3 D letters in wire

This was done as a class room exercise in Basic design with Master of design students in mid-eighties. Students came from different regions. They were encouraged to Some took letters from their mother tongue. Some took lettrs from other regions. I am thankful to all the students for their contribution.
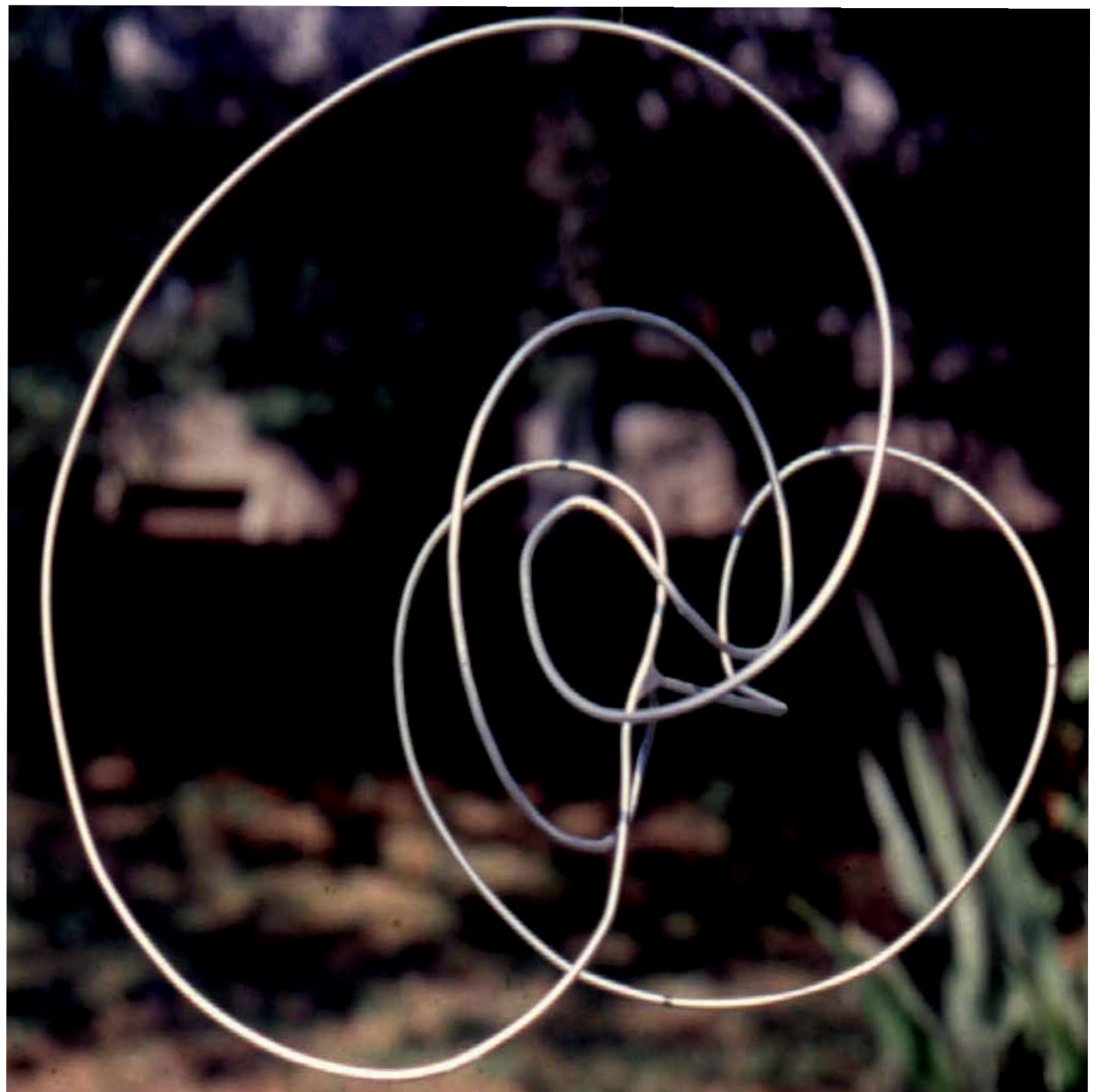
The task was to deconstruct the letter.
`.Origin of a Letter is in 2D.
Can we deconstruct it to explore form and space in 3dimensions?

'Look at the beautiful space a letter like 'AA' in Telugu or Kannada can create with round form! Repeat the letter if you like! Can you feel the space in the form! See the beauty of it. But learn to handle the wire! It is malleable. It will listen to you.'

I framed a task using letter-forms. At that time, Prof. R.K Joshi a well known calligrapher had joined IDC. He was a "great inspiration!" He used to say "look at our potential. India has 14 official languages. Each has around 56 letters. that gives us 784 letters to start with. Each letter-form has unique character. We can use them to develop a cultural identity in Design!"

The task I set was, 'Make a 3D form in 'wire' taking any letter in any language as basis! I had seen many interesting exercises with letter-forms at NID, explored by the well known graphic designer Besiele. But they all were in Roman letters!

Students coming with graduation s in Engineering and architecture had a problem as what to do ? How to explore ? Many discussions took place!.
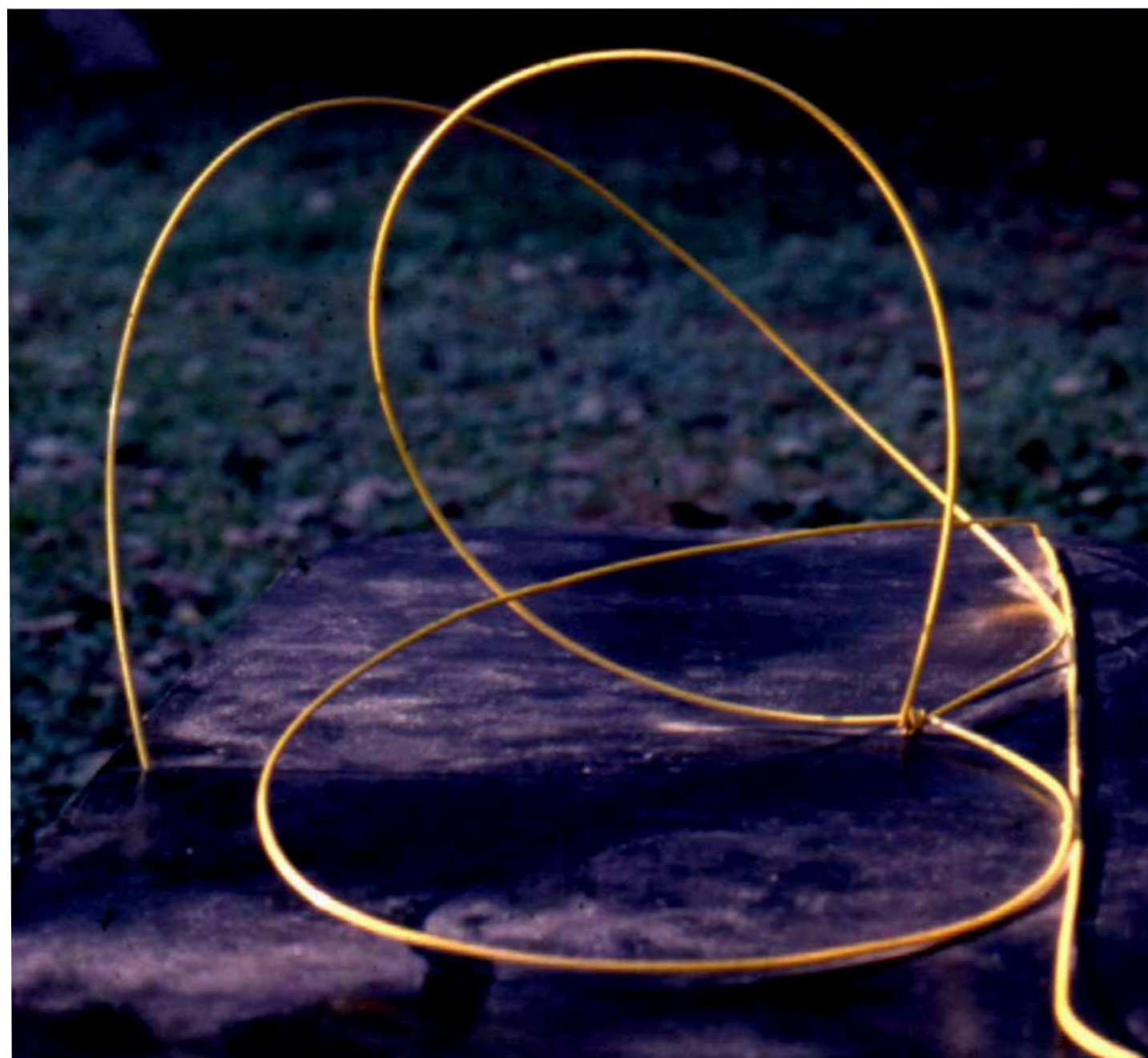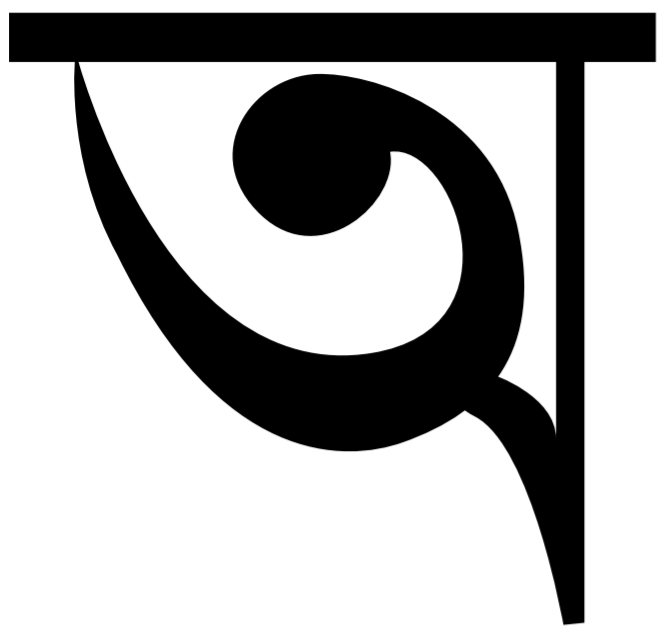
Discussions form a 'core' in Studio pedagogy, where you reach out to each student, provoking his/her imagination! For some a 'hint' is enough. Some students get stuck. See what others are doing! They try to find a rule behind and imitate,

A continuous dialogue between student and the teacher becomes necessary.. Feedback on student's ideas are given in a multidimensional framework. Tacit knowledge based on feels can only be dealt in specific contexts. Individual interactions have great advantage!

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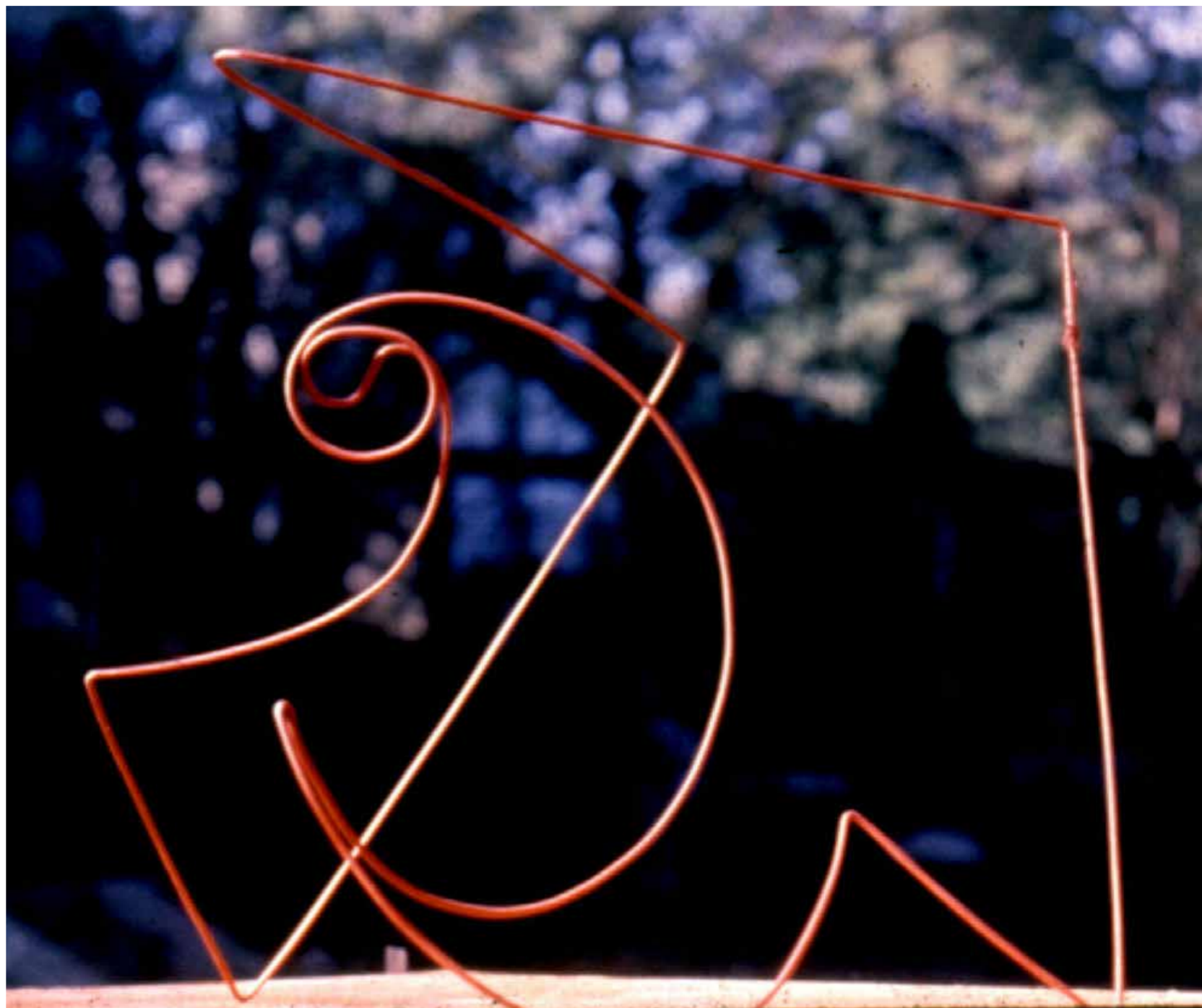A letter in Devanagari becomes soft and flowing giving a new manifestation.

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How do we teach 'Right brain thinking' ?
It has to be in many ways! Metaphoric suggestions play a significant role! Such tasks challenge teacher's imagination as well! His /her ability to see a solution and give some hints to a student becomes important. Once a student starts building a 'form' in his/her mind based on his/ her own imagination, then it takes shape and spreads to other students!
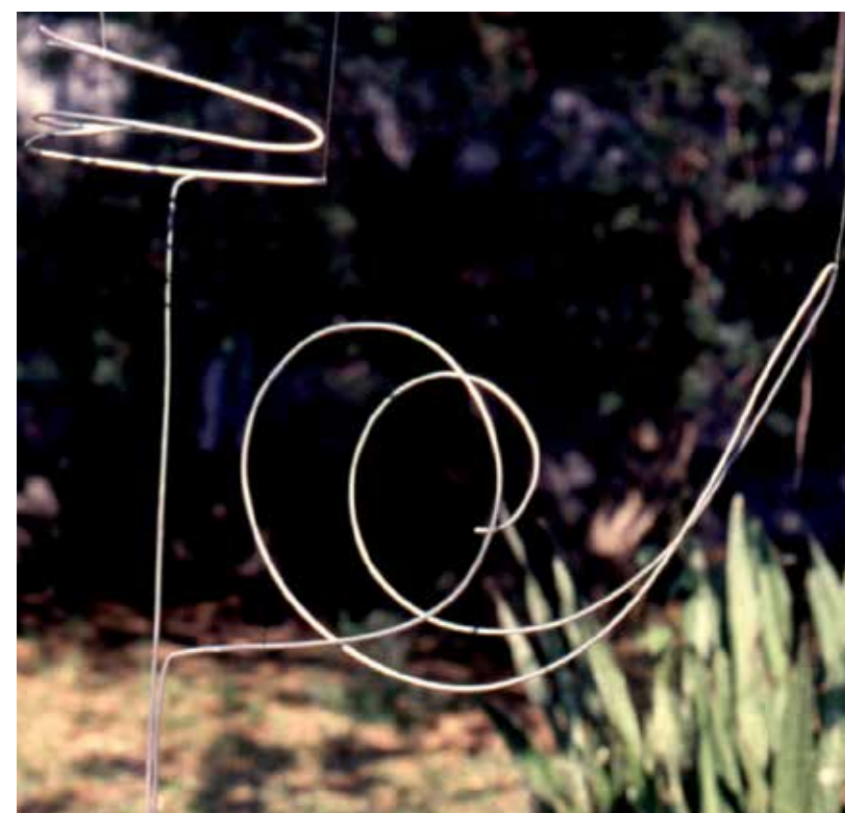Initial break becomes important to find tangible solution in a fuzzy zone!

When two students took the same letter 'AA' (shorter in pronounciation) in Bengali two different chatracters of the letter emerged.
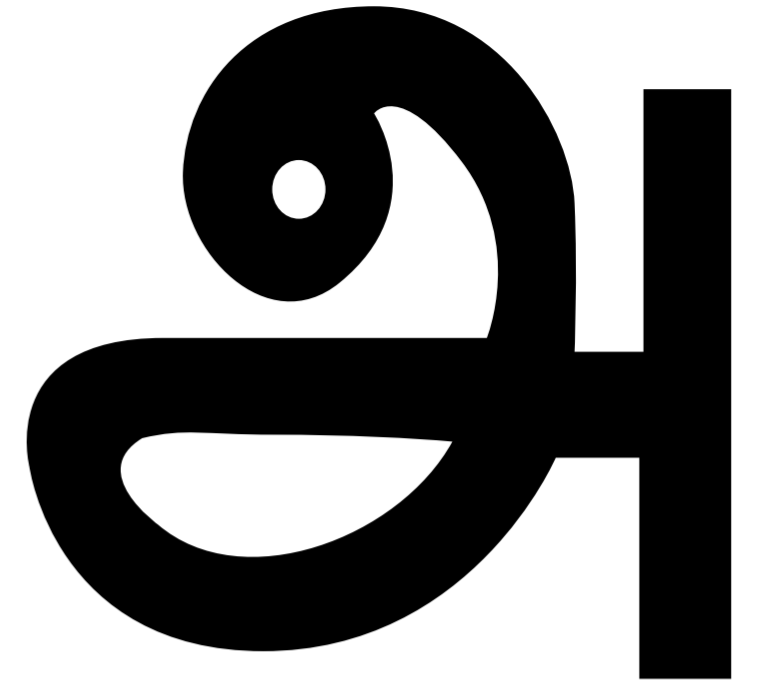First one (in top)asserted its 3dimensionality!
The second remained soft in its manifestation

A letter in 3Dimensions has a possibility to cast shadows of different kind and some may resemble 2D letter, reminding its origin. The 'essential form', its 3 Dimensional expression in space and its appearance as 2D form in shadow- all this can provide a rich platform for imagination, a link from 2D manifestation, Rupa, to Arupa, unmanifested Form.
I often bring in Abbott Abbott's 'Flatland' in my discussions!

Gujarathi language has a repu-
tation of softness in its vocal
expression. That seems to have
been brought out lucidly in the
3D expression of its first letter!

Odisha is known for its dance forms. Somehow its embedded
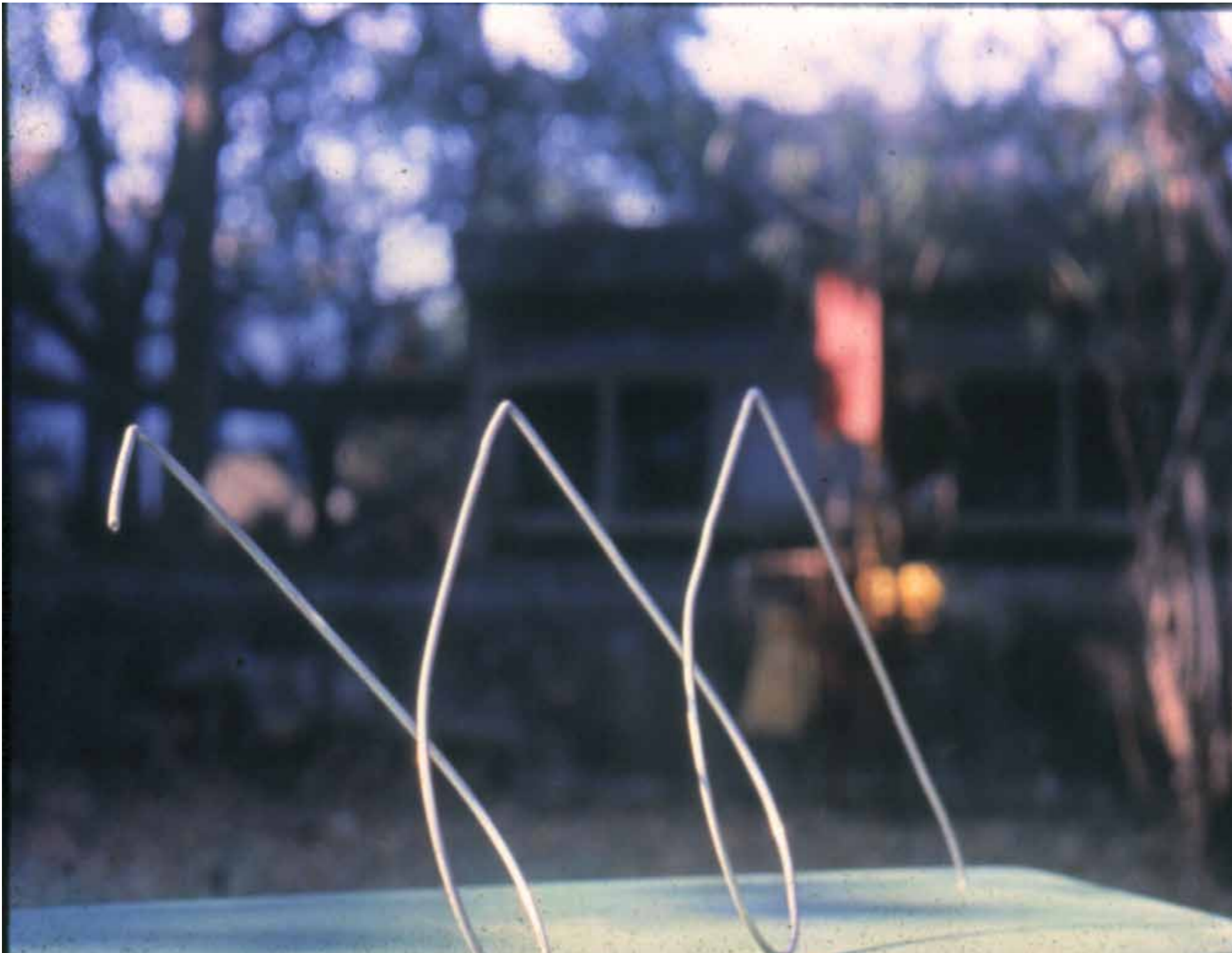sensuality in 2D letter seems to have manifested in its

gorgeous 3dimensional expression,

reminding us the vision of Bauhaus in having a strong
component of 'Theatre" in a Design School!
The basic design task provided an outlet to bring out such
unconscious cultural expressions.

When a student took an arabic
letter, it was new challenge. The let-
ter was so simple . It didn't have en-
closed 2D space.
 Repeating the letter was one strat-
egy we adopted. This got extended to
other letters by others. Writing from
left to write, practised in arabic lan-
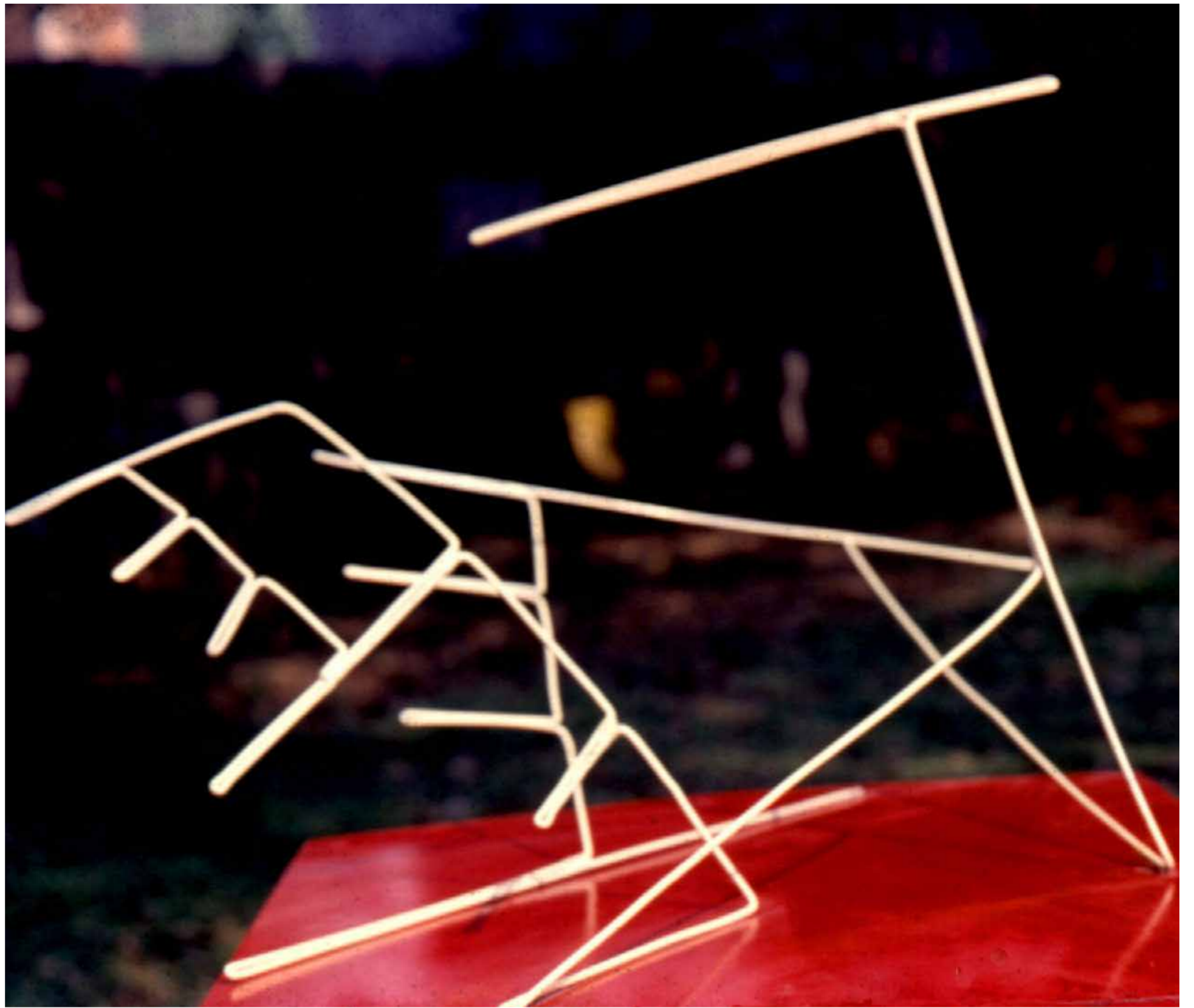guage gave a new dimension to the
expression.

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Malayalam alphabet had a flow
which student utilized
effectively, to make it look nat-
ural in wire.

Punjabi letter had its own character and challenge of expression in 3D.

Presentations are done at the end of the assignment with the group. An open discussion takes place to look at the task with different perspectives. Each student can compare the strategies adopted by others. Learning becomes a broad based approach rather than few rules to be applied.