

One Practitioner, Many Psychodramatists: A Journey

Psychodrama Beyond the Therapy Room

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towards Certification for Psychodrama Directorship

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Dedicated to my mother, Jayshree

&

my psychodramatic mother, Meenakshi

*"Things are not as easily understood not as expressible..
..Most happenings are beyond expression; they exist where a word has never intruded."*

-

Rainer Maria Rilke

"The longer I live, the more deeply I learn that love, whether we call it friendship or family or romance, is the work of mirroring and magnifying each other's light."

-

James Baldwin

"A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind"

-

J.L. Moreno

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Preface

I write this paper as a memoir of my journey as a senior psychodrama trainee and my experiences that shaped my emerging psychodramatist identity through my application of psychodrama from the end of 2023 to the end of 2025. Over this period of two years, I designed and facilitated fifteen psychodrama workshops under supervision, across a range of contexts: training spaces, public cultural venues, educational institutions, private groups, and collaborative formats that brought psychodrama into dialogue with photography and the arts.

These included five workshops for psychodrama trainees of my institute across different levels of training; five open public workshops hosted in collaboration with art and cultural spaces and museums, attended largely by participants encountering psychodrama for the first time; two workshops within design schools, one for a group of over one hundred undergraduate students, and another for Master's students of Photography Design that integrated psychodrama and photography as parallel methods of inquiry; one residential workshop for actors; and one private workshop for a group of ten women between the ages of thirty and forty.

Alongside these workshops, my practice extended outward into forms of engagement that sit slightly beyond the conventional understanding of psychodrama as a therapeutic method. I proposed psychodrama-based interventions within two major art festivals, one in Ahmedabad and another in Bengaluru. I developed three grant proposals for international art residencies in Finland, Abu Dhabi, and Sri Lanka, each seeking to build participatory projects that integrate psychodrama and photography as embodied, intuitive practices for self-exploration, care, and reflection. I submitted a proposal to fund a year-long series of psychodrama workshops across two cities. Most recently, I responded to a grant invitation under the Archives and Museums programme at the Conflictorium, Museum of Conflict, proposing participatory psychodrama-based artistic interventions to activate the museum's archive and public spaces as sites of dialogue, memory, and relational inquiry.

This paper does not attempt to document these activities as a project report. It seeks to make meaning of the psychodramatist in me as I engaged with the social and cultural conserves during this period, tracing how my identity as a director, facilitator, artist, and collaborator evolved through practice.

I hope you enjoy reading this paper, and that in some small or meaningful way it contributes to your own reflections, work, and ways of being in the world.

Acknowledgements

Google defines “eternally grateful” as feeling a deep, permanent, and extreme thankfulness for something significant, expressing a lifelong appreciation that words can barely capture, often used for major kindness, life-saving acts, or profound support. There’s one tiny edit I make as I express my gratitude towards Roohdaar aka Meenakshi; used for major kindness, life-saving acts, and profound support and so much more. As dramatic as it sounds, the statement, I wouldn’t be where I am if it weren’t for her contributions, is an acutely accurate description.

Sarita is another person who will perpetually be a part of all acknowledgements I write henceforth in the future. A stable, grounded double standing right behind me consistently during times when I find my grounding shaken, and right in front of me with arms wide open welcoming me for a big jhappi (a colloquial term for a warm embrace) during periods of celebration.

Sonal and I have been co-travellers on this journey, holding each other when our spines began to weaken. We have navigated, and continue to navigate, multiple role relationships that have deepened and solidified my understanding of role theory in psychodrama. Surbhi and I experienced psychodrama on the same day more than six years ago, and since then we have been co-trainees across multiple programmes, in parallel journeys of becoming within the field of healing.

Nina has been a consistent source of encouragement, often attending workshops and bringing participants along, and offering quiet but sustained support for this work. The community of trainees I have been part of over the past six years has functioned as a living learning environment; one that has shaped my thinking, practice, and relational capacities in profound ways. I hold particular gratitude for Bhavita, Mamta, Rohan, and Nalini, whose presence and engagement have influenced my development as a psychodramatist.

Although my time with Marcia Karp, Clark Baim, and Jochen Becker-Ebel was brief, those encounters had a significant impact on the psychodramatist(s) in me. Their teachings and presence continue to resonate in my practice.

I would like to acknowledge the participants of my workshops over the past two years, who placed their trust in me and in the psychodramatic method. Your willingness to engage with action, vulnerability, and relational presence has been central to my learning. I am also grateful to the organisations and institutions that invited me to facilitate this work and provided contexts in which these encounters could unfold.

And finally, J. L. and Zerka Moreno, who started the fire from which many lamps continue to be lit.

Introduction

I have structured my memoir psychodramatically. To write this paper is, for me, to enter the stage of processing as a director, a phase that follows the three primary stages of psychodrama: warm-up, action, and sharing.

The warm-up phase, in this context, reflects my movement toward the outward social situation: the questions, invitations, curiosities, and impulses that drew me into different spaces and communities.

The action phase encompasses the lived work itself, designing workshops, conducting sessions, engaging with participants, developing proposals, initiating collaborations, responding to institutional contexts, and placing psychodrama in spaces beyond conventional therapeutic settings.

The sharing phase emerges through conversations: with participants who reflected on their experiences, with institutions and organisations that hosted the work, through follow-up messages, recommendations, and the widening of the relational field around each intervention.

This act of writing becomes the processing stage, where these experiences are gathered, examined, and placed into relation with one another. Rather than presenting psychodrama as a fixed method applied across settings, this paper follows the evolving relationship between practice, context, and directorial understanding.

What unfolds across the sections that follow is not a theory of psychodrama, but a lived account of how psychodrama moved through my life and work during this period: across training rooms, museums, classrooms, festivals, community spaces, and private encounters and how, in return, those spaces reshaped the kind of psychodramatist I am becoming.

The paper is organised both chronologically and thematically. The *Index of Practice* situates the scope of the work that this memoir draws from. The section titled *Tracing the Arc of the Work* then offers an orientation to how the seven sections are held together.

Index of Practice

(Workshops, Grant Applications & Community Proposals - Chronological Overview)

2023

Dec 2023 - Workshop 1

Title: Time Travel x Here to Stay Even When I'm Gone

Demographic: Psychodrama trainees (training group; 3.5 years into training)

Context: Training workshop . Group Size: 4 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: time, mortality, reflection, future, meaning

2024

Feb 2024 - Workshop 2

Title: Time-Travelling Emotions

Demographic: Open public group (mostly first-time participants)

Context: Makers Fest, Mould Art Space, Ahmedabad . Group Size: 11 . Duration: 2 hours

Keywords: emotion, connection, vulnerability

Feb 2024 - Workshop 3

Title: Time-Travelling Emotions (Psychodrama x Therapeutic Photography)

Demographic: Mental health professionals, educators, students, photographers (11 cities)

Context: Online collaborative workshop . Group Size: 12 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: image, emotion, witnessing

May 2024 - Workshop 4

Title: Time Travel x Here to Stay Even When I'm Gone

Demographic: Senior trainee group (5 years into training)

Context: Final training session (facilitator task) . Group Size: 6 . Duration: 3 hours

Keywords: mortality, life review, closure

June 2024 - Workshop 5

Title: Time-Travelling Emotions

Demographic: Open public group

Context: Mould Art Space, Ahmedabad . Group Size: 8 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: vulnerability, self-reflection, group process

July 2024 - Workshop 6

Title: Intro to Psychodrama

Demographic: New training group

Context: First training session . Group Size: 6 . Duration: 2 hours

Keywords: orientation, foundations

Aug 2024 - Grant Application 1

Project: Gender Bender Festival, Bengaluru

Context: Psychodrama workshop + living installation

Keywords: gender, embodiment, participation

Sept 2024 - Workshop 7

Title: Residential Acting Workshop - Psychodrama Module

Demographic: Actors and budding actors

Context: Co-directed module within residential acting workshop . Group Size: 8 . Duration: 16 hours (2 days)

Keywords: performance, embodiment, emotion

2025

Feb 2025 - Workshop 8

Title: Everyone Is an Artist

Demographic: Open public group

Context: Mould Art Space, Ahmedabad . Group Size: 5 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: creativity, spontaneity, self-expression

Mar 2025 - Workshop 9

Title: Jhatpat Match

Demographic: University students (19–23 yrs; 100+ participants)

Context: Karnavati University night event . Group Size: 100+ . Duration: 2 hours

Keywords: body, mind, grief, communication

May 2025 - Workshop 10

Title: (Self) Love on My Mind - Self-first ≠ Selfish

Demographic: Women (30–40 yrs)

Context: Private workshop . Group Size: 10 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: self-love, boundaries, care

May 2025 - Grant Application 2

Project: IFA Production Grant

Context: Workshops in Auroville & Dehradun

Keywords: education, wellbeing, outreach

May 2025 - Grant Application 3

Project: Abhivyakti City Arts Project, Ahmedabad

Context: Public psychodrama vignettes

Keywords: public art, participation

June 2025 - Workshop 11

Title: Everyone Is an Artist

Demographic: Open public group

Context: Indigo Art Museum, Ahmedabad . Group Size: 6 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: creativity, accessibility

June 2025 - Grant Application 4

Project: Platform Residency, Finland

Context: Psychodrama x Photography participatory framework

Keywords: witnessing, memory, image

June 2025 - Grant Application 5

Project: RAI Residency, Abu Dhabi

Context: Psychodrama x Photography x Pedagogy

Keywords: self-inquiry, community, care

July 2025 - Grant Application 6

Project: Hampi Art Lab x KALA Residency, Sri Lanka

Context: Participatory art & psychodrama project

Keywords: care, resistance, repair

July 2025 - Workshop 12

Title: Community, Loving Communion

Demographic: Psychodrama trainees (1–5 years)

Context: Co-directed training workshop . Group Size: 22 . Duration: 8 hours

Keywords: community, connection

Aug–Sept 2025 - Workshop 13

Title: Sparkling Shiny Spontaneity

Demographic: Selected trainees (1–4 years)

Context: Supplementary training module . Group Size: 11 . Duration: 4 sessions x 4 hours

Keywords: spontaneity, play, embodiment

Aug 2025 - Workshop 14

Title: Psychodrama x Photography Workshop

Demographic: M.Des Photography students, NID Gandhinagar

Context: Curriculum-based invited workshop . Group Size: 13 . Duration: 16 hours (2 days)

Keywords: pedagogy, image, reflection

Sept 2025 - Workshop 15

Title: (Self) Love on My Mind - Self-first ≠ Selfish

Demographic: Open public group

Context: Mould Art Space, Ahmedabad . Group Size: 8 . Duration: 4 hours

Keywords: self-love, identity, healing

Dec 2025 - Grant Application 7

Project: Conflictorium × IFA

Context: Psychodrama-based museum interventions

Keywords: conflict, memory, narrative

Proposed Community Interventions (2025)

- Rooted Circle, Ahmedabad - ecology, land, wellbeing
- ADHD Queeple, Bengaluru - queer neurodivergent support
- Sandbox Collective, Bengaluru - gender, art, feminism
- Beyond Monogamy, Bengaluru - relationships, community, care

Tracing the Arc of the Work

In the pages that follow is a reflection on how my practice as a senior psychodrama trainee has taken shape over the past two years; in continuous relationship with people, spaces, institutions, and the social world. The structure of the paper follows seven sections which trace that movement: from recognitions that emerged through work in public and cultural settings, through successive shifts in design, direction, and self-understanding, toward a widening field of practice that now reaches into community, culture, and everyday life.

The journey begins with *Section 1 - Entry: Psychodrama as a Gateway*. This section explores how workshops in public and cultural spaces began to function as accessible entry points into inner work, and how this recognition shifted my understanding of what psychodrama could offer beyond clinical settings. *Section 2 - From Design to Action: The First Workshop* follows my transition from designing within training contexts to stepping into public facilitation, marking the moment I began to experience myself as a director in active relationship with real social groups. As the work continued to evolve, *Section 3 - Deepening: Self-Love & Demographic-Specific Design* examines how working with specific social and demographic contexts refined my approach to design, safety, and emotional depth, and sharpened my understanding of how psychodrama meets people where they are. A central learning then comes into focus in *Section 4 - Core Realisation: Depth Beyond Duration*. This part reflects on how repeated experiences across varied workshop formats questioned the idea that psychological depth depends on time, and instead revealed the importance of trust, readiness, and directorial attunement. *Section 5 - Expanding the Director: Sparkling Shiny Spontaneity* documents a decisive expansion in my directorial range as I learned to work with play, absurdity, laughter, and joy as serious psychological tools, transforming both my facilitation and my relationship with spontaneity itself. This expansion carries into *Section 6 - Beyond Therapy: Non-Therapeutic Interventions*, which situates my work at the intersection of psychodrama, photography, curation, and pedagogy, tracing how psychodramatic thinking began to live within artistic, educational, and cultural ecosystems. Finally, *Section 7 - Expanding the Field: Psychodrama as Community Practice* looks toward the future, outlining how ongoing conversations with diverse communities are shaping a practice that continues to move psychodrama into everyday social life.

Taken together, these sections trace how engagement with the external world, the other, the group, the institution, the community, has steadily and continuously informed my understanding of what it means to be a psychodramatist. Psychodrama is not a fixed method, but a living practice: shaped by encounter, refined through reflection, and continuously becoming. As I make meaning of my journey at this stage, I find myself returning to J. L. Moreno's words,

“My position was threefold: first, the hypothesis of spontaneity-creativity as a propelling force in human progress ... second, the hypothesis of having faith in our fellowman’s intentions ... of love and mutual sharing as a powerful, indispensable working principle of group life; and third, the hypothesis of a superdynamic community based upon these principles.”

Section 1. Entry: Psychodrama as a Gateway

About a year and a half into designing and facilitating psychodrama workshops, I began to notice a common thread running through these sessions. These workshops appeared to function as an entry point into psychological literacy, self-awareness, and mindful engagement with the psyche. Participants didn't necessarily arrive with a prior interest in psychological work, although many left with new language and reflection about their inner experience. Over time, this observation became an important reference point for how I understood the role of these workshops in public and cultural spaces. This became clearest to me in specific workshop contexts, where I observed these shifts. A parallel of this moment of recognition can be drawn with a moment of meaning making that participants often experience post the action and during the sharing stage of a psychodrama session.

One of the earliest instances where this became clear to me was during a workshop titled ***Everyone Is an Artist***, facilitated in **June 2025** at the **Indigo Art Museum**, part of the Kasturbhai Lalbhai Museum in Ahmedabad, as part of their summer programming. The museum is a significant cultural institution within the Indian art ecosystem. My decision to propose this workshop in such a space was informed by an interest in challenging the implicit gatekeeping that often characterises museums and gallery environments. By framing creativity as something that exists beyond technical skill or professional identity, the title *Everyone Is an Artist* was intended to make art more accessible and to place different participants, regardless of background, on common ground. Primarily I would be in service of the group as I would be in any other workshop, although the context of this venue added a layer of meaning for me as a director.

The workshop took place inside one of the museum's gallery spaces. The materials used in the session were deliberately simple and easily available: chart papers, crayons, oil pastels, sketch pens, stickers, and coloured sheets. Participants engaged with these materials as part of the workshop process.

The group consisted of six participants, each arriving with different relationships to the modality and to the space:

C had heard and read about the term psychodrama and wanted to experience the modality.

N is a current trainee from a junior group and a regular participant in my workshops.

P is a friend of N's and had some resistance to joining the workshop.

Z and **A** are employees of the museum where the workshop was hosted; they decided to join spontaneously on the morning of the workshop.

The sixth participant shared that he decided to join as part of his current belief of FOFO, *fuck around and find out*.

During the four-hour workshop, C chose to take up a psychodrama piece as protagonist. Her starting point for the work was:

“I don’t enjoy creating these days as much as I used to a few years ago.”

The piece involved inviting the role of herself from four years earlier. The process unfolded from this entry point.

After the workshop formally concluded, participants were invited to write reflections on their experience. C wrote:

“I felt like I went into different spaces in my head, my emotions & did like a face-to-face with them. And throughout, I was mostly 100% in the moment without really being distracted. I was able to tell my distracting thoughts to pause and say to them that I will come back to you later. It felt heavy, then expansive & light, in this order.”

Another participant, Z, wrote:

“જે દુનિયા થી ભાગવાનો પ્રયત્ન કરતી હતી, ત્યાં આવીને એનો અનુભવ કરતા શીખી અને એહસાસ થયો કે એના થી દરવાની જરૂર નથી.”

(The world I was trying to run away from, I came here and learned to experience it. And felt that there is no need to be afraid of it.)

A third participant, P, wrote:

“Firstly, the experience was too good, not what I expected, still, I got along. When my friend introduced me to this, I was not at all convinced. And I opened up a bit & it was not the other way around.”

These written reflections reinforced my earlier observation: that workshops situated in cultural and public spaces, without explicit therapeutic framing, were nevertheless enabling participants to engage with emotional and psychological material in meaningful ways. In this context, psychodrama appeared to operate as an accessible entry point into inner work, allowing participants to encounter their experience without the stigma or resistance often associated with formal psychological settings.

These observations also resonate with the way psychodrama understands creativity, spontaneity, and accessibility.

K.Bradshaw Tavon writes:

“A creative act results often in a product: a poem, a symphony, a painting, a play; these are what Moreno called cultural conserves. In the moment they are complete the creative act is over and unless they are subsequently approached with spontaneity they may lose their creative quality.”

(Bradshaw Tavon, 1998, p. 34)

What felt important in the design of *Everyone Is an Artist* was not the creation of an artistic product, but the activation of spontaneity and participation through ordinary materials and collective engagement, an approach that aligned closely with this understanding of creativity as a living process rather than a finished object.



Everyone is an Artist: Workshop photographs, Indigo Art Museum, June 2025

At the same time, the workshop's location within a formal museum space brought into focus another of Moreno's core commitments, that psychodrama was never meant to remain confined to clinical or elite contexts. P. Haworth writes:

"Moreno's passion throughout his life was to develop the methods of sociometry, psychodrama and sociodrama to tackle the problems of the world, of society and of human interactions, rather than just the individual. He started from a hope for a better world and went to each individual reality."

(Haworth, 1998, p. 16)

Placing this workshop inside a museum, a space that often functions as a cultural gatekeeper, and framing it through the assertion that *everyone is an artist*, became a concrete way for me, of working toward this larger social objective.

The workshop design, ***Everyone Is an Artist***, was also facilitated in **February 2025** at **Mould Art Space**, Ahmedabad. This venue holds particular significance in the development of my public psychodrama practice. My first public workshop had taken place at Mould in February 2024, followed by another in June 2024, then this workshop in February 2025, and most recently September 2025. Over this period, the relationship between my work and this space has gradually evolved. The owner of Mould participated in the June 2024 workshop, and we are currently in the process of formalising a regular calendar of psychodrama workshops there, as part of his vision to develop a mental wellbeing wing within the space. This shift in the function of the venue itself reflects a change in the socio-cultural conserve around how psychodrama is situated in public life.



Everyone is an Artist: Workshop invitations, Indigo Art Museum, June 2025(L) & Mould Art Space February 2025(R)

The February 2025 group consisted of five participants:

D - a returning participant; her first workshop had been in June 2024 at Mould

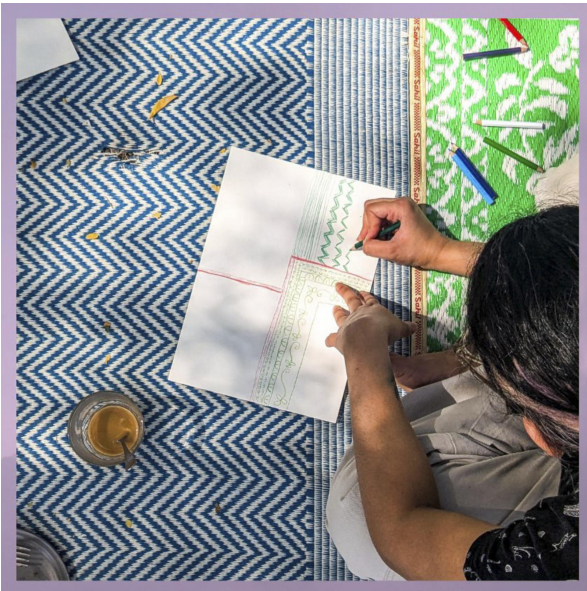
H - first-time participant who had wanted to attend earlier but was unable due to scheduling conflicts

K - first-time participant with very little psychological literacy; she is now in one-to-one therapy with me

N - a current trainee, also referred in the workshop above

R - N's mother, who joined on the morning of the workshop

The venue includes three enclosed rooms and a large open lawn and garden space. The decision to conduct the workshop in the open area was taken mutually by the group and myself. (Process notes: see Appendix 1.1)



Everyone is an Artist: Workshop photographs, Mould Art Space, February 2025
Two psychodrama pieces were facilitated during the four-hour session. Both were brief in duration. Despite this, participants reported significant shifts in their experience.

Written reflections collected after the workshop included:

"I feel exhilarated... Maybe just blurting it out once was what I needed... The sharing of what was built inside of me to a complete stranger felt relieving... Feel at peace, at the moment at least!"

-

D

“Right now I am feeling connected to 10-year-old me. And I am curious to know me, who I was and who I am now.”

“The workshop overall was blissful... I connected to the people of the group like I haven't connected to my closest friends in a while. It was very helpful as well and I really am looking forward to work more with this modality”

In July 2025, approximately five months later, H, one of the protagonists, wrote to me via text:

“I wanted to tell you that the psychodrama workshop made a significant shift in me. Didn't realise it closer to the experience but lately it has become very clear to me.”

This pattern of brief enactments followed by longer-term integration closely reflects the way psychodrama understands the process of learning and change:

“The learning does not only take place during a psychodrama session but the process started there often continues weeks, months or even years afterwards. The pennies keep dropping in unexpected moments.”
(Bradshaw Tavon, 1998, p. 104)

The contrast between the Indigo Art Museum workshop and the Mould workshop also brought into focus how different group compositions and cultural contexts shape the work, even when the design and intent remain consistent:

“Each group will have its own culture, built partly from individual norms which people bring from their own family and social cultures, and partly from the cultural expectations which have grown around the practice of psychodrama.”
(Bannister, 1998, p. 125)

At Mould, where the space itself was gradually becoming invested in the work, psychodrama was unfolding not as a specialised intervention but as part of a growing community context. This aligns with Moreno's understanding of the operation of psychodrama and tele:

“Moreno realised though that tele was interaction which was not confined to the therapist and patient but it existed in schools, workplaces and within the home.”
(Bannister, 1998, p. 117)

and with his emphasis on the accessibility of group work:

“Ahead of his time, as always, Moreno was advocating this approach ... He explained that a psychodrama group contains all the elements of psychotherapy ... In addition, he felt that the group was much more accessible to people of all classes.”
(Bannister, 1998, p. 123)

These developments reinforced my initial observation that psychodrama, when offered through culturally embedded and publicly accessible formats, can become part of the social fabric of a space, gradually shifting how inner work is understood and engaged with.

Photography × Psychodrama workshop, August 2025, National Institute of Design (NID), Gandhinagar

By the time the *Photography × Psychodrama workshop* took place at the National Institute of Design, Gandhinagar, I had already been working with psychodrama in public and cultural spaces for over a year and a half. What distinguished this moment was that it was the first time I consciously articulated psychodrama not only as a psychological method, but as a pedagogical and artistic framework within an educational institution.

The invitation emerged from a casual conversation in April 2025 with the Head of the department of the Masters programme in Photography Design at NID, where we were speaking about the current state of mental well-being support on campus. During that conversation, I introduced psychodrama and shared some relevant literature. A few months later, I was invited to design and conduct a two-day workshop for the second-year Masters students in Photography Design as part of their formal curriculum. Unlike the public workshops I had been facilitating, this was not an optional engagement. Participation was embedded within the academic structure of the programme.

The workshop was conducted in August 2025, across two days, eight hours each day, with thirteen participants who had already known each other for over a year. Almost all of them had relocated to Gandhinagar for their education. The group context therefore carried layers of shared history, proximity, and institutional belonging that were qualitatively different from the open public workshops I had been holding elsewhere.

The design of the workshop placed photography and psychodrama within a single participatory framework. Photography was approached not as a finished product or aesthetic outcome, but as a process of witnessing, of the self, others, memory, emotion, and place. Psychodrama functioned as the action method through which personal narratives could be explored collectively. Together, the two mediums were positioned as tools for emotional awareness, self-inquiry, and meaning-making.

The module abstract articulated this approach by emphasising spontaneity, embodied storytelling, and the creation of visual traces that function as emotional artefacts rather than aesthetic endpoints. This articulation marked a shift in my practice: psychodrama was now being offered not only as a therapeutic modality, but as a method of learning and artistic inquiry within a formal academic institution. (*Module abstract: see Appendix 1.2*)

At the close of the second day, after the workshop had formally concluded, participants were invited, not required, to write reflections on their experience. Seven of the thirteen chose to do so. Their handwritten responses included:

“It was a very successful workshop. It helped in bringing into forefront what is and could have been. It created space for everyone & me to be open and vulnerable & would suggest to have it for sem II kids.”

“I feel free.”

"In the two days of workshop I felt I revisited by old memories. I relived it. Talking to my younger self gave him suggestions and also learned from myself. It healed my mind and body. Thank you."

"A platform free of judgments where we all could be ourself, reflect upon, introspect and learn more about each other; this workshop was a way through & a new beginning for me. Thank you!"

"Before the experience I had my own biases regarding me & my surroundings but making a non-judgmental space with the same people, made me realise to not to judge them that quick & now I want to show my reactions & emotions unapologetically without thinking about being 'judged' gaze. Thanks for this beautiful experience :)"

"These two days were a great source of self-reflecting. Listening to everyone's stories helped me feel a wide range of emotions and the intensities of them. It was beautiful to see how it created a safe space for everyone to share very sensitive memories without any judgment. Thank you for such an eye-opening experience!"

"First of all, thank you so much, Mitul, for this amazing workshop. I am so grateful to be the part of this workshop. In these 2 days, I got really comfortable around my batchmates, my experience of revisiting my past and batchmates' past made a known connect which I didn't believe I could have ever. But it changed. Now this place feels like a place where I belong. 'I FEEL LIGHT'."

These responses made visible something that had been forming across my practice: when psychodrama is introduced through accessible and culturally embedded forms, in this case through photography and within an academic institution, it enables participants to encounter emotional and relational material without the weight of clinical or therapeutic framing. The language that appeared in their reflections was not the language of diagnosis or treatment, but of belonging, memory, connection, reflection, and self-recognition.

In this sense, the NID workshop became a pivotal moment in my journey. It confirmed that psychodrama could function as a public pedagogy, as a method of artistic inquiry, and as a collective learning process, one that belongs not only in training rooms or clinical spaces, but within the living structures of education, culture, and community.

Section 2. From Design to Action: The First Workshop

The first workshop that I consciously designed as a director was ***Time Travel x Here to Stay Even When I'm Gone***, conducted in **December 2023** for senior psychodrama trainees in an **online** format.

The workshop was designed to explore the idea that, as humans, we have the ability to time-travel, sometimes voluntarily, a simplistic example of which is a photo album from our childhood and sometimes involuntarily, via a particular and distinct smell we might suddenly come across in an unexpected space. We began with this premise, followed by warm-ups designed to lead the participants to travel both in their past and the future (for the sake of this design, it was assumed that time flows linearly).

One particular aspect of this workshop was designed to allow the participants to reimagine the future via the benefit of hindsight. One of the prompts led the participants to imagine they were present at their funeral, setting the scene by concretising the space, themselves, the people present, and someone who was giving a eulogy. Once the scene had been set, they looked at this from a mirror position and role-reversed with the person who was giving the eulogy.

After the end of everyone's sharing within smaller groups, the group was invited to share in the larger group if they wished to. One of the experiences that was shared was that of gratitude for the life they had lived so far, for the sense of belonging they experienced from the people they offer to and receive love from, a validation of the direction in which they were moving. Another participant shared about the contentment of knowing they were satisfied with who and where they were and would not miss anything if they were to drop dead at this point. Yet, another experience was a sense of relief, of an ease in recognising that they had sufficient time to achieve everything on their list before reaching a place of passing on from this physical world. A common thread among the participants was their recognition of where they were positioned in the macro picture of their life, which led to shifts and adjustments in the path they wished to move along from that point onwards.

I found the design connecting directly with the psychodramatic understandings of time and enactment:

"It is one thing to consider the expectancies of future happenings in our own minds and another thing to 'simulate' them, to construct techniques which enable us to live in the future, to act as if the future is at hand, right here ...

... All three dimensions of time, past, present, and future, are brought together in psychodrama, as they are in life, from the point of view of functional therapy."
(Moreno, 1969, cited in Fox, 1987, p. 5)

The first public adaptation of this workshop, now retitled to ***Time Traveling Emotions*** took place in **February 2024** at **Mould Art Space**, as part of Makers Fest, a two-day cultural and marketplace festival. The audience that assembled for the workshop reflected the ecology of the festival itself: a museum professional, a doctor, a blogger, a food and wellness artist, a teacher,

an artist, and others who had arrived with little or no prior exposure to psychodrama. Of the eleven participants, seven had pre-registered and four joined on the spot, one of them tagging along with a pre-registered friend, another being a chef working at the festival.

The workshop had originally been designed for senior trainees, with several years of psychodrama training and clinical experience. For this public setting, the design was consciously altered before the session. I removed the theme of death, central to the original trainee workshop. This was a deliberate directorial decision, made in advance, taking into account the cultural tone of the festival, the participants' unfamiliarity with the modality, and my own intent: to offer an experiential introduction to psychodrama as a group action method, rather than to pursue depth or resolution.

The design retained space for a brief psychodramatic vignette, but I was not expecting a full drama within the two-hour frame. What mattered more was that participants could encounter psychodrama as a lived experiential process rather than as concept or technique.

As I read S. Taylor thoughts in reference to the Director's warm-up to the group prior to entering it, the decision and process of redesigning the workshop found confirmation:

"In a new group: how many people are there? Who has done psychodrama before and who has not? What may their needs be in this moment?"

"In a one-off workshop ... whether people have chosen to be in the group, or have they been 'sent'?"
(Taylor, 1998, p. 57)

The choices made in adapting the workshop were not merely logistical. They marked the beginning of my directorial orientation toward public work: shaping form in response to people, place, and purpose, rather than imposing pre-existing structures. What follows reflects how these design decisions were received and lived by the participants themselves.

Approximately thirty minutes after the workshop had begun, a 24-year-old woman arrived alone. In our earlier text exchanges, she had expressed uncertainty about joining because of her fear of being vulnerable in a group. Despite this hesitation, and despite arriving after the group co-unconscious had begun to form, she chose to enter the space. Later in the session, she volunteered to take up a psychodramatic piece as protagonist. This was the only drama that happened during the two-hour session.

After the workshop formally ended, she wrote:

"I felt I met myself today which was much needed to understand my situation. Thank you Mitul for conducting this workshop. It has opened new doors for me and I hope to heal very soon!"

Another participant, a young man in his late twenties, had not taken up a role in the drama but had participated in the warm-up phase. After the session concluded, sensing something incomplete, I asked if he needed a hug. He hugged me and sobbed for several minutes. The image it evoked for me was of the scene in *Good Will Hunting*, where the character played by

Matt Damon breaks down in the arms of the therapist played by Robin Williams, except here, the shift had emerged from a two-hour group psychodrama session within a festival context. He later sent me a four-minute video testimonial describing the impact of the experience.

In conversations with other participants afterwards, several shared that they had been holding back visible emotion during the session so as not to disrupt the protagonist's process. My response to them was simple and direct: in psychodrama, not only is it acceptable for such emotions to surface, it is expected.

These experiences reflected an important principle of the work: that meaningful emotional movement can occur even for those who never step into the role of protagonist, and even within brief time frames, when the group field is held with care. (*Process notes: see Appendix 2*)

By the time of this workshop, I had already spent three and a half years in psychodrama training. I knew the power of the modality. What changed in February 2024 was not my knowledge of psychodrama, but my relationship to that knowledge. After the session, in an exhilarated state, I said to the supervisor who had accompanied me as a double:

"I had known and experienced the power of psychodrama in the three and a half years of training. Today, though, I was able to wield that power."

This moment marked a shift in my identity as a director from a trainee to a trainee director in public space.

Another conceptual recognition also crystallised for me during this workshop: *"Vulnerability is contagious."* This is a term I coined during the session and one that has remained true and in active use in my work since. For serious, deeper inner work to happen, the safety of the group is essential. While the director holds primary responsibility for this, each participant contributes to the container of safety. Through tele, the group co-unconscious can form rapidly, allowing vulnerability in one participant to invite vulnerability in others.

"Moreno's existential philosophy stresses that we all meet as equals in encounters in the here-and-now, indeed the director must accept that she too enters the group as the equal of all the other members but with added responsibilities."
(Holmes, 1998, p. 144)

This understanding of equality and responsibility within the group extends into how the work itself is created. Holmes further writes:

"Psychodrama is the result of a process of co-creation in which the creative and spontaneous contributions of director, protagonist and the group members combine to produce a drama that has emotional significance for the protagonist (and the rest of the group), thus allowing the possibility of therapeutic movement."
(Holmes, 1998, p. 144)

This insight aligns with foundational psychodramatic understanding. A. Bannister writes

“The co-unconscious then is an extension of tele, it is the history of an individual, of a family, and of a group. This is the material with which we are working when we undertake the direction of a psychodrama group.”

(Bannister, 1998, p. 121)

And regarding the permission to the participants:

“The patient is permitted to be as unspontaneous or inexpressive as he/she is at this time.”

(Moreno & Moreno, 1969, p. 236, cited in Taylor, 1998, p. 58)

The workshop also confirmed that depth is not solely a function of time, and that psychodrama can generate enduring movement even within brief, non-clinical, public encounters. This shift in my directorial orientation laid the ground for the demographic- and context-sensitive work that followed.

Section 3. Deepening: Self-Love & Demographic-Specific Design

This section traces how my directorial thinking deepened when I began designing workshops around specific social and demographic contexts, rather than around universal themes alone.

In **May 2025**, a friend approached me to facilitate a psychodrama workshop for her and her friends on the evening of her birthday, at her residence. She and I had recently completed a fifteen-month course in Person-Centred Therapy, and she had heard about psychodrama from me and another peer from the same programme, who was also part of my psychodrama training group. She had been wanting to experience the modality and felt that her birthday would be a meaningful context in which to do so.

In the conversations leading up to the workshop, I enquired about the participants and learned that the group would consist of ten to twelve women between the ages of thirty and forty, in different stages of life, some married, some married with children, some divorced and single, others unmarried. On the day of the workshop, I also realised that three women in the group were related: two sisters-in-law and a cousin. The presence of family members introduced an additional relational layer that required careful attention in the direction of the work.

The theme of the workshop was (Self) Love on My Mind - Self-First ≠ Selfish.

The phrase Self-First ≠ Selfish was a title I had noted for myself over a year earlier as one of the themes I wanted to design workshops around. The immediate inspiration for shaping the workshop around self-love came from bell hooks' book *All About Love*, particularly her writing on how self-acceptance is shaped by social conditioning, judgment, and internalised criticism, and how self-love is often misread as narcissism or selfishness.

My decision to work with this theme for this particular group was grounded in a social and cultural observation: women, historically and systemically, are expected to inhabit caregiving roles. This expectation extends beyond motherhood and shapes how women relate to partners, family members, friendships, and work. The internal labour of loving oneself therefore unfolds alongside strong external and internal pressures to prioritise the needs of others. While self-love is not exclusive to any gender, the burden placed on women in this regard is socially specific and persistent.

As I do in all my workshops, once the session formally closed, I invited participants to share their experiences if they wished. In this case, rather than writing them on site, they sent their reflections over the following days via text to the host, who then shared them with me.

The participants wrote:

“As someone who had never been exposed to Psychodrama earlier, it was a life-changing experience for me. I have carried home some heavy moments, tilting turns of epiphany and a lot of warmth and hope. I attribute this valuable takeaway to Mitul who was very patient and well-aware of his personal techniques. I particularly remember a moment where he stopped

someone from handing over a tissue to me as my tears rolled down and I realise in retrospect how rewarding that was for me, to not feel the urgent need to wipe away my tears and allow myself to sit with my raw emotions. Another observation I recall is his insistence to address the protagonist by their first name and not in second person, and that is so powerful. There are small pockets of magnanimous self-realisation that Mitul has beautifully sewn into my fabric, to not feel apologetic about my journey so far and sit with its imperfections till I have the actual strength to make a change. With his expert manoeuvring, I also realised how proud I am of myself (with all my versions) for making an effort to constantly learn and unlearn. Thank you, Mitul.”

- A

“What an amazing experience it was! Completely different, completely unimaginable. Love the way you took everyone into the depth of emotions. we felt grateful, we felt heavy, we felt lighter, we laughed, we cried, we felt attached, we felt helpless in one single session. It was a psychodrama in true sense. we forgot where we were for a while. Felt so much gratitude to you. I think your aura speaks volumes. You literally gave therapy without uttering a single word. One can’t be this non judgemental & this patient. Thank you for being so kind. ❤️”

- D

“It was really an amazing experience overall. And for me it was breaking my boundaries kind of experience. It was my core feelings that came out. And the way you carried out workshop was so comfortable and safe that everyone just went with the flow of emotions. I hope I can attend much more workshops like this in future. So grateful to experience this kind of thing in my journey. 😊”

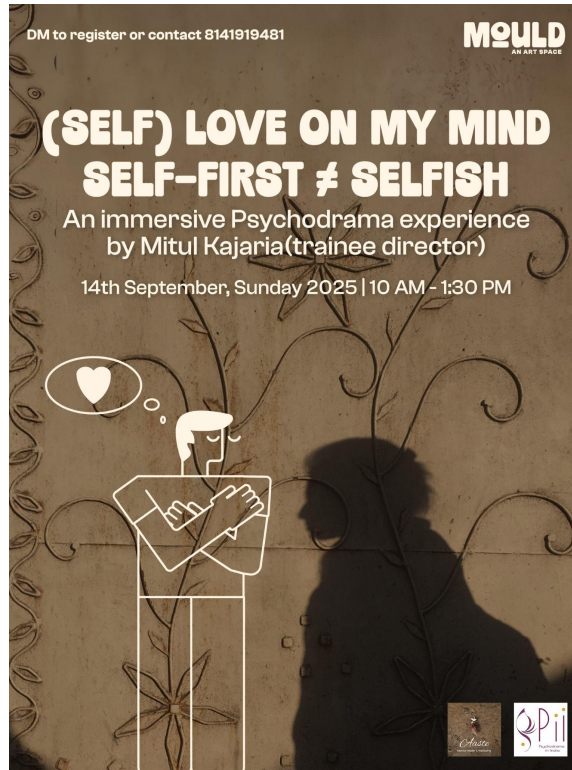
- R

“First of all, I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop, thank you so much for creating such a safe and open space where we could all express our vulnerability. It was truly powerful to witness the structures being formed, how each participant brought their own perspective, and how varied the interpretations were. A big thank you to all the participants who had the courage to open up and share. Without their honesty and vulnerability, the workshop wouldn’t have been the same. Once again, thank you. I had a truly wonderful experience.”

The following line by Marcia Karp resonates closely with how I experienced the group evolve by the end of the four hours.

“Each member of the group is a therapeutic agent of the other. To be understood and held emotionally and physically by a group member who is not previously enmeshed in the story, can be a healing experience in itself.”
(Karp, 1998, p. 3)

This exploration then moved into a public context. Several months later, in **September 2025**, I offered the same theme, (Self) Love on My Mind - Self-First ≠ Selfish, as an open public workshop at **Mould Art Space**.



(Self) Love on My Mind: Workshop invitation, Mould Art Space, September 2025

The group consisted of eight participants: two men and six women. Among them were one man, J, who had attended my first workshop in February 2024; one woman, S, visiting Ahmedabad who found the theme resonant and decided to join; one woman, A, from the venue who joined spontaneously; three junior-group co-trainees (one man, R, two women, B and N); one woman, K, who had attended the psychodrama conference; and one, RN, practising therapist.

The participants wrote:

"I came here with no expectations and no pre-conceived notions. But during the workshop I became an emotion that I have always found difficult to express. It was both overwhelming and healing to embody that. There is heaviness but I believe that heaviness is an important step towards healing. Thank you."

- S

"My participation in the workshop was purely accidental, as the only role I saw myself performing was that of an observer, DISTANT from the process. I don't really know what exactly has shifted and if it is temporary but I feel connected to the people who attended and shared much more of myself than I have in a few months."

- A

"It was a wonderful experience of psychodrama! It always is ... A lot of resonance of life-time roles and emotions. I was glad to be an active auxiliary! The place is serene and beautiful. I feel like coming to the 'Mould' again & again! Thank you tons Mitul!"

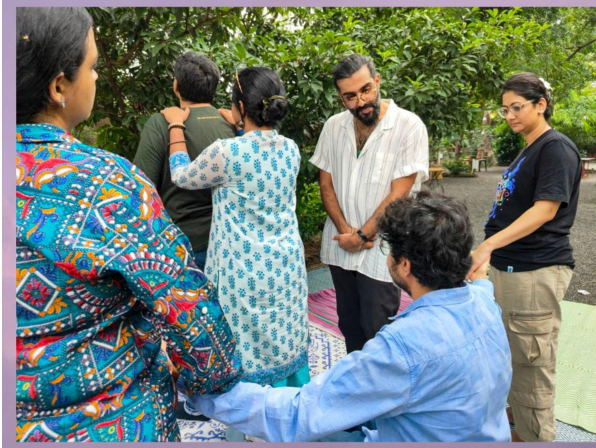
- K

"I felt that my Re-Journey of Self-Love once again has been started.... Thank you so much Mitul and each and everyone who participated in this workshop. The 'SORRY' you give to others made me realise I need to give to me. The entire psychodrama that was conducted was such a wonderful insight to me as well as to others who showed such courage and vulnerability. Looking forward for many such learnings in the future. Love & Healing,"

- RN

S's experience of embodying an emotion she had always found difficult to express connects closely with the psychodramatic understanding of auxiliary roles:

"The auxiliary ego may also benefit from the act of playing a role apparently distant from their repertoire of roles in everyday life ... It was clear that through doing this ... he was able to experience a more assertive and direct aspect of his own personality."
(Holmes, 1998, p. 151)



(Self) Love on My Mind: Workshop photographs, Mould Art Space, September 2025

The patterns visible in the participants' reflections, the movement from guardedness to openness, from distance to connection, from internalised judgment to self-recognition, are consistent with several core psychodramatic understandings of how change unfolds in groups.

Many participants described a sense of connection and relief that emerged from witnessing others and being witnessed in return:

"I feel connected to the people who attended and shared much more of myself than I have in a few months,"

"It created space for everyone & me to be open and vulnerable,"

"Listening to everyone's stories helped me feel a wide range of emotions."

This resonates closely with Yalom's articulation of universality as a central curative factor in group work. Many clients, he believes, come to therapy with a sense that:

"They are unique in their pain ... After hearing other members disclose distress similar to their own, clients report that the disconfirmation of their feelings of uniqueness is a powerful source of relief, and that they feel 'more in touch with the world'."
(Yalom, cited in Ruscombe-King, 1998, p. 178)

Within this process, the role of sharing became especially significant. What unfolded in the group mirrored my understanding of sharing as a space where experience is released and woven into collective meaning:

"The sharing is meant to capture this learning process and allow the group members to purge themselves of emotions or insights gained. It is also aimed at normalising the protagonist's experience by hearing how others are similarly involved at different levels of the same process."
(Karp, 1998, p. 9)

The intensity of emotional expression described by the participants; *"we felt grateful, we felt heavy, we felt lighter, we laughed, we cried,"* *"my core feelings came out"*, also reflects a foundational psychodramatic principle:

"They cannot learn control of their emotions until they have fully experienced them. In psychodrama they can fully live out their emotions and then learn to control them."
(Moreno, cited in Moreno, 1998, p. xii)

Several reflections pointed toward shifts in self-understanding and identity:

"There are small pockets of magnanimous self-realisation..."

"I realised how proud I am of myself (with all my versions),"

"The 'SORRY' you give to others made me realise I need to give to me."

These experiences align with Yalom's emphasis on self-understanding as a mechanism of growth:

***“Learning why I think and feel the way I do can induce enormous relief of conflict.”
(Yalom, cited in Ruscombe-King, 1998, p. 179)***

Together, these accounts and theoretical touchstones reinforce my growing understanding that carefully designed psychodramatic spaces, whether private or public, allow participants to encounter emotional, relational, and identity material in ways that are both contained and deeply transformative, even within brief time frames and outside clinical contexts.

Across both workshops, what became visible was not a single outcome but a pattern: emotional exposure, self-recognition, relational openness, and shifts in how participants related to themselves and to others. The depth of the work was shaped by careful attention to context, group composition, and safety, but the movement itself emerged through the group's engagement with one another.

Taken together, these two workshops deepened my understanding of how demographic-specific design, when combined with psychodramatic method, allows participants to encounter long-standing emotional material in ways that are both contained and transformative, without relying on clinical framing or extended time structures.

Section 4. Core Realisation: Depth Beyond Duration

During one of the sessions at **Aadi, the first international Psychodrama conference in India**, held in **January 2025**, I encountered a position that first gave me a sense of relief but eventually felt unsettling. It was suggested that in a four-hour workshop, particularly when participants have little to no understanding of psychodrama, it is sufficient for them to gain a sense of what the modality is, and that going into deeper work might not be ideal.

This encounter stayed with me. In the months that followed, a quieter recognition began to take shape in my practice. As I reflected on the workshops I had conducted before the conference, and as I observed the workshops that followed it, I began to notice how consistently participants were experiencing meaningful emotional and psychological movement, even within limited time frames. This was visible across two-hour sessions, four-hour sessions, and sixteen-hour two-day workshops. The depth of these shifts was evident both in my own experience as director and in what participants themselves articulated after the work.

The earliest of these observations emerged from the **February 2024** public workshop, **Time Travelling Emotions**, at **Mould art space**, a two-hour session. Participants wrote:

"Today was my first time experiencing this form of psychodrama. Two beautiful hours that I can't even put in words (yet). Completely immersed myself in the activities and came back in touch with my real, deep-down emotions after a long time. Can't wait to be part of another workshop again soon. <3"

"The depth of connection I found in this space is something I don't experience a lot... I look forward to more things like this because it's a very calm and safe space where I could experience myself and I know I will be held."

"I find that talking is not my thing. It doesn't give me a kind of realisation... In this workshop, I could be a part of someone else's healing journey and in the process could also work on some of mine."

"Attending the workshop made me realise the amount of emotions I haven't sorted through, and how much I need to get in touch with my residual feelings and emotions. Seeing everyone being open and vulnerable was as beautiful as it was scary, even if I wasn't showing it. I'm glad I got to attend it when I did... I'll forever be grateful for this experience and love what you are doing for all of us."

Four months later, at the **June 2024** public workshop, **Time Travelling Emotions at Mould art Space**, this time a four-hour session, participants reflected:

"I am grateful for this experience ... After trying therapy over the years, this workshop turned out to be so immersive. I hope more people get to experience this."

“My first time doing something like this in person ... Thank you for making a space where people could be vulnerable and genuine. Inspires me to share more of my life with those in it.”

“Not being able to sleep since so long is very difficult to go through. Doing this workshop made me feel sleepy post the session which is something I haven’t felt since sometime.”

“I feel so lucky to have been part of this workshop... I would have to be vulnerable myself and found through this in a support space myself.”

These accounts, emerging from sessions of different lengths, pointed to emotional, relational, and physiological shifts that were neither superficial nor momentary.

As a director, this accumulation of lived evidence quietly reshaped my understanding. What I had begun to witness was that depth is not proportionate to time. While longer formats offer certain possibilities, the presence of deep work is shaped far more by group safety, readiness, directorial attunement, and the integrity of the process than by the number of hours allocated to a session.

The recognition that emerged for me was simple: when a therapeutic environment can be created, even brief encounters can carry significant movement. The conditions for depth are created by the quality of direction, by how the group is warmed up, held, and accompanied through the process. This attention to the early life of the group and to the director’s own state is echoed in S. Taylor’s writing on group work:

“The need to establish a safe environment for work to be carried out is important, and should be developed quickly as the group’s life is short. Assuming the director has given him/herself good opportunity to go through their own warming-up process, the immediate consideration is how to begin to establish group cohesion and trust. One thing to facilitate at the start of any group is enabling members to speak, particularly as it may be that there are some who have never taken part in a group before.”
(Taylor, 1998, p. 66)

When the group is met with care, warmth and permission at the very beginning, the work can move quickly into depth, even when the overall duration of the encounter is brief. Across these moments, the figure of the director began to stand out more clearly in my work. Marcia Karp, describing the directors tasks writes:

“To build sufficient cohesion and a constructive working group climate ... To stimulate individual group members sufficiently and warm them up for action ... To create sufficient safety for the protagonist and the group ... To ensure that the psychodrama is a group process and not one-to-one therapy in a group ... To allow catharsis and integration of group members ...”
(Karp, 1998, p. 8-9)

As this understanding deepened, my attention increasingly settled on the director’s responsibility for the moment itself, the quality of presence brought into the room, and the way

the group is gently invited to get in touch with their uninhibited selves. Over time, this came to feel less like a technique and more like a position from which the work unfolds.

K. Bradshaw Tauvon writes:

“The ‘philosophy of the moment’, developed by J. L. Moreno, is psychodrama’s foundation stone. Moreno propounded a world-view within which all human beings are considered infinitely spontaneous and creative and equal in status. This stance then should be the starting point for the director of any psychodrama session.”
(Bradshaw Tauvon, 1998, p. 46)

My own training in person-centred therapy also finds resonance here. Rogers’ description of the therapeutic relationship, that when certain conditions are present, the individual gradually becomes comfortable to express themselves, more congruent with experience, and better capable of self-directed growth, is visibly reflected in what participants described across these workshops. This alignment is articulated by S. Taylor when she situates Rogers’ work within psychodramatic practice:

“Although he was looking at individual therapeutic relationships, his description of an ideal therapist/client alliance applies to psychodrama in that it has the spirit of a ‘client-centred’ therapy ... When the conditions of an ideal therapist/client—or director/group and director/protagonist—relationship exists, Rogers stated that a characteristic process was set in motion.”
(Taylor, 1998, pp. 63-64)

Within this process, Taylor expands Rogers observations that the individual:

“...is increasingly free in expressing his/her feelings ... increasingly becomes aware of the incongruity between his/her experiences and his/her concept of self ... becomes aware of feelings which have been previously denied or distorted in awareness ... becomes increasingly able to experience, without threat, the therapist’s—director’s/group’s—unconditional positive regard and to feel an unconditional positive self-regard.”
(Rogers, 1959, quoted in Taylor, 1998, p. 64)

Finally, the responsibility of trust, in the group, the method, and the people, became central to my learning as a director. A. Bannister writes about the position of the director in a group:

“Williams (1991:89) points out that the demeanour of the director is cardinal. Although spontaneity may mean that ‘anything can happen’, it is important that the group trusts the competence of the director to handle it. The director, in turn, has to trust the group, and the method, as well as the individual, in order to encourage change... In order to trust the group, the director must believe that it contains within it all the ingredients, the seeds, for change. This means a belief that each individual has the power to heal him or herself.”
(Bannister, 1998, p. 121)

Seen through this lens, the recognition that depth is not proportional to time is not surprising.

I became confirmed that depth arises when a director learns to create the conditions in which people are permitted to go at their own pace, feel what is present, and participate in a process of co-creation that honours the intelligence of the group itself.

Up to this point, I have traced my development as a director largely through the lived experience of workshops. For me, the work of a psychodramatist does not begin only when a group enters the room, nor does it end when a session closes. The imagining of where psychodrama might live, the shaping of its possible forms, the writing of proposals, and the initiation of conversations with institutions and communities are themselves central to the practice. These processes of visioning and planning function as a warm-up for future encounters. The following sections therefore extend this journey beyond enacted workshops into these generative processes, through which my directorial identity continues to take shape.

Section 5. Expanding the Director: Sparkling Shiny Spontaneity

The Sparkling Shiny Spontaneity module was developed within my training context and unfolded over the course of four sessions. It brought together a small, curated group of trainees from different levels of the psychodrama program for supplementary work focused on the development of spontaneity in them. Alongside this collective intention, the module also carried a more personal thread: my supervisor's invitation for me to consciously explore and cultivate my own joyful, light, and playful role as a psychodramatist.

Until this point, most of the workshops I had designed and facilitated, including those conducted with trainees, had followed serious themes and slower, grounding-oriented processes. This module required me to design and facilitate work around *ridiculousness, laughter, bodily play, exaggeration, and fun*, which was a new territory for me as a director.

The module therefore functioned not only as training for the participants, but as a direct intervention in my own development as a facilitator.

The Sparkling Shiny Spontaneity (SSS) module consisted of four sessions over four consecutive weekends, each session lasting four hours and conducted online. Participants were selected from different training groups; while some had familiarity through the larger training ecosystem, many had not worked closely together in this configuration before.

Each session explored a distinct relationship with spontaneity:

Session 1 - Relationship with Ridiculousness & Laughter

Participants entered exaggerated movement, voice, emotional orchestration, absurd expert roles, and comic scene settings. Ridiculousness was used as a warm-up and as the primary field of work. Laughter, exaggeration, and nonsense gradually opened into unexpected emotional, philosophical, and relational material.

Session 2 - Relationship with Body Consciousness

Spontaneity was explored through the body: exaggerated daily actions, mirror work, non-verbal debate, and physical improvisation. Ordinary gestures were expanded into theatrical ritual, allowing participants to experience their bodies as expressive instruments rather than controlled objects.

Session 3 - Unconscious Communication via Body Language

Communication moved beyond words into gesture, sound, posture, and symbolic interaction. Alien encounters, puppetry, and emotional embodiment allowed unconscious material to surface without direct narrative.

Session 4 - Spontaneity in the Ordinary

The final session grounded spontaneity in everyday life: commuting, household routines, minor frustrations, ordinary objects. The mundane was transformed into theatrical material, revealing how spontaneity operates in the smallest moments of daily living.

Across all sessions, play, absurdity, laughter, and imagination remained central, yet personal psychodramatic work emerged repeatedly and organically.

Participant reflections reveal how this tonal shift reshaped their inner experience.

One participant described the module as:

*“Very volatile in terms of flow of energy, physical actions, reflections, feelings, and thoughts...
I have seen my friends... otherwise very closed open up, go with the flow...
The enjoyment is unfiltered and yet planned...
I feel a teary-eyed joy for them.”*

Another wrote:

*“I realized how spontaneity can also make one introspect...
Spontaneity is not just being goofy or silly but can also help tap that part of self which is stuck and might need a bit of spontaneity to move.”*

A third participant captured a fundamental shift:

*“Spontaneity now means the permission to the self to be...
Even if it is for a short period of time just allow myself to lose control...
One doesn’t need to be conscious of themselves all the time.”*

Several participants named safety and embodiment as central:

*“The playfulness stood out and eased me into feeling safe, for bodywork, creativity, and bonding with others.”
“I have felt safe and comfortable, and I have realised that I like having fun.”*

For me as a director, these experiences reframed my understanding of how emotional depth and inner movement can emerge through laughter, absurdity, and shared play. I learned to trust that joy, humour, and ridiculousness can hold as much psychological truth as silence and gravity.

“Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the playing and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible, then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play.”

(Winnicott, 1971, quoted in Ruscombe-King, 1998, p. 195)

Through this work, this module quietly affirmed that spontaneity is not merely a technique to be trained, it is a way of being with others, of leading, of listening, and of allowing the group to meet life with greater honesty, courage, and ease. My role as director grew more flexible, more embodied, and more relationally responsive.

Up to this point, I have traced my development as a director largely through the lived experience of workshops: how groups are warmed up, how encounters are shaped, and how movement unfolds within them. Yet for me, the work of a psychodramatist does not begin only when a group enters the room, nor does it end when a session closes. The imagining of where psychodrama might live, the shaping of its possible forms, the writing of proposals, and the initiation of conversations with institutions and communities are themselves central to the practice. These processes of visioning and planning function are a warm-up for future encounters. The following sections therefore extend this journey beyond enacted workshops into these generative processes, through which my directorial identity continues to take shape.

Section 6. Beyond Therapy: Non-Therapeutic Interventions

Over time, alongside my work in training spaces and public workshops, another branch of my practice gradually began to take form. As a curator, I had long been more interested in the life of the artist and the inner movement behind an artwork than in the work itself as a finished product. As a photographer, I had begun to relate to photography not as a precursor to an image, but as a process through which the photographer encounters and reshapes the self. Psychodrama offered a way to weave these threads together as overlapping practices (therapist, psychodramatist, artist, educator) that inform one another. As I began to recognise this orientation in my own work, I found language for it in the writing of Marcia Karp:

“The creator is only interested in the creations, not in the possessions ... The ‘act’ is the atmosphere of a creation, not the content or result.”
(Karp, 1998, p. 168)

This orientation has increasingly shaped the way I imagine future work. It has found concrete articulation in a series of proposals submitted to arts and cultural institutions, where psychodrama is framed as a pedagogical and artistic method rather than solely a therapeutic one. Two such proposals are particularly reflective of this direction.

One proposal, submitted to the **RAI Residency in Abu Dhabi**, outlines a participatory framework that integrates photography, psychodrama, and pedagogy as tools for self-exploration. The proposed project is structured around thematic inquiries such as *Self-first ≠ selfish*, *Vulnerability is contagious*, *Love is an action, not a feeling*, and *Community as loving communion*. Through facilitated group sessions combining image-making and psychodramatic enactment, participants would be invited to witness themselves and one another with depth and care. The primary proposed outcome is an experiential workshop framework; a secondary proposed outcome, if required, is a photographic exhibition that treats images not as aesthetic endpoints but as artifacts of inner work and communal witnessing.

A second proposal, submitted in response to a grant invitation by **Conflictorium × IFA**, situates psychodrama within a museum context. Conflictorium is a museum in Ahmedabad dedicated to exploring conflict as a social, political, and personal phenomenon, using archives, installations, and public programming as tools for dialogue and reflection. Its permanent installations include the Memory Lab, the Sorry Tree, and the Reading Room, spaces designed to invite visitors into encounters with memory, apology, narrative, and the emotional residue of conflict.

Within this setting, the proposal outlines psychodrama-based artistic interventions that invite museum visitors and community groups to engage with personal memories of conflict, relational accountability, and narrative power. Participants would work with these installations not as static exhibits, but as living spaces of encounter, using psychodramatic processes to explore how conflict is carried internally, negotiated relationally, and shaped by dominant stories in society. The proposed process includes the creation of tangible materials, images, letters, annotations, and zines, to be collaboratively curated into temporary museum displays, with accompanying

public programming such as facilitated walkthroughs and dialogue circles. (*Project proposal: see Appendix 3*)

Alongside these, related proposals to **Platform Residency, Finland** and **Hampi Art Lab x KALA Residency, Sri Lanka** further reflect this widening field of practice, where psychodrama meets photography, pedagogy, and community engagement within artistic and cultural ecosystems.

What connects all of these initiatives is a commitment to taking psychodrama beyond conventionally therapeutic spaces. This direction is a movement in continuation of the impulse: to move as far and as wide as possible across communities, social contexts, and lived experiences. It gestures toward the kind of psychodrama director I am becoming, one whose work remains grounded in the method, while continuously re-imagining where and with whom that method might live.

Section 7. Expanding the Field: Psychodrama as Community Practice

Over time, my relationship with psychodrama has continued to widen beyond the spaces in which it is most commonly situated. I have increasingly felt drawn toward working with communities in ways that respond directly to their social, cultural, and relational realities. The design of experiences that meet specific groups where they are culturally, socially, and historically has become one of the primary factors in my directorial thinking.

In the past year, this orientation has begun to take form through a number of ongoing conversations with communities interested in psychodrama-based interventions, each calling for a different shape of work.

Of these, two are currently closest to being realised.

In Ahmedabad, I am actively planning with **Rooted Circle**, an environmentally conscious, volunteer-based farming community focused on sustainable food practices and collective wellbeing. The conversations here are centered on designing a site-specific psychodrama workshop shaped by the rhythms of land, food, labour, and community life.

Parallely, I am in conversation around a psychodrama workshop for **practicing actors in Mumbai**, which emerged through a co-trainee from my psychodrama training. This grew out of a co-facilitated psychodrama session within a larger residential acting workshop, and continues as an exploration of how psychodrama can support performers.

Alongside these, I have had exploratory conversations with several other groups:

- **Inner Circle Garba, Ahmedabad** - a youth-led community working with mindfulness and reflection around the traditional practice of Garba (a folkdance of Gujarat).
- **ADHD Queeple, Bengaluru** - a peer support community for queer individuals with ADHD.
- **Sandbox Collective, Bengaluru** - a women-led feminist arts organisation working at the intersection of gender, art, and social practice.
- **Beyond Monogamy, Bengaluru** - a community of polyamorous queer individuals.

While these remain in a more tentative stage at present, they reflect the widening range of social and cultural contexts in which I intend to take this work.

What unites these different contexts is not a shared theme but a shared approach: psychodrama is shaped around the specific lives, cultures, and relational worlds of the people who enter the space. Rather than offering a fixed model of intervention, the work is designed through listening, dialogue, and attunement to what each community needs.

This reflects an evolving understanding of my role as a director, less as someone who brings a ready-made method, and more as someone who co-creates conditions in which inner experience, social life, and collective meaning can meet.

Taken together, these conversations gesture toward a future practice in which psychodrama is not confined to clinical rooms or training spaces, but moves fluidly through cultural practices, artistic communities, ecological settings, and everyday social life. The work continues to expand toward diverse audiences and shifting social locations, opening the question of how far psychodrama might travel, and who it might ultimately serve.

Way Forward

In psychodrama, whenever a drama or an action sequence comes to a close, it is never truly an ending; it is a pause in an ongoing process that will continue later in new forms. I approach this paper in the same way. Instead of offering a conclusion, I want to pause here and share instead a map of the directions in which my work is moving.

As my work continues to travel outward it has simultaneously led me to explore the kind of psychodramatist I am becoming, and the field I am choosing to serve.

A few months ago, in July 2025, during a psychodrama training session, I chose to work as a protagonist. I set out to explore the different kinds of psychodrama director I had already become, was in the process of becoming, and hoped to grow into. I did this by placing auxiliary egos to represent each of these psychodramatists, each working with distinct demographics and sections of society. Inevitably, these roles overlap and intersect.

One of these psychodramatists is deeply oriented toward creating shifts in the socio-cultural conserve. Their central intention is to build awareness around the importance of holistic wellbeing, with particular emphasis on mental wellbeing. In the history of the civilised world, this is an especially difficult period for the civilisation to move toward self-actualisation. Hyper-capitalistic systems shape everyday life so thoroughly that participation in them is largely unavoidable; the work, instead, becomes how to remain psychologically alive, grounded, and agentic while living within them. In this context, acts of self-care have, unfortunately, come to resemble acts of resistance. One of the few available domains of agency is the inner life of the individual. If this psychodramatist can contribute even a minute shift in the cultural conserve, such that nourishment of the psyche holds as much importance in people's lives as their other priorities, then their work feels meaningful.

This way of locating personal agency within larger social conditions reflects one of Moreno's most fundamental commitments regarding the purpose of psychodrama. As articulated by Bradshaw Tauvon:

“Moreno wanted us to adopt his philosophy and principles, in order to work towards improving the world, by combating the negative effects of mechanisation, robotism in humanity and stereotypy—what he considered to be a living death or ‘normosis’. It was his aim and can be ours, to develop spontaneity and creativity in order to co-create the world we live in.”

(Bradshaw Tauvon, 1998, p. 46)

Another psychodramatist wishes to work with communities marginalised on the basis of gender orientation. As I engage more deeply in this direction, I continue to observe strong intersections between gender-based marginalisation and the prevalence of pathologised mental diagnoses.

Yet another psychodramatist is drawn toward working with economically marginalised communities. In conversations around mental health accessibility where the struggle to meet

basic needs is immediate, group-based work has repeatedly emerged as a particularly viable form of intervention.

One psychodramatist is oriented toward working with adolescents and young adults within existing education systems. Conversations with a school about workshops for boys aged fourteen to sixteen surfaced concerns around bullying, respect toward other genders, confidence, and the pressures of academic performance and career expectations. This is an age at which the formation of a healthy self-image can lay foundations for the rest of life, as young people begin to enter the world, so to speak.

Another psychodramatist wishes to work specifically with women, a direction that intersects with questions of class and social position. The realities of womanhood are not experienced in isolation from economic access, education, family structures, and cultural expectations. Yet another is drawn to individuals in creative fields, across commercial, artistic, and hybrid spaces.

This process of concretising multiple emerging roles reflects a foundational psychodramatic understanding that

***“roles do not emerge from the self, but the self may emerge from roles”
(Moreno, 1993, p. 47, quoted in Casson, 1998, p. 94).***

I remain acutely aware of how expansive this map of my future directions is. A single lifetime is unlikely to be sufficient for all the work I would wish to undertake. This awareness gives rise to another psychodramatist, the one who wishes to train the next generation of psychodramatists.

Here I return to a philosophy that continues to guide me:

What can a little lamp do, for it is so feeble and small? Not much, but it can spread light in a dark room, and it can light another small lamp like itself. If each small lamp decides to light just one more, then gradually, over the years, there develops a spread of lamps that are shining, glowing, and continuously spreading light in wider and wider circles.
- Meenakshi Kirtane

This image names, for me, both a personal orientation and a collective responsibility; the work of a director does not end with individual encounters, but extends into the cultivation of people, practices, and future carriers of the method itself.

Here I find a deep resonance in Haworth's note about the foundation of psychodrama:

Moreno developed psychodrama alongside sociometry, sociodrama, and group psychotherapy precisely as ways of addressing both personal suffering and the conditions of society, emerging from a historical moment shaped by the revolutionary ideas of Freud and Marx, and grounded in a hope for a better world.
(Haworth, 1998, p. 16)

And it is within this same horizon that my own becoming as a psychodrama director continues to unfold.

“Psychodrama is much more than a series of techniques. It is a method of exploration that includes psychotherapy but may also be used in other contexts. It arose from a particular historical period and it has a philosophical and psychological basis different from although connected with other psychotherapeutic methods. One important aspect ... is its positive view of humankind and its consequent emphasis on the exploration of social and political forms of human conflict as well as personal and familial pathology.” (Haworth, 1998, p. 15)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Materials for Section 1: Entry: Psychodrama as a Gateway

1.1 Everyone Is an Artist, Mould Art Space, Ahmedabad, February 2025

- Process Notes

List of participants: D, N, K, H, R (N's mother)

D and H arrived by 10:00. N and R were running late, and so was K. While waiting for everyone to arrive, I invited the participants who were present to do a breath walk. I joined them. (Later, during the closing sharing, both H and D mentioned that they had arrived feeling anxious and that the breath walk helped them settle.)

Once N and R arrived, we sat in a circle. We began with a slow check-in: *How is everyone doing?*

This was followed by grounding through breathing with closed eyes. I guided their attention to the breath, down to the toes, and gradually moving up the body until reaching the face and returning again to the breath. I then introduced the theme we would be working with.

Warm-up Prompt 1:

From the first fifteen years of your life/childhood, share something you did creatively (according to you). Participants shared in pairs. During this time, the fifth participant, K, arrived, and I added her to one of the pairs.

Warm-up Prompt 2:

Share something you did more recently that was outside your usual way of doing things, responding to a familiar context, prompt, or task in a non-habitual way. Participants then moved into small groups for sharing, chosen by tele. I made sure that N and her mother, R, were placed in different groups. This was followed by large-group sharing.

Warm-up Prompt 3:

What is creativity, according to you? Participants were invited to concretise their response using colours and one A4 sheet of paper. They could draw or choose not to draw, use different colours, and vary sizes to represent aspects of their concretisation.

R expressed hesitation: *I can't draw what I have in mind, and what's on the paper doesn't match.* Nevertheless, everyone completed their concretisation. N began the sharing, and R ended it, sharing comfortably.

Break

After the break, I offered the space for anyone who wished to work on a piece. K asked what exactly a 'piece' meant, and I explained it to the group.

We checked in post-break to see if anyone felt warmed up to do a piece. D said she did.

I invited D onto the stage and asked what she would like to work with. She shared that she feels more comfortable, herself, and spontaneous with people she doesn't know well or has just met, but not the same with people she knows closely, especially family.

I asked her to choose someone to represent her family. She chose K.

I asked: *Where is the family? Are they in the front, behind you, on the side?*

D placed them in front of her, facing her.

I asked if she would like to share something with them.

D told the family: *You are very cool and comfortable to be around, but I don't feel like sharing all parts of myself with you. Please don't force me.*

We then role-reversed.

In the role of the family, D said: *That's okay. We know. You don't have to share anything you don't want to. As long as you're happy, we are okay. Although it would be nice to have a conversation sometimes.*

We reversed roles again.

Back in her own role, D said: *Thank you.*

After one more role reversal, we paused the drama. D shared that she felt relieved in her body and that she had needed to say this out loud.

Sharing

During the sharing, H began to tear up. I asked if she would like to take a piece after the sharing ended. She said yes.

I invited H onto the stage. Her piece was about how she had gone through a lot in the recent past, persevered, and continued moving forward.

I asked H if she would like to speak with a younger version of herself.

H agreed and chose R to play that role.

I asked: *How old is this H?*

H replied: *27 years old.* (She is 31 today.)

They had a conversation with about 2-3 role reversals.

Gist of the exchange:

H-31 to H-27: *Thank you. You have been helpful and protective. But now it feels like you're holding me back. You can let go. I am capable of doing things and exploring without that protection.*

H-27 to H-31: *I'm very proud of you. You've come a long way.*

We paused the drama.

Sharing

As we moved toward closing the workshop, I invited everyone to use any or all of the materials, colours, crayons, oil pastels, pencil colours, sketch pens, and stickers, and create anything they wanted.

I checked in: *Would it help if I offered a prompt?*

The group said yes.

I offered the prompt: *Create something that represents your experience of these past four hours.*

At around 1:35 (the workshop ran from 10:00–1:30), I said that they could continue working, but that we were formally closing the workshop as everyone appeared deeply engaged and immersed.

N shared that she wanted time to speak about what she had created. Everyone agreed.

After ten minutes, everyone shared. All participants had created something. The experiences shared were overwhelmingly positive, with a unanimous sense of visible internal shifts.

I then invited them to write about their experience.

D, K, and H chose to write.

1.2 Photography x Psychodrama, National Institute of Design, Gandhinagar, August 2025

- Module Abstract

*“For this two-day workshop, we will work within a participatory framework that brings together **psychodrama and photography**, two media rooted in witnessing, spontaneity, and embodied storytelling. We intend to co-create experiential spaces where participants can explore inner life through image and action, reflecting on emotions, memory, and identity. The workshop will culminate in visual traces: photographs that act as tangible documents of internal processes, not as aesthetic endpoints, but as emotional artefacts.*

Participants will use photography as a tool for witnessing—of self, others, and place—while psychodrama will allow them to embody and reframe personal narratives in a collective space. The act of image-making becomes a pause, a way to see and be seen with greater presence.

What is Psychodrama and Its Relevance Today

Psychodrama is an action-based method of self-inquiry and group process that engages spontaneity, imagination, and role-play to explore emotional and psychological dynamics. Invented by Jacob L. Moreno nearly a century ago, it remains, for me, an underutilised but deeply transformative modality.

Why Combine Psychodrama and Photography?

Both photography and psychodrama are rooted in spontaneity, observation, and meaning-making. Photography, while highly accessible and widely practiced today, often remains a visual act. Psychodrama brings to it the possibility of emotional depth and embodied insight.

In my experience, photography can serve as a tangible anchor for healing and self-discovery—images can act as both mirrors and maps. When combined with psychodrama, the act of creating a photograph becomes an act of witnessing: of oneself, of others, and of unseen inner narratives.

Together, they offer an accessible yet profound way to approach inner work—allowing participants to “see” differently and be seen anew.

By the end of the workshop, participants will leave with more than photographs—they will carry embodied experiences, fresh perspectives, and a deeper connection to their own narratives. The images created will hold the resonance of somatic work, serving as living reminders of moments when inner truths were felt, seen, and shared. In combining photography with psychodrama, each frame becomes not just a record, but a touchstone for ongoing self-awareness and creative exploration. “

Appendix 2 - Materials for Section 2: From Design to Action: The First Workshop

Time Travelling Emotions, Mould Art Space, Ahmedabad, February 2024

- Process Notes

Participants in the sequence of registration: A, K, P, N, C, M, S, J (morning of workshop), Ad (walk-in), S (walk-in), Pr (walk-in - approximately 25 minutes after the workshop began).

(Mi = me / director, R = supervisor/double)

Opening & Check-In

We began with a check-in round. I asked everyone: *How has the week been so far?*

We then did introductions. Each participant was invited to share their name and anything else they felt comfortable sharing. I offered two optional prompts: What do you do? Why are you here?

There was no fixed order; participants shared according to their comfort. Some shared what they do, some shared why they were present, and some shared only their names. P and S shared that they found Mi very positive and creative and were curious to see what he was doing here. Ad shared that he had tagged along because he had slept over at M's place the previous night. C was brought by N. Everyone except N and S had little to no idea about what psychodrama was. M and P shared that they had consciously chosen not to look it up beforehand.

Warm-Up 1

Participants were invited to close their eyes and focus on their breath for one minute. There was no instruction for deep breathing or posture; they were encouraged to sit comfortably and simply notice the air moving in and out of the nose or mouth. I explained that I would be reading something, and they could choose to keep their eyes closed or open. I offered a suggestion: when opening the eyes, rub the palms together, place them gently on the eyelids, and open slowly. Some participants opened their eyes; some kept them closed. I read the piece on time travel. S arrived while I was reading. I asked her to pull up a chair and sit. I continued reading.

After finishing, I asked if anyone had travelled anywhere in their mind, into the past or to any particular place. Many responded yes. Some shared. A shared that the idea of photographs as portkeys that can take you back in time struck him strongly; he is a photographer. I caught S up on what we had done so far. P shared that she works with archives and museums and had mentally travelled to various places.

Warm-Up 2

Participants were asked to pair up with the person whose birthdate was closest to their own. There was some nervous joking about age. P shared she was the oldest, born in 1975; the others were born in the 1990s. She paired with N.

Prompt: Share something you remember from the first decade of your life (ages 1–10). This could be something you miss, something you do not miss, a pop culture memory, chocolates, tape cassettes, etc. After about four to five minutes, I raised my hand. Eventually everyone noticed and paused. I checked if everyone was done. They were not. They continued for another few minutes. I raised my hand again.

Gradually everyone paused. I explained the logic of the raised hand: when someone sees a raised hand, they raise their own hand. Eventually everyone notices and pauses without verbal interruption. Check-in on the sharing: The room was loud, energetic, and people had begun sharing immediately. P and N shared they had found similarities in their memories. C and K, who already knew each other, shared that they discovered they were complete opposites. Almost everyone shared something.

Warm-Up 3

Participants were asked to form new pairs based on tele: *At this moment, choose someone you want to speak with. No logic.* Pairs formed: J & S, N & K, M & A

Prompt: Share one happy memory with your partner. Someone asked if it had to be from childhood. I said no, it could be from any time. S asked if it had to be only one memory. I said any number was fine. About thirty minutes into the workshop, someone knocked. Pr arrived as a walk-in. R checked with me. I said yes. R explained to Pr what the group was doing and invited her to choose a pair. She hesitated and said she could not choose. I offered to choose and placed her with N and K. After about five minutes, I raised my hand. Eventually everyone paused.

Check-in and sharing: M and A shared that although they had known each other for a long time, they were able to learn about each other in more depth. S shared that she found it difficult to open up but was helped by hearing J share in such detail. C shared that he realised most of his happy memories were from the very recent past. N, K, and Pr realised that all of their memories were from Goa and involved substance use. N shared about travelling alone and being adopted by a group of strangers and becoming a bridesmaid at one of their weddings within five days. Pr also shared. Everyone shared.

I checked if anyone wanted to bring a memory into the room. Pr volunteered. I invited her to sit beside me (Mi).

Pr: *I was with a close friend at the beach, very early in the morning, around 6 a.m. It was still dark. It was May and it was raining. My feet were in the water. The waves were flowing over my feet and then receding.*

Mi – *should we bring the beach here?*

Pr – Yes.

Mi – *sitting on the beach? So, down?*

Pr – Yes. I placed a cushion and Pr sat.

Mi – *should we bring the ocean?*

Pr – Yes. I chose a blue/orange dupatta.

Mi – *choose someone to be the ocean?* Pr did not choose. M volunteered and took the role. *How should he be? Where?*

Pr – *On the floor, in the front. The waves are caressing my feet.*

M lay on the floor and began sliding the dupatta gently over Pr's feet.

Mi – *what else? Clouds?*

Pr – Yes. I chose a white/grey dupatta.

Mi – *choose someone?*

Pr – *N?*

Mi – *where? Are the clouds in the sky? Standing tall?*

Pr – Yes. *There.* (Points) N stood in that position.

Mi – *what else? You said you had a friend. Should we bring him?*

Pr – Yes.

Mi – *choose someone.* Pr chose C.

Pr – *His name is Sa.*

Mi – where is Sa?

Pr – *Beside me.* Sa sat beside her.

Mi – *do you want to talk to him?*

Pr – Yes. They spoke.

Pr – *I miss him.*

Mi – *tell him.*

Pr to Sa – *I miss you. I miss the peace we had. I want that. There are so many thoughts. So much chaos in my head.*

Mi – *should we bring peace here?*

Pr – Yes.

Mi – *choose someone.*

Pr chose R. I checked with R since she was technically not a participant. She agreed.

Mi – *where is peace?*

Pr – *Beside me. On the other side.*

Sa remained on one side; Peace stood on the other.

Mi – *do you want to talk to peace?*

Pr – Yes.

Pr to Peace – *I really miss you. I want you back. I'm trying really hard to stop the thoughts, but there's so much chaos in my head.*

At this moment, S became overwhelmed, gasped loudly, and left the room. I asked J to be with her.

Mi – *reverse roles. You will be Peace. R is you.* R (as Pr) repeats what Pr shared with Peace.

Peace (Pr) – *I am right here. You just need to calm down a little bit.*

Mi – *reverse roles.*

Pr (as herself) to Peace(R) – *I miss you. I want you. I need you.*

Peace (R) – *I am right here.*

Mi – *how does that feel?*

Pr – *Good. I understand what I need. There's hope now.*

Mi – *should we bring hope here?*

Pr – *Yes.*

Mi – *choose someone.* Pr chose P. *Where is hope?*

Pr – *Behind me. Standing. Hands on my head.* Hope (P) stood behind Pr with her hands gently on Pr's head.

Mi – *is the pressure okay? Too soft? Too hard?*

Pr – *It's perfect.*

Mi – *do you want to say something to hope?*

Pr – *Yes.*

Mi – *look up and tell her.*

Pr to Hope – *Be around. Don't go anywhere.*

Hope – *I am right here. I'm not leaving you.*

Mi – *is this a good time to pause?* I noticed a sense of relief appear in Pr's body and breath

Pr – *Yes.*

Mi – *thank you, everyone.* End of drama.

Sharing & Closing

S shared that she had not wanted to cry during the drama because she did not want to take attention away from Pr. R and I reassured her that this was expected. I explained the structure of psychodrama. We began the sharing. I instructed: We share what we could relate to, what we experienced. We are not analysing or giving suggestions to Pr. Many thanked Pr for her courage. P shared she would not have been able to do the drama herself. J shared extensively. C and K shared less, but responded to others. Pr attempted to respond early; I asked her to hold and receive. Toward the end, I invited Pr to thank people as they shared.

I closed the workshop by reading the time travel piece. Participants were invited to create a portkey to remember the day, by taking photos that concretise what the past two hours meant for them. People mingled, hugged, took photos, and spoke in small groups. We took a group photo. Participants were invited to write or share reflections afterward. Pr wrote. S posted on Instagram. J texted on WhatsApp. A offered a video testimonial. We recorded video testimonials from M and N too.

Appendix 3 - Materials for Section 6: Beyond Therapy: Non-Therapeutic Interventions

Conflictorium x IFA grant

- Project Proposal

“ Participatory Psychodrama Interventions at Conflictorium

This project proposes to activate the Memory Lab, Sorry Tree, and Reading Room at the Conflictorium through participatory psychodrama-based artistic interventions. It invites museum visitors and community groups to engage with the archive by working with personal memories of conflict, relational accountability, and narrative power. Through psychodrama participants will explore how conflict is carried internally, negotiated relationally, and shaped by dominant stories in society. Participants will develop tangible outputs, including images, letters, annotations, and zines, which will be collaboratively curated into temporary displays within the museum. These outcomes will remain open to the public as invitations for ongoing dialogue, with optional donation for inclusion in the museum’s evolving collection. The project aims to deepen public engagement with existing installations, expand approaches to the archive by centering lived experience, and foster new pathways of co-creation and discourse in the museum space. My interdisciplinary practice across photography, community storytelling, and psychodrama informs this process, ensuring methods grounded in care, collaboration, and ethical handling of personal narratives.

Vision

To activate the Conflictorium’s permanent installations as shared spaces of conflict transformation, where visitors become co-authors in reframing experiences of memory, apology, and narrative. Through psychodrama and creative practice, the project seeks to generate tools for co-existence and deeper public participation with the museum’s archive.

Methodology

The project uses psychodrama as a participatory, embodied methodology to engage visitors with the Conflictorium’s collections. Through guided enactments participants explore personal memories, relational tensions, and narrative identities in dialogue with the museum’s existing Installations. Workshops prioritise consent, confidentiality, and psychological safety and participants choose what is shared publicly. Outcomes remain temporary, with optional donation for long-term inclusion. Participants are involved in co-curating the displays, ensuring the museum becomes an active site of dialogue, not passive observation.

Public Programming

During the exhibition period, the museum will host public events such as facilitated walkthroughs and dialogue circles that invite wider audiences to reflect on the themes of conflict held in the Memory Lab, Sorry Tree, and Reading Room. Collaborations with educational and cultural institutions in Ahmedabad will widen participation and introduce new publics to the Conflictorium. These programmes collectively ensure that the project continues to generate conversation, care, and collective meaning-making beyond the workshop groups.

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