



INTRODUCTION

This short comic series was created during a workshop organized by researcher and comic artist Jiahao Ji in collaboration with the UK mental health charity Mind and art institution FuseBox. In the workshop, participants worked alongside the artist, using comics as a medium to express their illness experiences with mental challenges. They then reconstructed these stories, reframing their experiences in a more positive light. This initiative expanded the use of comics as a therapeutic intervention, further advancing the application of comics in therapy area.

CATALOGUE

I.

Mental Health Challenge

Externalization

Angry Kettle

Anxiety Journey

Emotion Outburst

My Turbulence

II.

Transform Illness

Experience into Comics

Angry Kettle Story

Anxiety Journey Story

Emotion Outburst Story

My Turbulence Story

III.

Reconstruct Initial Stories

Reconstruct Angry Kettle

Reconstruct Anxiety Journey

Reconstruct Emotion Outburst

Reconstruct My Turbulence

IV.

Appendix

Photos from Workshops

Drawings created by participants

I.

MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE EXTERNALIZATION

During this phase of externalizing mental health challenges, Jiahao Ji invited participants to express their struggles through visual metaphors, laying the foundation for the creation of personal metaphorical stories in the next phase.

Angry Kettle



Anxiety and Anger:

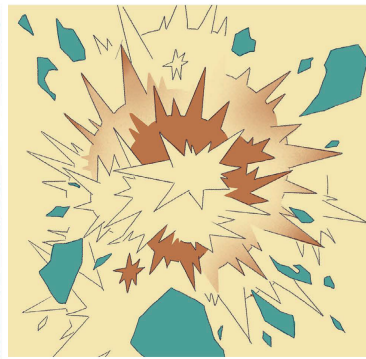
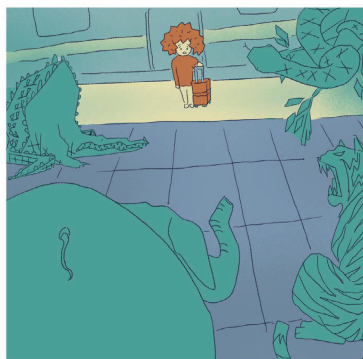
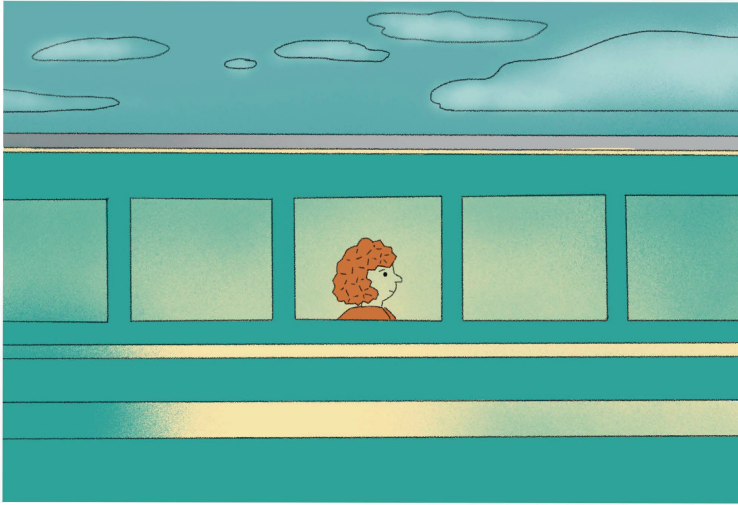
The outburst of my anger and anxiety is like boiling water about to erupt from a kettle.

Anxiety Journey



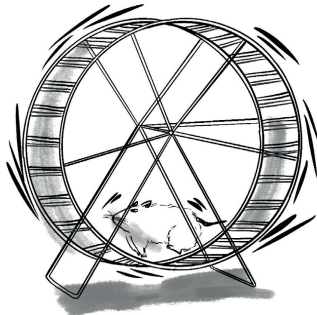
Anxiety:

I feel like I'm on a train with no known destination, worried about the unexpected misfortunes that might await me when I arrive.



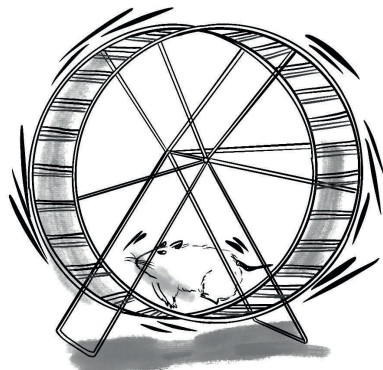
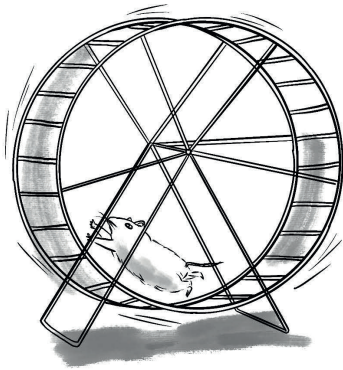
Anxiety Journey

Emotion Outburst



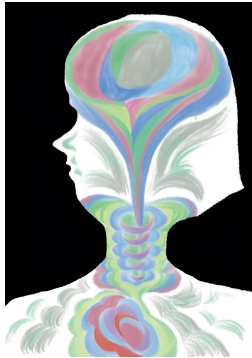
Being Bullied:

I am like a hamster, forced to run endlessly in a circular cage against my will.



Emotion Outburst

My Turbulence



The Experience of Trauma:

Layers upon layers of intertwined emotions and traumatic experiences flow from my mind to my heart, leaving both my body and soul in turmoil.

II.

TRANSFORM ILLNESS EXPERIENCE INTO COMICS

At this stage, Jiahao Ji invited participants to collaboratively create comics based on their life stories, using the visual metaphors they had developed in the previous workshop to reflect their personal experiences.

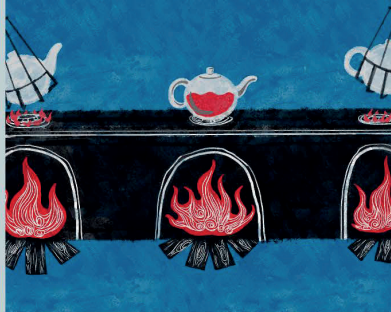
Me, along with the other kettles, was placed on the stove, and the fire underneath was burning fiercely,



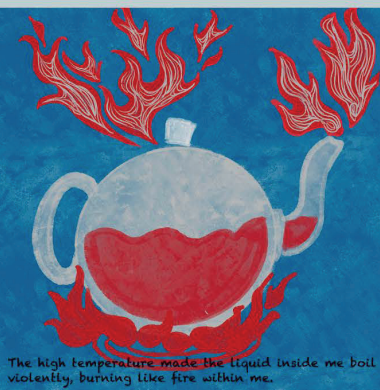
The liquid inside me was boiling vigorously due to the intense heat.



As the water reached a boil, the other kettles were promptly removed by people.



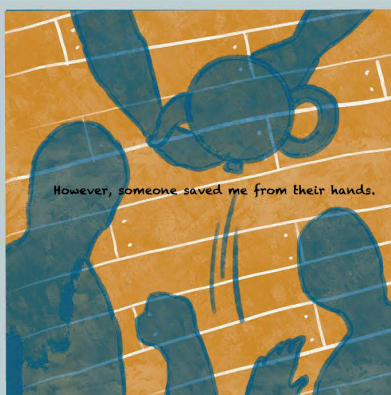
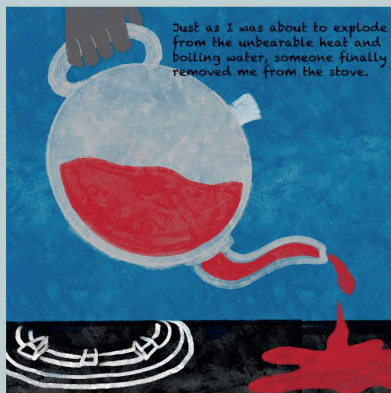
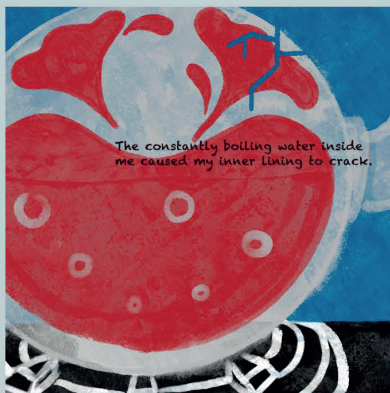
Only I was left in place.

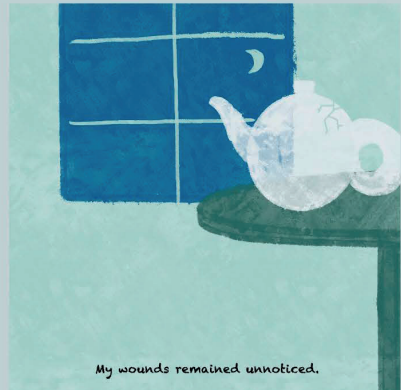


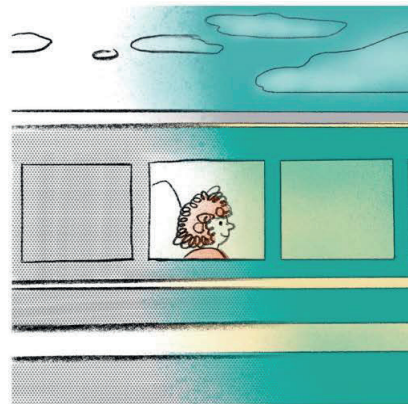
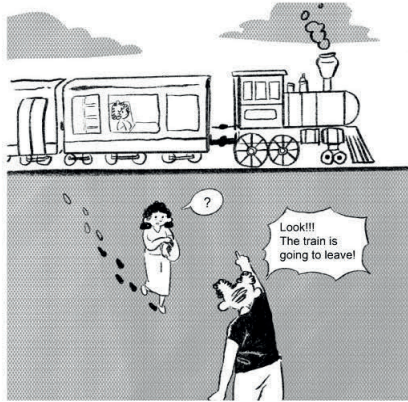
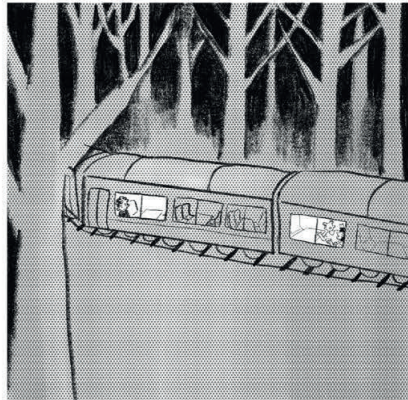
The high temperature made the liquid inside me boil violently, burning like fire within me.



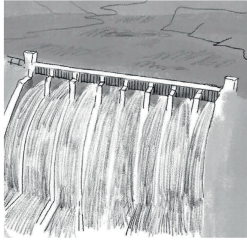
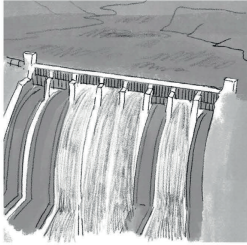
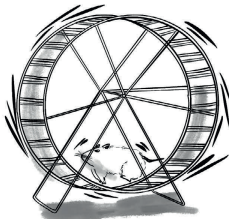
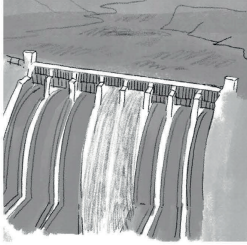
Meanwhile, the people beside me kept adding more firewood to my stove.





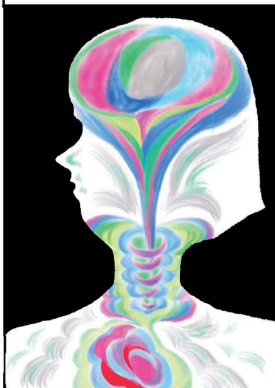






Emotion Outburst

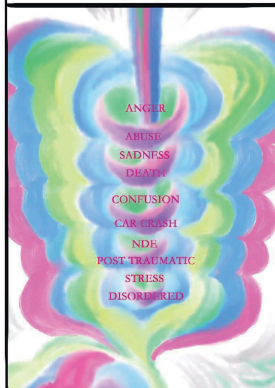
My body is in turmoil,



my mind racing with thoughts.



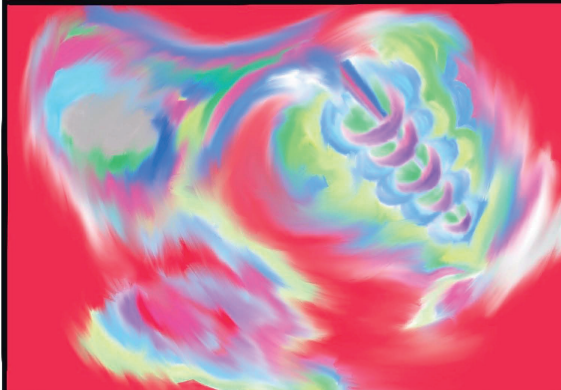
Emotions surge from my brain
to my heart,



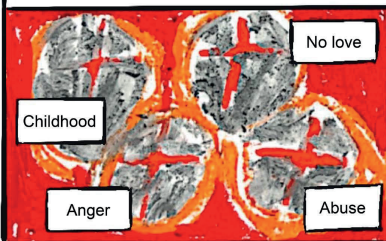
layering wounds upon wounds
deep within me.



This chaotic cycle plays out endlessly inside me.



These wounds feel like sharp nails,



piercing my heart.



My heart is heavily attacked by these nails.



But one day, the shape of these nails began to change.



Their jagged edges softened,



and their sharp tips elongated.



Gradually, they formed a box within me,



using my heart as its boundary.



I placed all my wounds inside, storing them away.



III.

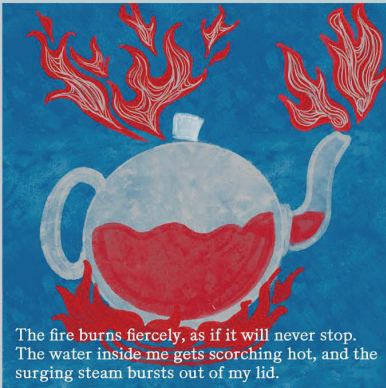
RECONSTRUCT INITIAL STORIES

In the final stage, Jiahao Ji, along with other workshop participants, reinterpreted the metaphorical stories, offering new, multifaceted perspectives on their original life experiences.

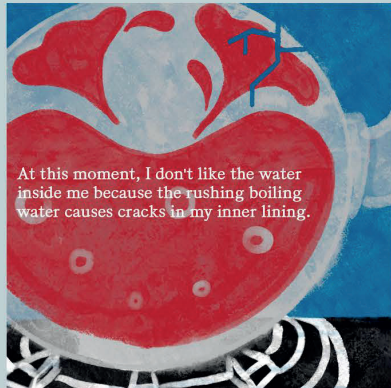
I am a kettle. There's always water inside me.
When I'm not boiling water, both the water and
I remain still and quiet.



When someone starts a fire to boil the water,
the water inside me begins to boil.



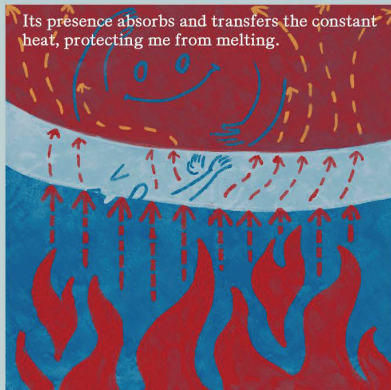
The fire burns fiercely, as if it will never stop.
The water inside me gets scorching hot, and the
surging steam bursts out of my lid.



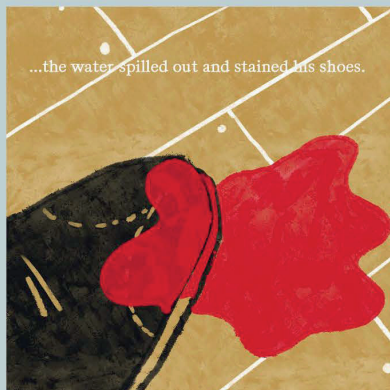
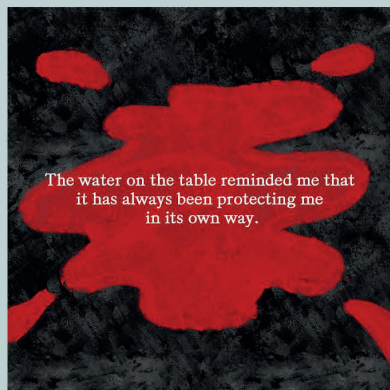
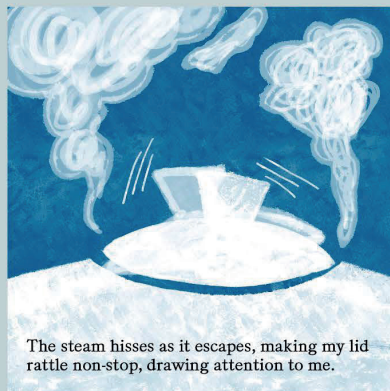
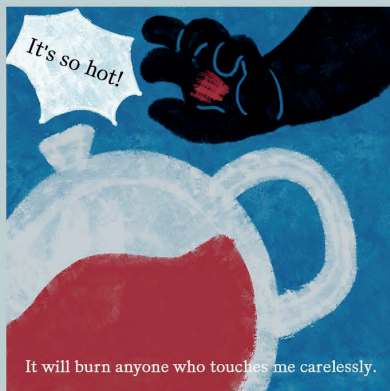
At this moment, I don't like the water
inside me because the rushing boiling
water causes cracks in my inner lining.



But at the same time, I'm grateful
for the water being there.



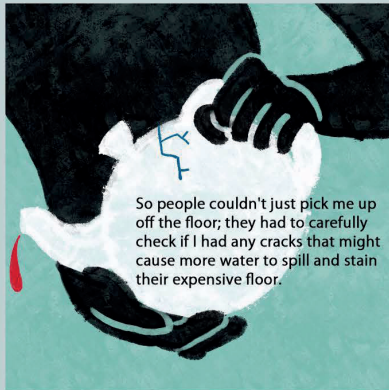
Its presence absorbs and transfers the constant
heat, protecting me from melting.



For instance, when I tried to fall off the table and make noise to get someone's attention,



..... the water spilled onto the floor with me, soaking it.

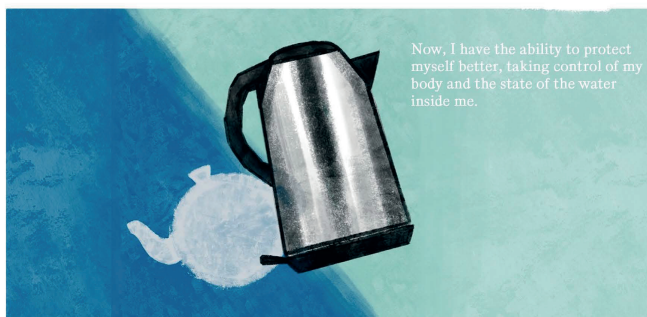
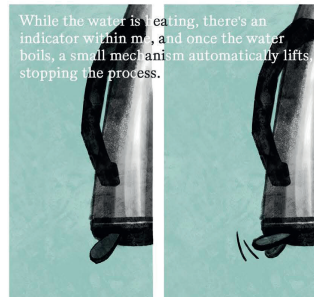
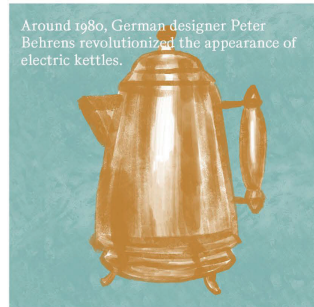


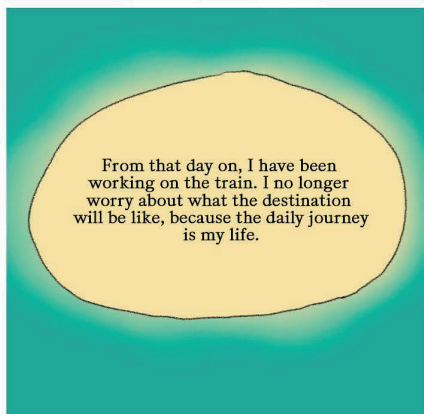
To prevent me from dirtying their floor again, they moved me away from that cold, rarely inhabited place

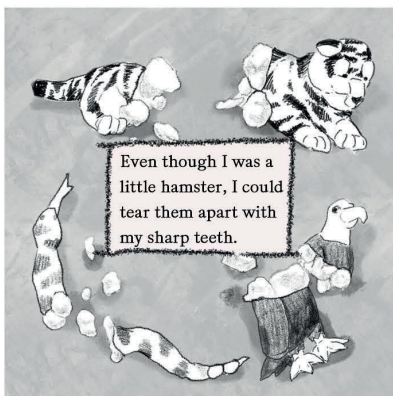
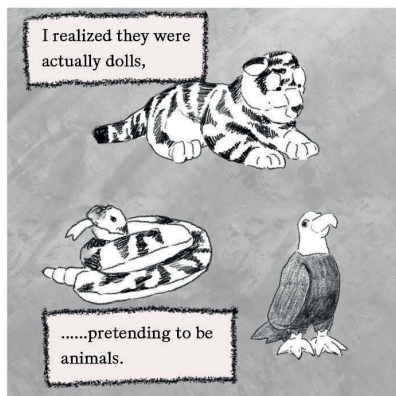
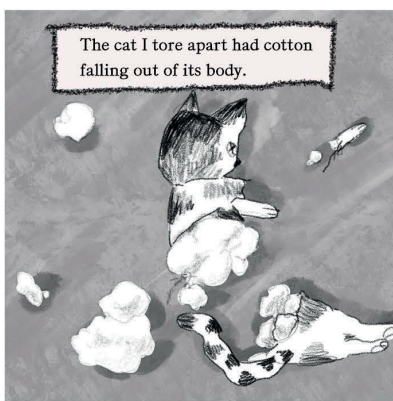


...and put me under their watchful eyes, using me to make tea every day. So I, along with the water inside me, remained quietly in place, sometimes boiling, sometimes calm.

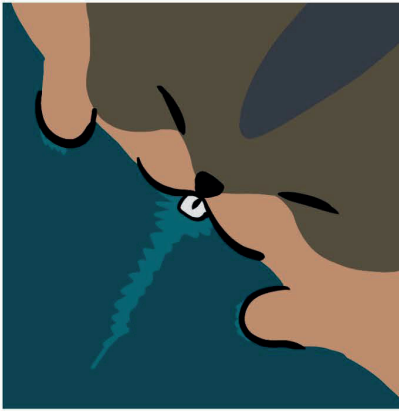




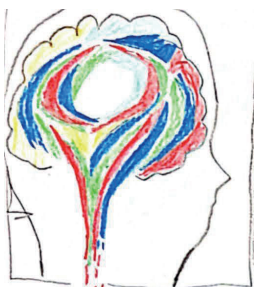




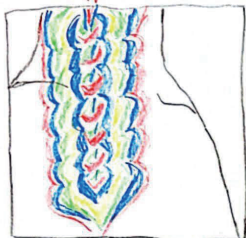








Too much going on in my mind...



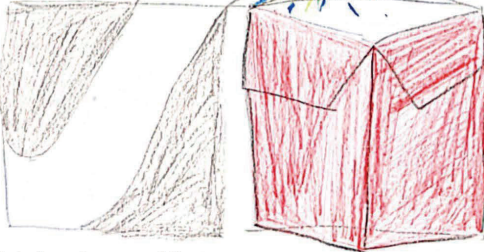
It flowed to my throat....
If only it can come out from mouth

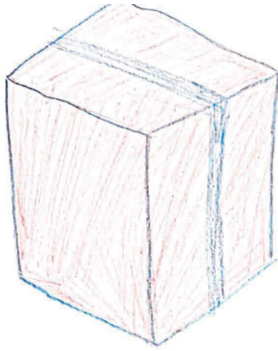


Yet it keep flowing,
and turn something strong to
my heart...

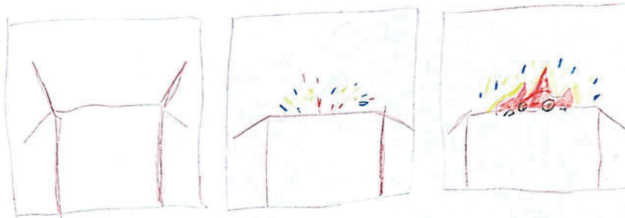


I have to put it into a box. My body can't process all the energy.

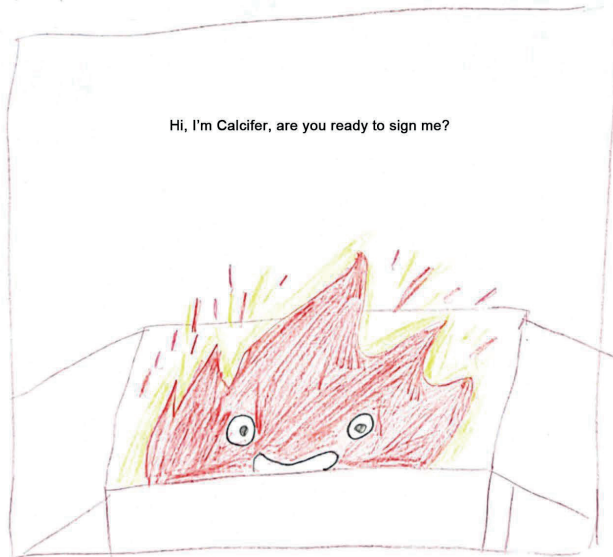




I put it into a corner,
thought I would never touch it again,
yet one day, I can't help myself,
and re-open it again.



Hi, I'm Calcifer, are you ready to sign me?



Calcifer is a fire demon in Howl's Moving Castle, both in Diana Wynne Jones's original novel (1988) and Studio Ghibli's animated adaptation (2004). Calcifer is bound to Howl through a mysterious magical contract. This agreement grants Howl immense power.

APPENDIX

I.

Photos from Workshop

Photo 01

Photo 02

Photo 03

Photo 04

Photo 05

Photo 06

II.

Drawing Samples Created by Participants

Drawing created by participant 01

Drawing created by participant 02

Drawing created by participant 03

Drawing created by participant 04

III.

Informed Consent Sample

PHOTOS FROM WORKSHOP



Photo o1

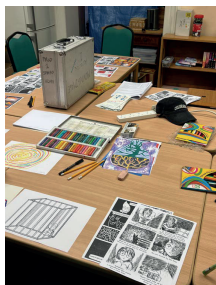


Photo o2



Photo o3



Photo o4

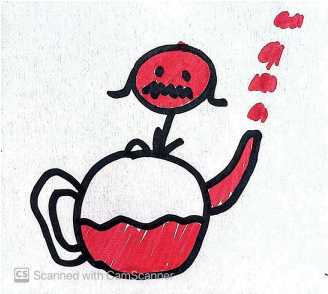


Photo o5

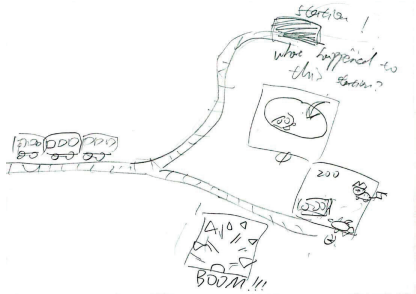


Photo o6

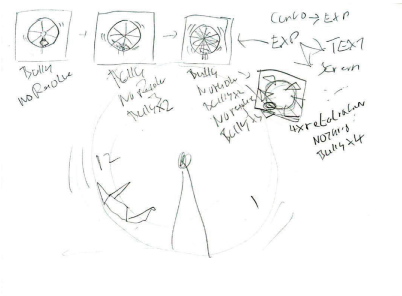
DRAWING SAMPLES CREATED BY PARTICIPANTS



Drawing created by participant 01



Drawing created by participant 02



Drawing created by participant 03



Drawing created by participant 04

Informed Consent for

Co-create Comics as Self-care Approach Workshops

Please tick the appropriate boxes

Yes No

1. Taking part in the study

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this workshop and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that taking part in the study involves information collection created by me. Information generated during the participatory workshops will include hand drawings created by me and notes-taking. ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Use of the information in the study

I understand that the artwork I created during the workshop and the result of the workshop might be used for future outputs/publications. I grant license for the researcher to utilize my artwork and written reflections produced during workshops within the context of this research. ☐ Yes ☐ No

All the data will be anonymised and named as 'Workshop 1', 'Workshop 2', and so on. The hand drawing created by participants will be numbered as 'image created by participant 01', 'image created by participant 02', and so on. No information will be released which will enable other people to identify who I was. ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Signatures

Name of participant [IN CAPITALS] Signature Date

For participants unable to sign their name, mark the box instead of signing

☐

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

Name of researcher [IN CAPITALS] Signature Date

Note: All participants have signed a consent form, granting researcher Jiahao Ji permission to use their workshop-created artworks for research purposes. A sample of the consent form can be found at the end of this booklet. However, to protect the confidentiality of the original data and the rights of the participants, all initial sketches presented in this book have been redrawn by the researcher to ensure that no one can identify participants based on their unique artistic styles.

