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DESIGN PROJECT II

M.DES., VISUAL COMMUNICATION

IDC, IIT Bombay, 2013-2014

TITLE SHEET

THE SPEAKING IMAGE

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF DESIGN

by

RESHAL SHAH

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Project Guide:

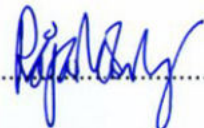
(PROF. RAJA MOHANTY)



INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CENTRE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY
2013 - 2014

APPROVAL SHEET

The design project 2 titled 'THE SPEAKING IMAGE'
by Reshai Shah (126250003) is approved
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
Master of Design degree in Visual Communication.

Guide: 

External Examiner: 

Internal Examiner: 

Chairperson: 

Date: 13.11.2013

DECLARATION SHEET

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature:.....

Reshal Shah (126250003)

Date:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Cheshire Puss,' she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider. 'Come, it's pleased so far,' thought Alice, and she went on; 'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?' 'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat. 'I don't much care where--' said Alice. 'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat. '--So long as I get somewhere,' Alice added as an explanation. 'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

(from Alice In Wonderland by Lewis Carroll)

I must thank Prof. Raja Mohanty for his support to my belief in a project full of experience and a journey of learning through the wonderland. The choice of this project would not have been possible without his discussions and his fascinating insights.

I am what I am because of mumma from whom the love for art has been inherited and papa who has been ever enthusiastic and supportive of my work.

My gratitude and appreciation goes to the IDC faculty for their constant advice and exposure to various thoughts and ideas. Here I have a chance to explore the project in the medium I love, a chance to be able to express what I wish, thanks to IDC.

An extended note of thanks to friends who have been a constant support and believers in my work as well as critics. They have constantly reminded me of the madness that one needs to stay alive; in order to live and not just survive.

Special thanks to all those people and events in life that have constantly reminded me of my passion for art and design; without whom I would have been lost in the not so much of wonderland.

*'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.
'You must be,' said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here.'*
(from Alice In Wonderland by Lewis Carroll)

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1. INTRODUCTION

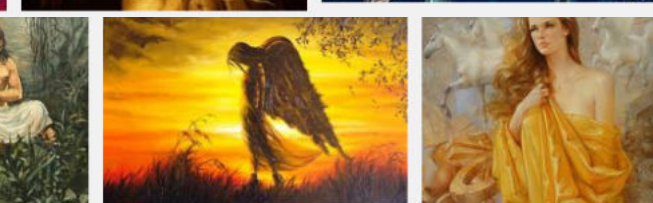
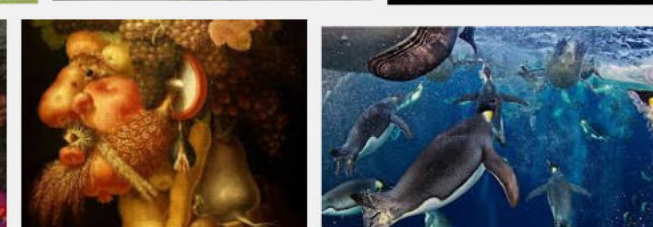
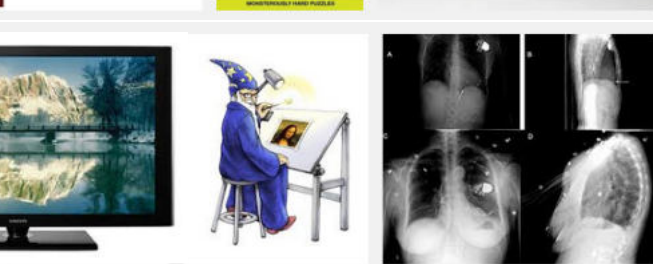
1.1 DIVING INTO IMAGES

~

SETTING AN OBJECTIVE

*Where all do we encounter images
and how do we make sense of them?*

Images have made a journey from the age-old
Lascaux's paintings to the contemporary
media images. But there arises a question
to reflect upon: *what are images and
what are the contemporary changes?*



These questions often hover my mind and I am compelled to ask:
What is my role as a visual communicator? How do I express?

In my view, the most challenging task for a visual communicator is being able to communicate visually. Good images have the power to stay silent, yet convey so much.

*The design is an expression of the purpose.
It may (if it is good enough) later be judged as art.*
- Charles Eames

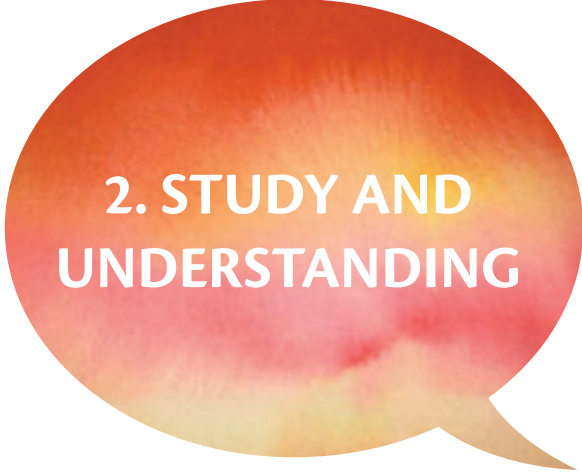
My objective thus becomes, to bring in images of art and make a study of images relevant to our current times. There is a need to realise the thought of what the purpose of an image is.

1.2 THE FUTURE OF THE IMAGE

The title is borrowed from the book, **The Future Of The Image by Jaques Ranciere**. The study of visual imagery in our times needs to take into account the diverse nature of images encountered today. We come across imagery in various forms like mobile imagery, Internet content (YouTube, TED, etc.), television, film, animation, advertisements (print, television, internet); illustration, painting, printmaking and sculpture.

In these times where media throws a tsunami of images, there arises a question as to what relationship do we have with a still image? For example, people watch television till late in the night where images change at the rate of 24fps. What is the future of a still image in this tsunami of images?





2. STUDY AND UNDERSTANDING

2.1 IMAGE ~ AN UNDERSTANDING

'Image refers to two different things. There is a simple relationship that produces the likeness of the original: not necessarily a faithful copy, but simply what suffices to stand for it. And then there is something that we call as art: an alteration of resemblance. This alteration can take a myriad forms. It might be the visibility given to brush-strokes that are superfluous when it comes to revealing who is represented by the portrait; an elongation of bodies that express their motion at the expense of their proportions; and so on and so forth.'
(quoted from the book, *The Future Of The Image*)

Thus, there are images created with a clear purpose and images that are exploratory in nature. But both are interested in the same function:
TO COMMUNICATE.

Images describe what the eye might see or might never see. They clarify or suggest an idea. **The image is a vehicle of silent discourse.** Images have the power to evoke emotions.

*The principle of true art
is not to portray, but to evoke.*
- Jerzy Kosinski

An image is characterised by the following:

While visual imagery is characterised basically by the ***subject, form and style***, there are a number of other aspects, though not obvious to the eyes, that are important in terms of a quality work. These include:

<i>Line</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>
<i>Form</i>	<i>Movement</i>
<i>Colour</i>	<i>Unity</i>
<i>Rhythm</i>	<i>Harmony</i>
<i>Space</i>	
<i>Shape</i>	
<i>Texture</i>	
<i>Value</i>	
<i>Tone</i>	
<i>Balance</i>	
<i>Contrast</i>	

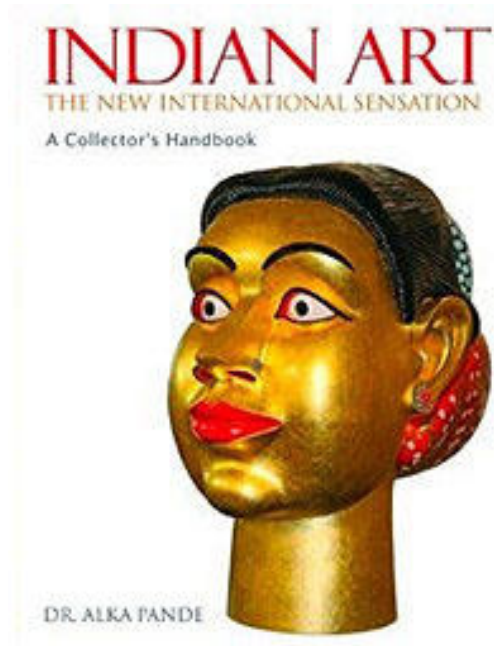
Apart from the subject and form, there is something else, like the notion of ***dhvani*** in poetry that makes the image interesting.

These words definitely took me back to those days when we learnt about the theories of making a design or any artwork. But indeed they made sense when I encountered the images during my research and understanding phase.

Various books helped me understand image making and the subjects an image could deal with. I referred to various books like

- *Black Book Illustration*
- *The Art of Hokusai in Book Illustration*
- *Hokusai - One Hundred Poets*
- *100 years of Fine Art - 2008 (Egyptian Artists' Works)*
- *The Future of The Image by Jaques Rancière*
- *Indian Art - The new international sensation by Dr. Alka Pande*
- *Art India (magazine)*
- *Various art exhibition catalogues*

These books helped me in different ways to get an understanding about the world of images. Each contributed in a different and important way.



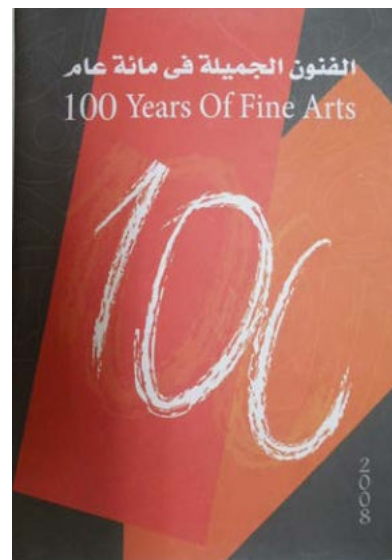
INDIAN ART by
Dr. Alka Pande

This book provided a bird's eye view of the dynamic and ever-shifting canvas of Indian art. Right from tracing the origins of drawing and painting in India, to the successful niche that the contemporary art has made for itself, this book talks about it all.

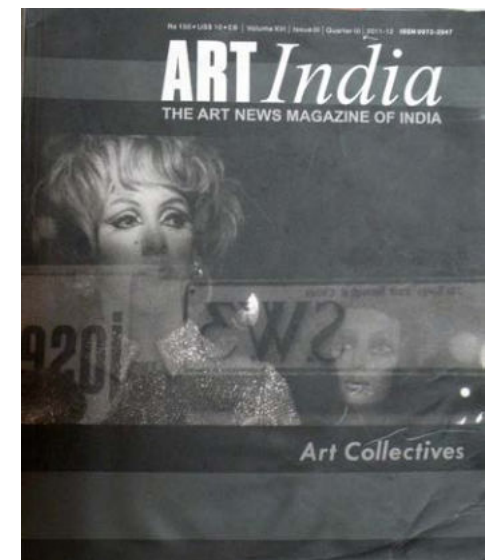


ART INDIA, PLATFORM

These magazines helped to look at the most contemporary subjects dealt with in the imagery and the works by contemporary artists. Their interviews, reviews and articles gave an insight about the ideologies of the image makers, the concepts and critical thinking.



Various other art catalogues.



2.2 LOOKING AT VISUAL IMAGERY

The best way to understand what an image is, how strong it is and what does it speak; is by seeing and trying to understand images itself. It was very important to look at various types of images and analyse for myself, as to which images have richer content and quality of skill and which were lacking of these aspects.

I engaged myself into a constant practice of looking at rich imagery and reading about the creator of that image. This gave me a deeper understanding of the subject he/she dealt with and its reasoning.

There was a huge ocean of images that I had in front of me. There were different mediums, forms, image makers, types of media, and so on that I had before me. These included painting, printmaking, photography, new media art, installations, concept art, folk art, etc.

This study greatly helped me to realise what is the content and subjects that the image and the maker of that image deal with and how the image is transformed into the one that speaks.

It would be impossible to probably share all the works I read about and saw. These are a few of many I have been fascinated with.

2.2.1 PAINTING



JITISH KALLAT's paintings come out as photo-graphic images. His work addresses the classical art themes of birth, death, mortality and ancestry. The viewer is often challenged to locate and decode the pictorial riddle created by him.



ERIN PARISH creates art based on what she stumbles upon in nature. Her artwork responds to nature's continuous circle of flux and tries to capture and preserve a moment that passes too quickly for most of us to see.



ANJU DODIYA's work comes across as bizarre yet lyrical self-disruptive autobiography. Her imagery creates the impression of the artist being trapped within the given frame by art itself.

2.2.1 PAINTING



DHRUVI ACHARYA's illustrative works deal with subjects like the continuing denial of equality to women; the blooming cult of violence across the globe; and the rapid deterioration of the environment.



AMRITA CAUR was greatly influenced by her novelist mother's writing, Punjabi literature, the Pahari miniatures and Indian Folk art motifs. Caur responds to the world around her and her work reflects all aspects of life and is centred around women. She reflects human tragedies and emotional trauma.



The reality of the larger world, its history and geography, began invading the play world of Arpita Singh's picture space. Her dream-time had to make space for real time which then elided into imagined times of the past and the future.



2.2.2 NEW MEDIA & CONCEPT ART



Nalini Malani's works are focussed on the vulnerable position of women, political dynamics, and on-going globalisation. She has worked with various media including video, installations and theatre plays.



ANISH KAPOOR's work is often simple with curved surfaces. Many of the themes include earth-skies, matter-spirit, visible-invisible, male-female and body-mind. His recent work sees the use of mirror like material.



Bose Krishnamachari's work is a fascinating manipulation of photographic elements interspersed with vibrant and abstract spaces. Emphasizing the fact that there is no fixed meaning that an image reflects, his patterns symbolise the impermanence of definitions, signs, signifier and claims of singular truth.

2.2.3 ILLUSTRATION



HOKUSAI made a direct observation of nature and human subjects, rather than portraying birds and flowers, scenes of historic epics and legends. Instead of shoguns, samurai, and their famous geisha, he placed the common man into his woodblocks, moving the emphasis away from the aristocrats and down to the rest of humanity.



SAMEER KULAVOOR is the present generation illustrator. His imagery is graphic-like and often depicts the common people. He has made visuals of places like Kala Ghoda, the dubbawallas of Mumbai, Xerox wallas, and such themes from Bombay.

2.2.3 ILLUSTRATION



There is a lovely simplicity within the graphic work of Korean artist, Daehyun Kim. These works of illustration are very bold and flat, indeed effective.



MUKESH SINGH's comic book illustrations are full of power and force. They are super-expressive and depict a comic/graphic story.



2.2.4 FOLK AND TRIBAL ART



MADHAVI PAREKH's works revolve around themes that are drawn from reality, particularly the rural life and are combined with a stylization. Her work could be called as contemporary folk and tribal.



These are Madhubani paintings by Ganga Devi. Visually speaking, the paintings are composed of two-dimensional images painted with plant-derived pigments, and they often depict Hindu religious themes, although not always.

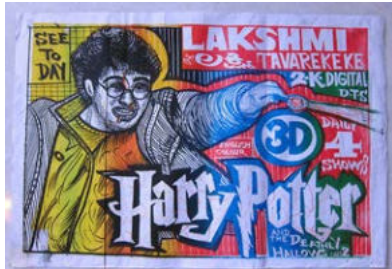


This is a Gond tribal art by artist JANGHAR SINGH SHYAM. Gond tribal art is beautiful and depicts the folk-lore. It is about the life the artists see and experience, usually about animals and other elements of nature.

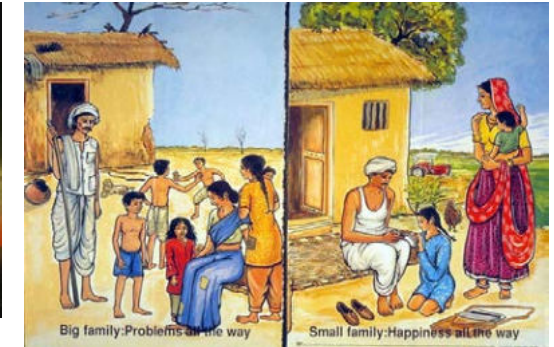


2.2.5 OTHER IMAGERY

Apart from looking at different works by image makers, I also came across other forms of imagery that one cannot avoid.



A film poster.



Educational Illustration.



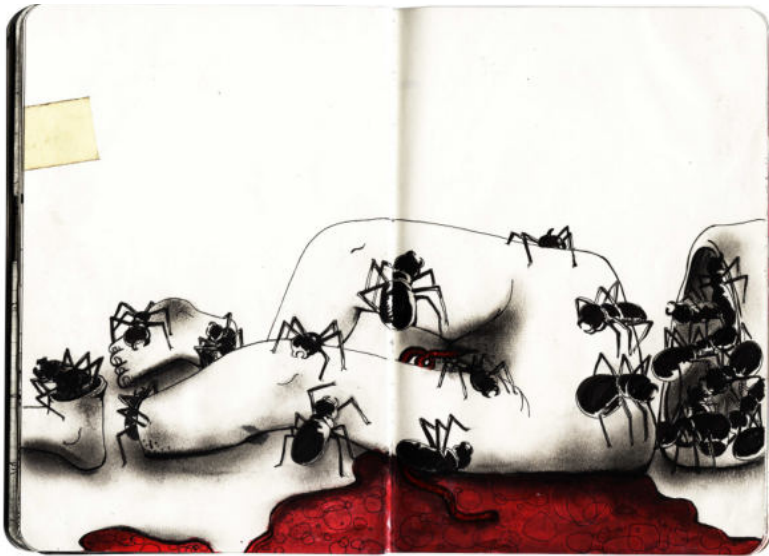
Images of images inside HDTV.



Government posters on sanitation / family planning for public welfare awareness.



2.2.6 ILLUSTRATION BASED PROJECTS FROM IDC

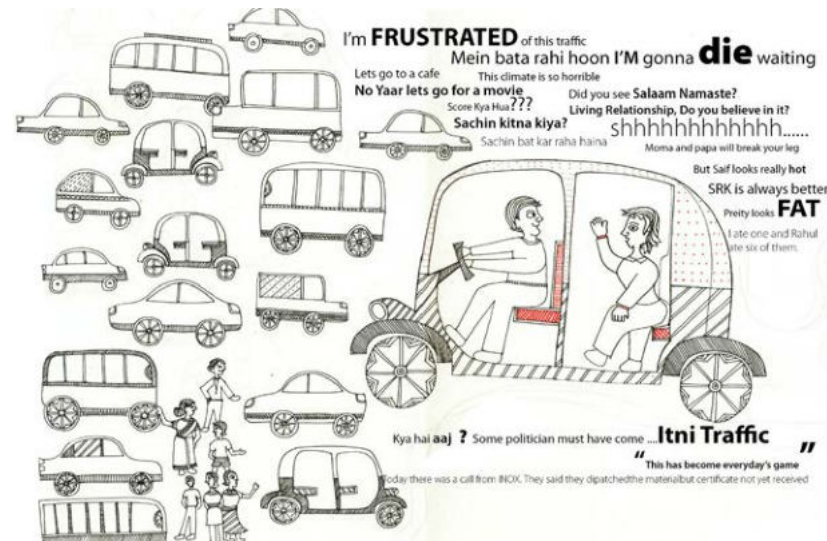


MANAS MITHIYA by Tarana Gupta is an art journal where she has explored personal emotions and experiences. She has depicted life of a female through her eyes.

Shilpa Beura's graphic novel was a good attempt to illustrating a story but in my opinion, there was a lack of maturity and finesse in her illustrations.



Arun Prabhakar's project showed illustrations that weaved a story of two people exploring the city of Mumbai. The illustrations were fresh and exploratory in nature.



2.2.6 ILLUSTRATION BASED PROJECTS FROM IDC



Narendar Singh's book about urbanization is set around the example of a wood block carver from Pethapur. The narrative is concise and the text has been printed using screen printing technique. He has used wood etching for his illustrations.



Sheetal Barge's project is about storytelling using mythology to convey the concern for environment in an animated film. She has made use of illustrative visual imagery in this film.



OUR NON-VEG COW is an illustrated story of Mahaswetadevi. Like the stories incidents, the illustrations had to bring out the quirky feel of the story. Ruchi Shah has tried experimental illustrations. The text is hand written and integrated with the illustrations.

2.3 VISITS

While continuing the practice of image making and reading about images, I opened my mind and eyes to the works and words of other artists. I attended a few talks and exhibitions which definitely enriched my thoughts and opened up new windows in the way of looking at images.

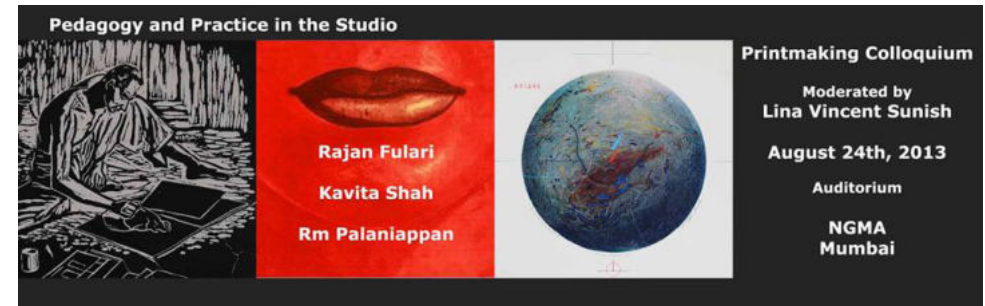
I visited exhibitions at NGMA, Chemould Presscott Road, Tao Art Gallery, Jehangir Art Gallery and many others.

Apart from these exhibitions, the talks that I attended were very enriching. There was indeed a lot of thinking, reflecting and identifying that happened due to all these. I realised a few important thoughts through these talks.

2.3.1 *Between the lines*, August 24, 2013



NANDALAL BOSE creates a pictorial text, while retaining a distinctly aesthetic sensibility.



24th August, 2013; the National Gallery of Modern Art was filled with visitors for the exhibition *Between The Lines* followed by a panel discussion. *Between The Lines – Identity, Place and Power* was an exhibition bringing the works of over eighty Indian print makers. The transformations of different eras and schools of art reflected in the content of the works. The initiation and development of printmaking in India is an interesting story. However, it has sometimes faced various difficulties and discrimination.

Some of the words read at the exhibition would be worth sharing and pondering upon. (Ref: *The writings put up at the exhibition*).

IDENTITY:

There is something compelling about creating an identity through visual means. With artists it seems almost a ritual, in some an obsession. Art becomes a channel through which fragments of identity – elements reflective of internal and external conditioning of the being – are revealed, explored and juxtaposed. Ideals of beauty and perfection, temples for the represent, sexuality, race, religion, culture and several other social categorizations enter into and thrive in the problematic of identity.

PLACE:

Artists mirror their environments, as much as they do their internal worlds. The fine lines between observed reality, imagined reality and fantasy mingle as contextual changes bring about diverse interpretations of place. The exhibition displays works of various artists from different schools of art and thought.

Bengal is where the story of Indian printmaking began. The era was one of the complex paradoxes; there was a gradual absorption of British systems into a society steeped in a strong local culture; conversely there was a steady growth of the nationalist movement and the urge to reject everything connected with the colonizers. Rabindranath Tagore's Kala Bhavan in Shantiniketan was the first truly experimental art college.

Bombay was new for art after independence with collectors, film industry and critics making it lively. The Progressive Artists were a group formed by M. F. Hussain, F. N. Souza, S. H. Raza, Tyeb Mehta and S. K. Bakre. These artists worked in a diverse style but a common language that rejected the sentimental reviving approach to show Indianness by Bengal school. The Progressives opened doors to expressionism that borrowed freely from European modernist movements at the same time deriving essences of Indian aesthetics.

The Baroda School, from its inception has been a centre for some of the most experimental modernist practices in India. The atmosphere here was one of open interaction, coupled with intellectual discourse. An engagement with European and American art movements as well as folk art of Indian culture was preferred to the lingering post-colonial academic influences. Printmakers like Nasreen Mohamedi, Bhupen Khakkar, Jarem Patel, Jyoti Bhatt, KG Subramaniam, Rini Dhumal, Laxma Goud and many others are associated with The Baroda School.

Power:

Art makers have been spoken of in relation with the godly attribute of being able to 'create', representing reality, and also worlds beyond. Artists are granted the power to communicate visually. Artworks also become instruments to explore personal

power – in which identities can be altered, fantasies can be depicted and new realities can be constructed through the act of making. The medium is the artist's instrument; it channels the ability to project multiple or fragmented realities. The artwork becomes a reflection of what exists in the artist's mind. Artists have the power to see beauty in ugliness, to find solace in trauma and redeem an equilibrium through the projection of the (un)truths.



Ladies Compartment by Preeti Agarwal

Panel Discussion:

The much interactive discussion at 6.30 p.m. in the gallery auditorium had a huge, enthusiastic audience full of print makers and print-lovers. The panellists were Mr. Palaniappan, Ms. Kavita Shah and Mr. Rajan Fularia, all of them practicing print makers and educators. The discussant, Lina Vincent Sunish brought forth various comments and questions, which were followed by interesting discussions, both from the panellists and the audience. The day concluded with the recognition of the need for educating people about the printmaking as an art form. Many a times, it does not receive the respect it deserves because of lacking awareness about the art and the efforts that go into making a print.

2.3.2 *The Art India Colloquy with Shanta Gokhale and Sudhir Patwardhan, Sept. 27, 2013*

I was present for the evening to listen to the talk by India's two leading artists, one being a writer and other a painter. The who of who from the art world were present including Gieve Patel, Atul and Anju Dodiya, Jenny Bhatt and many others. There was chattering, clicking of photographs with the speakers of the evening, Sudhir Patwardhan and Shanta Gokhale. The event began at 6.30p.m.

Both of the speakers had known each other since years, and had exchanged a friendly 'hi' when they met at art shows and other event openings. However, this was an event where they got to speak to each other, without much interruption from the others, as commented by Shanta Gokhale. Further, she commented that both of them are pucca marathis and have eaten food too at each other's homes. Both share the same era when they saw the city change - social, economic and political change.

Sudhir Patwardhan showed 2 of his recent works – one where there was an abandoned building with empty space around and another with the colourful, crowded scene of Mumbai's slum homes with too many houses made up of coloured material and stuck next to each other. Then he also showed his works from the past, which had the subjects of workers of the city of Mumbai. Shanta G. and Sudhir P. had a discussion about these subjects and his work.

Shanta G. asked Sudhir P. that how he connected to the other class of the people. For example, she belonged and grew up with people from middle class, like the teachers and others around and she found it very difficult to write about people from outside this class. Sudhir P. showed his other works on the subject of workers. They spoke about how these workers were connected to their times and how the shutting of mills and mill workers' life was something that Sudhir P. felt connected to. He went on to describe that there was anger with the condition of the mill workers. It was not a question of turning a society.



He showed his painting of Lower Parel, where he has showed the mills, a high-rise building behind and the common people carrying on with their daily conversations and chores. There was no ugliness though. Things were as they were. Neither the mills were ugly nor the high-rise building.



Then they went on to his other work, Nostalgia. This reminded Sudhir P. of the question by Gieve Patel: is nostalgia bad? No... There was a discussion over this painting where the artist spoke about how times were then when he had just shifted to a home in Thane. The landscape was quite different on the outskirts of Bombay, green and less of construction happening. The painting had two women, the older lady holding the hand, and looking straight towards the viewer while the younger one looking outside with hope. The artist was inside the room, busy in the act of painting. Shanta G. commented that she probably would not be so nostalgic about anything of past. But the artist brought his nostalgia and the city that was and now is, in his works. He commented that a lot of art is nostalgia.

The conversation then shifted to the political scene of the city. They both are liberal Marathis and have seen the rise of the Sena and how liberal people like them were compelled to explain that they believed in a cosmopolitan city and were not a part of the sena attitude. Shanta Gokhale read out an excerpt from her novel where she read the incident of a Hindu being killed during 1992 riots simply because he said he is a human being and the Hindu revolts could not take this. Instead of which his Muslim friend was safe. Sudhir P. showed his painting of a young Shiv Sainik, travelling somewhere with so much hope in his eyes about the future.

Then the conversation flowed towards the plays in Maharashtra of those times. They said that the play was often a state verses an individual. Sudhir P. also showed another painting of his where he had scenes from the famous Marathi play. Sudhir said he paints things the way they are. In such a case, they might not be his thoughts, but the play and scenes as they are.

He also showed other paintings where he had the subjects of daily family lives, where the female protagonist, the mother was working in the kitchen with her back towards the viewer, the maid sweeping the floor and the other male members of the house busy chatting.

Thus, the evening saw the era from 60's to the 90's through the eyes of the writer and the painter. It was indeed interesting, because the subject started with urbanization and the change the city has seen over the years. This is a subject similar to what I am interested in, the inevitable change and the change that a city-dweller has seen. Of course, the times they spoke about were familiar but not what I had experienced.

2.3.3 Looking at paintings: Busting some myths by Indrapramit Roy, Oct.11, 2013



NOCTURNE II



GREY DAWN

Indrapramit Roy was born in Calcutta in 1964. He studied printmaking (BFA) at the Visva-Bharati University of Santiniketan and painting (MFA) at the Faculty of Fine Arts of M.S. University of Baroda, India. His studies at the Royal College of Art, also included a term each at Cite des Arts, Paris and Hochschule der Kunst, Berlin. Indrapramit also designs books for children and young adults. His recent illustrations include “Antigone”, “King Oedipus”, “Bacchae” and “Hippolytus”: four retellings of Greek tragedies produced by Tara publishing and published by the Getty Museum, Los Angeles. “Antigone” won the best book design award in New York book fair, 2002 and “Bacchae” got the Association of American Museum Publishers Award in 2005.

Indrapramit’s other interests include writing on art. He has also designed the stage for the oldest non-profit theatre group in India “Bohurupee”, Kolkata and for the World Social forum held at Bombay in 2004. He has been teaching painting at his alma mater Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU of Baroda since 1995.

The session started with him talking about the various myths one has about art and images. Indeed, so true these were. He explained these with images itself. He went on explaining myths like art = beautiful; beautiful = pretty; art is good skill and so on with the works of Picasso, Frances Baker, FN Souza, and many more.

He brought in the talks about images and their relation with **context, intent, scope and purpose**.

After talking of many myths about art, he showed his own works and spoke about those. It was a delight to see huge works on the big screen and how he took us through. His works were much of his own times, experimental, layered and moreover, they were his views on things surrounding him.



3. POSSIBILITIES

Visual imagery for many people emerges from a subject or an idea that they wish to communicate. For visually inclined people image making is a response to visual stimuli or at times just a play with visuals.

There are various reasons for creating images. One might want to talk about the happenings around, or just speak about life, ideas and concepts through images. Here are a few possibilities that I have noted down. However, I shall be exploring further and finalising very soon.

1) I would want to create imagery based on what I experience in nature. People often ignore the complexity and beauty in the minute little things. Every aspect is constantly evolving.

There is a constant change that nature displays. A bird-call here and dew drop there, a splash here and a frog jumps there. Indeed, haiku does such justice. It captures the 'present' feel in a few words. I wish to bring this unclear, yet momentary experience into a permanent appreciation. I wish to capture the moment that passes too quickly before us...

But not everything is rosy out there. When there is a beauty, there exists a beast. Nature faces its own troubles. In the name of nature tourism, nature itself is being spoilt. Everything becomes a common nature I described in the little haiku!! Again, this takes us to the change... a change that often is unpleasant... A tree stood tall, now it's vanished... a memory indeed....

Now there is a contrast here... There is a shift from the romantic world of fantasy.. to the world of reality that I live in... What do I see around me? Busy people, busy streets, phones ringing, nobody listening....

And then this was not enough.... There is much more... a sacrifice from a superstitious mother... A game of hunt... A tradition of manhood with lots of blood... Oh and how fancy the snakeskin looks in your hand!! And you run away when you see a snake appears in your van... Delicious monkey brains or orphaned orangutans? Tigers in your jungle or in your plate?

Let that world be...just let that be.... Teach your little child, not to pluck a flower and possess when it can be admired in its habitat... Love not just Him and himself... But love His creation just like she loves him....Just as it was in my little haiku....The beautiful, pleasant, maybe just a fairytale... Indeed, a fairytale exists nowhere!

2) Mother And Child is a constantly dealt theme in images. It is one emotion and bond that so many people have depicted in images. Indeed, it is a special bond, that cannot be replaced by any sort of love. There is heaven where there exists a mother. But there is so much complexity and change all along. The journey from birth to growing up, the journey has sweet-sour episodes and experiences...

I often think what would I depict if I had the theme of Mother And Child. It would definitely be a personal experience. Infact such a special and an evolving bond.

3) Like the saying goes, 'Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last, you create what you will,' this quote holds true when I ask myself, what is it that you wish to create. Or well, re-create. The world as a kid is the amazing one, which she realizes only when she grows up. It is an innocent, carefree world and this is exactly what I desire, what I still imagine. And wish to recreate. I wish to create a series of works that would be 'Down The Memory Lane'. The times have changed. The 90's was a different era it feels at times and it no longer exists. We did not have mobile phones, nor did we read story books on ipads. TV was Disney. The growing happened through various trips, people I met all along. There were transitions from a childhood to adolescence to womanhood. I can do this project possibly because I was engaged in art since I was a little kid.

There is a mixed feel I experience, for there a smile of some wonderful times and a pain of them no-longer existing. Thus, I wish to create an autobiographical room where I enter again, 'down the memory lane'.

4) Apart from these subjects, another interest lies in looking at the life around. The city that I live in, urban-scape, and the chaos that have been created. The constant use of a mobile phone, the reducing social life, the conversations that run through texts and such concerns of today. It seems that we have been ruled by our own inventions to some extent and we have blindly been entangled into using these. Of course, they are of great use to humans, but are we being controlled by them? This is a question, comes to my mind specially when I was handicapped with no phone and laptop for a few days.

However, as I stated earlier, these are few ideas and possibilities. I shall be giving it a little more time to think of other concerns that affect me and ponder upon those. Thus, I will soon finalise one and work towards the same.



4. EXPLORATIONS

Imagination is the beginning of creation.
You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine,
and at last, you create what you will.

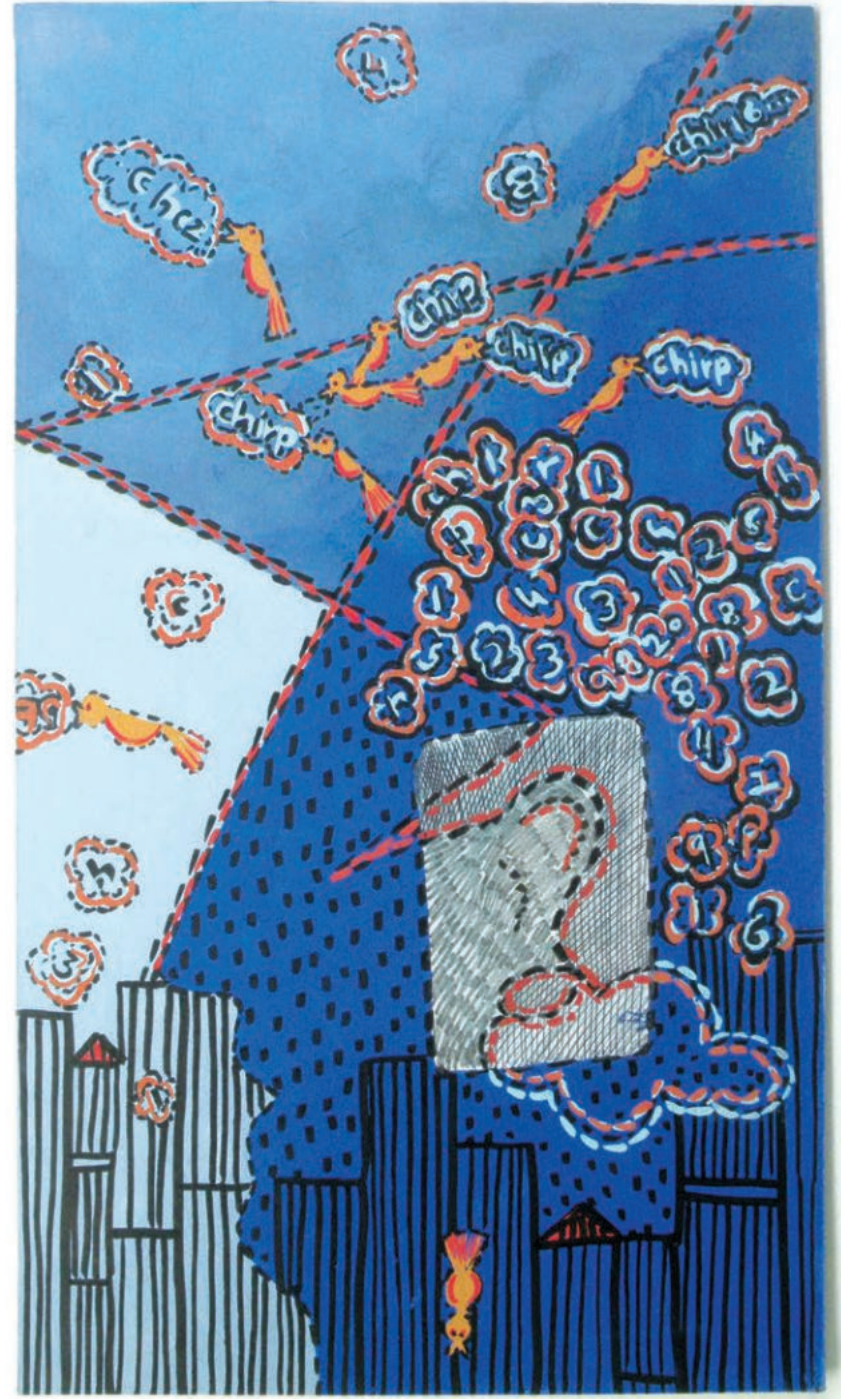
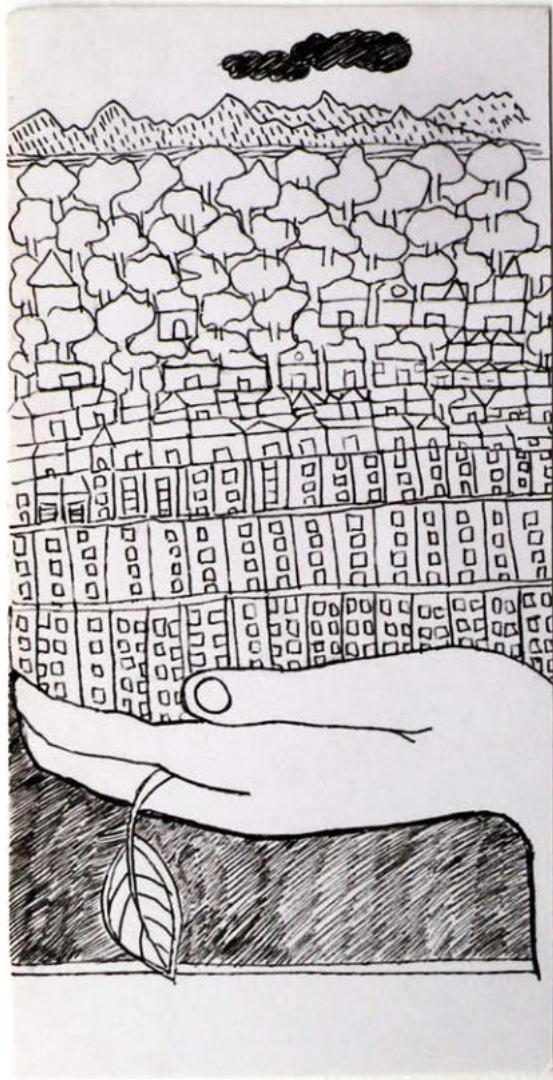
-George Bernard Shaw

Explorations here are just a form of riyaz, or the practice of getting into the flow of creating images. It helps to get the thoughts out. After all, a valuable image is one that is thoughtful and sayable both. This is just a part of the journey to image making. Possibilities arise while making these explorations as well as the concerns that we experience, everyday, which are relevant to our times.

These are a few explorations I started with, just to get into the flow of image making. They might be amateur right now, but definitely the steps that would lead to the bigger picture.







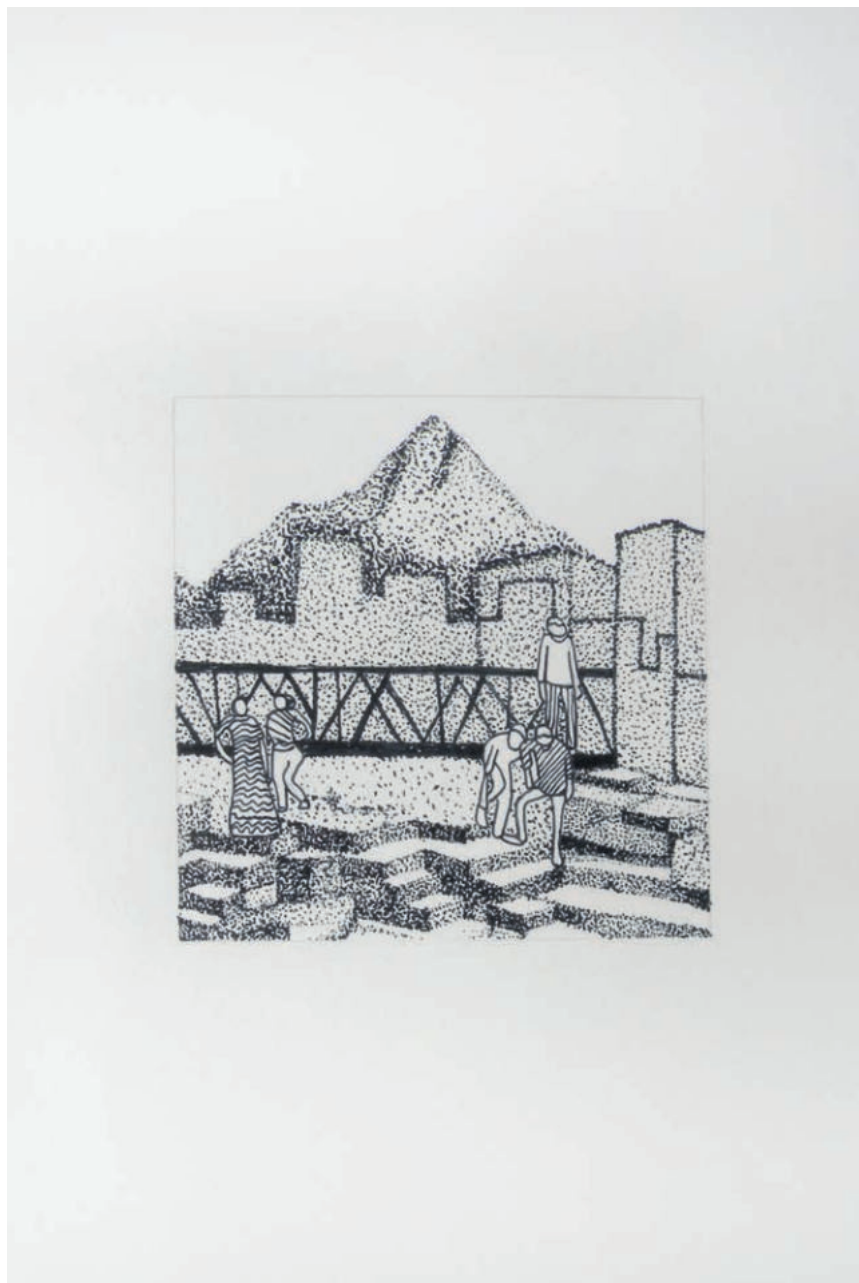


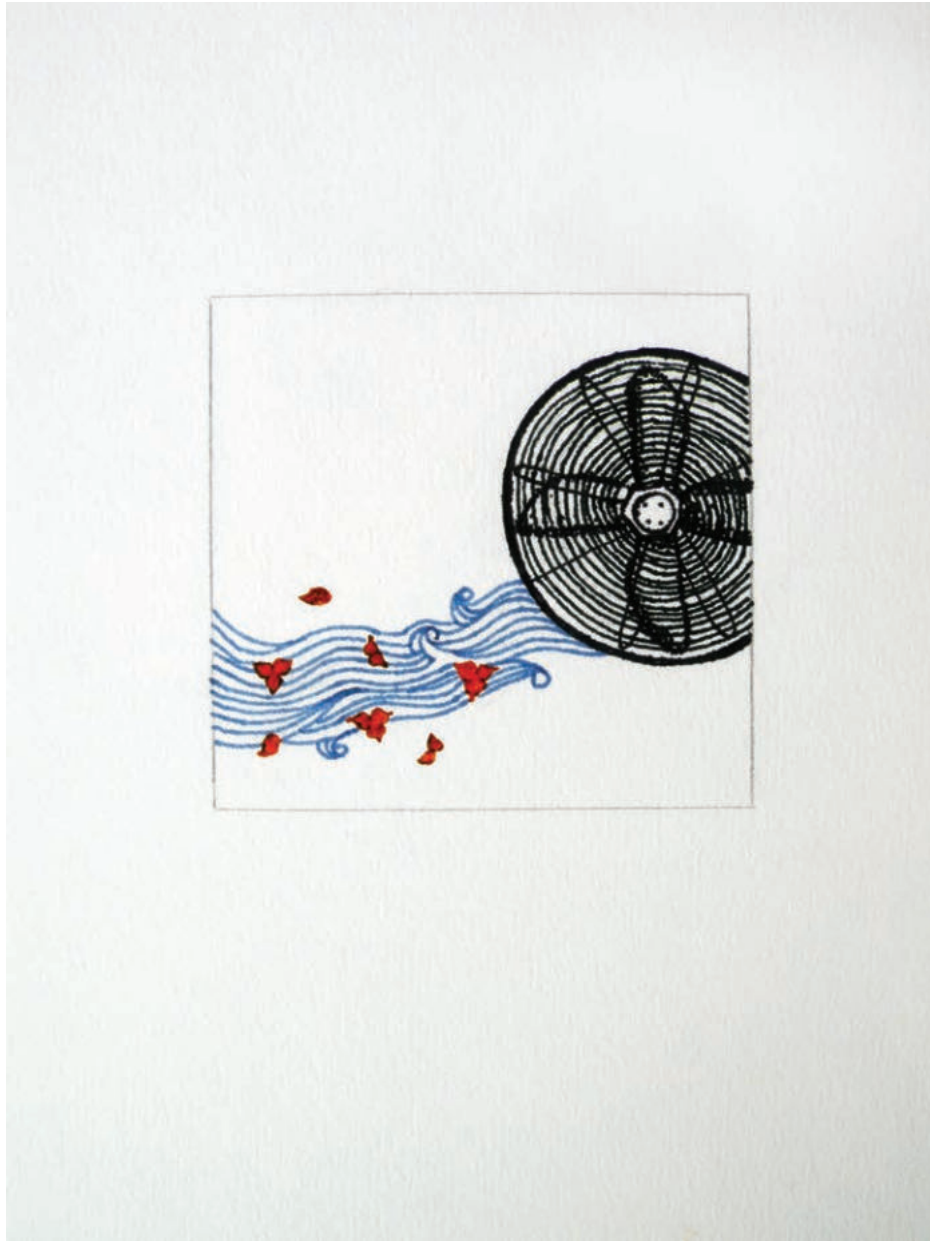


FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

After noting down the possibilities, I started again with the work of image making. I tried the medium of pen and ink with much detailing to bring out the intricacy of the landscapes and urbanscapes. Here, I decided to keep to a small size and bring back the feel of detailed miniature works. Thus, the viewer would have to hold the work in his/her hands and view it closely; unlike a work put up on the wall. This was one of the possibilities and explorations I tried in the process of figuring out what is it that would suit the best to me later.







Looking at my pen and ink miniatures, I was suggested by my guide to try my hand at etching. Etching would give me a different degree and quality of line work.

Etching is a laborious and one of the oldest forms of print making and image making. It helps one create multiple prints. I decided to try my hand at metal etching. It is the process of using strong acid to cut into the unprotected parts of a metal surface to create a design in the metal. As an intaglio method of printmaking, it is, along with engraving, the most important technique for old master prints, and remains in wide use today.

Learning and experimenting with etching indeed made me realise, how much of time and patience one invests to achieve the desired outcome. It is not just the output, but the joy that goes in the process of creating the image that matters.

I was very excited to learn something new called aqua-tint in etching, using aqua-dust. Aqua-tint uses acid-resistant resin to achieve tonal effects. The experience with etching was a nice one, but at the same time I realised, one needs good practice and understanding of this form of image making. One needs to be continuously at it to achieve the desired quality in the line work.



5. MY THOUGHTS

These were a few thoughts that evolved after looking closely at the works of Sudhir Patwardhan and Indrapramit Roy and understanding their views. Of course, the initial study of wide range of works by several artists of different era too developed a lot of rich knowledge. While exploring in practice, one realises the real possibilities and the needs of a good image, the one that speaks.

These thoughts became very important in further shaping my project. Some of my understandings or thoughts that came out of these are:

- Great art reflects it's own times.

A contemporary artist, will have an influence of the times that he lives in. His surroundings, his thoughts, life around, culture and system he lives have an influence on his work. He responds to his surroundings and his times through his work. A good piece of art will reflect the time it belonged to. Of course, one could go traditional, but the reason for going back there too is an outcome of the current time.

For example, Jitish Kallat's work well reflects the cityscape he sees, the life of people he views and the chaos around him. His style of work too, for that matter becomes contemporary in nature.

- Art should have it's local touch and roots, and then it becomes universal.

This could be well explained with examples like the works of Jamini Roy, Dhruvi Acharya and Raza. Jamini Roy's works have their roots from the traditional art of Madhubani figures while the contemporary works of Dhruvi Acharya have elements from Indian

books like Amar Chitra Katha and such. The style and colours are contemporary yet, there is an artist's connect to the paintings for she has read them in her childhood. Raza is one of the biggest artists we have today and his work is abstract in nature. Yet, it has roots in the old tantric art. All their works have a flavour of their roots and then, became universally appreciated.

An Image does not make you laugh or cry; rather it speaks very softly.

An image evokes feelings but it is never too loud to make someone cry or laugh. It talks in a subtle way about the subject it depicts. Sure, it lingers in the mind for long or maybe might make a permanent impression but it has its own limitations. One cannot solve issues directly, but can surely acknowledge the issues through a good image.

An image need not say anything new, but it needs to say it in a new way.

To make a statement or an impact, it is not necessary that the subject dealt with is innovative. But the same thing can be spoken off in a better way by a strong image.

It was mid-October by now. And I wanted to make up my mind as to what shape would I wish to give to my project. For this, it was important that I chose a theme and medium and worked towards it.

I had been trying etching simultaneously till now and also letting my thoughts evolve.

There are possibly two routes towards making images:

- 1) The Visual Route
- 2) Deliberately Designed Images

The visual route is often taken by people stimulated by colours and visual, who start off making images without any thought prior to making. Where as deliberately thought images are sort of illustrations where one plans before-hand what he/she wishes to make. But again, there is a thin line between the two which often vanishes. Visual route also involves making from what one imagines, sub-conscious thoughts and feelings and deliberate images might also evolve with experimental visuals.

As far as selecting a theme was concerned, I could have gone back to what I had wanted to illustrate since some time. I had been wanting to illustrate non-fiction writings of Ruskin Bond.

Apart from this theme, that came to connect with the possibility of working on nature that I had mentioned, I also had Urbanscapes in my mind. While working with pen and ink miniatures as well as etchings, I had been working with the theme of urbanscapes. However, the insights that I realised after attending the talks by artists of today changed way of looking at these. Earlier, I had a more generalised view of urbanscapes, where I showed the increasing number of concrete buildings, shrinking nature, etc. But the direct connect to MY Urbanscape was missing.

Thus, now came the realisation that even though I work with the same theme, as an image maker of today, my work needs to reflect the current times. I needed a more direct connect to the urban life I belonged to and experienced. Only then the images would have a soul and they might start speaking. This was another important point that shaped this project.



6. FINAL WORKS OF IMAGE-MAKING

If you hear a voice within you say
'you cannot paint,' then by all means paint,
and that voice will be silenced.

- Vincent Van Gogh

Now that I decided to work with the theme of urbanscapes, not illustrating any literary work from outside but reflecting my own reality and life around was the goal. Of course, this was much more challenging than the generic work I made before this. It was my response to my surroundings.

I was also aware of my shortcomings while dealing with human figures, expressions, hands and feet, and so on. But this challenge is what made it interesting and exciting.

I had to put in double efforts to bring out what I wanted. Thus, my images would now have the roots to where the subject belongs and would certainly reflect the reality of today.

As a part of my final output, I designed an exhibition, where in the images are displayed. The images were displayed in a larger size. The exhibition is accompanied by a textual narrative relating to my experience of urbanscape.













EXHIBIT DISPLAY & WRITE-UP



Everyone was invited to view the display of my work on 26th November, 2013 outside IDC, outside the auditorium.

An image is a vehicle of silent discourse. Every illustrator, painter or designer is a conveyor of his or her time & the image he or she creates reflects the same. The Speaking Image is my attempt towards this goal. This journey is not just a dialogue with self, but also with the images. Images have a lot to tell us.

This exhibit is a set of works that suggest Urbanscapes. They are my response to the urban scene around me. Everything, from the clutter of the vehicles, to the chatter in the local trains, the immigrants much blended as the city-dwellers, & the cluster of the buildings; these are an impression of my urbanscape. There is unexpectedness & timelessness with the city of Mumbai. It is not an outer view, but the inner picture of the so-called 'urban' life. The city dwellers are present everywhere. There are innumerable life experiences & these make the city real. Under the constructions of concrete walls, are the eyes that dream and the hearts that dance. Happiness and sorrow, liveliness and tiredness, poverty and plenty; the urban life is full of contradictions. My works are a response to these contradictions.

These little patches of urbanscapes are my surroundings, the city I have loved passionately. This project has been a journey of evolution as well as re-visiting some of the past memories.

While working on this project, I realised that my journey with image-making had just begun. It is a continuing process. The association with image-making, indeed enriched my understanding of visual language. As a visual communicator, it is very important to be able to understand and create strong visuals that speak.

The project has been a great learning experience where a lot of understanding happened apart from the goals set in the beginning. I took away much more than expected through this project.



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