

The background is a repeating pattern of overlapping circles. Each circle is divided into concentric rings of color. The colors used are a vibrant yellow, a soft lavender purple, and a light sky blue. The circles are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with the overlapping areas creating a complex, organic texture. The overall effect is reminiscent of a stained-glass window or a traditional textile pattern.

**Making in Isolation,**

**Together**



Led by artist Nicole Morris  
with participants:

Sara Apoolingum,  
Ranjini Arasasingham,  
Angela Byer,  
Maggie Freake,  
Melvyn Freake,  
Shirley Ann Giles,  
Kiran Kansagra,  
Khim Lee,  
Odun Ogundipe,  
Denise Ross,  
Rita Vora.



*Making in Isolation, Together* was an artist-led programme that offered activity for Redbridge residents over the age of 65 to remotely engage in during the COVID-19 lockdown, March – July 2020.

The first 5-week set of workshops came together quickly thanks to the remarkable energy and vision of artist Nicole Morris and the vital support of Age UK Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham and Havering. Twelve participants received by post the materials and instructions to create a collaborative batik and to explore making within the confines of their own homes. Each week the group dialled into a conference call to update on their progress, resolve any practical issues and explore a different topic of conversation guided by the themes of confinement, solidarity and survival. In the first week the group drew patterns, moving from room to room in their homes, outlining objects of importance.

They then posted their patterns back to Morris who mixed them all up and returned new ones to them. Mimicking collectives of people that congregate to exchange ideas, designs and make quilts together, the group created their own pieces from the patterns drawn by others.

Over the 5 weeks the participants developed confidence in melting wax, using their tjanting tool, and painting with dye. During the weekly 14-person conference phone calls, trust and camaraderie developed through sharing mistakes and epiphanies, as well as stories and memories inspired by the themes. The resulting work that you see here is the outcome of an inspiring group of people who were isolated in their own homes but were very much making together. Many modestly claim to have little creativity, but as you will see, this is clearly not the case! Morris' interest in creating something together that archived the lockdown period, through both textiles and conversations, offered a chance to reflect on personal circumstances and varied experiences of this unprecedented moment.

Persilia Caton, SPACE Exhibitions Curator

Hello ,

Thank you for welcoming me to the group .

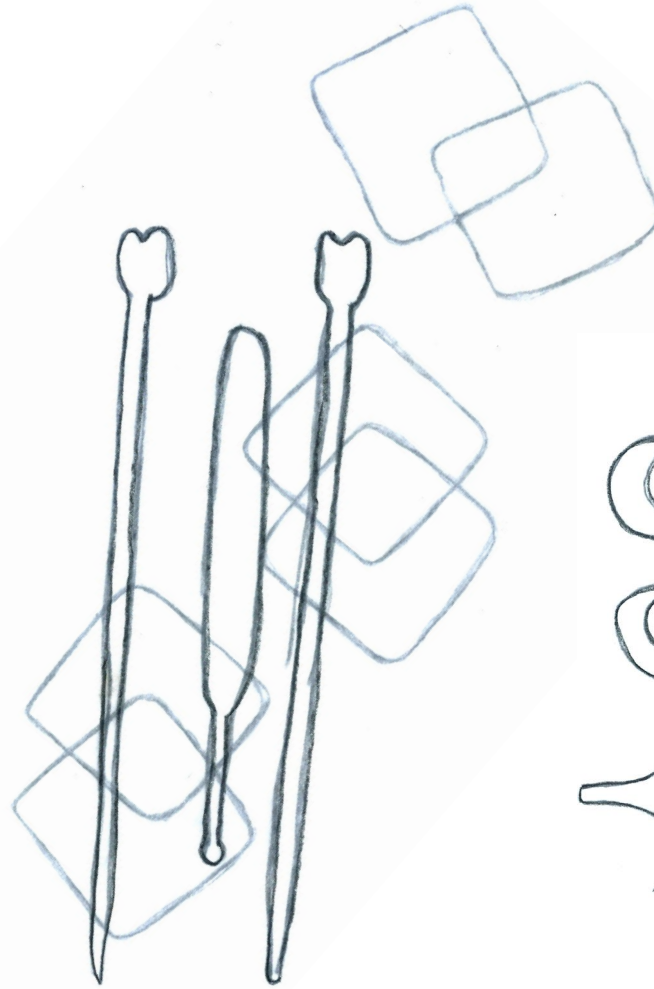
I gather you have all done projects together before as the banter and laughter is enlightening.

Looking forward to a social event when we are safe to meet up.

For now , I enjoy connecting on conference chats and participating in this project over 5 weeks .

Kind regards ,

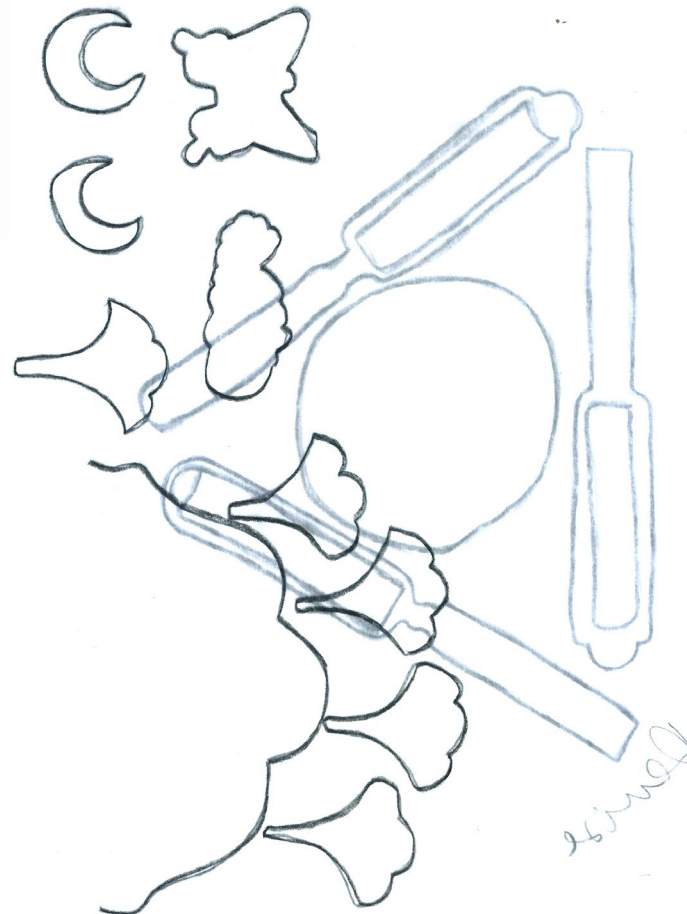
Sent from my iPhone  
Khim



Wed, May 6, 4:18 PM

Hullo to you all. Thank you for this morning. I went out in the garden this afternoon and managed to get my husband out for a walk around that made me feel much better. Never mind the weeds. Just smell the fresh air and flowers. Plus there's a little vitamin d in the system.

Best wishes  
Denise



AUDIO  
RECORDING

Thu, May 7, 1:20 PM

Hi everyone

This little video is the one Melvyn and I mentioned when we all had our meeting together yesterday. It is good food for thought.

Lovely to hear of your life giving experience as you walked in the garden Denise. Well done!

Best Wishes  
Maggie

Talking about confinement brought memories of childbirth confinement from nearly 36 years ago.

It flooded my present mind as I recalled clearly how suffocating and restricted I felt post childbirth. That was really a “senseless confinement” of 30 days with no scientific evidence of what I had to endure out of respect.

I struggled as a modern midwife and new mother grateful and respectful that my in laws flew 5,000 miles to give me what they thought “the best care”. It was based on generations of handed down taboos, myths and restrictions with no sound rationale to me. The eating of speciality prepared foods , the reduced excessive washing for “hygienic concerns”, no social visitors or attending any functions as deemed “bad luck” was so stifling.

I struggled to enjoy nursing my baby and every cry was frowned by my in laws that my lactation to nurture my son was inadequate. My in laws and my parents were influenced by generations of Chinese ancestral cultures, myths and habits passed down from their fore parents. The continuance without questioning was acceptable. They have not even visited China as our grandparents were born as migrants in other countries .

Khim



When I think of Solidarity I remember The Embrace the Base gathering at Greenham Common in 1982 – nearly 40 years ago. 30,000 women gathered to protest at the impending arrival of Cruise missiles at this US air base in Berkshire. Embrace the Base was a powerful symbolic act, like a giant communal hug – women linking arms around the 9 mile perimeter fence of the air base. Surrounding the the nuclear weapons with a feeling of love and care and peace, rather as a mother hugs a child. The 9 mile fence looked like a shrine, with art works and weavings, children’s toys and pictures hung on it – the symbols of everyday life and what we hold dear, which would somehow absorb the poison of war and threat of violence, coming from inside the fence. There were rainbows then too...

The Greenham Common Peace Camp was an ongoing presence outside the airbase for many years – until the weapons finally left. Tents were moved and trashed by bailiffs, women were arrested and imprisoned and sometimes injured, but the solidarity held, like one big beating heart. Women would visit the camp and sometimes stay overnight to support the blockade. We would sit in the road, linking arms and singing, to prevent the flow of vehicles into the base, bringing in weapons and supplies. We were regularly lifted or dragged out of the road by police, but we would go back, like an unstoppable tide. There were too many of us to arrest. Creative, spontaneous actions were dreamt up round the campfire. There was an energy coming from our younger selves – a sort of eco warrior/ non-violent peace energy . This could be light- hearted and adventurous, as when women entered the base and glued rubber ducks to the runway. The multimillion dollar aircraft and weapons could not take off ! Or it could be deadly serious, or both.

And we sang, lots of songs . For me “You can’t kill the spirit” was our soul song:

*You can’t kill the Spirit / she is like a mountain /  
Old and strong she goes on and on and on  
You can’t kill the spirit...*

Maggie

1.05.2020

Dear Nicole, hello,  
As requested, I am enclosing  
4 sheets of different patterns  
made from 5 different things from  
the 4 different rooms.

Regards.  
Sara.

Sorry, for the delay, will take  
care to be on time next time.

Kind regards.

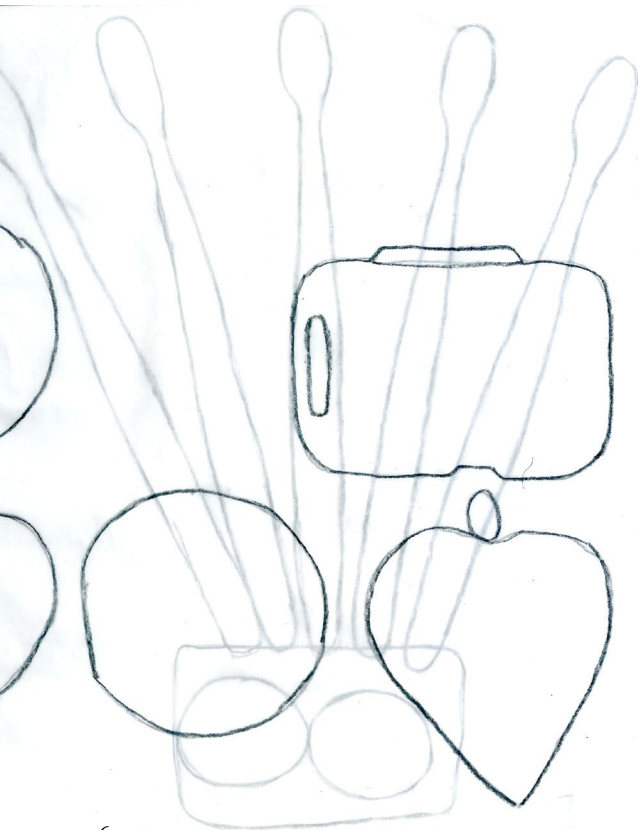
Ria  
4/5/20.

Thu, May 7, 4:30 PM

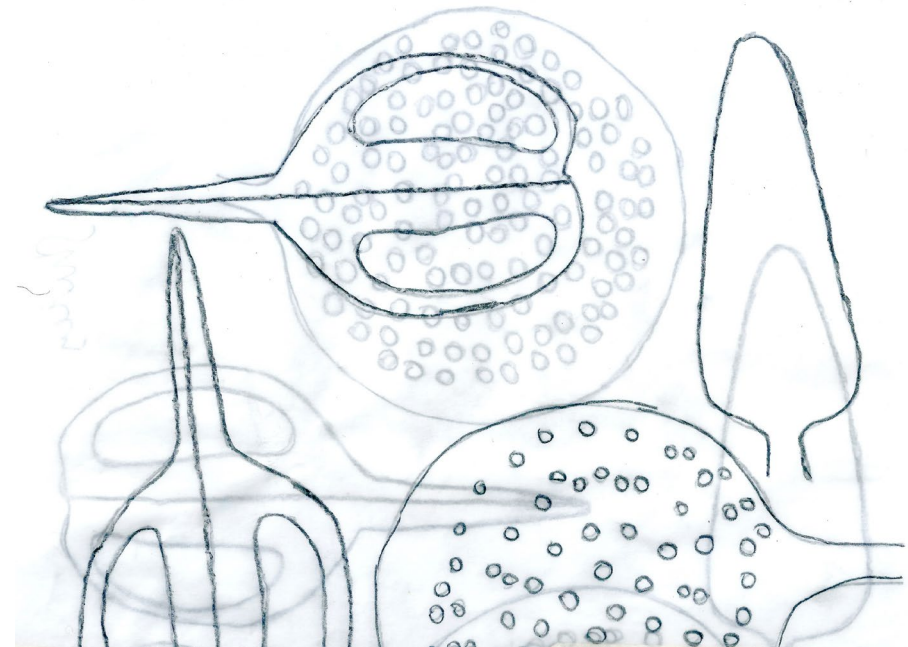
Hi

I posted my drawings today morning.  
I am not an artist neither am I creative.  
My imagination is nil. But I must say  
that I did take an interest and concen-  
trate on my drawings. Even my son  
asked why I was so absorbed so much.  
Once again thank so much for helping  
us to use our brains and skills.  
Regards

Ranjini



AUDIO  
RECORDING





①

5.06.2020

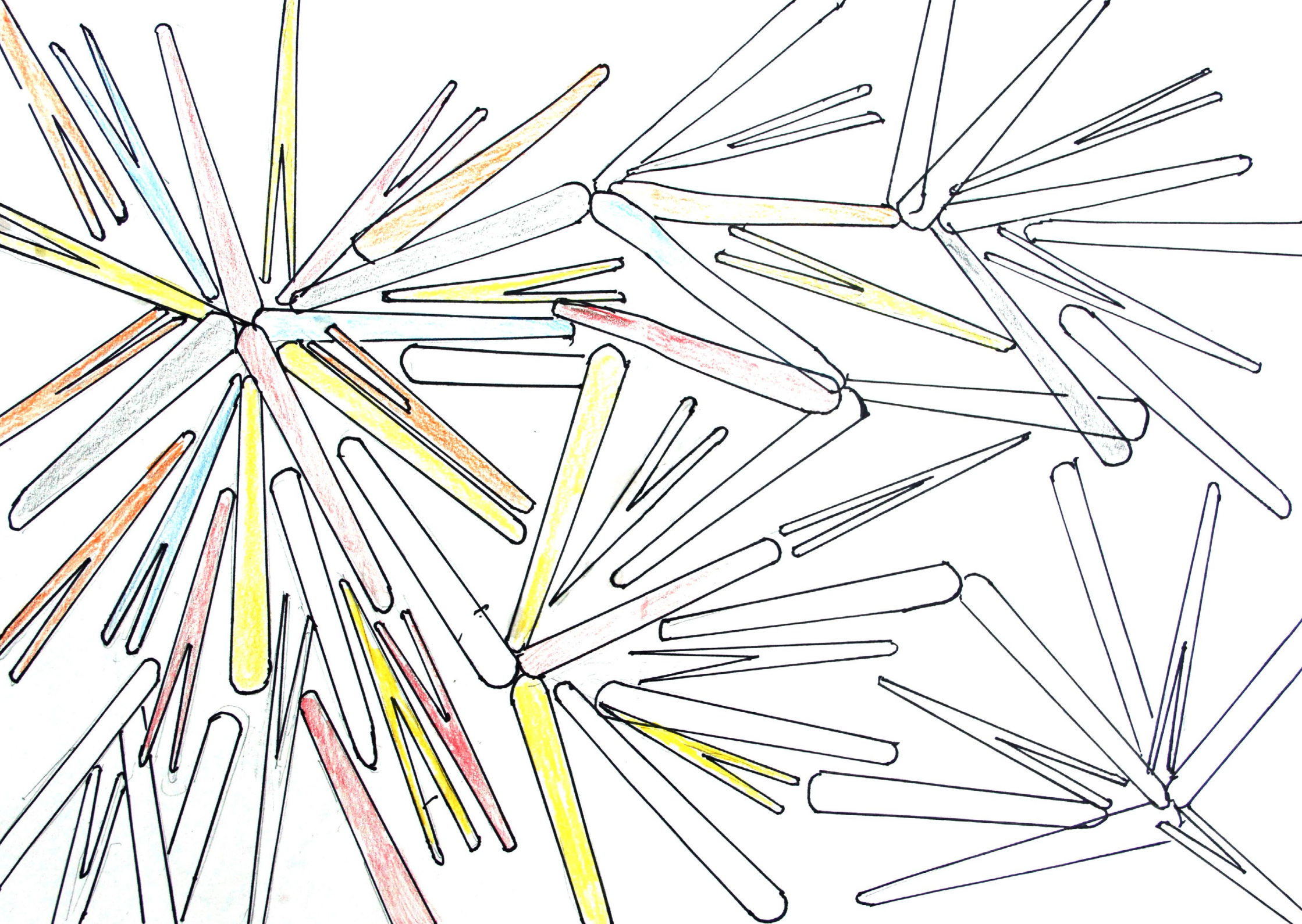
I want to write something on Survival.

In 1967 when I came to England, being an unknown country, I was anxious, frightened as it's the 1st time I left my home (Mauritius) to follow a nursing career. The first thing I noticed was the cold which was very fierce for me. Then a few days later I was very pleased as it was the first time I saw snow in my life. I had a real experience with it as I was so happy that I did not realise that it will melt as I gathered it & put it in the sink to clean the window seal & put it back & to my amazement, it disappeared. I learnt a lesson & never to be repeated again. I was the first one out of my whole family to have crossed the sea, so I had nobody that I know here & had to learn to cope with people I don't know at all

②

& not all from my country. Only one person came from my country & I don't even know her either. I survived even the food was different from ours. It was plain food without any spices yet it was an experience for me. As the years go on, I learn to cope to the best of my ability, I still felt lonely and miss my mother and brothers but I was here for a good reason & I persevere. I even had difficulties to find a church to go to. I did miss a lot but I gain a lot too through the years. I'll never forget the good old days with all its complications but I really enjoy it now. Though I'm shielding, I find positivity during this difficult time. Lockdown has made me see things I've taken for granted like listening to birds singing in my little garden. In the past, before coronavirus, I'm out five days a week & no time for anything else. Well, I'm still surviving & enjoy new technology which I never did before. Sarah







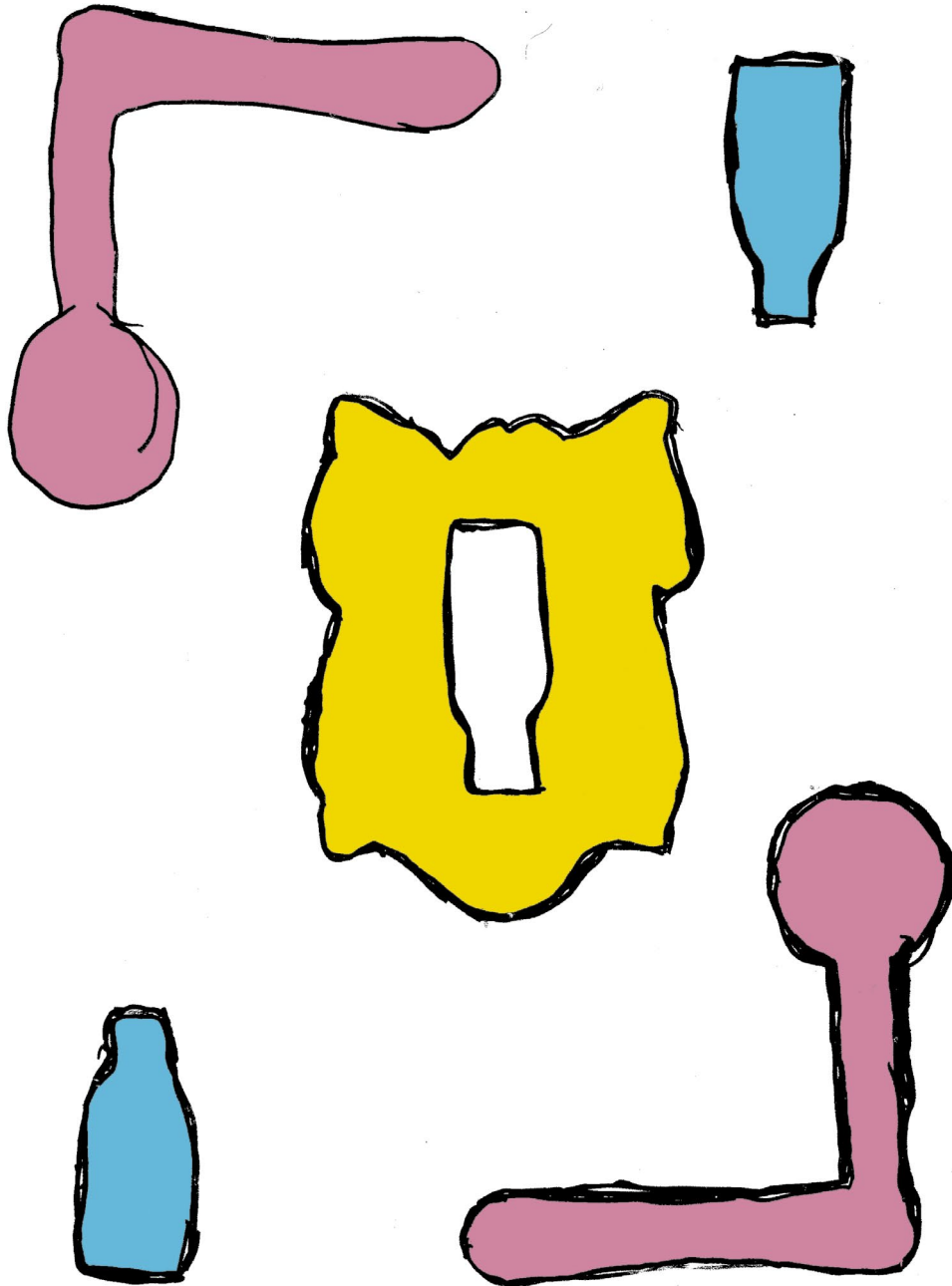
## SURVIVAL

Many of the "older" generation have  
been through "SURVIVAL" in one way  
or another. Our "fault" is that we  
have shielded youngsters from this and  
they take things for granted.  
Being able to manage with what you have;  
always having a "little" money handy; a little food  
in reserve and being able to utilize things  
that might otherwise be wasted.

Angela B







My earliest memory of survival was in 1972 when Idi Amin declared all Asians to leave the country in 3 months. Amin was an army chief before he staged a coup in January 1971, in the absence of the then prime minister Milton Obote. There was wide spread fear amongst Asians, especially families with young girls for fear of abduction and abuse. Families with young girls were sent out of Uganda, either to India or UK.

It was a difficult and traumatic experience for all family members as we were separated. My dad, brother (13years) and sister (8 years) were in Uganda while mum, myself, two sisters and brother were in India. There was not much communications coming except through media and people. About 300,000 civilians were massacred. Asians left quietly to the airport with a suitcase without even informing neighbours. Some were stopped and tortured and robbed.

I started the process of getting a temporary Indian travel document which took numerous trips to the embassy and endless queuing, mornings and afternoons as we were not allowed to remain in the building during their lunch breaks. Before the embassy would take up my case, I had to register myself at a police station. That was the most unforgettable and dreadful experience. I was so glad that my sister had accompanied me. A police officer kept on telling me off and shouting in Hindi saying that he can put me behind bars for not registering earlier. I did not understand Hindi well then. I tried to explain that I was unaware of the political situation where I needed to register. He calmed down and then guided me through the registration procedure. Once it was sorted, I was classified as “stateless”.

Next day, we visited the British embassy and were extremely disappointed to learn our cases were dealt by Mumbai branch. At this stage, we were all very tired. My older sister decided to continue her studies, my mum and two of my siblings left for UK while I went back to Mumbai to sort out UK entry visa. Again, I had to stay with a relative. It was a huge relief the UK entry visa were granted. An Egypt airlines flight was booked via Cairo. I was so desperate to leave earlier than my scheduled date that I paid rupees 300 to a travel agent to bring forward my travel date.

I joined the rest of my family in Southampton. I went through the Naturalisation process where by I got a British citizenship. Both parents worked hard to earn. It must very difficult for them as Dad owned his business in Uganda. I worked in dry cleaners, laundry and did some baby sitting for cash. My Dad encouraged us all to study. My grandmother’s words still ring a bell, which in translation meant, “written can be read”.

Kiran





Odun



Maggie





Denise



Sara





Melvyn



Rita





Ranjini



Kiran





Shirley



Khim



Angela



# Reading Material

## On Confinement

*Are Prisons Obsolete*

Angela Y Davis (2003)

[https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are\\_Prisons\\_Obsolete.pdf](https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are_Prisons_Obsolete.pdf)

## On Solidarity

*Mutual Aid: A factor of evolution*

Petr Kropotkin (1902)

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-mutual-aid-a-factor-of-evolution>

## On Survival

*Nothing Comes Without its World: Thinking with care*

Maria de la Bellacasa (2012)

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263529571\\_'Nothing\\_comes\\_without\\_its\\_world'\\_Thinking\\_with\\_care](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263529571_'Nothing_comes_without_its_world'_Thinking_with_care)

AUDIO RECORDING

## Survival

We are not through this episode in our lives yet. But many of us have survived thanks to family, friends, new friends. Frontline workers the government for delivering food parcels to people like me who are extremely vulnerable. There are so many to list. Thank You All Also a big thank you to Space for organizing this project. It has helped me survive. We all know there is a long way to go for the world to get over this horrible time. The world will never forget 2020. I hope we can learn from our experiences.

Finally I hope everyone that sees the end result of our project will enjoy it. I've enjoyed doing it and the people that have done it with me have all helped me survive.

Love to you all  
Shirley-Ann xxx

04/06/2020

A focus on care, and the diverse theories that intersect with this term, is present in the Commissions and Exhibitions programme at SPACE. The first project that overtly explored working directly with a care organisation was in 2017 when SPACE supported the artist Zoe Kreye to collaborate with St Joseph's Hospice, our neighbour at the time in Hackney. This project was the beginning of a larger aim to make visible a network of care in the neighbourhood where the SPACE gallery is situated (previously Hackney<sup>1</sup>, and now Ilford). Through partnering with organisations that practise and promote care, the aim is to expand the reach of the artist's practice beyond the gallery, offer new experiences for participants and highlight the important work of the organisations. Over time, these neighbours who are linked through the projects and shared aims, together offer greater accessibility to spaces where visitors can access a toilet, a cup of tea, a tour of an exhibition, a warm welcome and conversation. These projects aim to bring people together, to facilitate meaningful interactions and to collectively enact or imagine future possibilities where care of each other is placed at the fore.

When SPACE moved its public programme to Ilford in 2019, one focus was on creating more social activities for people over the age of 65, in an effort to reduce isolation and loneliness. The first project was led by artist Lindsey Mendick, whose solo commission *Regrets, I've Had a Few* was made in collaboration with her mother and a group of 20 Ilford-based people over the age of 65. This project enabled the artist to test new ways of working while also supporting an important collaboration with members of the local community. The outcome was a powerful exhibition that positioned ceramic effigies as a catalyst for cross-generational discussion and debate. Mendick's exhibition was cut short when the gallery closed due to COVID-19.

The process and outcomes of *Making in Isolation, Together* have been completely analogue and, thus, invisible, much like loneliness and isolation itself. In a moment where we cannot yet physically come together, this booklet is an effort to celebrate and make visible the spirit and talent of the participants and the dedicated organisations that support them, such as Age UK. Hopefully, it will also encourage new participants to get involved at a future date. This remotely-led project has tested ways of working to include people that cannot leave their homes, pandemic aside, and I am optimistic that access will increase for future projects. Finally, we want to promote care as a practice; together with our Ilford neighbours, remotely and in-person, we endeavour to create experiences and spaces that are built on mutual thriving.

Persilia Caton  
SPACE Exhibitions Curator

<sup>1</sup> This project grew out of generous conversations with Liza Fior from muf architecture/art, artist Zoe Kreye, The Walking Reading Group (Ania Bas & Lydia Ashman), Joy Kahumbu who previously coordinated the Compassionate Neighbours Programme in Hackney and curator Nathalie Boobis.



The finished collective batiks  
will be on display at two locations:

**Age UK Redbridge**

Barking & Dagenham and Havering office  
4th Floor, 103 Cranbrook Road  
Ilford, IG1 4PU  
Phone number: 0208 220 6000

**The Allan Burgess Centre**

2 Gove Park, Wanstead, E11 2DL  
Phone number: 020 8989 6338

At this time, both locations are closed  
but are making plans to reopen. If you  
would like to view the pieces, please  
call in advance to ensure they are open.

Nicole Morris is an artist who  
uses textiles and film to explore  
methods of performance and  
collaboration across exhibition,  
education and community contexts.  
**[www.nicolemorris.co.uk](http://www.nicolemorris.co.uk)**

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