Unsee and See

A creative workbook which introduces children to design

We live in a time when **design surrounds us** and **affects our lives daily**. Products, services, spaces and structures, advertisements are all Design. However, people **fail** to **appreciate** and **acknowledge** them in their truest sense. **Design** as a **career** is **not very well known** in **India** and **people** have their own **skepticism** and **misconceptions** about it. Amidst all the engineering, medical or business courses there is nothing to make students **aware about design**.

A research study was done to understand the problem better. Part of the research consisted of views and inputs from some design educators and design students-the challenges they faced or the gaps that are visible to them. They suggested that the first step towards **understanding** or even **acknowledging design** is **good observation**. Whereas, the most common **misconception** about design is that **design is all about beautification** which is not entirely true. It is **equally important** to look into the **usability** and **ergonomics** alongside aesthetics. There is a **lack of understanding** about **design** as a **problem solving tool**. Besides, there is not enough awareness about the various sectors and opportunities within design.

Studies suggest that children during their **early adolescence** are open to **exploring** and **making their own discoveries**. At this stage, they try to understand what things they like and dislike. Thus, it would be an **ideal time** to get them **introduced** to something new like **design**. And if they **find it interesting** enough, they could collect more details on the subject and maybe even go ahead to **make a career in it**. The target audience would be young adolescents aged between 10 to 14 year olds, from higher and lower middle class families.

Based on the data collected, a book was to be designed as a solution to the problem. **Unsee and See** is a workbook which aims towards **sensitizing children to design around them** through fun exercises. The title **Unsee and See** tries to **convey** the idea that in order to understand design one has to **break his/her old ways of looking** and **instill new ways of seeing** and analyzing things.

The exercises have been inspired from a few self-help books or journals and Design college entrance exam papers; with some alter in the difficulty of the exercises and adding a few twists as required. The **objective** of these **exercises** is to **teach** students the **importance of design** and its **role in their day to day lives**. At the same time, it would **encourage** them to **bring out their creative side**. There would be a **small description** to the **exercises** along with some **supportive graphics** to help users understand how to proceed. Besides this, users would also be **acquainted** with different **examples of design** which would **introduce** them to the **design industry**-some designers and their work, **different streams** such as interior, product and visual communication. The exercises start with basics like identifying dots, shapes and

eventually build up to understanding the functionality of design. It would also **teach** them how to **observe** and see **things from different aspects** and thereby **push** them towards **lateral thinking**. Students would be consistently **encouraged** to **bring out** their **ideas** in whichever form possible **without restricting** themselves in any way.

The **visual approach** taken is **simple** and **friendly** so it does **not intimidate** the users of **perfection**. This is an attempt to encourage them to bring out their individual styles. Use of hand drawn illustrations and bright colours is evident throughout the book to provide a visual treat. Children nowadays are **losing touch of books** in the advancing digital world and they need to **realize the importance** of **maintaining a process**. Thus, the **format** of a **book** would **encourage** the users to **document their ideas in different ways** thereby, treating it as their **personal journal**. Books also add a very personal touch as it is something fabricated by you. Besides, making it engaging and interactive also adds a fun element to it.

A **prototype** had been **tested** with a couple of students from in the target group and they provided **positive feedback** for the same. The **audience** said they became **more observant** and **aware** of their surroundings. They also **enjoyed** going through the **examples** alongside each exercise. The **exercises** were small, **easy to understand**, **fun** to do and **informative**, all at the same time. Thus, based on the data collected from protoype test it can be concluded that the desired goals have been met to a great extent.
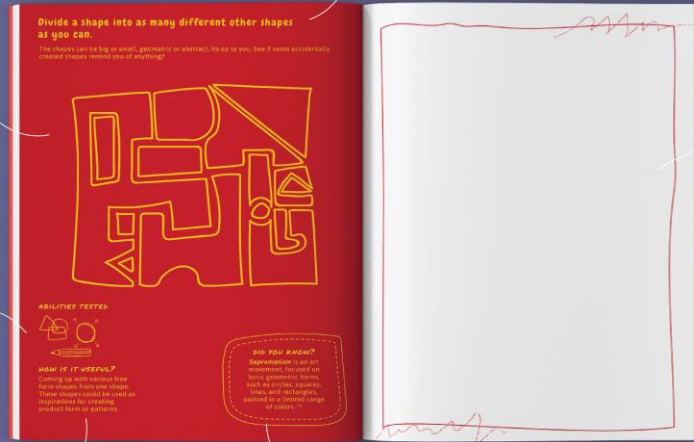
- by Isha Pednekar

Each of the exercises is given a brief description so they are easy to understand and perform

Supportive illustrations and or images

Empty area for drawing and or documentation

This section tells which different qualities are tested or which qualities are developed through that particular exercise

This section describes where and how this exercise will be useful

This section would introduce users to the design industry-some designers and their work, different streams such as interior, product and visual communication. The full links of these excerpts have been provided in the Further Reading section towards the end of the book to read more on them if needed