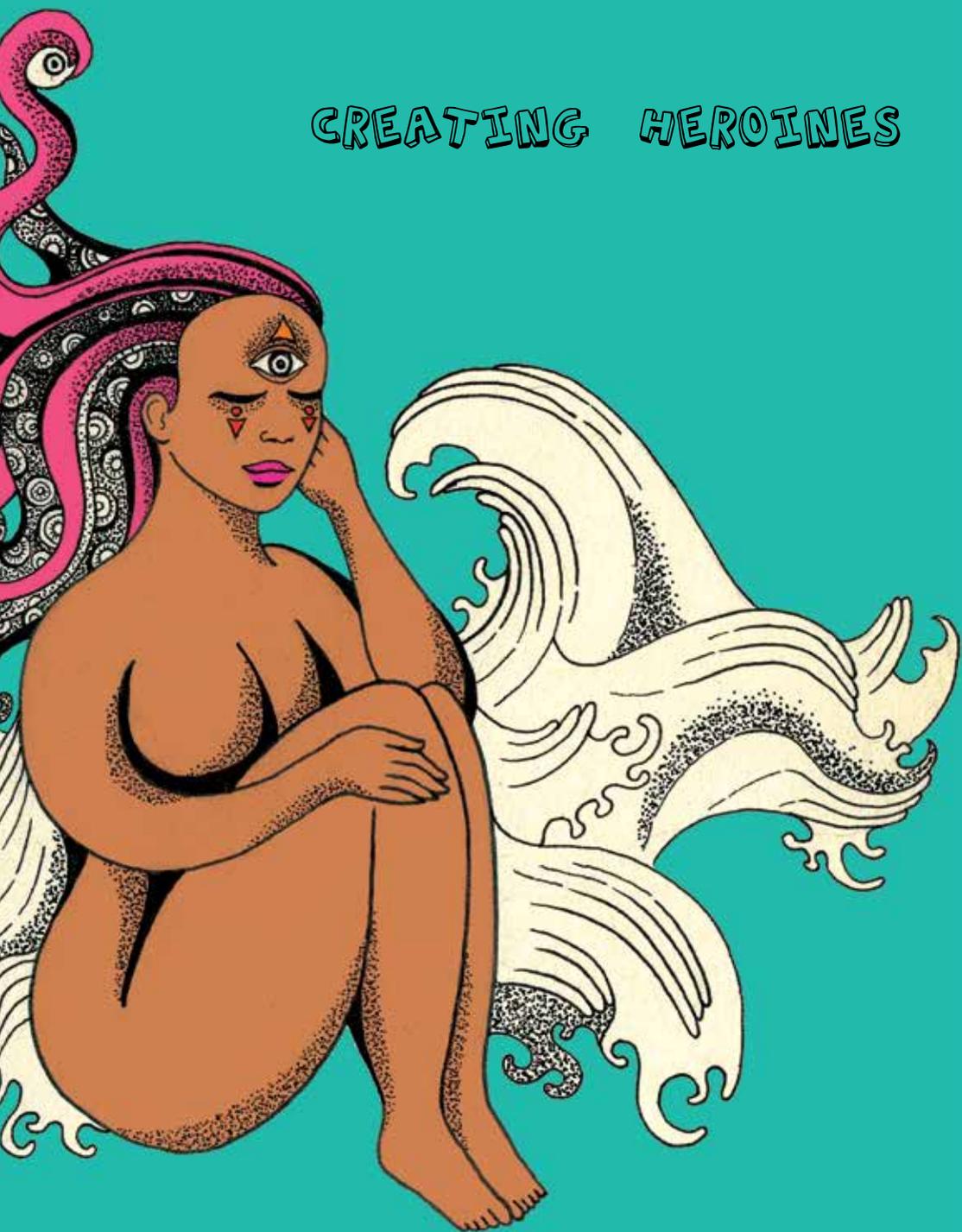


CREATING HEROINES



Produced for WOW London
Contains mature content

CREATING HEROINES

First published to mark the British Council Creating Heroines Artists' Workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal, February 2018.

Printed in the UK. The main part of this publication is printed on 100% recycled stock.

Contributing artists: Samya Arif, Isuri Merenchi Hewage, Promina Shrestha, Shraddha Shrestha, Nicola Streeten, Bandana Tulachan.

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Front and back cover artwork by Samya Arif.

The content of this zine does not reflect the official opinion of the British Council. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the zine lies entirely with the artists.

ABOUT CREATING HEROINES

This zine emerged from a three-day artists' workshop in February 2018, hosted by the British Council Nepal. The theme was around female heroines and inspiring role models from our different countries and we wanted to include an interpretation that allowed for the fictional, the fantastical and the everyday as well as more well-known figures.

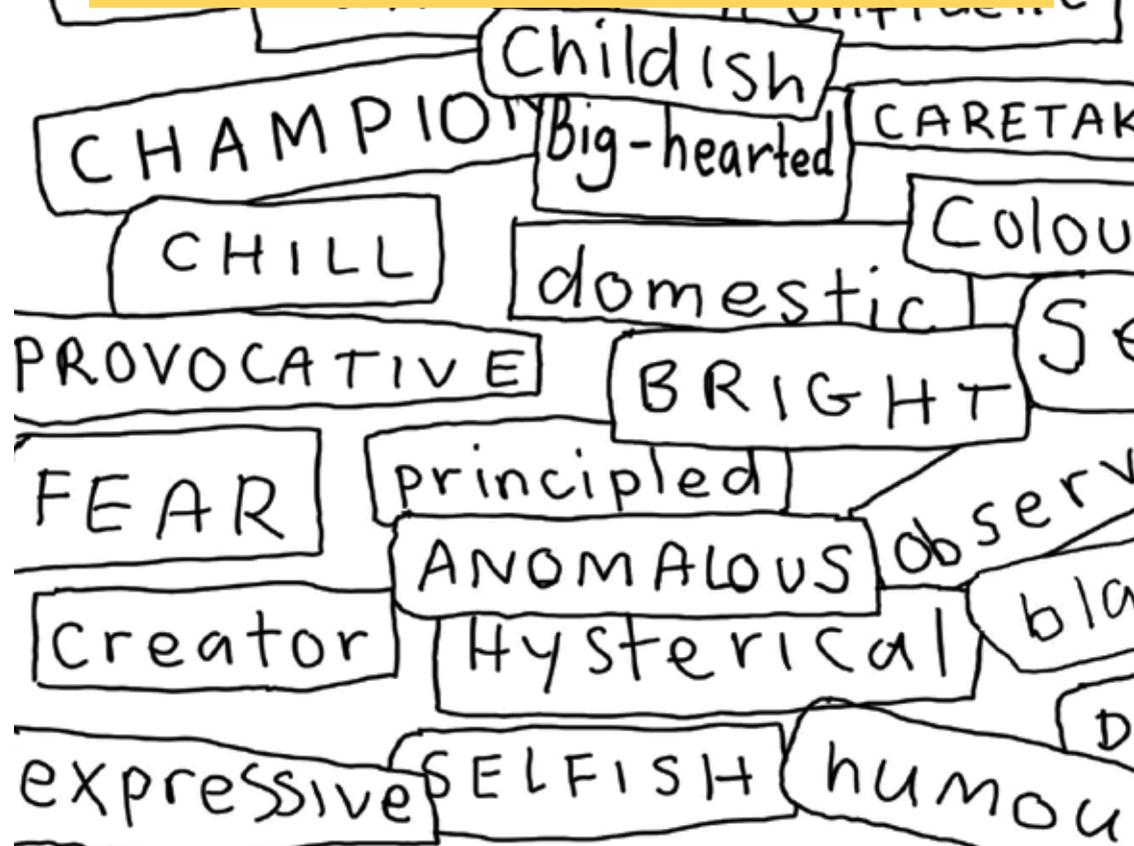
The workshop included six women artists from four countries: Samya Arif from Pakistan; Isuri Merenchi Hewage from Sri Lanka; Promina Shrestha, Shraddha Shrestha and Bandana Tulachan from Nepal and myself, Nicola Streeten from the UK acting as facilitator. All the artists have been part of kick-starting this Creating Heroines project at Women of the World (WOW) Festivals in South Asia, crowd-sourcing imagined and real life local heroines. We did not previously know each other and our practices cover a wide spectrum of styles and applications from street art to children's book illustration. I had planned a loose brief with the British Council, that included producing a zine. We were keen for the zine to reflect conversations that took place during our time together rather than be dictated in advance. The work and our friendships developed organically, with much laughter and many anecdotes based on our experiences as women.

We hope this visual expression from our time together sparks reflection and provokes thought on definitions and examples of women of influence in our lives. We also hope it challenges any assumptions we have about what it might mean to be a heroine in the past, present and future, both in our own homes as well as in countries across the globe.

Dr Nicola Streeten
Kathmandu, February 2018

THE WORD BAG

We started the workshop with an exercise based on American cartoonist Lynda Barry's idea. We spent five minutes writing words we associate with 'Heroine' and put them in a bag. We then randomly selected five words each and spent the rest of the day drawing our responses to those words. It took each of us in specific directions which we developed for this zine. Here we include examples from rough sketches to finished artworks.



PAKISTAN

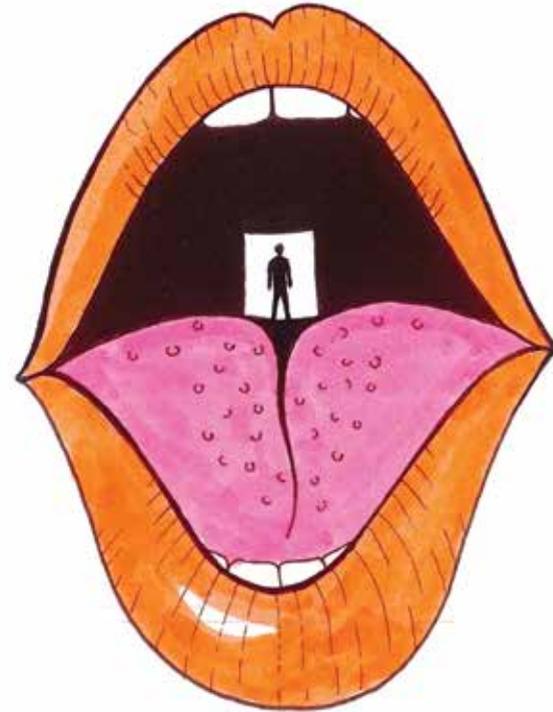


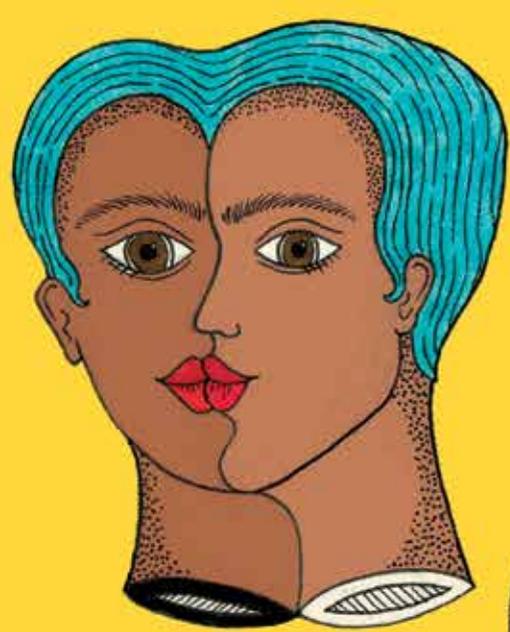
SAMYA ARIF - OCEA is an illustrator and graphic designer based in Karachi, Pakistan. After graduating from the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture in Communication Design in 2010, her focus has evolved towards visual art and illustration. She has also been an active part of the electronic music collective, Forever South, as artist, designer and DJ.

Samya has worked on various international projects including the Mumbai based Taxi Fabric, for which her designs were featured in the British band Coldplay's video; the London based One Beat Zines collective and the US Embassy in Nepal. She regularly illustrates for Pakistan's Herald magazine.

'Women of my Land'

I hope one day, if I have a daughter, I can tell her that where I come from we celebrate and revere women. Women who are bold and climb mountains, women who entertain and break stereotypes, women who make the impossible very possible. My illustrations for this zine celebrate women from Pakistan who have inspired me over the years. Women such as my mentor Sabeen Mahmud, the force behind T2F - a one-of-its-kind community space in Karachi for young musicians, artists and even minorities. Women such as Nergis Mavalvala, a celebrated Pakistani-American astrophysicist who went on to detect Einstein's gravitational waves; and the mythical creature Buraq. My artwork is dedicated to strong and beautiful women who I see and meet everyday in Pakistan.





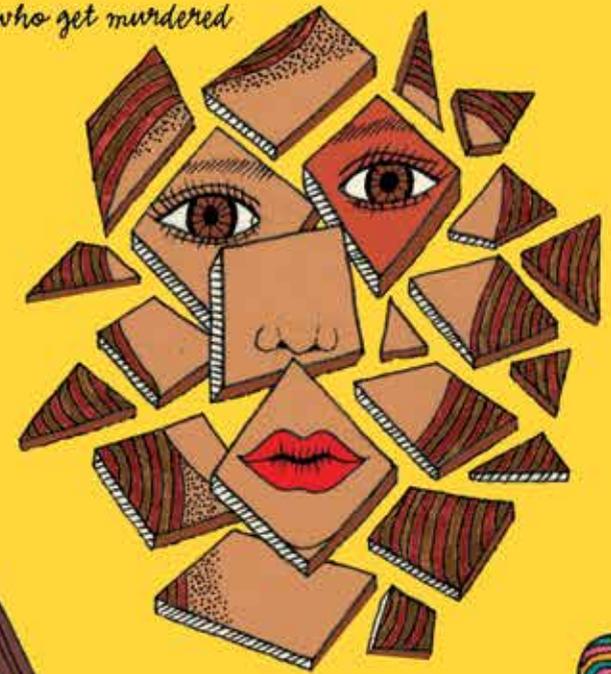
We have crazy women



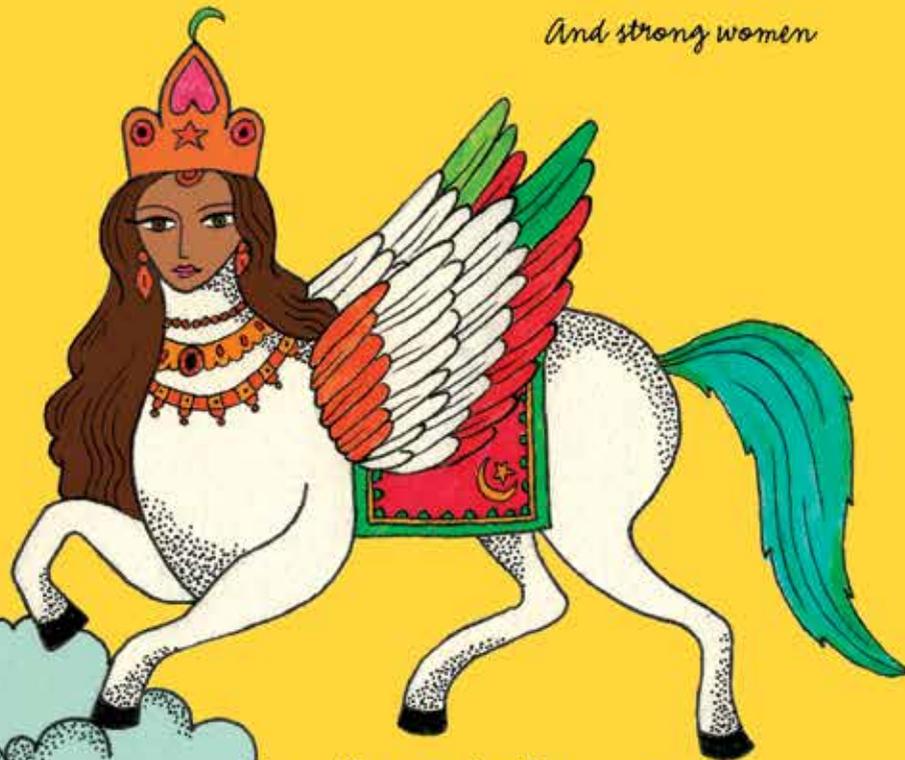
And strong women



And women who get murdered



Women who live in space



Women who fly





SRI LANKA

ISURI MERENCHI HEWAGE is an illustrator and comic artist from Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is a graduate of Columbus College of Art & Design with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration. Isuri is currently working on her first comic book, Podi (written by Deshan Tennekoon and Navin Ratnayake) to be published by Oni Press in 2019. <http://artofisuri.com>

I began by reflecting on the everyday and the quiet, untold heroism of women in Sri Lanka who come in all shapes and sizes. These are women who work hard to support their families, women who fight for their rights, women who have lost their families, women who continue to carry on kindly in a system full of discrimination, abuse and violence.





NEPAL



SHRADDHA SHRESTHA Shraddha Shrestha is a designer, illustrator and mural artist from Kathmandu, Nepal. She holds a Masters Degree in Illustration from the Glasgow School of Art. Her works revolve around cartoons, comics, and fantasy dealing with her emotional and social experiences. She is also experimenting with street art and loves to play with her imaginary characters. <https://shraddhashrestha.carbonmade.com>

Religion, tradition, and history are an open book for female icons. If we observe closely, any mythology of any part of the world has always placed women in the highest place. Since I am interested in myths and traditional iconographies and stories, I began my research studying about female characters in the traditional background of Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. My research led to discovering Kali who represents strength and liberation in Hindu mythology, the mythical creature Buraq, and Viharamahadevi who represents patriotism and sacrifice. In this design, I wanted to show these three strong characters hanging out together despite being from different backgrounds and holding a strong independent character.

The lower part of the boat is a collage of drawings we collected from the WOW (Women of the World) event in Kathmandu where we asked people to draw their heroines or idols. The text 'You can be anything' was also from a participant. She emphasized that all woman have their own struggles and achievements. It is not always important that we find an idol because we ourselves are heroes within and we can be anything to lead the world. I couldn't agree more with her words: You can be anything!



YOU CAN BE
ANYTHING



NEPAL



PROMINA SHRESTHA is an illustrator, graphic designer and researcher based in Kathmandu, Nepal. She holds a Master's Degree in Arts and Aesthetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. She has published papers on current trans-cultural influence on Newari Poubha tradition and national identity in children's book illustration in Nepal. She is currently working on the anthropological Yatayat Comic Project with Professor Stacey Leigh Pigg (Simon Fraser University, Canada) and illustrating children's books for publisher Rato Bangala Kitab. <http://kt.artmandu.org/team-member/promina-shrestha/>

From the word bag I pulled: confident, black sheep, adventurous, expresses herself and says 'no'. I thought if this was a character with these attributes in real life, she would be my kind of person! I began drawing characters and the idea of a little mis-adventure developed.

A is the blue haired woman who is always optimistic, B is a voluptuous, sexy, hardcore feminist, cat-loving punk. C lives with the black sheep label for not conforming to tradition. She always says no!

My characters also developed in response to conversations we were having while drawing, about ourselves, our backgrounds and experiences as women. We shared stories from our past and present, both serious and hilarious. Additionally, the characters touch on to my own multicultural history - where I have wrestled to fit into a specific identity and had my own adventures. As such, these are not cape wearing heroines but ordinary people in various forms, with their own struggles and beliefs.





MEOW

COME DOWN KITTY!!!

GROWL GRRRR

HEHEHE

HELP!!! PANT PANT

HOT STU

GIVE IT BACK YOU @!?!

PEPPAL TREE

BAT CAVE

3 TREE TEMPLE

CAVE

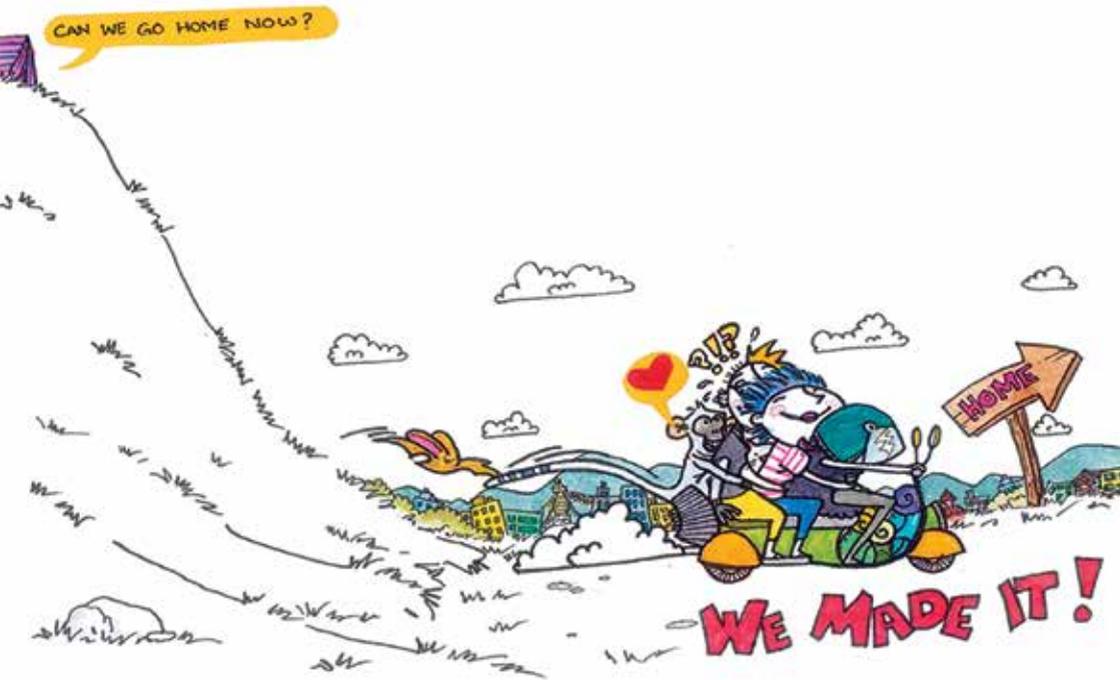
ARE WE THERE YET? NO!!!

ARE WE THERE YET? NO!! ARE WE THERE YET???

ARE WE THERE YET? NO!! ARE WE THERE YET???

ARE WE THERE YET? NO! ARE WE...





NEPAL



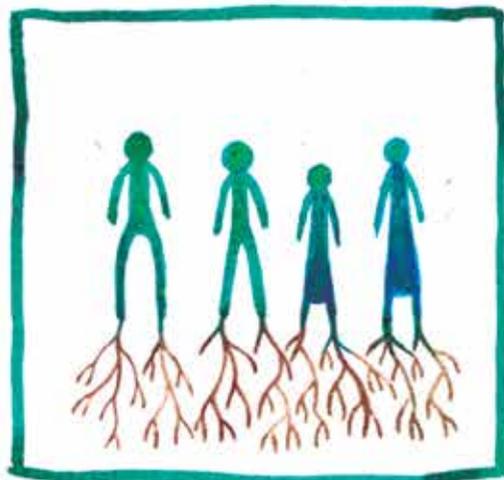
BANDANA TULACHAN is a freelance illustrator based in Kathmandu, Nepal. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts in Graphic Communication from Kathmandu University Center for Art and Design. Bandana has illustrated over ten picture books for children since 2012. In 2015, she wrote and illustrated *Sanu ra Adhiberi* (Sanu and the Big Storm). She is working on introducing more fantasy into children's literature in Nepal. <http://cargocollective.com/bandanatulachan>

The idea for the A-typical traveller started with thinking about who I find inspiring in my life. I thought about my aunt Shakuntala, a typical housewife in Nepal. She cooks and cleans and looks after her family. But a few years ago she started to travel the world. This might sound normal to some, but a woman travelling is not very common in Nepal, especially not if you are older and not from a privileged background. My aunt spent most of her life being a wife and a mother. But then she started her own business and started to live for her own sake. I find the way she's taken control of her life to be really inspiring.

My short comic is dedicated to women who break boundaries. We play the role that society has spelled out for us, and there's little space for our individuality. I wish more women could be true to themselves and do the things that they like. I wish for a time where simple things like staying out late, travelling alone or falling in love with who you want to will not be taboo.



A- TYPICAL TRAVELLER



Sometimes roots grow too strong,
in comfort of traditions.



And many more that you don't.



In a flash life passes you by,
with hardly a space in between
for yourself.



There are things that you do...

But you don't want to grow
roots of restrictions.



You don't want to believe
in people who say-
NO, YOU CAN'T!



Because you will fly over
mountains of prejudice.



And you will be free.
As you always were.





THE U.K.

WHAT DOES "HEROINE" MEAN TO YOU?

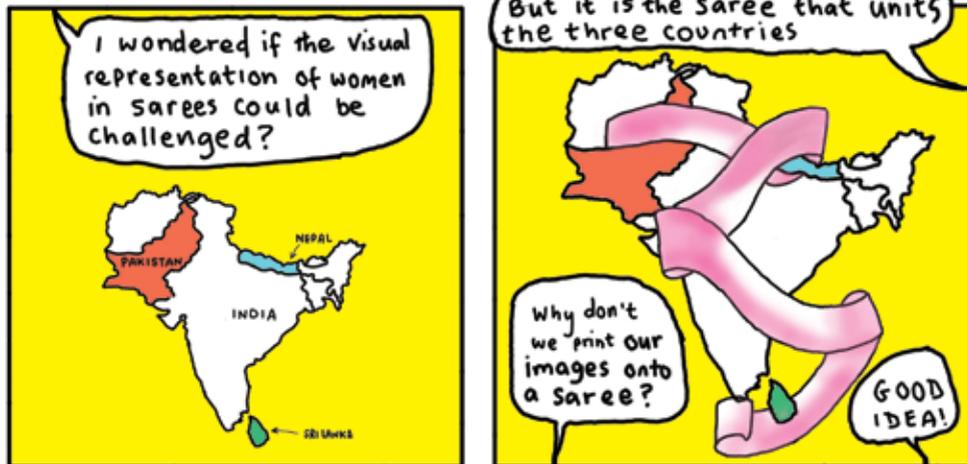
Fill in the boxes...

Write down words you associate with HEROINE

DR NICOLA STREETEN is an anthropologist-turned-illustrator, graphic novelist and comics scholar. She is author of graphic memoir, 'Billy, Me & You' (2011) and co-editor of 'The Inking Woman' (2018). She co-founded the international forum Laydeez do Comics in 2009. Her PhD was A Cultural History of Feminist Cartoons and Comics in Britain from 1970-2010.

www.streetenillustration.com

Below draw your associations and think of examples of your real heroines



The images from this zine have been reproduced on a Creative Heroines saree for display at Women of the World (WOW) London, 2018.

GROUP SELFIE



Left to right, Back: Daisy Leitch (British Council), Delphine Pawlik (British Council), Samya Arif, Nicola Streeten, Promina Shrestha.
Front: Isuri Merenchi Hewage, Bandana Tulachan, Shraddha Shrestha.



Women
of my
Land