

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTMAKING IN INDIA

India
Santiniketan
Calcutta
History
Development
Printmaking
Bombay
Baroda
Madras
Delhi

DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTMAKING IN INDIA

“Print has always been something of an amalgam of art, craft and science of creativity, skill and technology.” (Robinson 6)

Commencement of Printmaking

Fifteenth century marked the beginning of printing activities in Europe when Johann Gutenberg of Germany, invented the technique of printing with the help of Press, durable moveable type-face in 1450. (Movable type) His invention of the mechanical movable type printing started the Printing Revolution in Europe, which is widely viewed as the most important event of the modern period. (Miller) In 1452 the first Bible was printed – the 42-line Bible, known as the ‘Gutenberg Bible’. (Johannes Gutenberg) Later, wood-cut prints were also printed which played an important role in the development of this technique.

Printmaking in India

In India Printmaking started in the beginning of 20th century as a creative medium, but the printing activities among artists were very limited till 1950’s. However, it was found that the use of wood blocks was already popular in India since ancient times and it was used as state stamps. (S. Sharma,

Kashth Chapa Kala 51)

The first printing press was established in Goa in around 1556 by the Christian missionaries. (Mukhopadhyay and Das, Graphic Art in India: 1850 to 1950 (A Brief Background and History) 5) They



Plate2.1: Printing Press at Goa

were the first to start printing on paper for spreading Christian ideology in India. For this they imported printing presses and moveable types from Lisbon and printed their first book in the same year. Books only of Italian and Portuguese language were printed there. Along with the press and other material for printing, few engraved blocks of wood were imported which were later printed in religious books.

Few years later, in 1568, first illustrated cover was printed at Goa in the book entitled “*Constituições do arcebispado de Goa, Appro Vadas Pello Primeiro Cocilio Provincial.*” It depicted an image of a traditional doorway or entrance made in wood-cut. The earliest intaglio picture of metal plate engraving was printed in 1716 in a book “*Gramatica Damulica*”; Tamil translation of the Bible. (Das, The Early Indian Printmakers. An Approach to Social Science, Ethical and Technical Study 7) However, the earliest print by an Indian artist is noticed during 1816 in Calcutta, about two hundred and fifty years after the first wood-engraving in Goa. (Das, The Early Indian Printmakers. An Approach to Social Science, Ethical and Technical Study 8) During this period printing activities also started in different parts of India with the establishment of presses near Madras, Shreerampur, Hooghly and Calcutta by Christian missionaries.

Calcutta, the capital of British India, witnessed the maximum development in printing activities. To keep an account of their discoveries and travels in India they published journals and books which were embellished with illustrations in wood-cuts and engravings. Although they tend to be imaginary as they were produced by artists who never visited India, but they are an important source of the visual information about those early days.

Gradually life became more structured and settled, and people became more interested in documenting pictures. Henceforth professional artists and engravers began to arrive in India. From 1760's onwards, East India Company encouraged professional

British artists to work in the main cities of India, especially Calcutta and Madras. Between 1767 and 1820 about sixty amateur artists from other countries visited India. (The History of Printmaking in India. A look into the development of fine



Plate2.2: William Hodges, “A view of part of the palace of the late Nabob Suja ul Dowla at Fizabad [Fizabad, Shuja-ud-daula’s Palace], Aquatint with Etching, 1787

art printmaking in India) Of these foreign artists, a few were basically engravers and printmakers; they include Joseph Shepperd, Caleb John Garbrant, Thomas Daniell, William Hodges, Richard Brittridge, James Moffat, Thomas Taylor, Henry Hudson, William Baille, Frans Baltasar Solvyns, Avon Apjon, etc. (Das, The Early Indian Printmakers. An Approach to Social Science, Ethnical and Technical Study 9)

During their stay in India they prepared a large number of prints containing etching, engraving and lithographs on different subjects including historical episodes, portraitures, field sports, naval & military events, customs, costumes, daily life events, social life caricatures, celebrated personages, various craftsmen and workers in their natural surroundings, topographical views covering architecture & archaeology, scenic studies of mountains, rivers, waterfalls & coastlines, nature printing, illustrations of various birds and animals,



Plate2.3: Princess Victoria Gouramma of Coorg (1819-1901). Line-engraving by R. Graves after F. Winterhalter, London, c. 1835. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

etc. (Rohatgi and Godrej)

Engravings and lithographs of important British officials after oil paintings by professional artists were also produced in considerable number. Apart from professional artists, Company's civil servants and military officials also used to spend their leisure hours sketching subjects that caught their attention. (Rohatgi and Godrej)

The two prominent artists from this time were William Daniell and Thomas Daniell. In 1786 they published the album, *Twelve Views of Calcutta*, containing twelve original etchings, worked and printed in Calcutta. All the etchings were monochrome and stained with coloured inks. This was the first time anyone has explored the possibility of single sheet printing



Plate2.4: Thomas Daniell, “Gateway of the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra”, Hand-coloured aquatint engraving, from *Oriental Scenery*, London, 1795. Indina Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

on a large scale in India. (The History of Printmaking in India. A look into the development of fine art printmaking in India) The end of eighteenth century and beginning of nineteenth century may be considered as the golden age of engraving and lithography in India.

In 1779, East India Company established its printing press in Calcutta where pictures and illustrations were printed by foreign engravers and artists. (S. Sharma, *Kashth Chapa Kala* 53) The local craftsmen learnt the technique of printing from European artists who worked there. In the beginning they were unable to grasp the technique as it was not in their traditional practice, but slowly they adopted the process and learnt to put their traditional skills to new uses and applications. Whatever they learnt

there was to fulfil the requirements of the British presses and not for the development of printing as an art form.

Until 1820s, printing activities in India were dominated by Europeans, but gradually it shifted towards Indian enterprises. (Mukhopadhyay and Das, Graphic Art in India: 1850 to 1950 (A Brief Background and History) 6-7) The regular demand of wood-cut blocks, steadily developed printmaking into a business, thus, Indians also entered the mainstream of the printing business. Like the British publishers, they also started incorporating engraved illustrations in printed books. The earliest signed printed illustration appeared in a Bengali book, “Oonoodha Mongal”, printed at the press of Ferris and Co., Calcutta, in 1816 bears the declaration ‘*engraved by Ramchand Roy*’. (Mukhopadhyay and Das, Graphic Art in India: 1850 to 1950 (A Brief Background and History) 7) Thus it can be said that the history of Indian Print-makers started with the name of Ramchand Roy.

During this period, several illustrated printed books in Bengali language were published from Calcutta and the illustrations of wood-cut, wood-engraving, etching and metal plate-engraving were executed by Indian artists. By the close of second decade of nineteenth century, we had the names of nine Indian graphic artists; they are Ramchand Roy, Biswambara Acherjee, Roopchand Acherjee, Ramsagar Chakravorty, Birchandra Dutta, Ramdoon Sarnakar, Madhav Das, Casheenath Mistree and Harihar Bondhopadhyay. (Das, The Early Indian Printmakers. An approach to Social Science, Ethinical and Technical Study. 10)

Many printing presses were set up at various places in India to spread European education system where books in Devnagri, Bengali and English languages were printed along with illustrations in wood-cuts.

From the beginning of nineteenth century, wood block printing was already in fashion. In around 1818 Bishwanath Dev set up the first printing press in the Shobhabazar of Calcutta. (Kumar, Bhartiya Chapachitra Kala: Aadi se aadhunik kaal tak 55) Soon it became the hub of printing activities and emerged as a Book district in Calcutta by 1820. (Shah) This evolved the famous wood block print in the first half of the nineteenth century as book illustrations. The prints produced here were known as the ‘*Bat-tala prints*’. Bat-tala is a name derived from a giant banyan tree in the Shobhabazar and Chitpur areas of Calcutta. (The History of Printmaking in India. A look into the development of fine art printmaking in India) The prints that developed here were a variation of the Kalighat paintings made on contemporary themes and gave a distinctively modern feel. It soon became a



Plate2.5: Bat-tala Print

flourishing trade and picture production began to mushroom all over Shobhabazar, Dorjitola, Ahiritola, Kumurtuli, Garanhata, Simulia and Baghbazar. (Sengupta, Under the Banyan Tree - The Woodcut Prints of 19th Century Calcutta)

Beside woodcuts and engravings, during nineteenth century lithography was widely practiced and popularized by the British. In 1825, Asiatic Lithographic Press was established in Calcutta. (Kumar, Bhartiya Chapachitra Kala: Aadi se aadhunik kaal tak 57) Indian artists also learnt the technique of Lithography, which was totally unknown to them. Jairam Das, a working artist learnt this technique from Sir Charles D'Oyly in Patna during 1828. (Das, The Early Indian Printmakers. An approach to Social Science, Ethnical and Technical Study. 12) During his stay at Patna from 1821 to 1832, he organized an art society called ‘The Behar School of Athens’. He imported a lithographic

press from England and taught and worked with Jairam Das along with some other local artists. (The People of India 8)

With the increased popularity of graphic art in India, art schools in Madras (1853), Calcutta (1854), Bombay (1857), and later in Lahore (1878) were established. (Ganguly) Different printing techniques were introduced in the teaching programme and more emphasis was laid on wood engraving, wood-cut and lithography. Priority was given to illustrations and copy work. It was taught as a medium of mass-reproduction of pictures rather than as a creative medium.

Later, in 1870s several private presses flourished in different parts of India namely: Calcutta, Dacca, Bombay, Pune, Lucknow, Delhi, Madras, Mysore and Punjab. (Mukhopadhyay and Das, Graphic Art in India: 1850 to 1950 (A Brief Background and History) 7)

By the late nineteenth century, in Bombay, emerged an indigenous school of lithography where prints drew inspiration from the classicism of Tanjore painting and the academicism of European art. With the arrival of Raja Ravi Varma and Bamapada Banerjee in Bombay in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the European style began gaining popularity. Their work represented western style depicting Indian themes. Raja Ravi Varma setup his own lithographic press, known as the Ravi Varma



Plate2.6: Raja Ravi Varma, “Haunsa Damyanti Sanwada”, Oleograph

Press in Ghatkopr, Bombay. (The History of Printmaking in India. A look into the development of fine art printmaking in India) Here several of his oil paintings of popular

myths, legends, gods and goddesses were reproduced using oleography technique. This marked the beginning of calendar art and the first instance of ‘high’ art intermingling with the ‘popular’. (Sengupta, Lead Essay: Lasting Impressions)

Till the seventies of the century traditional craftsmen who turned into graphic artists, followed the stylistic trends of the eighteenth century miniatures or the folk paintings of Eastern India and were directed towards capturing realism, as seen in the pictures imported from the West. After 1870s some of the talented graphic artists, especially those specializing in wood-engraving and wood-cut, succeeded in combining the Western and Indian styles and evolved their integrated personal styles. The nineteenth and early twentieth century printing was concerned with production of images and designs for commercial considerations. (Ray, Printmaking in Bengal 44-45)

Hence the beginning of twentieth century marked the shift in the aesthetic preferences of people, which led to a gradual emergence of a group of artists who engaged themselves in developing a fresh, ‘new’ Indian aesthetic. (Sengupta, Lead Essay:

Lasting Impressions) The difference between printing and printmaking began to become clearer and creating an identity of its own. With the development of this form of art, ‘Bichitra Club’ was established by the Tagore family of Calcutta in 1915 where new style of painting and printmaking were explored. (The History of Printmaking in India. A look into the development of fine art printmaking in India) Gaganendranath Tagore was the first modern Indian individual artist who tried to transform printmaking from a mere



Plate2.7: Gaganendranath Tagore, Lithography

economic activity to a cultural activity and to communicate his socially significant social

responses to people. He took special interest in lithography and used the print process for his caricatures to communicate. (Ray, *Printmaking in Bengal: A Quick Survey* 45)

Mukul Chandra Dey was also an active member of the club and was the first Indian artist who went abroad to learn the printmaking techniques. (S. Sharma, *Kashth Chapa Kala* 55)

Printmaking at Santiniketan

The new era in Indian art began with the establishment of Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan in 1919 by Rabindranath Tagore. The creative atmosphere of the newly established art collage received a new energy in the graphic art movement in India when in 1921 Nandalal Bose took charge of Kala Bhavan. (Das, *A Brief History of Printmaking at Santiniketan*) The credit for creating extreme interest in creative printing in this period should go to Nandalal Bose, Ramendranath Chakravarty, Manindra Bhushan Gupta and Biswarup Bose. They created a number of woodcuts, lino cuts and etchings.

In 1923, Mexican connoisseur Fryman visited Santiniketan where he demonstrated the process of Japanese multi-colour woodcut printing. This was experimented by Ramendranath Chakravarty and he excelled in colour wood cut printing.

(Das, *A Brief History of Printmaking at Santiniketan*) He also learned the techniques of lithography and etching from Surendranath Kar who was trained in these techniques from London during 1925. (Das, *A Brief History of Printmaking at*



Plate2.8: Ramendranath Chakravarty, Woodcut

Santiniketan) During this period Nandalal Bose, Ramendranath and a few artists of Kala Bhavan executed some lithographs also.

Manindra Bhusan Gupta got interested in printmaking and joined Kala Bhavan. There he started with wood engraving and woodcut. Biswarup Bose, after learning the technique of Japanese multi-colour woodcut, made colour reproductions of original pictures with this technique and later taught this medium at Kala Bhavan. (Kumar, Bhartiya Chapachitra Kala: Aadi se aadhunik kaal tak 67)

Ramendranath, Manindra Bhusan and Biswarup Bose were great experimentalists, their research attitude towards printmaking created an atmosphere of creative experimentation. Their aim was to build up a picturesque effect on the graphic surface, thus most of their prints became more painterly than graphic. This was the turning point for printmaking in India, as artists no longer related the techniques with their reproductive values; instead, they are more concerned in creating an art work. (Das, A Brief History of Printmaking at Santiniketan)

Between 1920-1930, Nandalal Bose and Binode Behari Mukherjee came up with a different aim and experimented with various graphic media: wood-cut, lino-cut, etching, dry-point, lithographs and non-traditional matrix such as cement blocks. (Mukhopadhyay and Das, Graphic Art in India: 1850 to 1950 (A Brief Background and History) 8)

In 1924 Nandalal Bose visited China and Japan, from where he brought an authentic collection of Chinese rubbings and Japanese colour woodcut



Plate2.9: Binode Behari Mukharjee, Etching

prints. (Das, A Brief History of Printmaking at Santiniketan) Nandalal's vision easily adapted the creative possibilities and scope of this medium and he experimented with various printmaking techniques. In 1930-31, he selected the linoleum block to illustrate

Rabindranath's book 'Sahaj Path', a Bengali alphabetical book for children. His black & white lino-cuts had a strong influence on the young artists. (Das, A Brief History of Printmaking at Santiniketan)



Plate2.10: Nandalal Bose, Linocut from "Sahaj Path / Pratham Bhag"

By the late 40's, however, the printmaking activities in Santiniketan were coming to an end. Among younger artists working at this time, considered solely printmakers are Haren Das and Chittaprosad. Haren Das's work has elaborate texture and detail while Chittaprosad's work is inspired by folk art with bold treatment (Appasamy) and he established himself as a fine relief printmaker mainly of lino cuts between the mid-forties and the mid-fifties. (Ray, Printmaking in Bengal: A Quick Survey 46)



Plate2.11: Haren Das, "Water lily", Linocut, 1990



Plate2.12: Chittaprosad, "The Nomads in the City of Bombay", Linocut

Besides this, the credit for developing printmaking as a movement of contemporary art should go to the Society of Contemporary Artists of Calcutta, the earliest contemporary printmaking workshop in India formed in 1960 by some likeminded painters and sculptors – Somnath Hore, Ajit Chakravorty, Arun Bose, Deepak

Banerjee, etc. Other members of the workshop were Sanat Kar, Shyamal Dutta Ray, Suhas Roy, Sailen Mittra and Anil Baran Shah. Arun Bose was the most active member, learnt the intricacies of printmaking from Atelier 17, Paris. Sanat Kar developed the method of pulling intaglio prints off matrices made of engraved or cut wood blocks. (Ray, *Printmaking in Bengal: A Quick Survey* 46-47)

Before 1964, all the printed pictures for both commercial and fine art purposes were together titled 'Graphic art'. But with gradual developments and increasing popularity of printing among artists, it became a vital necessity to coin a new term to distinguish between them. So the Print Council of America, in 1964, restricted the definition of an original print and thus the term 'Printmaking' was generally accepted. (Mukhopadhyay and Das, *Graphic Art in India: 1850 to 1950 (A Brief Background and History 5)* In the year 1967, graphic emerged as an independent stream for study in the course structure. Printmaking as a specialized course in the graduate level was introduced in India for the very first time. (Das, *A Brief History of Printmaking at Santiniketan*)

In 1968, Somnath Hore took up the responsibility of organizing the first full-fledged printmaking department at Kala Bhavan. The new generation of printmakers from Santiniketan worked in a variety of media. Suranjan Basu's big sized relief prints from wood-cut blocks and Nirmalendu Das's lithographs are as interesting as Pinaki Barua's and Shukla Sen's intaglio prints.



Plate 2.13: Suranjan Basu, "Angutha Chhaap", Woodcut, 2001

From outside the periphery comes Tapan Ghosh who was trained at Atelier 17 and made interesting intaglio prints. Tapan Mitra, the only notable artist of the stencil media

was trained in Santiniketan before Somnath Hore had joined the institution. But he mastered the serigraphy medium all by himself. (Ray, Printmaking in Bengal: A Quick Survey 48)

Printmaking in Western Region

In Western India, Bombay and Baroda in particular can be described as synonymous with printmaking at its sophisticated best. (Raman, Printmaking in India: Focus on the Western Region 50)

Baroda has always been in the forefront in the field of graphic arts in India. The Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda was established in 1949-50, where artists like, Haroon Khimani, Shanti Dave, Jayant Parikh, Vinod Ray Patel, Jyoti Bhatt and G M Sheikh experimented with various printmaking techniques. They worked on large prints with single or multiple wood and lino blocks.



Plate 2.14: Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, "Expelled Angel", Silkscreen, 1988



Plate 2.15: Jyoti Bhatt, "YK2-09-10", Etching, 2010

The Faculty of Fine Arts here has served as a major training ground providing a permanent and suitably equipped place for printmaking with a sophisticated and highly trained staff. (Parimoo, Graphic Art in India Since 1850 24) The pioneer was Jyoti Bhatt

who virtually set up the department. With the temperament of an artistically motivated creative genius and with his technical mastery, he was a trend-setter in the sense that the prints he made were aesthetically as significant as they were technically sound. Artists from all over the country go to Baroda for advanced training in different print media. (Raman, *Printmaking in India: Focus on the Western Region* 52)

In the fifties, Shanti Dave has done a great many lino cuts and woodcuts and was probably the first to work in large sizes and was fascinated by the illustrative possibilities of this medium. (Parimoo, *Graphic Art in India*



Plate2.16: Shanti Dave, “Untitled”, Woodcut, 1978

Since 1850 24) Jayant Parikh has shown his brilliance in woodcut process and his emphasis was on texture. For making his prints, he exploited wood, linoleum, hardboard and plywood. Vinod Ray Patel began with lino-cuts but his output in lithography is considerable. He also made a series of line engravings using plastic sheets as a substitute for the conventional but expensive metal plates. (Parimoo, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 25)

Demy Hunt a young American artist, in early 1960s, introduced silkscreen printing in Baroda. Few years later, Jyoti Bhatt along with artists like Feroze Katpitia, V S Patel, Vinod Ray Patel and P D Dhumal, put together a silkscreen unit. They all experimented in this medium in the 70's with great success. Soon they moved beyond the basic techniques to explore possibilities of tonal and color gradations. (Bordewekar)

From the mid-1960s to the early 70s, Sheikh, Bhupen Khakhar, Jyoti Bhatt and several other artists bring out a literary magazine called *Kshitij*, another one on art and

ideas, called *Vrishchik*. One issue of *Kshitij* had a silkscreen-printed cover, tried out experimentally for the first time.

Till the mid 1960's black & white prints were done with limited facilities. The second half of 60's and the early 70's was a period of accelerated growth, among which the annual fine arts fair gave scope to the artists in the creation of original prints. The involvement of K.G.



Plate 2.17: K. G. Subramanyan, "Untitled 02", Lithograph, 1993

Subramaniyan with his younger

colleagues had been a guiding inspiration. (Panikkar, *Printmaking in Western India - Baroda, Bombay and Ahmedabad* 30)

Jyoti Bhatt after his return from the Pratt institute and Tamarind Workshop, USA, in 1966, learnt and practiced intaglio printing technique, and introduced it in Baroda in the 1970's. He even brought with him the elaborate drawings of the presses he worked on in Tamarind, which were later turned into engineering drawings and an actual etching press was hammered into place.

Intaglio printing interested several other painters and sculptors in Baroda. Even lithography was also popular among artists, like Naina Dalal, Kishor Wala and Megan Parmar. (Parimoo, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 26) Naina Dalal and Jayant Parikh set up small presses in their homes to work and experiment as they desired. However, the printmakers of extreme significance from this early era of printmaking at Baroda were, Laxma Goud, DLN Reddy and Rini Dasgupta Dhumal. (Bordewekar)

In **Bombay**, Printmaking was introduced in Sir J.J. School of Arts in 1952 under the guidance of Prof. Yangeswar Kalyanji Shukla, a specialist in etching and engraving

on metal and wood, however it was included in the curriculum as a subject for study during 1962. During 1969, Prof. Vasant Parab along with Anant Nikam experimented with viscosity and lino-etching respectively. (Panikkar, Printmaking in Western India - Baroda, Bombay and Ahmedabad 35-36)



Plate 2.18: Anant Nikam, "Untitled", Lino Etching, 2009



Plate 2.19: Lalita Lajmi, Etching

The graphic workshop at the Sir J.J. School of Art was the only active common studio in Bombay for the staff and students. Where also professional artists like Prayag Jha, Lalita Lajmi, Vilas J. Shinde, Jin Sook Shinde, Yogesh Rawal and Tukka Jadav were involved in printmaking. (Panikkar, Printmaking in Western India - Baroda, Bombay and Ahmedabad 36) P Mansaram, Pradumna Tana, Himmat Shah, Thakor Patel, Manu Parekh and Gautam Vaghela were also distinguished printmakers. (Raman, Printmaking in India: Focus on the Western Region 51)

In Bombay one must mention the establishment of *Shilalekh* during the mid nineteen-fifties as a result of the joint efforts of Husain, Ram Kumar and others. The scheme was to provide workshop facilities and arrangement of pulling out prints in editions from plates prepared by artists. Since prints are priced more moderately it was hoped that it would attract more buyers thus serving the dual purpose of proving a means of livelihood for the artists as well as to popularize their work. Apart from bringing out a

handful of prints this arrangement did not hold for long. (Parimoo, Graphic Art in India Since 1850 27)

At Ahmedabad, under the guidance of Y. K. Shukla, a number of talented artists received training in printmaking at the local college where he taught after his departure from Sir J.J. School of Art.

Nagpur, Pune and Nasik are among other centers of Western India where facilities for training in printmaking exist to some extent but cannot attract talented artists in the absence of adequate staff and up-to-date equipments.



Plate2.20: Y. K. Shukla, “Street Corner”, Etching, 1975

Printmaking in the Northern Region

The graphic medium began gathering strength in Delhi area from 1965 and by 1970 the medium caught the imagination of a number of senior artists, and even larger number of young artists. (Krishnan, Graphic Art in India Since 1850 28)

The Delhi Shilpi Chakra which was formed in 1949 held the first all India Graphic Show in 1965. It was a modest but significant show with only fifty-one works by thirty-three artists with notable contributions by Jagmohan Chopra, Bhupendra Karia, Manhar Makwana, Jayant Parikh. R. Vardarajan, Krishna Reddy, Akbar Padamsee Parikh, Kanwal Krishna, Devayani Krishna and Somnath Hore. This exhibition opened the way and interested many artists in the possibilities of the medium. (Krishnan, Graphic Art in India Since 1850 28-29)

The real credit for creating the necessary climate for



Plate2.21: Somnath Hore, Wood Engraving IV

the medium in Delhi must, however, go to the excellent graphicist Somnath Hore and Kanwal Krishna and, more recently, to Jagmohan Chopra. Somnath Hore came to Delhi in 1958 as the incharge of the graphic section of the Delhi College of Art. He commissioned an outmoded printing machine laying idle there and set to work. Inspired by the veteran Krishna Reddy, by the humanism of Kathe Kollwitz, and with sufficient experience as a wood engraver, he applied himself to metal engraving with tenacity and devotion and is now acknowledged as one of the most gifted and experienced graphicists. (Krishnan, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 29)

Kanwal Krishna is also a well known printmaker, had worked at the graphic press even before he went to Atelier 17. He started with monoprint technique, but gradually discovered the phenomenal technical range of intaglio printing. This conventional method did not satisfy his essentially inventive temperament so he left it all behind and resorted to a combination of relief and intaglio process by building demarcated relief areas with different levels. With this he employed rollers of varying hardness to achieve results which combined the best of both the conventional and his own innovated methods. (Krishnan, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 29) Devyani Krishna, who is an excellent graphic artist in her own right, relies on similar technical processes as those of Kanwal Krishna. (Krishnan, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 30)

Jagmohan Chopra, who is the live-wire of the Delhi graphic world, owns much to the work of Somnath Hore who inspired and encouraged him. He, too, prefers the unconventional technical processes of paper block or mount-board plates, engraving the relief, building with

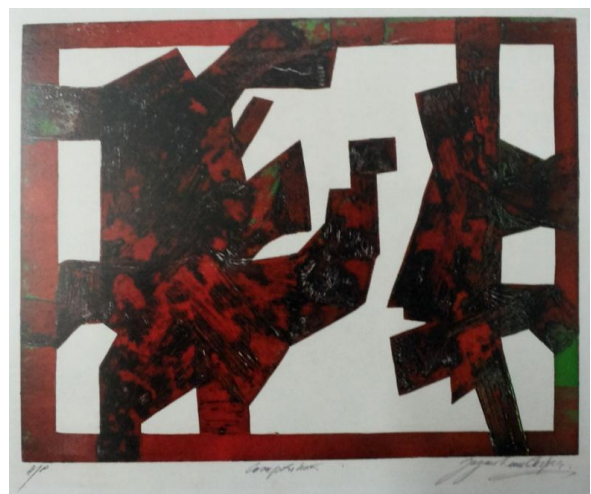


Plate2.22: Jagmohan Chopra, “Composition 1”, Collograph

additives such as resins, polymers, araldite, etc. He achieved a much vast and varied range of relief and intaglio surface than is perhaps possible by metal and acid bite. It is said that it is not so much the plate but the preparation of the plate for the press that makes the print better. (Krishnan, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 30)

Chopra is also the moving spirit of the “Group 8” of Delhi formed in 1968, an association of working printmakers, most of whom were senior students of the Delhi College of Art. Already some of these “Group 8” artists have produced works that hold considerable promise, such as, Anupam Sood, Yogshakti Chopra and

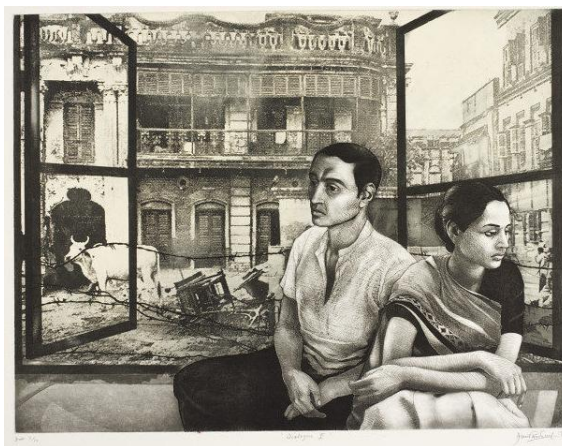


Plate2.23: Anupam Sud, “Dialogue I”, Etching and aquatint printed in black and cream, 1984

Lakshmi Dutt. (Krishnan, *Graphic Art in India Since 1850* 31)

Other artists working in Delhi were Mohammed Yasin of Hyderabad, Zarina, N.K. Dixit, Bimal Banerjee, Umesh Varma, Jivan Adalji, Gunen Ganguly, Jai Krishna, Gunen Ganguly, Laxman Pai, Pushpa Rao, Jai, Satish Sharma, Satish Gupta, etc.

Printmaking in the Southern Region

Printmaking in the southern region began during the 50’s at the Govt. School of Arts and Crafts, Madras and it had an excellent metal working and engraving department. The earliest prints found were of Devi Prasad Roy Choudhury and K.C.S. Paniker.

Printmaking activities in the school multiplied in 1957 when K.C.S. Paniker joined as the principal. The school upgraded into a collage in 1963, and started courses in various printmaking techniques. Under the guidance of master engraver Kalyanasundaram, number of students practiced printmaking, like: A.S. Jagannathan, Varadharajan, Akkitham Narayanan, and A. P. Panneerselvam. The first batch of

printmakers passed out in 1968. A. P. Panneerselvam was the first artist from the Southern Region to win the National Award with a print. (James, Printmaking in the Southern Region 54-55)

After 1967, collograph prints were being made with a small table press at Cholamandal by K.R. Hari, K.S. Gopal and Jayapala Panicker, which came to be noted at important exhibitions between 1972 and 1978. (James, Printmaking in the Southern Region 54)

In 1973, new printmaking machinery and equipments were acquired in the department under the headship of R.B. Bhaskaran. He was the first in the south to use zinc plates for etching.

Printmaking activities in the south and in the country has benefited greatly from the visits and workshops conducted by Paul Lingren of the Smithsonian Institute., United States. At his workshop in Delhi in 1970, three artists from the



**Plate2.24: R. B. Bhaskaran,
“Couple”, Etching, 2009**

south participated. They are R.B. Bhaskaran, Arnawas and Vardharajan. Subsequently he held two workshops at the College of Arts and Crafts, Madras. Many printmakers in the south trained themselves in intaglio printmaking under his guidance at these workshops. (James, Printmaking in the Southern Region 55)

Thota Tharani, developed interest in graphics under the instruction from Panneerselvam and practice at his press. Later, studied at Atelier 17 in Paris under William Hayter; worked at the Garhi workshop in Delhi and at the Regional Center of the Lalit Kala Academy Madras. His handling of the medium was innovative. He made free use of textures and grains using the open bite process, to impose geometrical structure by

sticking acid resistant tapes on the plate and, to cut up the plate and printing varied combinations of the pieces. (James, Printmaking in the Southern Region 56)

These developed facilities helped to shape young competent printmakers, namely: Palaniappan, Bhavanishankar, Karunamoorthy, Valsan, Vasudha and P. Mohan.

Printmaking activity in the neighbouring states had much to do with the Government College of Arts and Crafts, Madras. Three artists from Trivandrum, Rajappan, Sanathanan and Narayanan Pillai were trained at the college under Bhaskaran, maintained a full-fledged graphic department at the Government School of Art, Trivandrum. Hyderabad produced its best printmakers in the sixties, like Laxma Goud, Devaraj and D.L.N. Reddy. After completing their study at the Government College of Arts, Hyderabad, they moved to the Faculty of Fine Arts; M.S. University, Baroda for higher studies. P.S. Chandrasekar, also from Government College of Arts, Hyderabad, excelled with the litho process. P.T. Reddy, an artist from Andhra Pradesh, contributed generously to printmaking activity in that state by making available his studio for collective printmaking by the artists there. (James, Printmaking in the Southern Region 57)

21st Century: Expansion of printmaking

By the end of 20th century Contemporary Indian art prints came up as an independent medium of artistic expression. Bengal artist Somenath Hore is acknowledged as the father of modern Indian prints. He worked and experimented widely with the medium after receiving preliminary

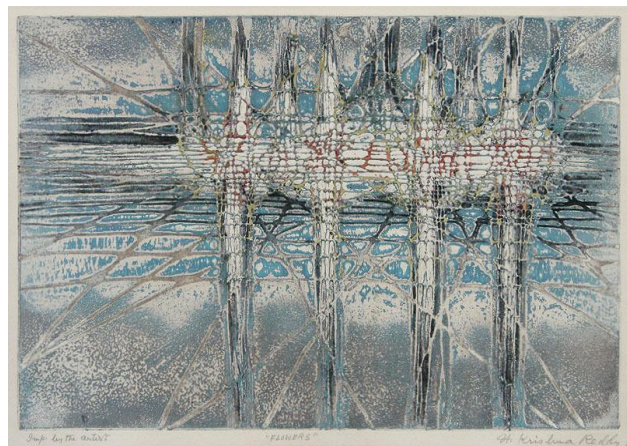


Plate2.25: Krishna Reddy, “Flowers”, Colour intaglio (Viscosity print), 1960

training from Krishna Reddy; another reputed artist, who involved himself in the intaglio process while working in the studio of master print-maker William Hayter.

Today India's famous painters are also eminently creative printmakers who are responsible for the propagation of printmaking into various techniques mediums and technologies, and the growing importance and demand for prints in the market. These include artists like: Amitava Banerjee, Lalu Prasad Shaw, K.G. Subramanyam, K. Laxma Gaud, Paramjit Singh, Sanat Kar, Jyoti Bhatt, Swapan Kr. Das, Anupam Sud, Shukla Sen Poddar, Anita Chakravarty, etc. Sanat Kar pioneered wood intaglio, cardboard intaglio and sun mica engravings and Swapan Das in the multiplicity of color gradations that can be introduced into a single linocut.



Plate 2.26: Sanat Kar, Untitled, Etching, 2008



Plate 2.27: Swapan Kr. Das, "Vulture", Linocut

The development and spread of Printmaking increased during late 20th century with the setting up of the graphic workshop at Garhi – Lalit Kala Studio, New Delhi; Lalit Kala Akademi Studios at Lucknow, Calcutta, Madras; Bharat Bhawan Bhopal; Printstudio and Academy of Fine Arts, Mumbai; Kanoria Centre for Arts, Ahmedabad; Chaap – Baroda Printmaking Studio; Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur; etc. (Shah)

These workshops made an effort to create and promote wider appreciation of original prints and different printmaking techniques. They all have well established infrastructure and facilities for various techniques, providing opportunities to artists and

students to work in different printmaking media and are frequently visited by many senior and international artists.

Rajasthan also witnesses a major change in the creative activities and artists started taking interest in Graphic art. The decade of 1970s can be assumed as the beginning of artistic printing in Rajasthan and printmaking emerged as a new medium with immense possibilities for experimentation and artists started accepting it as a new mode of expression. However, this development of artistic printing was quite late as compared to other parts of the country. But within few years of time, various printmaking materials, machines and other accessories were imported and studios and workshops were set-up in the state at Banasthali Vidhyapeeth, Udaipur university, Rajasthan School of Arts, Jawahar Kala Kendra, Takhman 28, etc. to promote printmaking in Rajasthan.

Now prints enjoy an elevated status, over those of the 19th century. Now they are being drawn, cut and in most cases printed by the individual artist in very limited editions. These artist created prints are regarded as belonging to the Fine Art's family, each being viewed nearly equal in importance as a painting or sculpture for artistic expression.

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