

Jordan Katz

As a filmmaker, I have the task of telling stories through a collection of moving images. If a picture is worth a thousand words, the 10 minute documentary I created this summer could be translated into a novel.

During my time abroad, I felt as if I was handed a blank outline of myself found in a coloring book. I was given the opportunity to fill it in with colors I hadn't used before coming to India. The sky didn't have to be blue and the grass didn't have to be green. I felt challenged and inspired to find new shades of myself; to write 1,000 new words. Once I stopped clinging to old shades, I found adventures waiting for me in Jodhpur. Living in a hostel with 6 people and no alone time was a brand new experience for me. As someone who previously found comfort and security in isolation, I was forced to give my peers an opportunity to enjoy my presence, even when I feared that it was an impossible task. This taught me the importance of being around people, despite my fears of rejection. I was surprised to find that people liked me when I gave them the opportunity to do so. This made me feel valued in a way that I hadn't felt in a long time. I developed a judgement-free appreciation and awareness for the energy I brought into a room.

Extended to our work, I also learned that I needed my collaborators, and my collaborators needed me. We each complemented the other's strengths and weaknesses in ways that truly humbled me. As someone who found joy in cooking for myself and peace in knowing exactly what was going into my body, I was terrified of what would happen during this 30 day period where I would have to eat food which I did not prepare 3 times a day. My anxieties are often quieted by the way I choose to feed myself. Confronting those fears taught me to loosen up and forgive myself for setting unrealistic expectations. To recognize my lack of control in certain situations, and to be okay with it. To enjoy nourishing my body without deprivation and punishment. To recognize that I could still eat even if I hadn't exercised that morning. I believe that eating healthy and exercising regularly are both great practices, but when they come at the expense of spending time with other people, we have to re-evaluate our priorities. Sometimes it's more important to sacrifice a few hours of sleep and enjoy the company of friends than it is to go to bed early in obedience to [a 6 a.m.](#) wake up call for the gym. I am grateful for allowing myself to do this.

India has given me a new set of crayons with names of colors that I have never heard before. The completed template I left with looks quite different than the one I came with. However, they are both in the same book. They are both parts of who I am. Different days call for different colors. Monet once said that "Colors pursue me like a constant worry. They even worry me in my sleep." In this sense, the endless possibilities of colors we can choose from becomes daunting. It's easy to become paralyzed by overchoice syndrome. Nonetheless, I hope to no longer allow the fear of what I can't become, provoke me to seek familiar, safe, and predictable colors.

When discussing his struggles with capturing the Waterloo Bridge, Monet said: "The point is to know how to use the colors, the choice of which is, when all's said and done, a matter of habit." There are many nuanced self-impressions we paint our portraits from, and we get to choose which habits of color capture that portrait best.