  

- Dr. Cindy
Food's ready...

Not, hungry...

Jesus, give me some crazy ideas.
There's a Story of this kind.

Tell me, about it.
No man can kill me!

I'm no man.

Women weren't created to do everything a man can do, women were created to do everything a man can't do.

That's it!

Submission
SEND

Jesus Rock
Manju Sunuwar holds a BFA degree from Kathmandu University, School of Art and Design. She prefers using physical two-dimensional media as opposed to digital tools to create art, which she finds great joy in.

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KNOW YOURSELF BETTER

Anmari Tamang
HELLO! MY NAME IS MARI AND TODAY WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A LITTLE STORY TIME!

LET'S BEGIN ON ONE FINE Da- I MEAN NIGHT...

OCTOBER 7, 2018 MIDNIGHT

MUM I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...

WHAT'S WRONG? IT'S MIDNIGHT.

MY LOWER ABDOMEN... IT HURTS. I HAVE BEEN PEETING EVERY 15 SECONDS AND EVERYTIME I PEE I FEEL AN EXCRUCIATING PAIN. HELP ME MUM...

THE PAIN WAS SO STRONG IT FELT LIKE MY WOMB WAS BEING PULLED INSIDE OUT!

I WAS RUSHED TO AN ER.
Urinary tract infection is an infection in any part of the urinary system.

Unprotected & unhygienic intercourse

Not drinking enough water

Dirty toilets

Not wiping front to back after pee pee.

What even was UTI?
This explains everything. My irregular cycles, getting periods twice a month, heavy bleeding, excruciating cramps. I thought I was normal. I wasn’t!!

Why is this happening to me? Why?? What the fuck did I do? Why??? Why?? Why?? Why? Why?

Why Me!?! Why Me!?! Why Me!?! Why Me!

While all this was going on in my head... it didn’t show in my face.

I was happy it was Inktober. Dad brought me my sketch book and pencils for me to kill my boredom... and I did...

Maybe I wasn’t comfortable in the silent hospital which didn’t feel safe.

I kept drawing till my IV installed hand swelled up...
After I was discharged, I put up a happy front in public but behind closed doors cried all night.

I just didn't know what I was supposed to do...
I started to do my research.

But I was able to pull myself together.

I learned a lot.

I learned to take better care of myself.

Now, I'm slowly building myself up mentally & physically.

One speed bump shouldn't stop you!!
I STAYED IN HOSPITAL FOR 5 DAYS

IT WASN'T THAT BAD. JUST BORING...

BUT THINGS CHANGED ON THE DAY OF MY USG RESULT.

THEN I WAS TOLD...

WE FOUND A TUMOR IN YOUR UTERUS.

I AM A GIRL IN MY EARLY 20s. HEARING THAT SENTENCE AND KNOWING WHAT IT MEANS BROKE ME...

A TUMOR? WHY ME? WHAT DID I DO WRONG??
OH I KNOW... IT'S GENETIC. BOTH MY MOTHER AND GRANNY HAD TUMORS AND HAD TO... REMOVE... THEIR... WOMB....
Anmari Tamang is a 25-year-old art student pursuing her Master’s degree in Sculpture. She works with different mediums in both round and relief forms and figures. She has also worked as a graphic designer, illustrator and installation artist. She loves illustrating using traditional media, but plans to venture into the world of digital art because of her love for anime, manga and comics.

Instagram: mlle_mari
Illustration: Dr Nicola Streeten

britishcouncil.org.np/creating-heroines
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2019
In December 2018, the British Council organised a three-day comics making workshop in the lake city of Pokhara. The workshop was facilitated by award winning graphic novelist Dr Nicola Streeten. Post the workshop, eight participants worked on original stories to come up with comics shorts of their own. This book is a compilation of these stories.

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