

CREATING HEROINES

EVALUATION REPORT

December 2017-March 2018



"See the word 'Heroine' differently – all of us are heroines in our own way and we should never underestimate ourselves or take others for granted."
Creating Heroines participant

INTRODUCTION



CREATING HEROINES is a collaborative artistic project that unites leading artists, illustrators and graphic novelists from South Asia and the UK along with members of the public and aspiring artists in a series of workshops, panel events and pop-up stalls exploring the theme of heroines in a quest to challenge female stereotypes and awaken the heroine in all of us.

The project explores heroines from the past and imagines heroines for the future by crowdsourcing knowledge and aspirations from artists and audiences. It looks at the stories behind the side-lined heroines of history and present day role models, as well as inspiring figures from mythology.

The project ran for the first time from December 2017 to March 2018 with a budget of GBP 26,000. It involved artists from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and UK with separate events taking place in Colombo (December 2017), Karachi (December 2017), Kathmandu (Feb 2018) and London (March 2018). Partners included the Southbank Centre's WOW - Women of the World - Festival and UN Women's #HeForShe Arts Week.

SOME HIGHLIGHT FIGURES

Creating
Heroines had
2,025
face to face
engagements

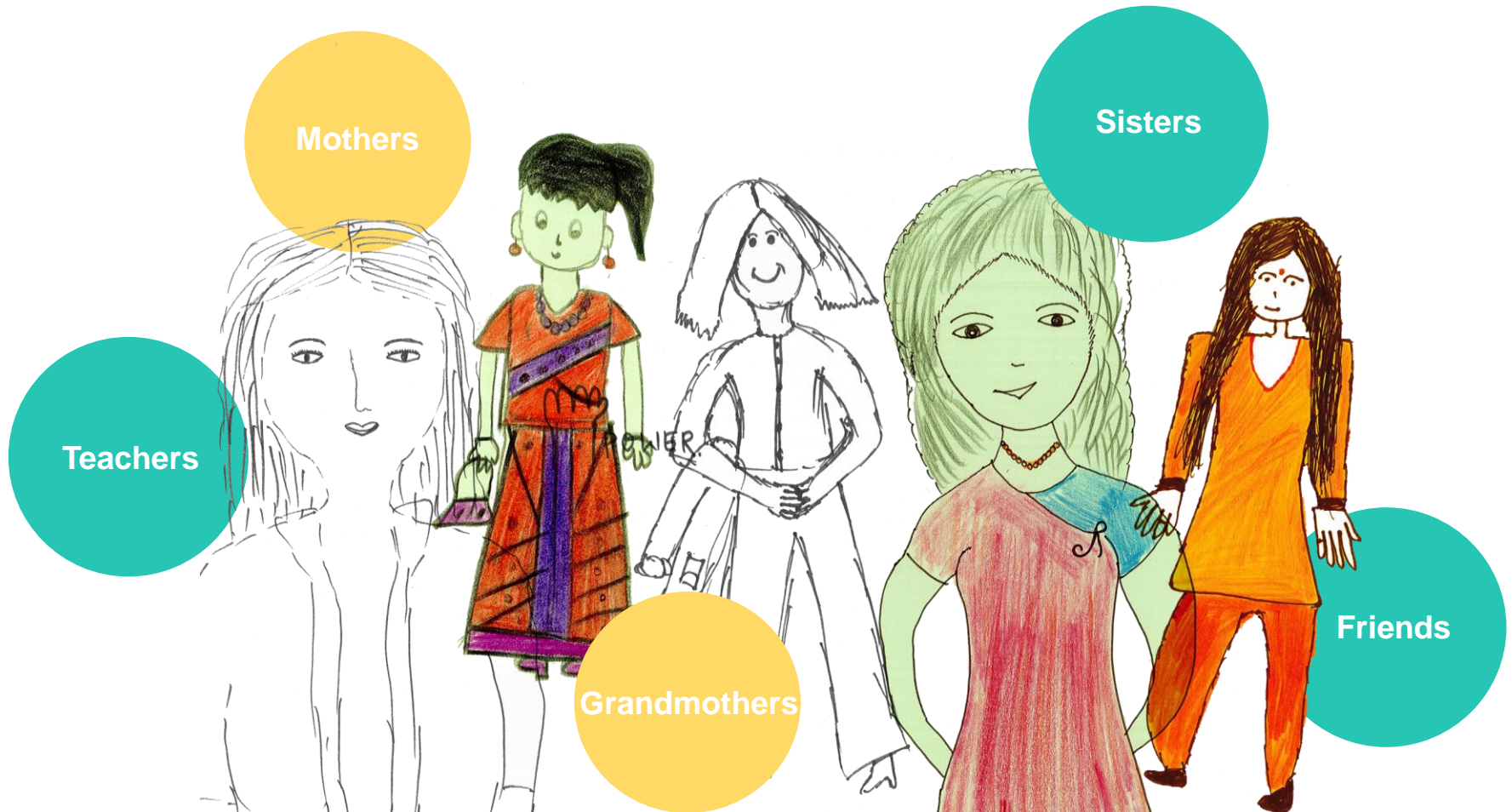
1,300
zines were created
and distributed at
WOW London and
#HeForShe Arts
Week

#7 Artists had
6 million
impressions
and 7.7 million reach
and featured artists from
7 countries

Artists from
4 countries
took part in the activities on
the ground

WHICH HEROINES EMERGED?

There was **A REAL FOCUS ON EVERYDAY HEROINES** and women that people knew personally.



WHICH HEROINES EMERGED?

“The heroines that came to mind were not legendary or famous people but women around me who I found inspiring.”

Creating Heroines stall participant

“I was surprised as a lot of the people had their own mother or sister or teacher as their heroines which is absolutely true.”

Creating Heroines artist

“I came to realize that every person is a heroine in their own way.”

Creating Heroines workshop participant



WHICH HEROINES EMERGED?



In the midst of all the heroines contributed by the Creating Heroines participants, there were of course **ALSO INSPIRING FAMOUS PEOPLE**, such as the portrait of Jane Austen drawn here by HM Ambassador to Nepal Richard Morris, at the Creating Heroines stall at WOW Kathmandu.

POP-UP STALLS AT WOW



The concept for the **CREATING HEROINES STALLS** was developed by the British Council and a project brief was conceptualised by leading UK graphic novelist Karrie Fransman to guide local artists in adapting the concept to their contexts.

Between December 2017 and March 2018 interactive stalls were led at WOW (Women of the World) Festivals in Karachi, Colombo, Kathmandu and London. All the activities around the stalls asked the audience to imagine their heroines and to challenge the stereotypes of what a heroine looks like.

POP-UP STALLS AT WOW FESTIVAL



At WOW Colombo

the interactive activity asked the audience to write and draw about their heroines and was led by artist Isuri Merenchi Hewage.



At WOW Kathmandu the

Creating Heroines stall was developed by leading artists Promina Shrestha, Bandana Tulachan, Shraddha Shrestha.

At WOW Karachi

a bespoke puppet workshop was developed by acclaimed puppet artist Yamina Peerzada, working with Sara Nisar & Amneh Sheikh. It looked at the theme of heroines and created puppets based on the characters the audience imagined.



At WOW London

the stall brought together the collaborative work created by all the artists from the activities that had taken part across South Asia, including a zine and three of the puppets with their unique stories.



POP-UP STALLS AT WOW FESTIVAL



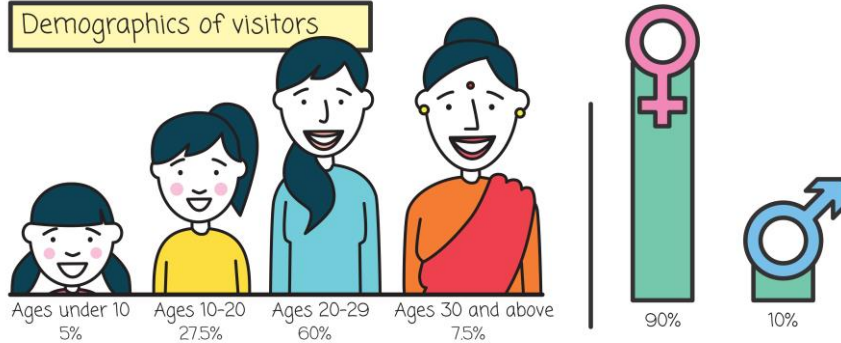
1,854

people visited the stalls in Karachi, Colombo, Kathmandu and London to take part in the workshop, tell us about and draw their heroines or take home a copy of the collaborative zine.

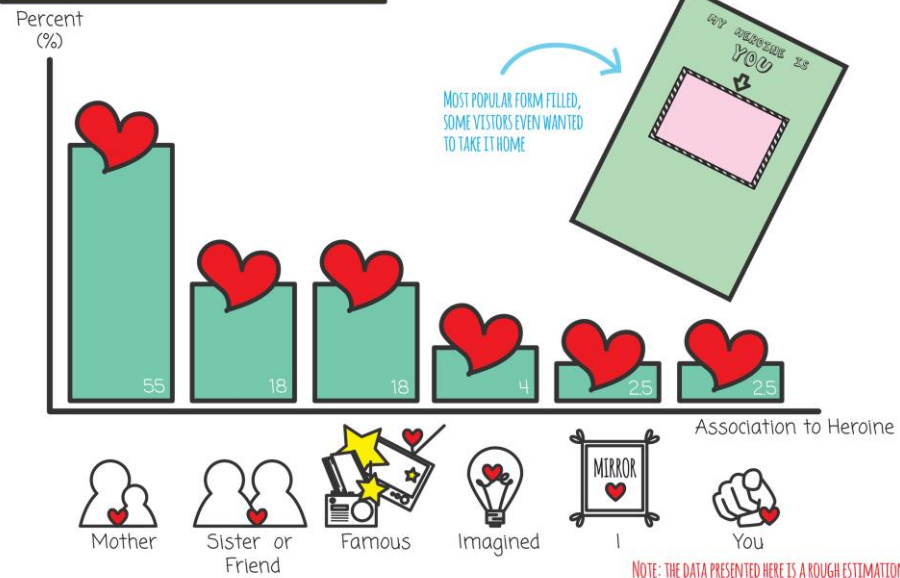


PO-UP STALLS AT WOW FESTIVAL

Demographics of visitors



Responses from visitors



COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP



AN IN DEPTH COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP

was hosted in Nepal for the artists that had been part of the Creating Heroines stalls in South Asia. As a result, cross-cultural discussions on womanhood and the concept of heroines led to the production of a collaborative zine. It included inspiration that had been crowd sourced at the Creating Heroines stalls at the WOW festivals.

The workshop was led by Nicola Streeten a leading UK cartoon and graphic artist, academic and founder of female comic collective Laydeez Do Comics. The workshop included artists Samya Arif (Pakistan), Promina Shrestha (Nepal), Bandana Tulachan (Nepal), Shraddha Shrestha (Nepal) and Isuri Merenchi Hewage (Sri Lanka).



COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP



1,300 ZINES were printed and distributed to audiences at WOW London and UN Women #HeForShe Arts Week

A MURAL combining the heroine figures imagined and conceived during the workshop was painted outside the British Council Nepal.



COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP

“Being part of the workshop I got great exposure to how my fellow female artists work in the sub-continent, their art and stories have been extremely inspirational. I want to work on collaborating between us in our different cities, and creating artwork that empowers women, be it through murals, zines, shows etc. and include more female artists to spread our messages and stories.

As an artist who is curious about women and their role in society and culture, the workshop provided a great learning and exposure to the lives of women in neighbouring countries.”

Samya Arif- OCEÁ, Pakistan

“Apart from the Nepali artists, there were two other artists from Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Working with them I got to learn a different perspective on womanhood and cultures and traditions from a different part of the world.

The idea that you yourself are a heroine was an absolute realisation for me. Heroines do not always have to come with a superpower and dress fancy. Every woman has their own story of struggle and how they are trying to overcome that hardship each minute.”

Shraddha Shresha, Nepal

“I am inspired to look for inspirational stories from everyday women.”

-Isuri Merenchi Hewage, Sri Lanka



COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP

“The workshop for me was an amazing experience and I was able to get insight into new places and culture that I haven’t visited before. For me heroes or heroines have always felt overrated and unrealistic. But in the workshop we discussed and thought about what the definitions of heroines can be. Oddly the heroines that came to mind were not legendary or famous people but women around me who I found inspiring.

This workshop has made me think about how I can create heroines who can inspire others with their qualities or even their flaws.”

Bandana Tulachan, Nepal

“Initially I thought that creating heroines was about constructing a fictional character. But after much conversation, the event and the workshop, I came to realize that every person is a heroine in their own way. It highlighted a different perspective on the subject, which was illuminating.

It reinforced my enthusiasm for illustration and the importance of art as an instrument for dialogue.”

Promina Shrestha, Nepal

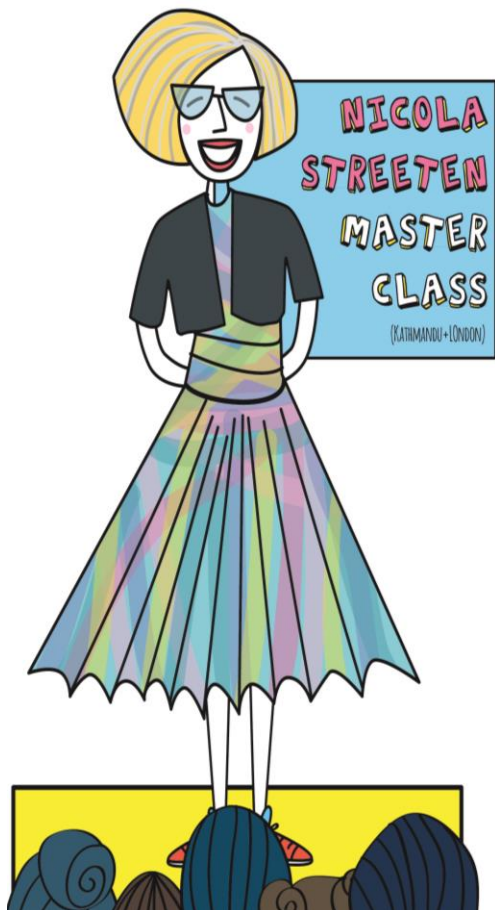
“My enjoyment of the workshop greatly exceeded my expectations. Although I have wide experience in facilitating, this was the first time I have worked so closely with artists towards producing a visual outcome. It was also the first time I have worked outside the UK.

It was a rewarding opportunity for me. The experience challenged my assumptions in a number of areas as well as introducing me to different ways of working. I don’t think the honesty of conversations that informed the artworks produced could have been replicated without the opportunity to meet and work together physically.”

Dr. Nicola Streetn, UK



GRAPHIC NOVEL MASTERCLASSES

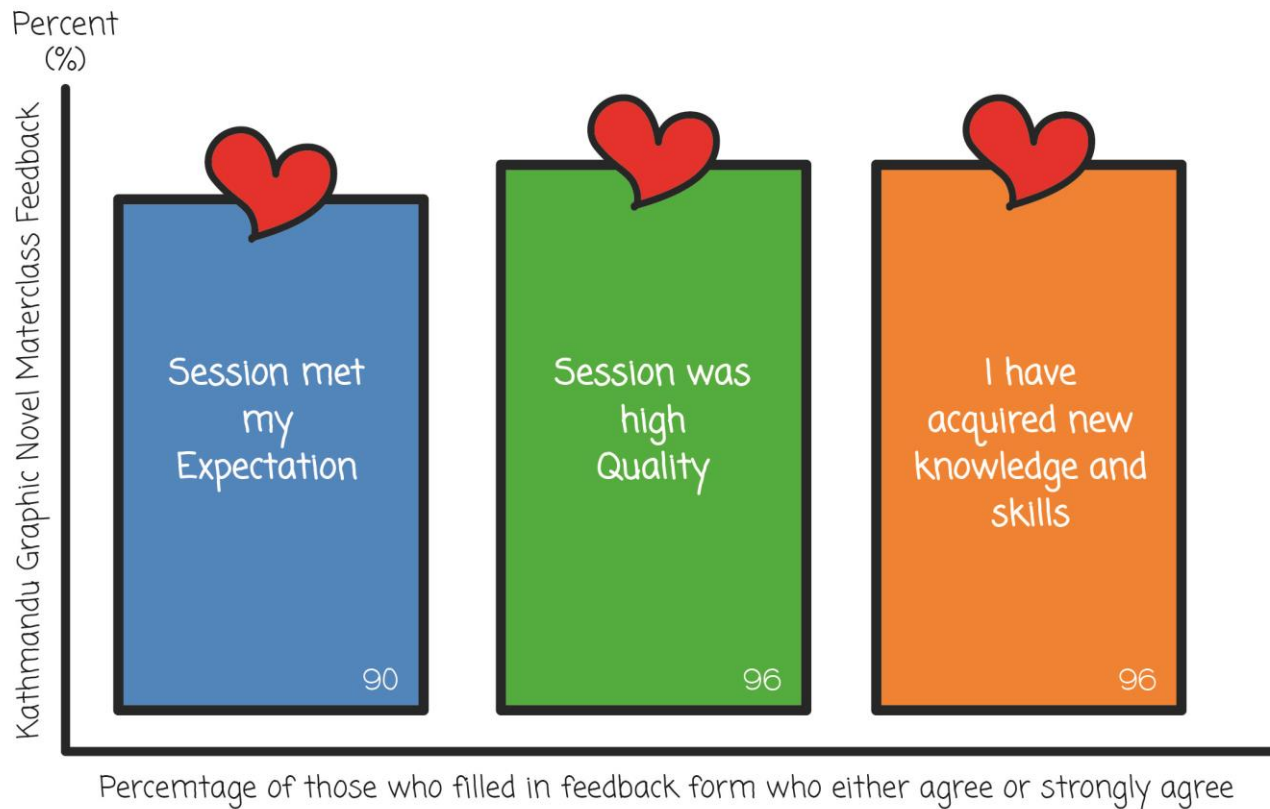


2 GRAPHIC NOVEL MASTERCLASSES were led by Nicola Streeten for members of the public at WOW Kathmandu and WOW London for aspiring graphic novelists to give them more skills in drawing and expressing themselves in cartoon form, narrative constructions and story development. The graphic novels created were on the theme of heroines.



68 attendees
in total in
London and
Kathmandu

GRAPHIC NOVEL MASTERCLASSES



GRAPHIC NOVEL MASTERCLASSES



HEFORSHE ARTS WEEK



A HIGH LEVEL PANEL EVENT took place with partner UN Women as part of UN Women #HeForShe Arts Week.

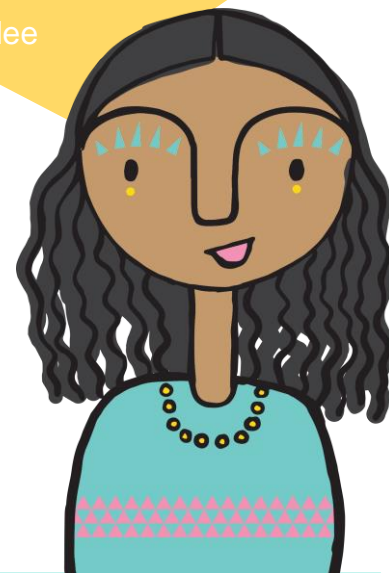
It looked at the theme of the importance of female role models and included leading female artists - Rachel Holmes (eminent biographer of Sylvia Pankhurst), Emmy the Great (musician and culture writer), Corrina Antrobus (Bechdel Film Fest), Jo Craven (Frieze Academy), Suhair Khan (Google Arts and Culture) and Nicola Streeten (graphic novelist and academic and author of *The Inking Woman*). The event was also a networking event for influencers and emerging female and male artists as well as being live streamed around the world.

HEFORSHE ARTS WEEK



"The British Council should run these panels every year. The conversation of female role models in the arts and how to ensure we become more visible is incredibly important and the opportunity to network with so many inspiring female artists is so so valuable!"

Panel attendee



#SEVENARTISTS CAMPAIGN



The British Council ran **A WORLDWIDE DIGITAL CAMPAIGN** around International Women's Day through social media to highlight female artists. 7 emerging female artists from around the world got featured during this 1-week campaign - #7artists - 1 artist's story and biography was shared every day.

The Hashtag: #7Artists

(from 7 March to 15 March 2018)

- Impressions

6 million

- Reach

7.7 million

WHAT'S NEXT?



The British Council is organising **A STAND – “CELEBRATING WOMEN AND GIRLS, CREATING HEROINES IN SOUTH ASIA”** – at the European development Days under the theme of Women and Girls’ Voice and Participation, to open up a discussion around women and girls through showcasing our Women of the World (WOW) festivals and Creating Heroines projects in South Asia. The stand aims to recreate an interactive creative space for all visitors to share their views on female empowerment and gender equality.

The thoughts and ideas of the audience will be collected throughout the event to inspire two female South Asian artists on-site to create meaningful artwork on the theme of the event. We will also have evaluation reports, zines and puppets on display for the audience to explore the impact of our projects.

The European Development Days large-scale conference is organised by the European Commission and is one of the most significant annual events in the International Development sector globally – according to the organisers, the EDDs attract more than 8,000 participants from over 140 countries each year. This year it will take place on 5-6 June in Brussels and the theme is “Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development: protect, empower and invest”.

THE ARTISTS



Samya Arif- OCEÁ is an illustrator and graphic designer who works in a variety of media based in Karachi. Her focus is on visual art and illustration, often working on album covers. While creating artworks for various music acts, she has also been a part of the electronic music collective, Forever South, as artist, designer and DJ. Samya has also worked on various international projects such as the Mumbai based Taxi Fabric, her designs for which were featured in the British band Coldplay's video, the London based One Beat Zines collective, the US Embassy in Nepal and is a regular illustrator at Pakistan's renowned Herald magazine.



Isuri Merenchi Hewage is an illustrator and graphic comics artist living in Colombo, Sri Lanka. She spends most of her time drawing comics/picture books and painting murals. She is currently working on her first graphic Novel, Podi (written by Deshan Tennekoon and Navin Ratnayake) forthcoming from Oni Press. Isuri studied Illustration at Columbus College of Art & Design.



Promina Shrestha is an illustrator, graphic designer and researcher based in Kathmandu, Nepal. She holds a Master's Degree in Arts and Aesthetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India and has published papers on current trans-cultural influence on Newari Poubha tradition and national identity in children's book illustration in Nepal. She works mostly on children's book illustrations.

THE ARTISTS



Dr. Nicola Streeten is an anthropologist-turned-illustrator and author of award winning graphic memoir, 'Billy, Me & You' (Myriad Editions, 2011). She co-founded the international forum Laydeez do Comics in 2009 which launched the first women's prize for graphic novels in progress in 2018. Streeten co-edited The Inking Woman (Myriad Editions, 2018), a picture-led publication offering the first documented history of 250 years of women's cartoons and comics in Britain.



Bandana Tulachan is an illustrator based in Kathmandu, Nepal. She completed a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts in Graphic Communication from Kathmandu University Center for Art and Design. Since 2012 she has been practicing illustration, mostly in children picture books. In 2015, Sanu ra Adhiberi (Sanu and the Big Storm) was published which Bandana wrote as well as illustrated. Since then, she has been working on creating her own narrative work and introducing more fantasy in children's literature in Nepal.



Shraddha Shrestha is a designer, illustrator as well as mural artist from Kathmandu, Nepal. She holds a Master Degree in Illustration from the Glasgow School of Art. Her works revolve around cartoons, comics, and fantasy dealing with her emotional and social experiences. She enjoys classical animations, traditional art and is inspired by them. She is also experimenting with street art and loves to play with traditional iconographies and her imaginary characters. Shraddha works are largely based on her illustrations, and she mainly does street art, murals and storybooks.

THE PANELISTS

Rachel Holmes - the author of *Eleanor Marx: A Life*, serialized on BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week and shortlisted for the James Tait Black Prize. Her biography *Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel* will be published by Bloomsbury in 2019. Her previous books include *The Hottentot Venus: The Life and Death of Saartjie Baartman*, *The Secret Life of Dr. James Barry*, and—as a commissioning editor—I Call Myself a Feminist and *Fifty Shades of Feminism*.

Corrina Antrobus - founder of Bechdel Test Fest – London's ongoing feminist film festival. She is a film broadcaster for TV, radio, podcasts and online and works in film marketing and distribution. 'The Bechdel Test' was inspired by cartoonist Alison Bechdel's 1985 tongue-in-cheek comic strip 'The Rule' which became a basic measure to see if women are fairly represented in a film.

Jo Craven - after graduating from University of St Andrews, Jo had a career in British journalism enjoying editing roles at Tatler, Vogue, The Times, Luxx Magazine and the Financial Times. In 2013, she played a pivotal creative role for the launch of Porter magazine as Arts and Lifestyle Director. Since May last year, Jo has been the Head of Programming at Frieze Academy, directing a unique programme of talks, workshops and symposiums exploring all aspects of the worlds of art and culture. Jo's specialities and passions include visual arts, fashion, contemporary art and design.

Suhair Khan - has spent six years working at Google, she is the lead on Google Arts & Culture projects and collaborations in many countries such as the UK, Australia, Indonesia and Korea. She was a key part of launching the Google Cultural Institute in 2013 and additionally launched the project in Pakistan. Whilst the majority of her work is based in the London office, Suhair grew up between Milan, London and South Asia before studying and then working in the USA and Singapore. She often travels back to Lahore to visit family and is passionate about the art, literature, rich culture and food of her heritage.

Emma-Lee Moss - is a musician and culture writer (my writing is collected here). As Emmy the Great she has released many albums including *Second Love*, *This is Christmas*. Her mother is Chinese and my father is British. Alongside studio albums, she has collaborated on a variety of projects. Recent favourites include writing original music for Starlee Kine's *Mystery Show* Podcast, Mia Lidofsky's upcoming series *Strangers*, and music and libretto for Sara Pascoe's *Pride & Prejudice*, directed by Susannah Tresilian. She has campaigned for Wateraid, mentored for Strummerville, and given music workshops in HM Holloway Women's Prison as part of Billy Bragg's *Jail Guitar Doors* charity. She is currently involved with the Woodland Trust, helping to promote the Tree Charter, a commitment to maintaining Britain's forests and trees.

THE PARTNERS

SOUTHBANK CENTRE



HeForShe
ARTS WEEK
LONDON

Southbank Centre's WOW festival

WOW – Women of the World festival celebrates women and girls, and looks at the obstacles that stop them from achieving their potential. Around the world, individuals and communities are insisting on the simple proposition that women and girls must have equal rights and asking the question: why is gender equality taking so long? Southbank Centre's WOW – Women of the World festival is a global network of festivals which provides a platform for celebrating what has been achieved, and exploring all the ways we can change the world for the better.

UN Women #HeForShe Arts Week

Art both reflects and influences culture; in partnership with artists and art institutions, we can all evolve the behaviors, norms and perceptions that shape our cultural view of gender. UN Women, the United Nations organization, is dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women's HeForShe Arts Week is the global festival for gender equality from the 8 March which is International Women's Day. As children we were told stories that shaped who we are. As adults, we are still told stories that shape our reality. It is time to change the narrative to bring about gender equality. There are events throughout the week to challenge the old stories, explore gender equality, change mind-sets and raise funds to change the lives of millions of women and girls through discussion, debate, dance, music, theatre, exhibitions and experience. HeForShe Arts Week is simultaneously taking place in London, Rio de Janeiro, La Paz, Addis Ababa, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Panama City, Santiago, Mexico City, and Bogota.

ARTISTS' SELF EVALUATIONS OF THEIR CREATING HEROINES JOURNEYS

SAMYA ARIF - OCEÁ

CREATING HEROINES

Journey through the Workshop



I arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal on a beautiful, starry night surrounded by mountains.

I was feeling a bit antsy but very excited about starting the Creating Heroines workshop.

Next day at the workshop, I met the coolest, most talented and amazing women and we all seem to hit it off instantly!



We talked and we laughed, and shared our unique experiences as women. We talked some more and laughed a lot more, it felt like we had all known each other for years.

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CREATING HEROINES

Journey through the Workshop



Lunches were the best, after a few hours of working the women would crave a healthy meal to revitalise their creative juices, one of our favorites turned out to be delicious, freshly served momos at Momo Queen of course!

Working together with five brilliant and uber talented illustrators from around the world was so inspiring. We would sometimes work together for hours without saying a word, content in our silence, until someone cracked a joke.



By the end of the workshop, everyone was wishing we had more time together to talk about things that mattered to us as women, to goof around and make each other laugh, to draw our lives and inspire each other.

Alas! It was time to say goodbye to a precious, educational, invigorating and inspiring experience and to the sweet, wonderful friends I had made.

Here's to hoping the Creating Heroines journey continues in another time and another place.

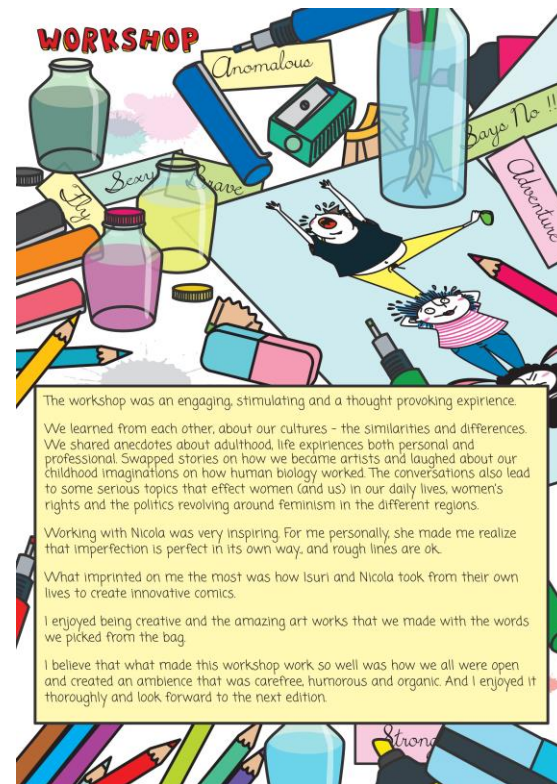
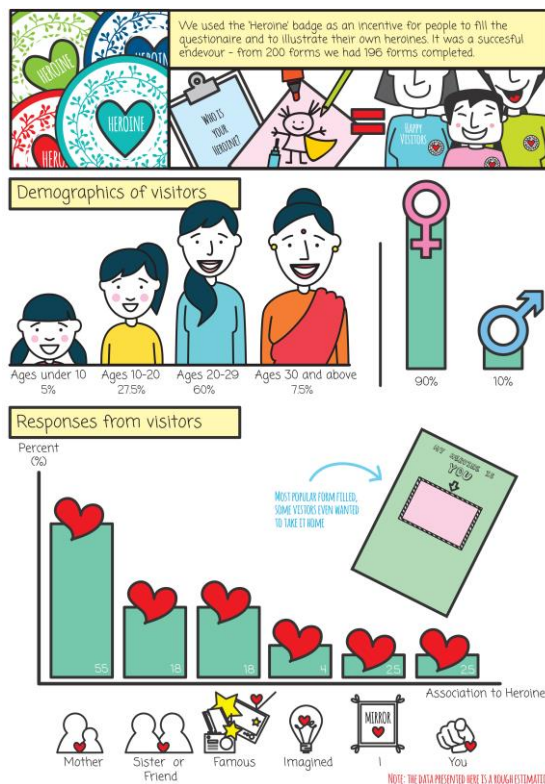
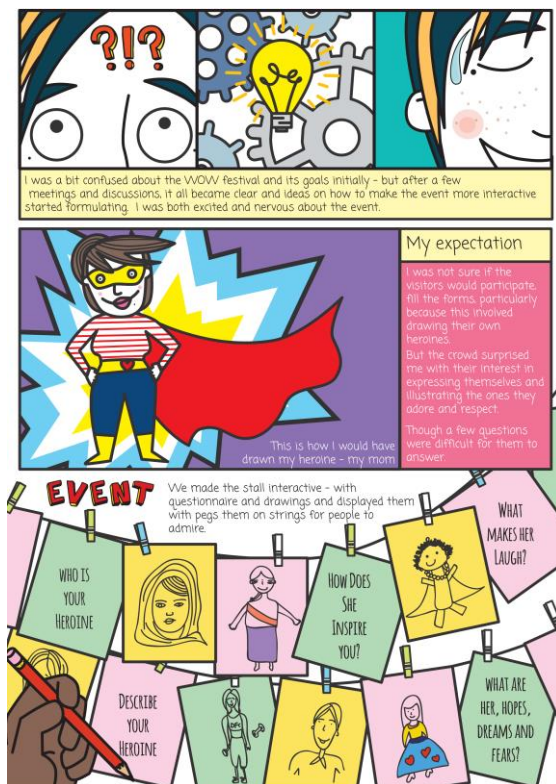


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ISURI MERENCHI HEWAGE

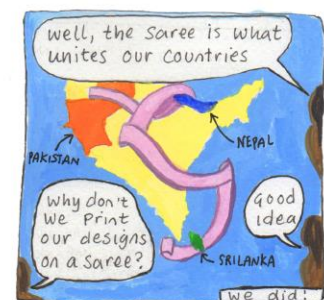
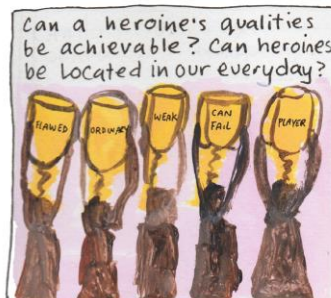
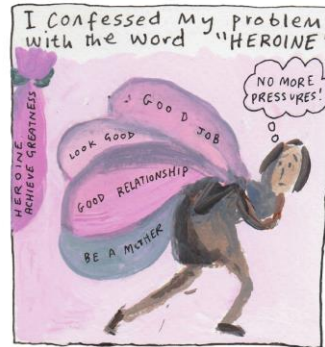


PROMINA SHRESTHA

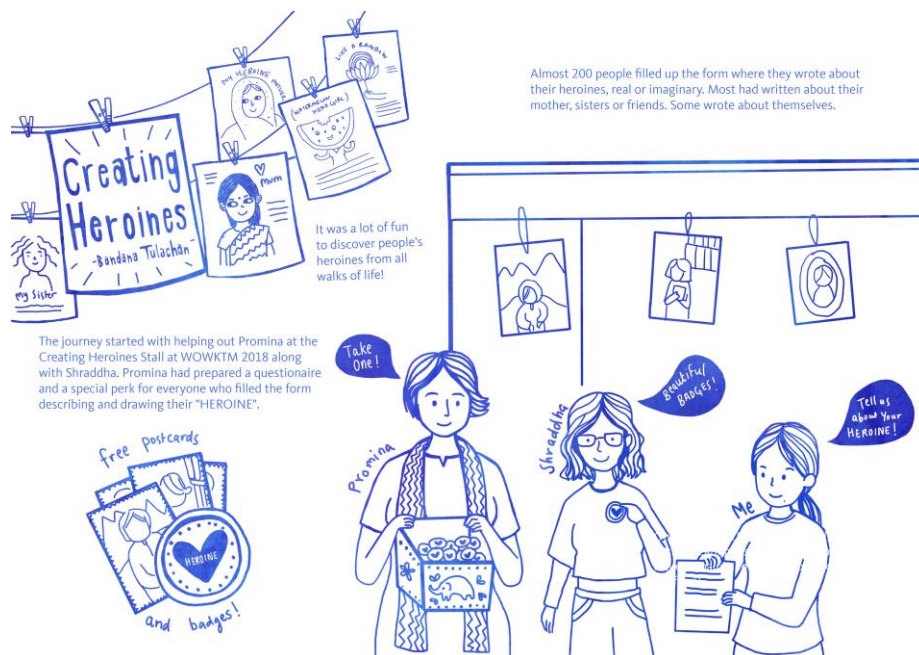


DR. NICOLA STREETEN

CREATING HEROINES EVALUATION by Nicola Streeten March 2018



BANDANA TULACHAN



The journey started with helping out Promina at the Creating Heroines Stall at WOWKTM 2018 along with Shraddha. Promina had prepared a questionnaire and a special perk for everyone who filled the form describing and drawing their "HEROINE".



It was great to meet participants from Sri Lanka and Pakistan who had come to attend the workshop.

SO GOOD!!



We all talked about many things, about being women and about being strong.

What followed were three days of drawing, brainstorming, thinking about heroines and coming up with ideas for a collaborative zine.



During the speed drawing session, I pulled out the words vulnerable and naive from the mix bag. From these words and some quick drawings, my narrative about women overcoming challenges began to take form.



The final zine was amazing! And I am inspired to create more!

SHRADDHA SHRESTHA

