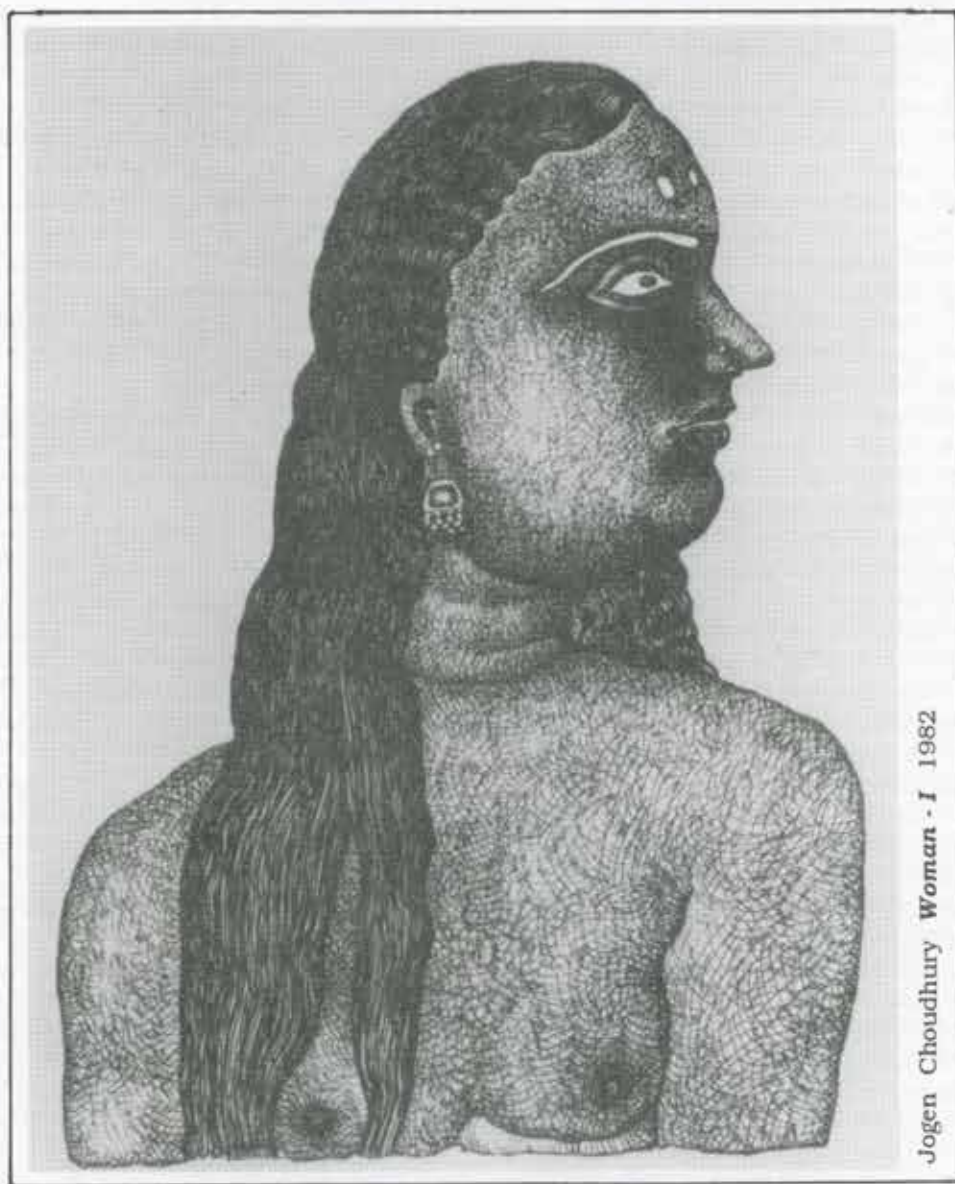


**FROM INDIA: 28 Contemporary
Artists Present New Graphic Work.**



Jogen Choudhury *Woman - I* 1982

February 6 - March 27, 1994

Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery, University of Victoria

PRINTMAKING IN INDIA - A SHORT SURVEY

Printing was first introduced to India by the Jesuit Missionaries in Goa in 1556. It was, however, not until the end of the 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th Century that printing arrived in Bengal and began to flourish under the patronage of the Honourable East India Company. Calcutta, seat of Company rule, became a major centre of printmaking. It was the East India Company officials' spirit of scientific enquiry regarding the fauna and flora, the local custom and manners of India as well as their penchant for the 'picturesque' which served as a catalyst to the print-making process in Calcutta. Along with printing of books in the Bengali vernacular on subjects as varied as religion, history, social and erotic, a new art-form emerged in the form of woodcut illustrations. The most popular was the single sheet woodcuts depicting the well-known courtesans of Calcutta. All of these gave the Battala woodcuts a dubious reputation somewhat similar to the 19th Century woodcuts of Japan.

Towards the end of the 19th Century the demand for the Battala woodcuts amongst the Calcutta populace began to fade as chromolithographic prints began to flood the market. This change in taste was brought about by a new class of artists, who were trained in British academic-style art schools set up in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Lahore. The effect on traditional artists and art-forms was disastrous as the popularity of poor quality westernized art grew among the Indian public.

Printmaking was still, however, used only as a mode of reproduction rather than a medium to be used and exploited by the artists for their creative expression. It was not until the early 20th Century that printmaking caught the imagination of the artists in Bengal. It was the establishment of progressive art societies like the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Bichitra Sabha in Calcutta, and, later Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan, which took the initiative in promoting printmaking as an art-form in India.

Despite these auspicious beginnings by the Bengal school artists, it would be some time before printmaking really came into its own in the field of Indian art. Until the 1940s printmaking was practised mainly by the Bengal School artists and their disciples, distributed all over India as teachers. Most of these artists, however, were not able to assimilate the print medium and exploit it for their own original creative expressions. The influence of the Bengal School painters which was created by Abanindranath Tagore to express revivalist and nationalist sentiments of the time, had, by the 1940s, also begun to disappear and instead a demand arose for a style which would express independent India's emergence as a modern nation.

This was to have a revolutionary effect not only in the field of Indian painting and sculpture but in printmaking as well.

It was only from the 1960s and the 1970s that graphic art came of age and was accepted as a serious art-form in India. For the first time in Indian art one notices a move towards modernist innovation and abstract simplification of forms. Of the artists who brought about these changes and whose works are represented in this exhibition are **Somnath Hore, Jyoti Bhatt, Jeram Patel, Laxma Goud, Amitabha Banerjee, Shyamal Dutta Roy, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Sanat Kar and Panesar.**

Amongst these trend-setters, Santiniketan's **Somnath Hore's** name is important. As a young artist with socialistic leanings, **Somnath Hore's** prints were bold and expressionist in style, reflecting the deep suffering of the down-trodden. In time his figures became more and more simplified as seen in his litho print of 1978. In the late 1980s, **Somnath** started experimenting with hand made paper pulp prints, and created his famous 'Wounds' series. In these pulp prints the high relief juxtaposed with deep uneven depressions on plaster-like surfaces gave the works an interesting sense of space and tension, thereby successfully expressing the hurt that a wound inflicts.

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EXPRESSIONS

Navjot Altaf
Serigraph, 1992

FALLEN MAN

Yusuf Arakkal
Collograph, 1984

BHOPAL

Yusuf Arakkal
Collograph, 1984

BODY AND SOUL

Amitabha Bannerjee
Intaglio colour, 1986

BEGINNING OF A JOURNEY

Jyoti Bhatt
Serigraph, 1986

FACES

Jyoti Bhatt
Serigraph, 1991

UNTITLED

Bikash Bhattacharjee
Serigraph colour, 1992

WOMAN I

Jogen Chowdhury
Silk Screen, 1982

COUPLE II

Jogen Chowdhury
Serigraph, 1982

UDAIPUR

Shail Choyal
Etching/Aquatint, 1992

DAWANAL

Shail Choyal
Etching/Aquatint, 1992

HOPE II

Naina Dalal
Etching and Acquatint, 1990

MONUMENT

Shyamal Dutta Ray
Etching (colour), 1975

THIRD EYE

Babita Das
Lithograph, 1992

GULF TOYS

Chandan Das
Etching, 1992

NETWORK

Chandan Das
Etching, 1992

SUMMER AFTERNOON

Rini Dhumal
Lithograph, 1993

THE SHOW GOES ON

Walter D'Souza
Woodcut, 1993

FUN MUNCH

Siddhartha Ghosh
Etching/Aquatint, 1993

UNTITLED

Laxma Goud
Intaglio Zinc, 1993

UNTITLED

Laxma Goud
Intaglio Zinc, 1993

WOUND SERIES

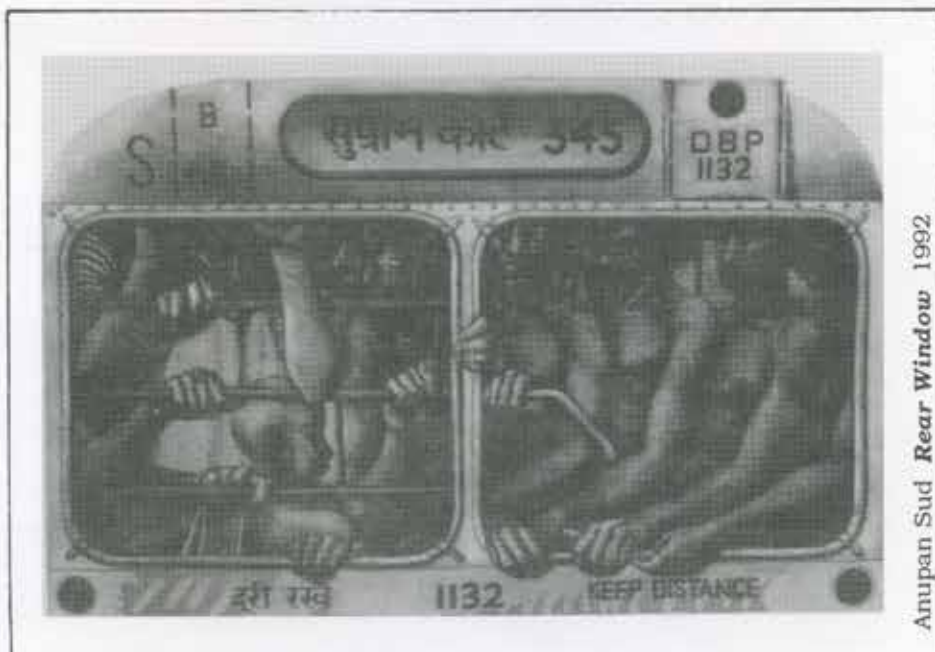
Somnath Hore
Pulp Print, 1983

UNTITLED

Somnath Hore
Lithograph, 1978

UNTITLED

Sanat Kar
Cardboard Intaglio, 1993



Anupam Sud Rear Window 1992

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WET HANDKERCHIEF

Bhupen Khakhar
Etching, 1993

THE RIVER

Bhupen Khakhar
Etching, 1993

TRANSIENT

Kavita Nayar
Etching, 1993

**ENERGY, LAND
ARCHITECTURE - I**

Rm. Palanlappan
Mixed media, 1993

**ENERGY, LAND
ARCHITECTURE - II**

Rm. Palanlappan
Mixed media, 1993

BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

B. R. Panesar
Etching, 1992

VIOLENCE

Jeram Patel
Lithograph

UNTITLED I

D. L. N. Reddy
Etching/Colour Aquatint 1991

UNTITLED II

D. L. N. Reddy
Etching/Colour Aquatint 1991

FACE I

Suhas Roy
Lithograph, 1992

UNTITLED

Lalu Prosad Shaw
Etching colour, 1993

WOUNDS

Lalu Prosad Shaw
Etching colour, 1993

MOVEMENT

Jin Hook Shinde
Etching, 1992

SOURCE

Jin Hook Shinde
Etching, 1992

DIALOGUE 8

Anupam Sud
Etching, 1992

REAR WINDOW

Anupam Sud
Etching, 1992

WINGS

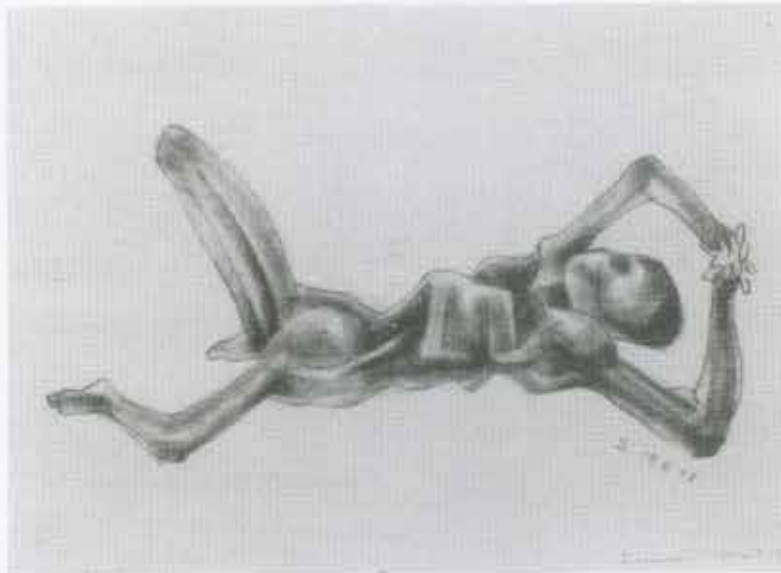
Shuvaprasanna
Etching, 1993

OWL

Shuvaprasanna
Lithograph, 1993

SQ 45

Thotaa Tharani
Etching/Viscosity, 1993



Somnath Gore *Untitled* 1978

In the field of contemporary printmaking, Baroda has produced some of India's finest printmakers. Amongst them are graphic artists like **Jyoti Bhatt**, **Jeram Patel** and **Laxma Goud**.

Jyoti Bhatt could be described as a total artist who first moved from the field of painting into graphics. Now he has taken to photography, which to him is yet another form of printmaking technique. Like his medium and techniques, his theme and imagery also vary. They range from the traditional folk motifs, deeply-rooted in his cultural sub-conscious seen in his graphic '*Beginning of a Journey*' (1986) to his experimenting with silk-screen print using photographic multiple imagery. '*Faces*' (1993) is reminiscent of Andy Warhol's print, 'Marilyn Monroe'. It is the technical possibilities of printmaking and the element of surprise inherent in the process which excites **Jyoti Bhatt** and leads him to search for further techniques of printmaking.

Jeram Patel's graphics on the other hand expresses a deep psychological vision of the contemporary world. In his lithograph, '*Violence*' (1992), **Jeram Patel** expresses his revulsion against violence and terror that was stalking India in 1992 during the Ayodhya crisis. The imagery in this lithograph is 'palpably organic' and provokes the viewer to investigate and experience the destructive anger embodied in these dismembered shapes.

Laxma Goud is the other Baroda printmaker who has advanced the printmaking media to a high level of artistic expression. The two intaglio/aquatint prints, '*Untitled*' (1992) and '*Untitled*' (1993), reflect his consummate skill as a draftsman and his complete control over the print media. With the use of finely chiselled lines and aquatint, **Laxma Goud** has created a charming vision of rural India.

Amongst the senior graphic artists from Calcutta are **Sanat Kar**, **Amitabha Bannerjee**, **Shyamal Dutta Ray**, **Lalu Prosad Shaw** and **Shuvaprasanna Suhas Roy**. They are amongst India's senior and well-known printmakers. A special

mention must be made of **Sanat Kar's** innovative experiments with the intaglio on card-board and **Lalu Prosad Shaw's** sensitive and consummate skill in handling colour etching reflected in his print '*Untitled*' (1993) and '*Graphic*' (1993). **Lalu Prosad Shaw** especially made the print '*Graphic*' (1993) for CIMA's (Centre of International Modern Art, Calcutta) powerful exhibition 'Wounds' in 1993 as a voice of protest against the communal violence in India in 1992/1993.

Before moving on to discuss the next generation of young printmakers, it is necessary to mention that some of India's senior painters have occasionally taken to printmaking not as a total artistic pursuit, but as a change. A sample of painters working in the print media, whose works are represented in this exhibition are **Bikash Bhattacharjee**, **Jogen Chowdhury** and **Bhupen Khakhar**. Amongst these, **Bhupen Khakhar** has of late taken up printmaking very seriously and is emerging as one of India's important printmakers.

From the seeds sown by these pioneers, a new and dynamic generation of young printmakers has emerged. The ones who have made the most significant contribution are **Anupam Sud**, **Rini Dhumal**, **Walter D'Souza**, **Rm Palaniappan**, **Shail Choyal** and **Yusuf Arakkal**. In their works one notices an eclecticism both in style and technique which has given contemporary Indian printmaking its unique identity.

Anupam Sud's etching, '*Dialogue*' (1992), reflects her pre-occupation with figures and their configuration within a demarcated space. This sensitive handling of space gives her prints a spatial tension, which in turn, creates an interesting psychic link between the figures.

Rm Palaniappan's graphic/collage, '*Energy - Land Architecture*' (1993), on the other hand, with astute handling of space and imagery expresses the artist's concept of time, space and the environment. **Rini Dhumal's** serigraph, '*Summer Afternoon*', with its use of rich, warm colours and strong lines is painterly in effect. **Walter D'Souza** is the only woodcut artist

D'Souza is the only woodcut artist represented. His diptych, **'The Show Goes On'** (1993), exhibits his control and facility with the woodcut media. **Shail Choyal**, an artist from Rajasthan, on the other hand, has contemporised and adapted the old tradition of Rajput miniature paintings in his etchings. His consummate skill in handling the techniques can be seen in the print **'Dawana'**. Although the theme is traditional--Lord Krishna swallowing the flame engulfing his herd of cattle--the technique and style are contemporary. This gives his print a rare charm.

Jin Sook Shinde on the other hand experiments with abstract imagery. By constant experimentation with the graphic technique in which the plate is prepared by etching and super-imposing different layers of colour on the plate, **Jin Sook** creates prints of profound simplicity and elegance. In her etchings, **'Source'** (1992) and **'Movement'**, one experiences a deep meditative, almost a vedantic, experience of abstraction and stillness.

The overall theme that emerges from this collection of graphic art, is the artist's concern for human survival and the social predicament that confronts India today. **Chandan Das'** colour etching, **'Network'** (1993), has surrealist imagery which reflects the tension and fear that shook India after the Ayodhya crisis in 1992. On the other hand, **Yusuf Arakkal's 'Bhopal'**, with restrained use of colour, space and sensitivity manages to express his concern at the price India has had to pay for progress and modernization.

Today, there are many such young artists in India, who are expanding the horizon of printmaking and creating a new awareness towards the graphic media amongst the art viewing public. Their continuing experimentation and innovation in this relatively new media along with the vibrancy of Indian imagery and ethos has created a language which is both modern and yet Indian, confident and yet exploring.

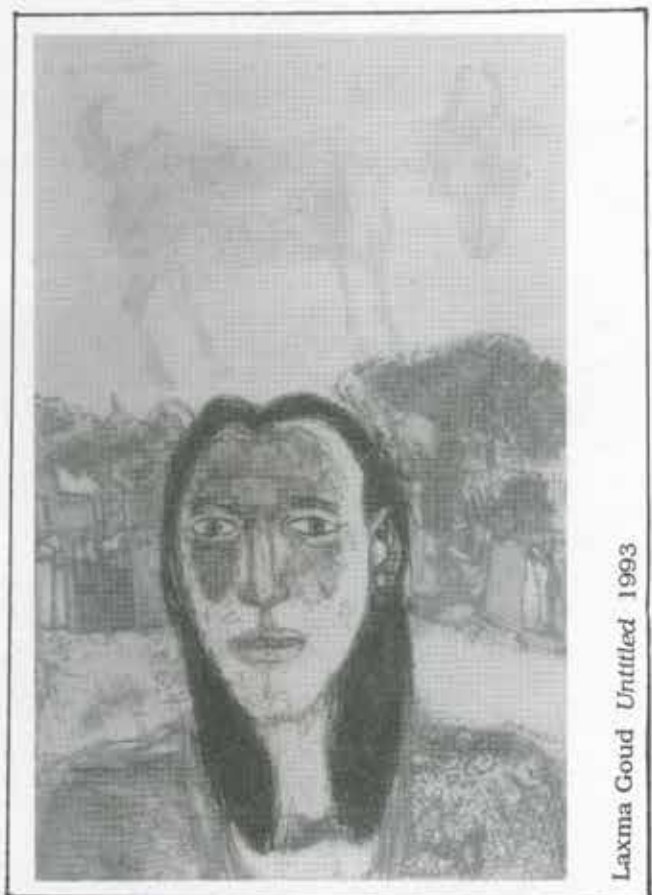
*Baruna Bhattacharjee
Calcutta 1994*

Exhibition Credits:

Director	Martin Segger
Curator	Baruna Bhattacharjee
Secretary/ Registrar	Barbara Jackson
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The works in this exhibition have been made available through the generosity of the Centre of International Modern Art, Calcutta.

The University would like to recognize the financial support of Jawl Industries.



Laxma Goud *Untitled* 1993