

CHAPTER IV

Through the initial two decades, that is from 1950-1970, most of the Painters, Sculptors and even Applied Artist of the Faculty of Fine Arts, indulged in Printmaking - sometimes as a subsidiary course to their main subject and sometimes as one interested in working in a new medium, exploring its potential and scope. There were also a few amongst the students who took up Printmaking as a way of continuing thier work after finishing their academic training. These artist, who acquired some form of aid or scholarship, could continue to work within the condusive art-atmosphere in the Faculty and at the same time work with a new medium. Certain artist from other art - institution, but with a similar urge and intention to continue work under some eminent artist also worked in the Printmaking medium! In these two decades many from the Faculty also availed of foreign scholarships and took up Printmaking as their medium of expression. They returned with experience and expertise to continue work in this medium. Thus until the seventies even through the department was just a subsidiary one, it nurtured many aspiring. Printmakers. Certainly the prolificity of experssion and the standard of work produced made clear that this was a potential medium. To give this aspect its full recognition, from 1971, the department which by this time was fully equipped-started offering a Masters degree in Printmaking. This was the first time that a degree at this level was being offered in Printmaking in India. Printmaking certainly had come a long way from it's initiation in the 16th century as a copier technique for missionary propogation.

Through the 1960's, activities in Printmaking medium all over India-as well as in Baroda- had gradually been building momentum. In Delhi several artist had set up personal studio and were working consistently- such as Kanwal and Devyani Krishna; Jagmohan Chopra who initiated the Group 8, and therefore group activity amongst young aspiring artist; Somnath Hore who after inculcating an interest in Printmaking amongst the Calcutta

artist as the one incharge of the Graphic department in Indian College of Art and Draughtsmanship in 1954, came to Delhi Polytechnic in 1958. He not only set up the various sections of woodcut, lithography and etching in these institutions but also experimented with local material such as developing the etching ground with the help of Haren Das and Ramenranath Chakrabarty. Before this, ground, an essential ingredient for Intaglio had to be imported. N.B. Joglekar of Baroda advised and helped Somnath Hore set up and master the lithography technique. Somnath Hore who learnt the process through self interest and by reading books on the technique of lithography- which were mostly foreign publications-took N.B. Joglekar's help to substitute expensive material which were imported for locally made products.

In fact experiment with material was also being done by other artist who stuck strips of paper on hard board and used multiple rollers to get a multicoloured print from one matrix, or used synthetic resin, applied directly on the matrix with a brush, or crumpled paper and coated it with resin to get a certain texture and dimension etc. Or they applied liquid plastic in layers and allowed it to dry and incised on it or made pulp prints with mould and paperpulp. Several members of Group '8' experimented with cardboard or plyboard matrix, made up of multiple layers as a substitute for metal (which was not only expensive but scarce). In Calcutta too experiments with material by Printmakers of Contemporary Art Grade which was later renamed Society of Contemporary Artist continued in the sixties. In Bombay in J.J. School of art, Y.K. Shukla had introduced evening classes in Printmaking from 1952 which by 1962 was introduced into the regular curriculum with the help of Vasatn Pranab. In Shantiniketan, there was a rekindling of interest in Printmaking in the sixties when workshops in various medium were set up. Once again Somnath Hore inculcated an interest in the medium, and it was enthusiastically taken up by eminent artist such as Ram Kinkar and Binod Bihari Mukherjee amongst others.

Of course exhibitions, camps and workshops also helped as well as the official and national recognition of the medium by Lalit Kala Academy, which by this time acknowledged the medium in its exhibitions. Exhibitions such as Modern German graphics in 1963 in New Delhi or Lithographs from Britain in the same year featuring artist such as Henry Moore, Gerham Sutherland, Michael Ayrton, Ceri Richard, Keith Vaughan etc. exposed the unusual aspects in printmaking and the type of work being done by printmakers abroad. Other exhibitions in the 60's like the 'French Arts' in 1963; Vangogh's in 1964, Blue Rider in 1964 too gave the necessary exposure. In 1970 Graphic 70, an All India Exhibition of prints was organised by Group '8' in New Delhi. The printmakers from Baroda, who participated in it were Jyoti Bhatt, Anju Choudhary, P.D. Dhumal, Jeram Patel, K.G. Subramanyan, and G.M. Sheikh. In 1970 the other major event in this field was the workshop organised by USIS, conducted by Paul Lingren. In this four month long workshop participants from various parts of India could experience at first hand the methods and techniques employed by a master Printmakers and or many this workshop proved to be an eye opener and turning point. The camp exposed the Indian Printmaker to the mediums potential. Since it was a well organised workshop, over a long span of time, the techniques could be grasped well and it made many aware of the profession aspect and attitude towards the medium. Many who had merely experimented in printmaking till then turned towards it seriously and became committed printmakers. From Baroda, Dakoji Devraj, Prayag Jha, Bhupen Khakkar, Nasreen Mohamadi, Himat Shah, P.D. Dhumal, Jyoti Bhatt and Gulam M. Sheik participated in the camp. So by 1970's Printmaking activities in may parts of the country had gained intensity and in Baroda it cutminated in the offer of a Masters degree course by 1971.

When the proposal to make the printmaking course into a full-fledged recognised degree at Masters level was proposed, probably the initiators had grasped the significance of the substantial qualitative and quantitative aspect of work to be produced. Further the

recognition and perception of the scope of a number of artist, totally dedicated to the medium-as their primary means of expression and the relevance of the stylistic situation possible thereof could not have escaped their notice. The basic consideration was to project the medium in a more professional manner. And to encourage experimenting with new technique and methods.

From the very beginning there was complete freedom of expression as per choice of subject or manner of execution for the students. This very basic but primary factor allowed the Printmaker to make their own choice. So each artist who worked here for the span of two years had two main goals-to be able to perfectly handle technique so that it could be manoeuvred and moulded according to personal need. And to be able to build up a body of works which spoke of an individual manner-to realise and evolve a personal language of expression. The teachers and senior Printmakers remained as a support system in the background and helped when asked or made suggestions for further possibilities. At no point did they try to manipulate or juxtapose their own manner or style of expression on the students. This complete freedom to choose and grown upon one's own creditability proved to be the chore of what makes this department unique. For on the one hand individuality of expression was encouraged yet at the same time a group of students were allowed to work together in close companionship, which naturally encouraged exchange and sharing of ideas. In fact Printmaking is a medium which thrives in a conducive atmosphere of mutual give and take be it in technique or otherwise. Combined with this then is an underlying aspect that at the Masters level each student should have already a basic idea of what he or she would want to express. Therefore he or she is allowed to develop in whatever direction they choose. Individuality is encouraged yet it is not in isolation. A healthy respect for group exchange, changes resulting from social-environmental circumstances and an attitude to gauge and discussion each others work develops. This aspect is easily noticeable in retrospect.

Initially in the early seventies infact right up to 1978 the number of student per batch was quite minimal. Each artists work was therefore more pronouncedly individual and often seemed like a struggle to overcome the odds of technical perfection. If a casual glance is passed on the list of printmakers who worked during these years, it will be noticed that very few amongst them continued to work as printmakers beyond their academic training. Whether this can be ascribed to lack of facility outside the faculty or whether the popularity of prints was almost an unknown factor then is debatable. Most printmakers chose to take up other occupation and of the ones who continued to work did so by becoming associated to art institutions.

However this study does not ascribe the success of Printmaking to the number of Printmakers produced from this department. The quantity in no way contribute to the 'Identity of Art' and the unique contribution of the printmakers to contemporary art. Rather the attempt here has been to study their works concentrating mainly on two year that they worked here and in a few cases where they continued to work even after their respective degrees. This is necessary because the 'identity' and contribution that is emphasised upon in this study emerges within the two years that each printmaker has worked in the department. This arises from the fact that any visual experience on part of the artist becomes fruitful and relevant only when it corresponds to the requirement of the stylistic situation in a particular moment. It then becomes important to study the tendencies and their orientation and attempt to isolate them so as to recognise them.

In the year 1971 two students P.D. Dhumal and B.S. Sharma were the first to acquire a Masters degree from this department. In the subsequent years till the year 1978 very few students per batch are registered and of these only about twentyfive percent have contained to work in some capacity. But this study deals with their work within the two years that they were in the department. However one of the major drawbacks of this is the lack and loss of visual records and the inability to trace by correspondence or otherwise

the location of several artist. Since there is no substantial body of works of each artist of these initial years, in collection with the department, it is difficult to study their contribution. Most of them have settled down in different field of occupation in various part of the country and cannot be traced. If their location is found, often it is noticed that they have misplaced the works of their academic phase and have no visual record left of what they made. They are more keen to discuss their present occupation, the past remains a reminiscence for them. Given this drawback it has been difficult to get a clear picture of the type of work-individualistic as well as the kinds of exchange that took place at this time.

As stated in the previous chapter, the main aspect which emerges from a study of works of the artist, is that of the interaction within informal groups of artist and the results thereof. In the previous chapter, such interaction is noticed within the works of many artist working in mediums other than just printmaking. It is interesting to note that this interaction within a close community of artist, working together over a phase of time, inevitable leads to exchanges and correspondence. Their works often take off from similar tangents and evolving totally unique possibilities of different variations. And this as stated before mostly happen without any conscious effort or manipulation on part of the expressor. This can be ascribed to the fact that the common language that is created is one which "grows out of communication between members of a composite working community, created by people thrown together under a common environment, with a common problem with common hopes and fears". Though such composite working communities of art do not exist in the society yet an art-institution provides a similar scope. So the language that evolves out of such a conducive atmosphere is one based on shared circumstances, meanings and memories. The visual expression which can be triggered off in several direction based on a common motif is often ambiguous and unspecific though it generates an interest. In the 50's and 60's such group interaction was informal in the sense that any or all artist within

a time space, working in different mediums, often ended up with works which were similar or showed a 'point of contact'. After the 70's, such a study can be more compositely reviewed within the works of students from the Printmaking department. So as to demonstrate that the identity that emerges from their works is a result of intense interaction within a group of artist working within a marked time and space.

A research which deals with human behaviour, or as in this case expression, when restricted to a small region, with clearly defined boundaries allows effective comparison if it is not extended beyond the area selected for study. The human mind has a natural tendency towards a logical-aesthetic classification of categorising the various entities. So working within a composite unit often helps to clarify a hypothesis. This is important because when working with expressive-patterns or 'cultural types', one can notice similar or related phenomenon in cases totally segregated. For these cultural typicalities tend to occur in very similar form in every society. They are constructed around very simple polarities and they fulfil different function in different cases. So one can keep coming upon example which strengthen a hypothesis from very segregated source. It is therefore important to confine and concentrate on a particular phenomenon in this case the works of Printmaking from Baroda- to put across a legible or rather comprehensive viewpoint. However it is true that the similarity noticeable in motifs or symbols gain universal recognition during a certain time because they are constructed around very simple polarities and they signify similar things and they are common for every region.

However as stated before the similarities which crop do due to interaction amongst students is not immediately perceptible in the initial few years. They occur automatically and they become noticeable only when the number of students increase so that possibilities of interaction within the groups also increases. This fact is illustrated with examples further on. To begin with the works of two initial printmakers from the department i.e. P.D.

Dhumal and B.S. Sharma seem to be totally dissimilar to each other. Rather each artists pursuit is to build up a vocabulary very individualistic and unique. Consider (Plate 137, 138, and 139) all done in the year 1971. Through both of them completed their B.F.A. in Painting and went on to do a Masters degree in Printmaking from Faculty of Fine Arts, yet their works are totally different from each other. However P.D. Dhumal's works, with their strong erotic and surrealistic overtone has been compared to works by Laxma goud. The similarity in their work ends with the erotic for both have very definite and different reason for their expression. Dhumal created the 'animal-non animal' symbol represented by the phallus-generally seen as an isolated entity on it's own in a surreal setting whereas Laxma early works seem to personify the animality in human nature (Plate 140) Another difference between the two is Dhumal's work have been influenced by the cubistic approach, quite popular in Baroda, where as this is rarely seen in Laxma's work.

Another printmaker whose works assume importance during this time is DLN Reddy who came to study Printmaking in Baroada. He did not register as a regular student for the Masters degree, rather he came on a cultural scholarship. However, as a dedicated Printmaker his works have a marked significance. Amongst other Printmakers Prayag Jha who passed out graphic with Post -diploma in 1973 continued to work. Her classmate Ashok Shah Popatlal went on to persue and practice Art Therapy after Printmaking. As a student in the department his work dealt with subject of daily routine of everyday life and usually in lithography technique. After his degree he worked with the mentally handicapped and eventually took up Art Therapy as his profession. In 1975 Nirmalendu Das finished his masters degree and went on to complete a doctorate in Printmaking from Shantiniketan under Somnath Hore. Amongst his classmates, Pradeepsinh Vasantrao Babar, Arun Kumar Shantilal Patel and Satishchandra Manilal shah got interested in Book Production and Applied arts. Chandra M. Joshi who had a diploma in Drawing and Painting from J.J. School of Arts, Bombay and a Post-diploma in printmaking from Kala Bhavan came to Baroda

in 1974-75 to do printmaking. Her choice of medium being lithography, there is a noticeable tendency toward expressionistic brush strokes as seen in (Plate 141.)

Another printmaker of significance during the mid 70,s is Rini Dhumal who finished with a degree in Painting in 1972 from this institution and went on to work under Prof. Somnath Hore as a government of India Cultural Scholar in Shantiniketan. She was awarded the French Government Scholarship in 1974 and spent the next two years in Paris at the Atelier 17 studying Printmaking under S.W. Hayter Krishna Reddy and Claude Jobin. Here she mastered the technique of viscosity and her works changed significantly thereafter compare (Plate 142) done in 1974 to (Plate 143,144,145) Rini Dhumal came back to Baroda with expertise in most graphic techniques and her tremendous energy to work constantly in new methods, in large scale and in challenging circumstances, proved to be an inspiration to any student or artist associated with the department at that time. Anjana Mehra and Shakuntala Kulkarni both from J.J. School of Arts, Bombay came to do printmaking in Baroda in mid 1970's. Shakuntala came for only six months where as Anjana was here for a longer time. The 1977 batch of Printmakers from the department records two names Arke Manohar Punjaramji and Pravinkumar Ambalal Patel. Whereas Arke Manohar's was interested in the lithography technique (Plate 146, 147) Pravin Kumar was an accomplished serigrapher who could work in an amazing pace of one print in several colours in a day. His work inspired his junior Vinod Sharma who also did extremely significant work in serigraphy. Unfortunately neither of their works can be reproduced since they could not be contacted. Of the printmakers from the years after this A.K.M. Alamgir of 1979 (Plate 148,149) from Bangladesh, continued work. Pralay Chakraborty 1979 teaches printmaking in Calcutta and Niranjana Hariprasad Trivedi also of 1979 is incharge of the Government Art Gallery in Lalit Kala Academy of Ahmedabad. Of the 1980 batch only Dattatrya Dinkar Apte and Vrundavan Damodar Solnaki's works are traceable, the other having left Printmaking and non-responsive to correspondence. This is

also true of the 1981 batch in which only one artist Suchismita Madhusan Chakravarti works are in collection with the department and hence available (Plate 150.) All the other four printmakers of this year have not responded to any queries made during this study.

So certain observations which seem remarkable in retrospect was that every aspiring printmakers work seemed to be extremely individualistic-within a batch of students it was observed that no two student shared the same language-each tried to develop a very personal form of expression. The other noticeable fact was that within the time span of two years, each artist had recognised and refined his or her way of expression. A kind of precision in technique as well as the content was achieved and the body of works produced by the end of two years had a crispness of statement and clarity easily noticeable in every ones work. The third observation is that in each batch there were students from various parts of the country as well as a few local student. This became more pronounced from late 70's onwards when the number of student per batch increased and it was noticed that many students from art-institutions in other part of the country opted to attain their post-graduate degree from this department. So within a batch there would be students from Shantiniketan, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Karnataka, Kerala, Delhi, etc. as well as a few local students. The local students fell under two categories, those who attained bachelors degree from the same institution and those who were from other art-institutions within Gujarat. All these students worked together in close association for two years. So for example if batch comprised of seven students they worked together for two years and at the same time came in contact with their seniors or juniors. So at any given time atleast fourteen or more printmakers within the department interacted and worked in close companionship. Studying this interaction within students over the years the noticeable facts were that each students started with a loosely defined style- generally reflecting their indigenous influence from their place of work during the bachelors phase and in period of two years their work seemed to change-in response to new environment, exchanges and a conscious attempt to

make the most of exposure to new ideas. Thus each batch ended up with new permutation combination of basically the same indigenous types.

This may become clear to any observer who sees the works over a period of five years. What was remarkable was the metamorphosis-individual or batchwise. A certain mode of expression would gain popularity within a group the same would be used by many in various ways leading to absolutely new tangents. However since this was not a conscious attempt made by everybody at a particular time or in particular circumstance, the spontaneity of expression remained pure.

There was no manipulation or an unspoken code which gave sanction to any particular type of expression. Rather working together in a sensitised conducive atmosphere, sharing similar experience, certain facts or events assumed importance and these were translated in forms of symbols or codes in their work. So a precise motif or form of expression assumed significance when it appeared in any one student's work and often a reflection of it or another of similar significance appeared in another student's work. From here on the significant form was often expressed in very individualistic ways in different works until the form became insignificant with over exposure or its meaning changed totally. So from a focus it would spread out in different directions. This automatically leads to the question that if such a sequence of events kept on happening over a certain period of time, the pattern that emerges out of this would also be of significance. However this is a rather direct and objective observation of only a structure which can arise out of this situation. There are other trajectories other considerations. Sometimes conscious decision complicated the issue. However on comparison the similarities which arise knowingly or at times without any premonition only emphasise the fact that given the circumstances and independence of expression, it is still possible to demark a unique identity within a specific group in a time and place.

When the Graphic department became full fledged offering courses in Post-diploma and Masters degree in 1971 all efforts were made to overcome any material or technical incapacity. Within two or three years with the cumulative effort of enterprising students and teachers it became well equipped. Of the teachers who took a special interest were N.B. Joglekar, who personally helped each and every printmaker overcome any technical problem. His experience and expertise in solving all types of technical hitches, allowed for experimentation in the department. Due to his guidance, no printmaker had to leave any work incomplete and he always had helpful alternative suggestion to make in case of experimental error. Technique was not the only point of discussion. Old students often recount how a particular piece of advice by a teacher inspired them. P.D. Dhumal recounts that it was through guidance and discussion with K.G. Subramanyan that he started developing his own expression-he was asked to decide by himself exactly what imagery he wanted to create and to evolve his own symbol and language. Another student Prayag Jha was similarly inspired by Jyoti Bhatt. Prayag Jha who tried to find new techniques and textures to work with was told that no matter how hard she tried to do so it could be impossible since, printmaking was a much experimented field and most possibilities had already been tried and tested. Therefore it would be better to concentrate on views, thoughts, concept and subject. So that Prayag Jha gave up trying to evolve new technique in search of new subject within. The department was new yet it was always full of teachers from other department who were interested in printmaking such as Jeram Patel, V.R. Patel, Vinod Shah, K.G. Subramanyan, G.M. Sheikh, Jyoti Bhatt, V.S. Patel and Ratan Parnioo. K.G. Subramanyan started making books for children for the Faculty Fair from 1969 in the silk screen or offset technique. In fact during the annual fair this department became a hub of activity.

Printmakers like Laxma Goud, found their interest in the medium during such times. He had come for mural-design to the Faculty and during the fair of 1969, he made many

cards in pen and ink which were an instant success. His draughtsmanship was appreciated. So to meet the demand, under N.B. Joglekar's advice he printed his drawings and thus found a new medium of expression. The student were given full freedom to work and they had the constant company of encouraging teachers who gave moral support to tentative venture by inexperienced student to carry on their work. Interaction between juniors, seniors and within classmates was healthy though each was left to work according to their own interest.

In the initial years a lot of experiment went on in colour-printing. While in the Fifties and Sixties woodcut, woodcarving, woodengraving and lithography or offset was popular, gradually by Seventies the interest towards intaglio and serigraphy developed. P.D. Dimal concentrated on intaglio techniques and tried etching in multicolour and deep etching. He would leave his zinc plate in strong acid then try scrapping the surface and constantly try unconventional ways. Such attitude towards technique proved to be an inspiration to his juniors. In between 1975 and 1978 serigraphy became one of the main mediums due to two students who worked constantly in this medium-Pravinkumar, Ambalal Patel and Vinod Sharma.

It is necessary to illustrate the observation made with examples. However what follows is only an interpretation. Probably these visual examples can be used to exemplify other hypothesis. It is also a fact while expressing them selves, none of the printmakers were aware of this particular categorisation. Therefore what becomes clear in retrospect actually evolved spontaneously over the years.

Eros and fear have been two themes which have played a major role in choice of subject for visual expression. Related feeling of loneliness or companionship, grotesqueness, fables, fantasies suggested through appropriate symbols, motifs have generally been used by most printmakers. The general tendency is towards figuration though in certain cases abstraction also persist. Sometimes human presence is made felt through associated

imagery. The other noticeable factor is that of refinement and precision of expression. However the main point to be emphasised is beyond these observations i.e. the interaction amongst the printmakers and the result of such point of contact. The question that remains in this is to what extent is such a phenomenon automatic and spontaneous.

In 1971 Dhumal made 'Best without a face' (Plate 139.) This work can be compared to 'Erosive World of A.K.M. Alamgir made in 1979 (Plate 148). Both have obvious phallic connotation though the symbol is 'beastly' in one and in the other the sensation is more environmental.

B.S. Sharmas 'Peacock' in Lithography 1971 (Plate 137) is rather abstract comprising of strokes through which he tried to depict 'the peacock'-ness of his subject. Overall the effect is of rather expressionistic lines. Similarly Chandra M. Doshi composition in lithography (Plate 141) as well as Shakuntala Kulkarni lithography (Plate 151) are totally abstract- perhaps it is worth mentioning that the later two artists came from J.J. School of art and worked at the same time in this department. Perhaps it is also possible that lithography being a more autobiographic process allowed them to work in this manner.

Nirmalendu Das who completed his masters degree in 1975 from this department was also engaged with a abstract imagery. His works were influenced by the nature and imaging it in a abstract op-pop manner. He made several works in the offset process using many colours. One of the examples is 'Paddy Field' of 1975 (Plate 152). In 1992 another student Anand Sharma made 'Harvest' (Plate 153) in relief process. As a student of the 1991 batch, he was also interested in an abstract expression of nature. In 1996 a former student of the department Vir Raghawan made a work in fiber glass which bears a strange resemblance to works to these artists. His preoccupation was not with nature and abstraction. He is merely experimenting in a new medium and may be this is what guided him (Plate 154). However the resemblance between (Plate 152 and 154) is unmistakable. It is debatable

whether such a situation is a freak-event or whether similar sensibilities give rise to similar expression-even if they are separated in time.

Printmaking is a process which demands complete control over technique by the artist to be able to realise his/her expression with precision. One can of course depend on accidental effect-of which there are many-to make a unusual work. But a complete mastery over a particular technique allows the artist to make tangible in print the idea or image initiated by him. To this end, the Printmaker tries to learn the technique in which he or she feels most comfortable. So a constant striving to perfection often results in a precise and crisp imagery. This precision is specially noticed in intaglio technique in which each delicate line and tone can be made with a neatness. Of course photoprocess in screen and precise registration in an offset print can also result in this but in an intaglio print there is an advantage of transparency not possible in screen, and depth which is not as much in a planographic technique.

This preoccupation with precision and detail often allows the intaglio artist to choose subjects which need detailed depiction-in tones, lines. In the works of certain artist this fact becomes obvious. They have used to their advantage the possibilities in the medium to create extremely delicate works which deal with the subject as delicate. Though there are many printmakers through the decades who have mastered a technique so as to manoeuvre it according to their needs, this fact is particularly notable in the works of printmakers like DLN, Reddy, Prayag Jha, Vrindavan Solanki, Rati Nirula and Anjana Mehra.

In the recently published book 'Contemporary Art in Baroda' in Ajay Sinha article 'Envisioning the Seventies and Eighties' there is statement that. 'In Baroda there is a pervasive tendency among artist to create deeply felt visual poetry from the small things of life..... given centerstage to what otherwise might not have entered the periphery of our

vision.' He claims DLN Reddy has such a sensibility, as well as Prayag Jha and Anjana Mehra amongst other artist. In all their works he notices a percision for detail of things which would normally go unnoticed but is captured in their work and thus focused on. Whether they had such a sensibility is debatable but one fact that come forth is that all three artist were good at their chosen technique. DLN works deals with depicting the ordinary in an usual way objects such as benches, plants, butterflies, in a garden or house plants, grills on windows and doors assumed significance becasuse of the detail with whcih they were rednered giving them an ambiguous meaning (Plate 156,157,158).

His work is most comparable to Prayag Jha works. However whilst in Baroda from 1971 to 1973, Prayag Jha works dealt with rejected and unwanted things and objects of society because she felt nobody cared for their existence. Her works included ants,catapillar, old age, rejected fallen broken walls, rejected empty liquor bottles which for her symbolised the society, (Plate 159) of Niranjan Trivedi done in 1979 also deals with the insect life. However in (Plate 160,161,162) of Prayag Jha one notices a similar preoccupation shared by her and DLN. The trees in (Plate 162) can be compared to that of (Plate157), whereas in tenderlife of (Plate 161) once again has the common mushroom as its centerstage. In the works of Anjana Mehra, the focus is on an imaginary world with quaint plants and insect like forms which do not exist in reality. In the works of Artist like Rati Nirula of the 1982 batch, one can see that even an ordinary leaf or stem assumes significance and is rendered with a precision (Plate 163,164).

By mid 1970's DLN.Reddy subject had changed to include the human figure or associated items such as in (Plate 165,166,167). In 1979, Vrindavan Solanki made a few landscapes which too depcitt a precision and crispness in the lithography technique. They

depict a barren landscape with sensitive lines and tones (Plate 168). Dattatraya Dinkar Apte who was a batchmate of Vrundavan D. Solanki made a series of works on two wheelers and autorickshaws in 1980 his final year. These works (Plate 169,170) show how a common object like an autorickshaw assume significance. Apte's preoccupation with his subject allowed him to make innumerable lithographs of curiously animated autorickshaws where in the shape and form is viewed almost like an anatomy with mechanical parts which look like bones. It suggests a refinement of an idea -to the point of obsession. Another Printmaker who was extremely meticulous and a perfectionist was Charoen Panit Kaul Chainarong from Thailand in the 1982 batch. His works stand out not only for their unusual imagery but for the dexterity in handling the medium (Plate 171,172). Having such a meticulous classmate probably had its effect on the whole batch in which there is a noticeable emphasis on perfect handling of technique by most of the students, as compared to that of the previous year. In fact it is from the 1982 batch that a number of extremely dedicated students are noticeable each with a very individual approach and a large body of works and most of whom have continued to work in some capacity in the field.

From this point onwards with substantial visual evidence as well as an increase in the number of artists per year, it is more important to make comparative study according to the hypothesis, rather than just recount the personal achievement of each printmaker in isolation. The later methodology would only be a kind of documentation whereas the aim of this study is much more complex.

For a printmaker who is working over a certain time period the whole set of works during this time combines to form an individual manner of expression, where as it is often noticed that any artist who makes a print only once in a while-as opportunity presents (for e.g. in a workshop) treats the printmaking medium as a single graphic statement of their work. Often a painter or sculptor will choose out of his/her particular theme or content a

single image which is almost like a representation of their work. This gives their work a 'statement' like quality. This mode has been unconsciously followed and it has given the printmaking medium a 'single-image' characteristic. A printmaker who works continuously for a long duration, in contrast proceeds from one work to the next and the continuity in language theme, content, subject etc. is easily visible. The single-image prints can be compared to short -stories-compact and direct within themselves without any attempt at grand narrative or elaboration. They are generally of a simple figure or object. These works are often extremely intimate for they express without any ambiguity. Often a printmaker, inspired by an event may produce a single work of such a quality. Many printmakers take up a subject like portraiture to initiate work or fill in the gaps in between series of work. The portraits made may be of friends or an imaginary face. Of the examples given below by different printmakers from this department some of the common features are of faces generally in profile. A purity of line is maintained so that often a single continuous line gives a stark classical purity to the face. Most of the expressions are introspective. Compare (Plates 173,174,175,176 or plates 177,178,179,180,181). In the former group the face with expressive eyes is the main focus.(Plate 174 and 175) both portray women in woodcut, with long hair, and bare torso. In the later group the emphasis is again on woman whose profile is shown through a single pure bold line. Other examples of portraits are such as those in (Plate 183,184,185,186) all show a male face in profile.

Surendran Nair made a series of portraits of his friends in 1984 in the aquatint medium. Three examples (Plate 187,188,189) depict the characteristic elongation and economy of line which seems to have been the accepted mode of expression. Much before this, Suranjan Basu made a self portrait in 1982 in woodcut (Plate 190.) In the year 1983 and 1985 he made two large compositions of a combination of faces and single figures (Plate 194,195). It is worth questioning if portrait or single faces was one of the most popular subjects in the eighties since all these Printmakers made these works during

this time. Was the subject matter also chosen according to unspoken codes-so that one expression inspired a whole group to choose the same subject?. The human face, a single figure or two figures communicating or even group of figures seems to have been other very common subject. Distortion of the face or figure to convey a beastiness or defacing also seems popular. In fact human emotions, relationships, isolation, bonds are conveyed through these prints. It almost seems to be an accepted and common format. Obviously such a manner of expression is strictly due to evolvement from the interaction amongst the students of the department but whether it was individualistic or a result of other sources is an open ended question. What is significant is that a similar form of expression is circulated amongst students and it reappears in various Printmakers work with or without a direct reference from one to another probably due to shared circumstances, time and space. Consider (Plate 196,197,198,199) all these faces have similar characteristic. There is a starkness in the faces made by Rati Nirula and Gananath's. In their works the lips have almost same proportion. In Shridhar work the face has slightly upturned lips and the figure holds a flower. It is possible to imagine that the child in Rati Nirulas print grows into a youth in Gananath's work and becomes a man in Shidhar's work. Rati made this imaginary face in Delhi in 1985; in the same year Gananath made her work in Baroda. They were not in contact or aware of each others expression. The question that comes up is why do they make similar faces when they expression from their imagination? How does Rati Gananath's face seem similar and are made away from each other at the same time. How does Shridhar face look similar even though it is made 7 years later. Does it mean that by having similar academic background they have subconsciously imbibed certain manner of expression? But the freedom of expression prevalent in the department, ensure that there are no obvious codes or styles being taught or exchanged. So it is the interaction amongst students that bring out similar inherent patterns of expression. To hypothesis further, there may be a variation of the combination of similar regional types. All these students interacted

with students from Gujrat, Karnataka, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala. Can these regional ethnicity combine to form some style which has a typicality? Of course this is a very broad assumption and the time and circumstance of each particular artist varies but can it be hypothesised that inspite of differences, these are parmitution of the same pattern. So does the indeginous factor lead to a choice or mode of expression?

Single contemplative figures with suggestive gestures which are remarkably alike also form another pattern consider (Plate 200,201,202,203-A,B,C,204,205). All these figures seem to be questioning or contemplating certain circumstances and the gestures of the hand often folded across their chest give emphasis to their situation. These works span ten years but the issues and the expressions is similar a reason for this similarity may be that a typical gesture or posture is used by everybody to express a certain emotion. Gestures are not innumerable. They are used by innumerable individual with slight variation. So if the emotion which is being expressed is common-in their case a contemplative one then even if it encompasses a decade, it can remain the same.

Consider (Plate 206,207,208,209,210,211,212,213). these are all of a single figure in front of a suggestive background. In Shridhar Murti's Self, Baswaraj's, 'Between you and Me' made in 1989 & 1991 respectively the faces seem similar due to glassess and are both of photographs exposed on to the screen. In Baswaraj 'Canteen Boy' made seven years before in 1984, he has used the same compositional structure. There is a detachment between the figures and the background against which they are posed. In Sanjana's and Suba, De's work (Plate 211 and 213) there is a striking similarity in the profile, sharp nose and urban locality against which these faces appear in the front conners-yet these artist were not in a contact when they made these. Sanjana was in the department and Suba De's was in Madras. Can the similarity be due to similar academic background?

An artist does not make original expression-he is exposed to certain 'types' from the moment he starts expressing in an academic field. These type-casts are age old patterns

practiced by many before them. If this is the case then may be all of them subconsciously understand the advantage of composing in this way. But what is remarkable is they all use this manner in such a markedly similar way without being in contact or knowing that the others had made a work in this very form within a few years of each other or in some cases at the same time in same year. It is not possible that they all applied to the same book of rules which has 'magic formulas' for composition and picked up the same rule at the same time. They rather subconsciously made similar composition as a result of some subliminal memory without being aware of each other's work. Can it then be further assumed that this subliminal memory got tickled due to similar conducive circumstances. Does the time and space of work that they shared lead them to choose a certain manner of expression. If this is so and if the printmaking department provides the time and space factor does this manner of expression become a natural occurrence. Does the department conduce its artist to work in a certain manner if they share the similar time, place and environmental specificities.

To cite some more examples consider (Plate 214,215,216,217,218,219,220,221). They all depict a human figure, mainly women with some specific hand gesture-all are single figures, posed against a supportive background. All have expression of deep contemplation. It might be considered that these particular prints deal with a subject commonly experienced by everybody and it is expressed in this direct manner. Some further examples will prove that at times the coincidence of unusual subject and similarity of depiction is significant. Consider (Plate 222,223,224,225,226,227,228). In (Plate 222 of N.S. Pradeep made in 1985 there is a reclining male figure with its legs hovering in space and a female figure is juxtaposed on top near the head. There is a diagonal line towards the left hand corner and the gestures of the hand of the two figures suggest some struggle. In 1987 Madhu made an etching which shows a striking similarity in a reclining male with its leg flung in space, a female near its head, hand gesture showing agitation and

a diagonal shadow towards the left hand corner to balance the space. (Plate 223) in contrast depicts a reclining female with a passive male figure contemplating it. Further when (Plate 225, 226, 227, 228) are considered few unusual aspects are the awkwardly depicted limbs in (Plate 227) is echoed in (226) and (225). there are ambiguous floating figures in space with hands and legs spread out to enclose and gather within itself some other form. The colour combination and the hazy floating figures in both (226 and 228) are also similar. Considering the fact that Kavita made this linocut in 1989 away from the department and Habib made his in 1986 in the department the question of one work leading to another due to observation does not arise. Once again it becomes necessary to hypothesise that these artists expressed in this way because they felt some similar emotion due to some circumstance which may have been personal or otherwise.

At times an object becomes symbolic of some connotation and is depicted by different artists conveying something which though common remains personal or ambiguous. The donkey is often used as a symbol of the foolishness or passiveness by the artist (Plate 229, 230, 231, 232) all show this beast of burden in different connotation. Similarly another common motif used often is that of a boat, relating to a journey or departure. Such motifs which appear suddenly with a universal significance become popular and often remain as subliminal memory. An artist may recall it and use it later as and when they need to. Until with overuse of the same motif by numerous artists in a certain time and space, it becomes redundant and the motif loses its vitality. However in (Plate 233, 234, 235, 236) the boat is depicted in a very individualistic way, often only as a background suggesting some personal meaning. Symbols can be extremely personal yet their significance may be more universal though often not specified. In (Plate 237 and 238) an electric pole and a fish seem to symbolise something beyond what is visually obvious. This is specially conveyed by the title 'I' in (Plate 238). Coincidentally both were done in the year 1989 though the artists were not in contact and though the subject they choose is not common. Yet the fact

remains that an ordinary object is given a special significance by both. Another observation is seen in (Plate 239,240,241) in which a particular semicircular format becomes the basic compositional element. Mostly to do with space and architecture. This semicircular space which becomes a staircase in Jayanti Rabaria's print to an extent is echoed in Sudhakar Reddy's work of 1984 (Plate 242). Staircases and architectural forms seem to be also quite a popular subject as seen in (Plate 243,244).

At times the manner of execution in two printmakers work is so deceptive that their works seem identical. This is often seen in etching process because instead of a pen, pencil, or brush a needle point is used to execute. When the strokes seem to be similar as seen in (Plate 245,246) the personal autography of the artist gets subsumed. However in these two plates other than similarity of execution the short stunted male figure with massive shoulders, spread apart legs, similar close cropped hair amidst scratchy lines and ambiguous connotation seem to be done by the same artist. They are made by two different artist but in the same year. Which only emphasises the fact that at times working together one may unconsciously be inspired by another's personal manner.

In 1982 Jayakumar works (Plate 247) depicts a death body surrounded by concerned onlookers. In another print (Plate 248) made in 1985 on a similar theme a dog is seen in the foreground. A lithography made by R. Gutta (Plate 249) in 1985 also echoes similar concerns. Gutta's work seems to be another version of the same theme though all figures, and the whole place is fluid except for the table and clock. The faces have skeletal look. Neither Gutta's or Jayakumar have tried to present the beautiful-their work is most probably inspired from some experience from their life, metaphysical depiction, some reading which created an impact, a dramatic narration of death/diseased. Whether Gutta had seen Jayakumar's works and whether this created an impact on him is just a possibility for Jayakumar made this work in 1982 as compared to Gutta in 1985. Probably their source of inspiration was similar for though the works appear alike, they are not a copy of the

other or lesser than the other. What is more prominent is the faces with skeleton like mask in both cases and the male form in the left in Jaya's work compared to the female in Gutta's left. In both the gesture is important-the raised hand of Gutta's figure a reflection of many similar gesture used before and after him by printmakers from Baroda to show 'stress'. And the white belly of both the figures is also similar.

In Jayakumar etching what is remarkable is the bulb which hangs midway to the center of the composition (Plate 248). Such a perspective with the bulb as the motif is seen in the works of Baswaraj (Plate 182). On the extreme left Gutta's work is a female with a child-their faces are upturned. This can also be seen in Padma Reddy's works (Plate 252B). The faces and figures defy any kind of classical perfection and go on to be studied in dark tones-also the posture is of isolation and celebration of their morbid state. Themes which have a special narrative significance may be due to some incident read in a book, or some particular memory which remains ingrained. Theme of death, dying or ghostly sequences can be found in some works such as (Plate 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252) Jayakumar and Gutta Ravindranath and Jogi Jitendar Makhani's works seem to be about dying. Jayakumar and Gutta almost seem to be expressing the same scene where as ghost like forms in their works is echoed in Jogi's works. Another work of Jogi, 'Mourning the death of virtue' (Plate 251) bears strange similarity to Bhupen Khagias print *Dream I* (Plate 252). Both have been made in 1986 and the most common feature in both is a reclining figure in the foreground on a beautifully etched lace cloth with a group of figures at the back. Also both have a window in the upper left hand corner.

Two other works recall the pastoral theme, made so popular by Laxma Goud (Plate 253, 254). Both depict two figures, under a tree with same gestures and an animal nearby. These prints were made by printmakers who had no contact with one another. Both of these works reflect a similar mood.

Some forms gain immense popularity due to its potential at connoting several meanings. They are used time and again by different artists because their significance is so vast that they do not get stagnant. As mentioned before prints often portray a single specific image which might be an enigmatic motif of a symbolic form. Since the size and intimacy of prints allows such single specific imagery. The human head, expressed in extremely graphic bareness, with no appendages like hair has been a much used form. Perhaps the purity of the round shape, stark features, expressive eyes can convey certain emotions without any unwanted details to distract. The head of a human is the center of attraction in the human figure. Decapitated heads have their own significance. They may be just forms such as the one in (Plate 255) or they might be single monolithic entity such as (Plate 256) or they might have some specific symbology such as in (Plate 257 and 258) or be distorted as in (Plate 259, 260). Whatever the reason for expression, the head continues to be an enigmatic form used by many sometime or another. Defacement is another step further from the depiction of a pure human head. Consider (Plate 261, 261, 263). Distorting the features and expression with strokes so that only a part of the face is clear, in all these work, the head is frontal, almost fitting into the picture frame and without any attempt at a background, or hand gesture etc. There seems to be certain codes which are universal and are picked up and used by artist if the need arises depending on personal choice.

Metamorphosis of the human face toward a beast is also seen in some works and curiously the beast seems to be a bull or buffalo like form. Consider (Plate 259, 264, 265) all by Usha Patel. The 'animal head' and Human' has metamorphosed into 'Head' which is a strange combination of the two. In (Plate 266) of P.D. Dhumal there is a horned beast which also thrusts into the picture plane. It is an innocently depicted animal but it is full of connotation. This work is metamorphosed into a colourful viscosity as seen (Plate 267) which just proves the capacity of this artist to play and change a significant work. However it seems possible that for the artist the initial image remained particularly significant and

resulted in a set of charcoal drawings a few years later which reemphasises the metamorphosis of a human head to that of a beast as seen in (Plate 268, 269, 270). The last work can be an echo of another popular imagery much used by many printmakers - that of a half-human and half beastly form. The human form which is seen as a rider on an animal gradually merges into it and becomes half human half beast. Consider (plate 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276). Whatever the reason may be for such a imagery - for each of these artist - it is obvious that the half human half beastly form is another universally accepted form which is used by many. Yet each of these works have an individuality in spite of the common 'image-transformation'. This is the main feature that keeps a much used language as significant and fresh.

When a Printmaker's work seems to have many association with the works of his/her companion - the main thought that comes to one's mind is that the elements have been 'picked up' from other and used conveniently rather than evolving a new significant element. However there is a difference. We are so used to categorising 'genuineness', 'uniqueness', 'first time' that we often forget that even the most unusual form/element in the work has been seen by the artist before - it merely remained in the subconsciousness and arose to be expressed with new significance. The forms are never invented they are premodial subliminal memories. Their use is more consequential. If they are used in a novel way and they express or arouse genuine emotions/feelings they become pure and unique.

So the same element like a gesture or a posture, a situation is repeated again and again to reemphasise the purity of feeling - the success of which makes the work unique. In the same way in a group some element become immensely popular very suddenly. This is because that element can express the circumstance the group is collectively going through. And it is repeated in various manifestations until its metamorphosis through different tangents makes it lose its initial form. However it is apparent that feeling & emotions and their visual expression is not innumerable. therefore the manner in which they are expressed

visually are universal. This being so whenever this 'universality' is acknowledged the manner of expression is acknowledged as real. As there are certain accepted patterns within groups which express this universality, their usage and their repetition is accepted. It forms an inner 'code' or language. For e.g. a contemporary Indian artist the human form with wings, or a donkey or a boat has an accepted significance though each artist has to use it in a 'universally' significant way. But the inquiry goes deeper into this - do these patterns reoccur due to similar circumstances? Do they have to have a contact for growth - what about significance which reoccurs independently but of the same 'code' - Why do they reoccur? So similar? Does the 'ethics' of a situation where one becomes 'mature' make so much difference that it surface even away from the place of work? Do they all coexist? The printmaking medium has the unique quality among visual - arts to openly acknowledge and celebrate mutual exchange within a group. In fact a group's conducive atmosphere generates successive growth of ideas. As such the artist in 'isolation' is not the 'ideal' quality that is looked forward to by printmakers. Given this circumstance, and the fact that the exchanges are not only technical, it is natural to expect works of printmakers which have been inspired by or are a reaction to their co-artist. And when the group is interactive for a certain set period of time due to regulatory considerations certain patterns start developing.

The questions that come to mind on such an occasion are :

If such a situation keeps on reoccurring over a period of time does it result in any typical pattern. These artists worked together and it is obvious that they have been inspired by each other. But each has very individualistic quality. They use the same formal aspect to produce individual modes - and this justifies this exchange. In fact exchanges can probably generate works. For example Amongst students of ABC, 'A' makes a work which conveys feelings that are felt by 'B' 'B' makes a work having the similar connotations so 'A' and 'B' have started an insipid interaction where in every new work by one triggers off the other. 'C' may also get inspired and his works would be another target to the same (Thus

for time being each one gets ideas to supplement their own expression as a reaction to the other.

This gives rise to a pattern wherein the popular elements get reemphasised again and again. There is an intuitive recognition of this by each participant to begin with. When it is recognised and each artist consciously reacts to or against their co-expressors work the descent from the peak begins. The Peak is generally for a very short time.

During the peak, certain elements get 'immortalised'. They remain to be used again and again or to be subverted by others and to reappear later. The decline starts when these 'common' elements get emulated by too many in situations which are not as significant. And when the invention of the element and its meaning gets lost due to very ordinary common usage. As soon as this is intuited the expressor automatically dissects and develops new imagery- which starts the whole cycle again.

Often while working together such 'codes' become important. And the realisation and play of this is an important part of any exchange. Yet another set of examples will illustrate the above points. A particular motif like a crown is commonly used in many works. It may be a conventional one or just a few strokes hinting at a head gear. At times it has assumed significance beyond the obvious when the artist has used a structure which resembles a crown but may be a house or a fort as in (plate 277, 278.) In both the female figure supports a house like structure in place of a crown. Whatever may be the reason for making a house in place of a crown for each of them - it is an unusual confidence. (Plate 279, 280, 281, 282) depict figures with more conventional crowns whereas in (Plate 183) the seated figure is turbaned. Why does the crown assume such significance? Consider also the fact that both (Plate 183 and 182) were made in 1993 by printmakers of the department who had already completed the degree and were working in very separate regions.

In the 1990's a group of printmakers from the department started making works whose characteristic lay in the manner of execution (plate 284, 285, 286, 287). Boldly expressionistic lines which were emphasised either through brush strokes in lithograph or a very liner manner of cutting linolium Elongation, hand gestures, slating eyes and the background emphasised this. Since they all belonged to the late 80's or early 90's batches, there was obvious interaction - though unspoken within them. Most probably a particular work set off a chain reaction within the others and resulted in works which were executed similarly but had very similar execution but very different theme and subject. The subject was a continuation of a very individualistic choice in each artist. In these three printmakers case the significant elements are dialouge between two figuers in a unspecific situation, gestures of the hand, elongated eyes, expressionistic lines and rendering. This infact is one of the main aspects in the works of most artist - the individuality in expression which incorporates certain elements which are common - and which helps us to see these works as combinations and interactions.

The tendency to narrate a circumstance or an event has been prevalent in most printmakers work. It may be triggered of by a particular happening. Some aspect of relationship perosonally experienced, a story read or heard of or seen in the theatre, an aspect of life etc. Often human relationship have assumed significance specially because within the two years that most students spend here, away from home in a new atmosphere and situation they are fonfronted by similar experiences of companionship or isolation or detachment. They all go through very similar circumstances and yet each students experience it personally and it remains a poignant sigular experience. And therefore it is not surprising that human relationships symbolised by two figure compositons are extremely popular and have been made by many (Plate 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298). So themes too can become a common point of departre if the need becomes such.

Group of figures which have a markedly narrative connotation have also been attempted by many. They may be as a grand narrative as in (Plate 299, 300, 301) or a few figures who seem to be communicating with each other as in (Plate 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310).

Point of contact : On seeing a work of art the first question that comes to mind is how did it get made? What did the artist think of? How did he arrive at that images? where is the 'point of contact' between the thought out conscious part and the spontaneous part.

These points of contacts are many, they form a pattern. They are what gives a particular space and time its identity. It can be very brief - it is the recognition and involvement of the contact that actually allows a similarity and individuality at the same time.

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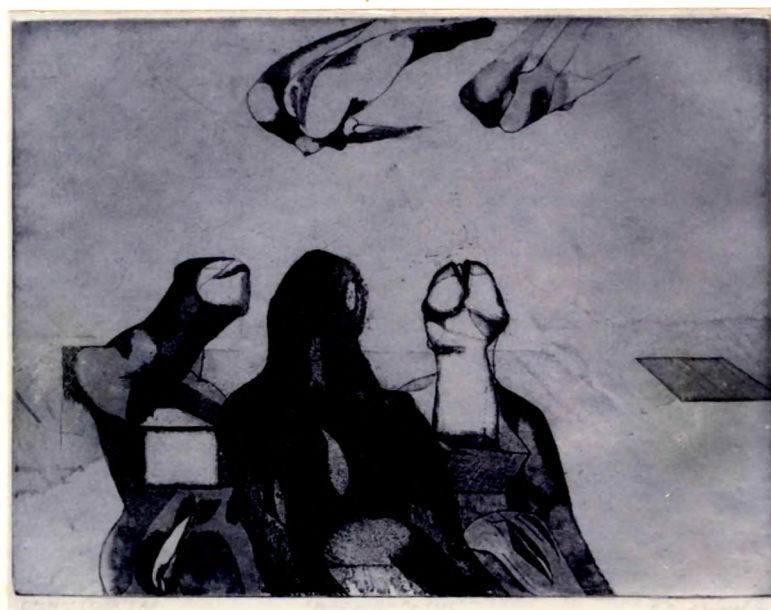
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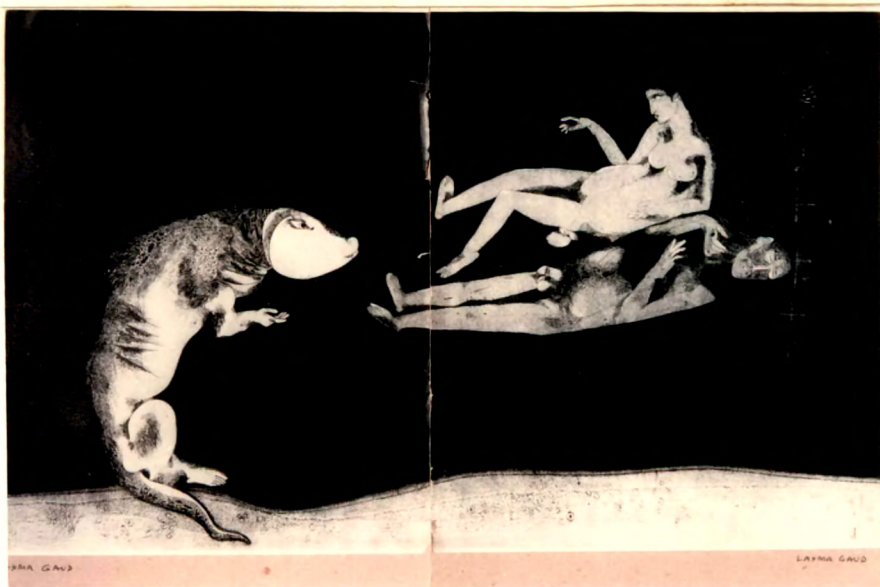
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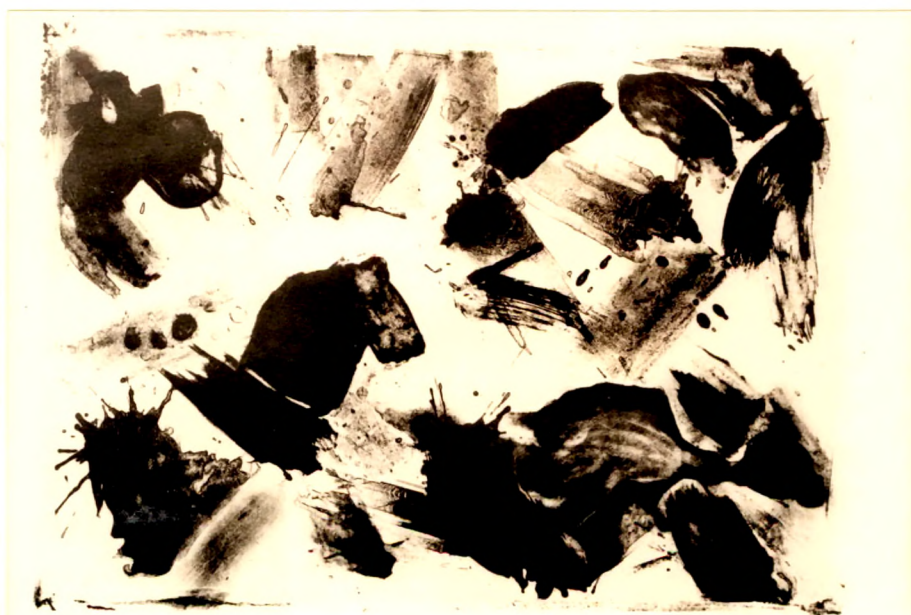
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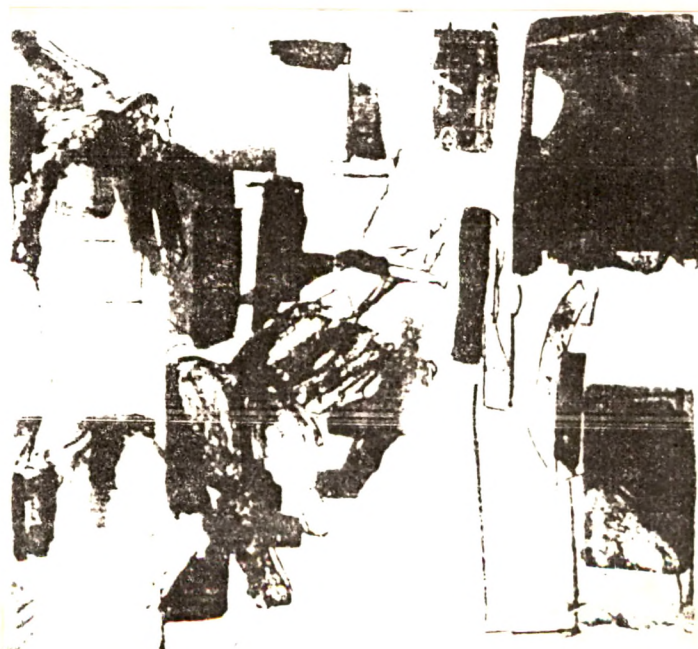
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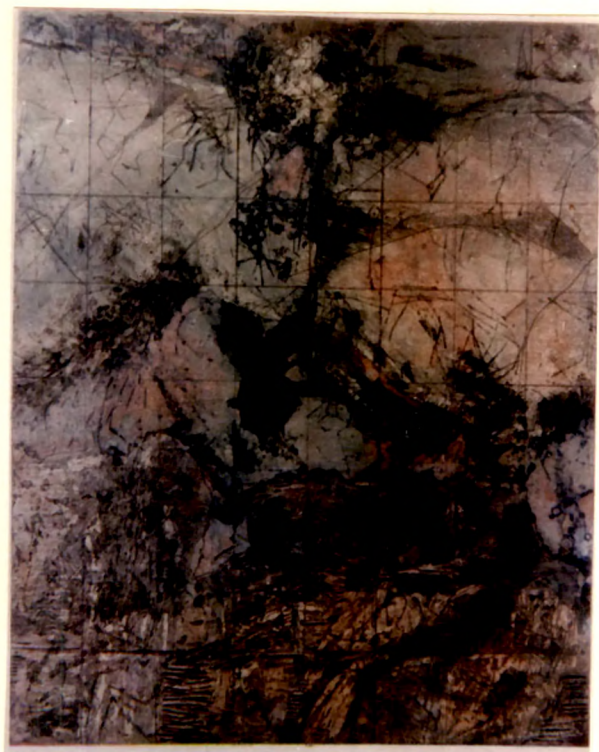
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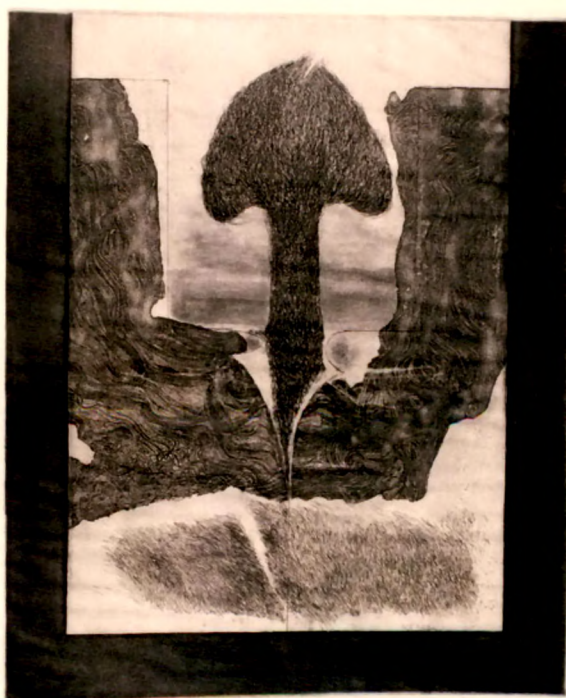
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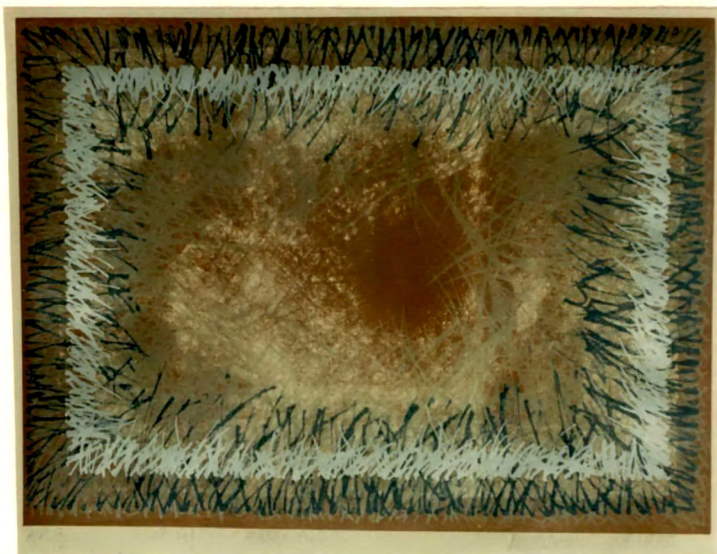
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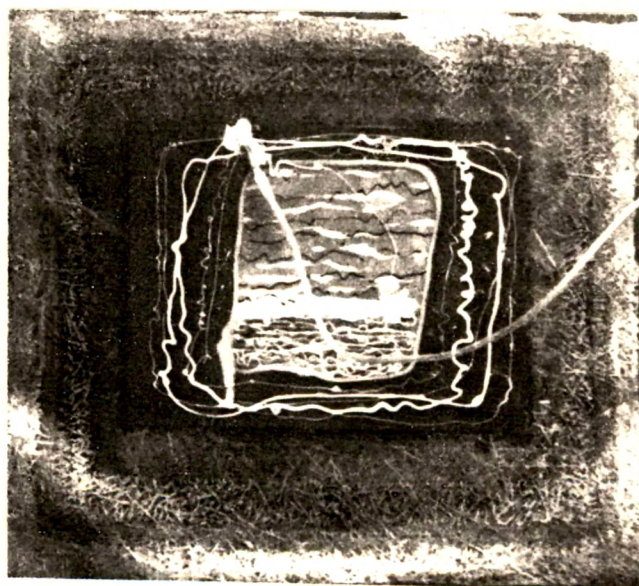
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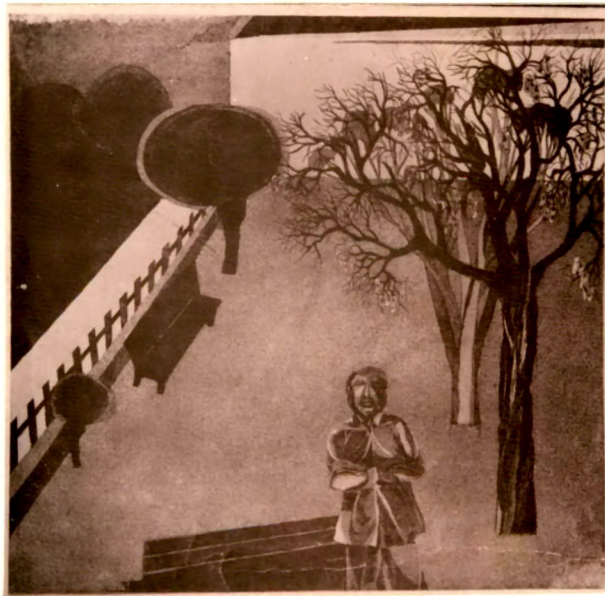
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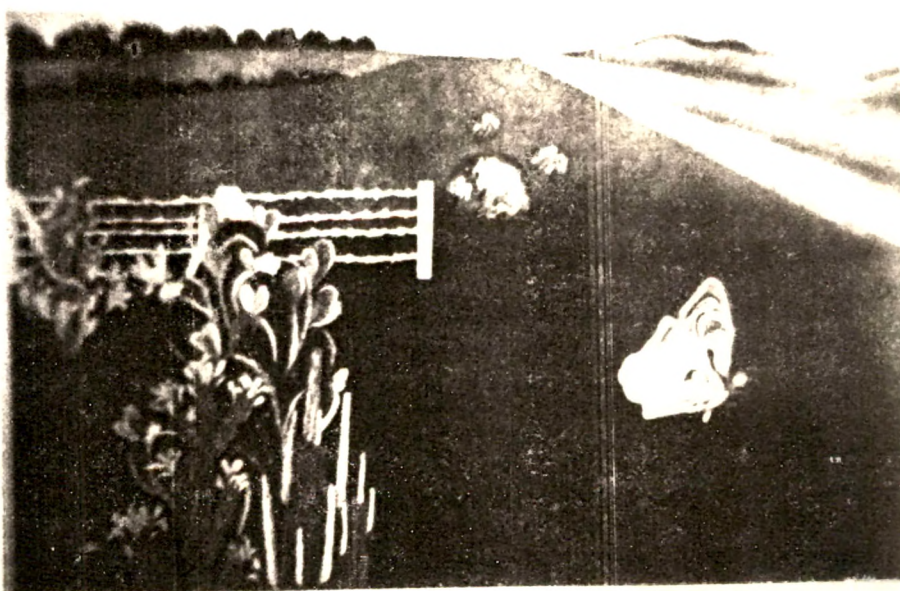
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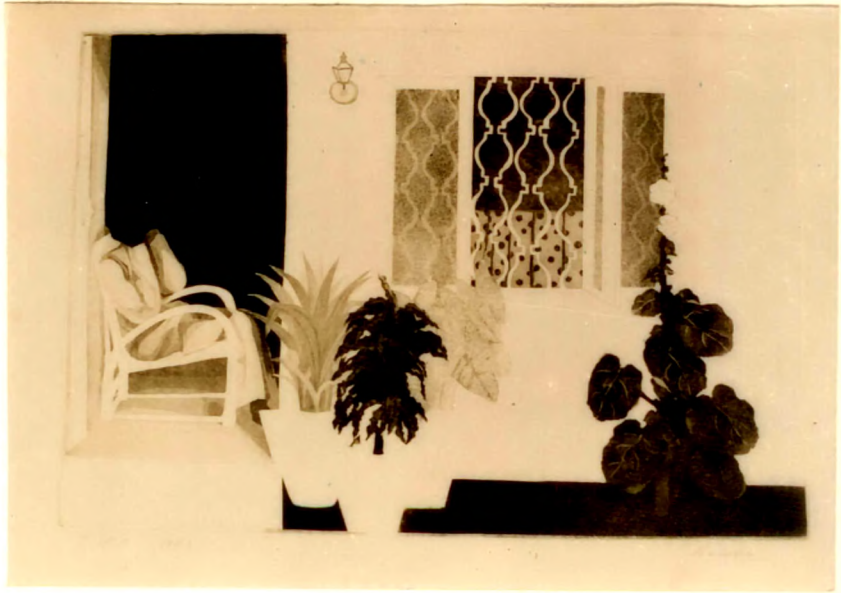
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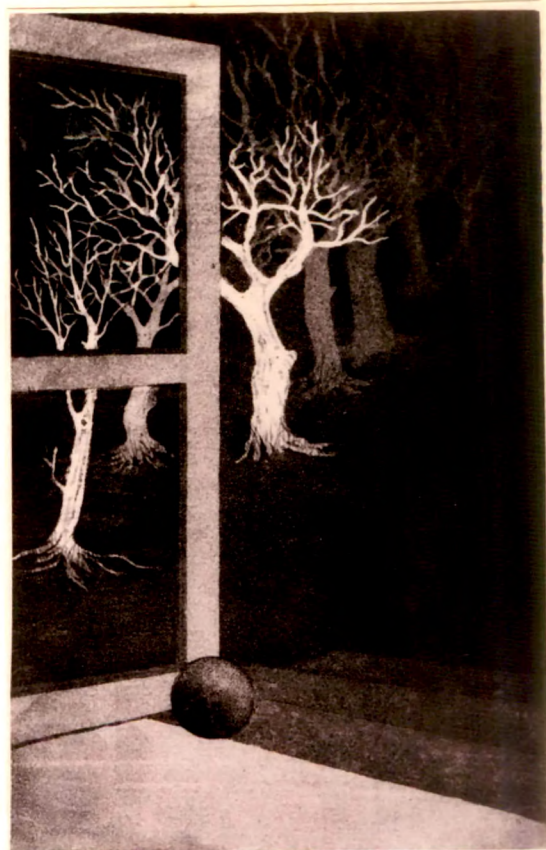
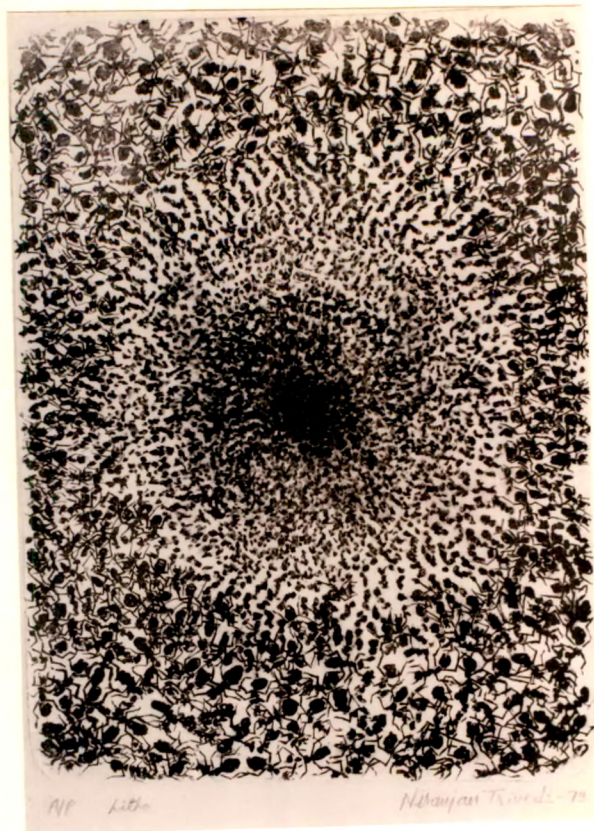
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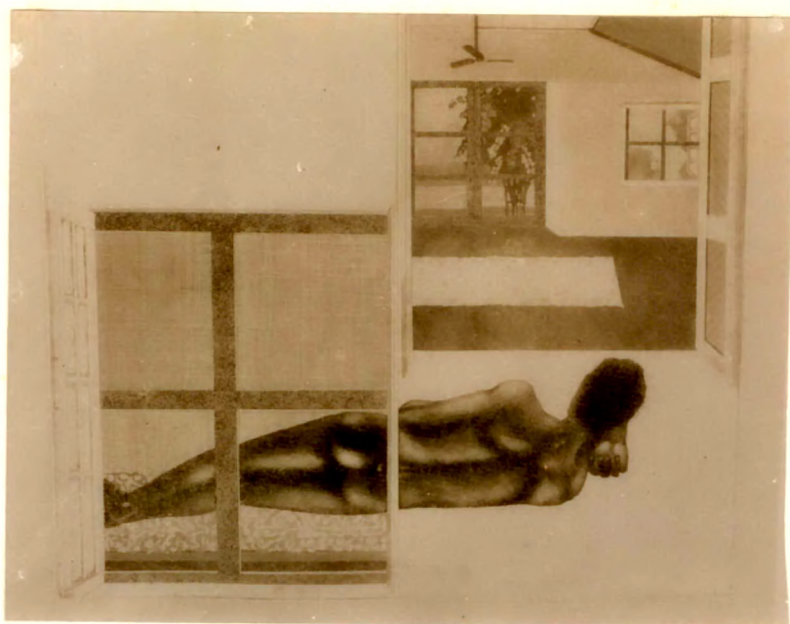


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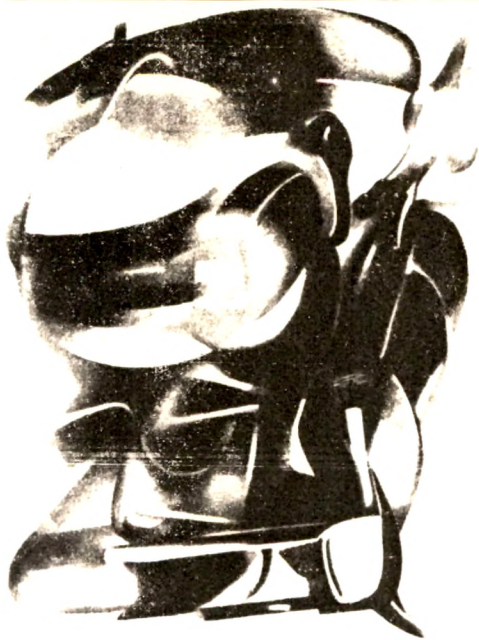
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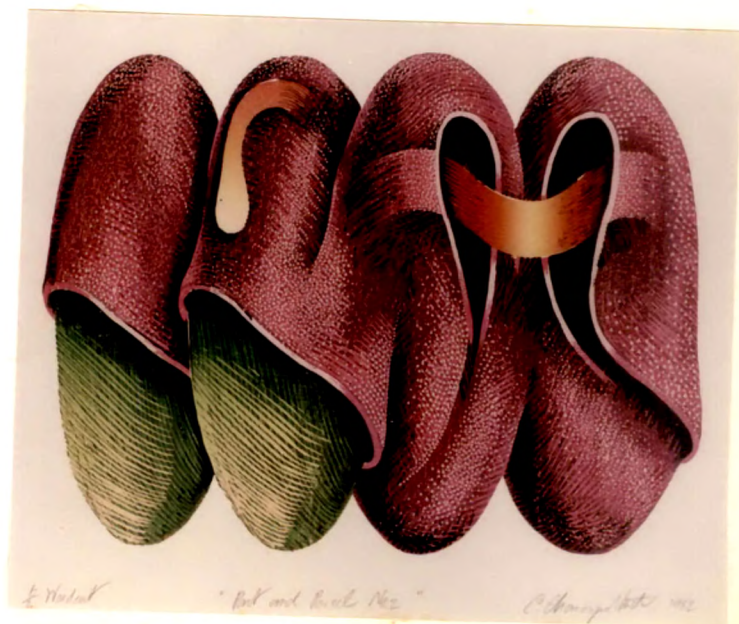
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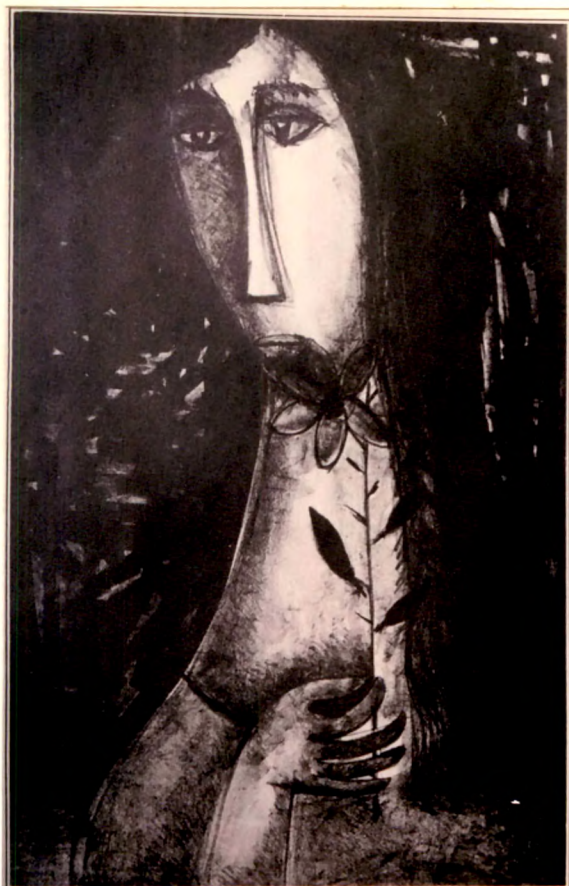
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*The Adolescent (1962); Naina Dalal
Lithograph*

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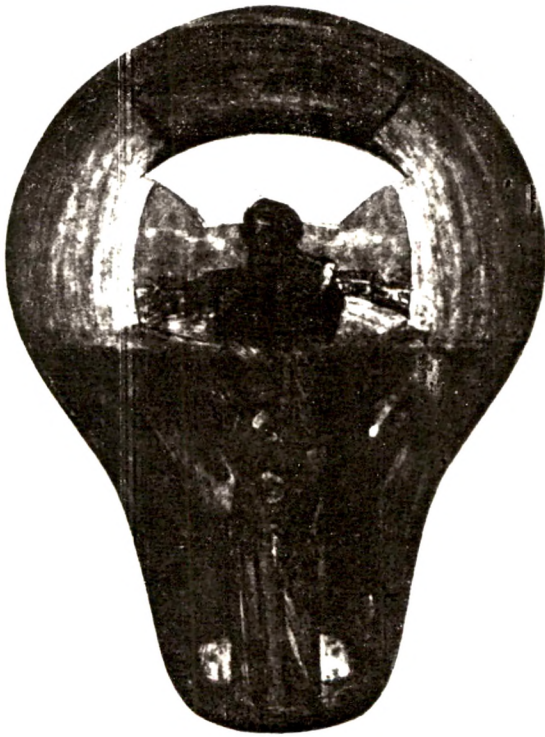
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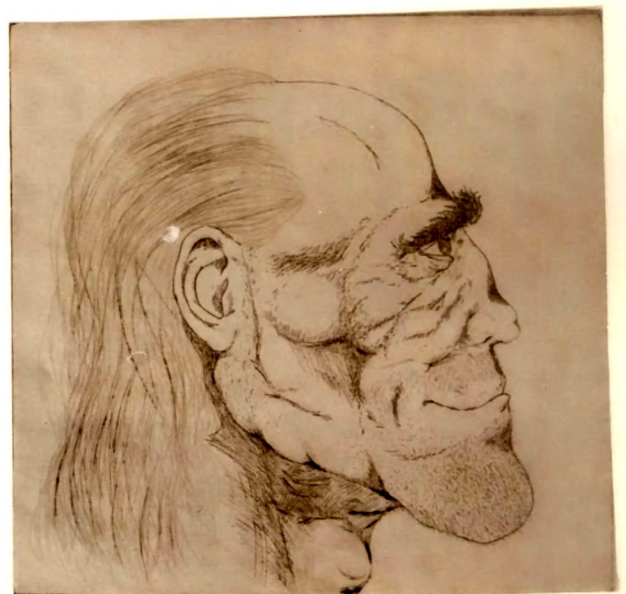


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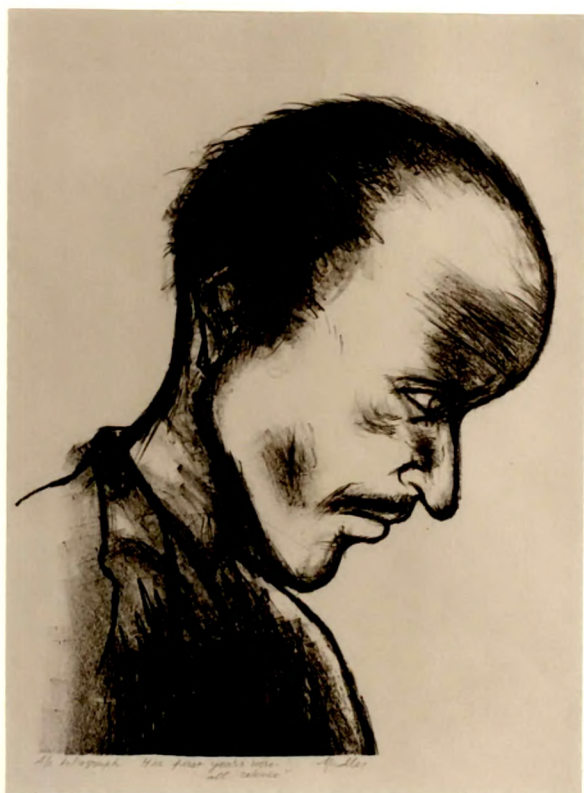
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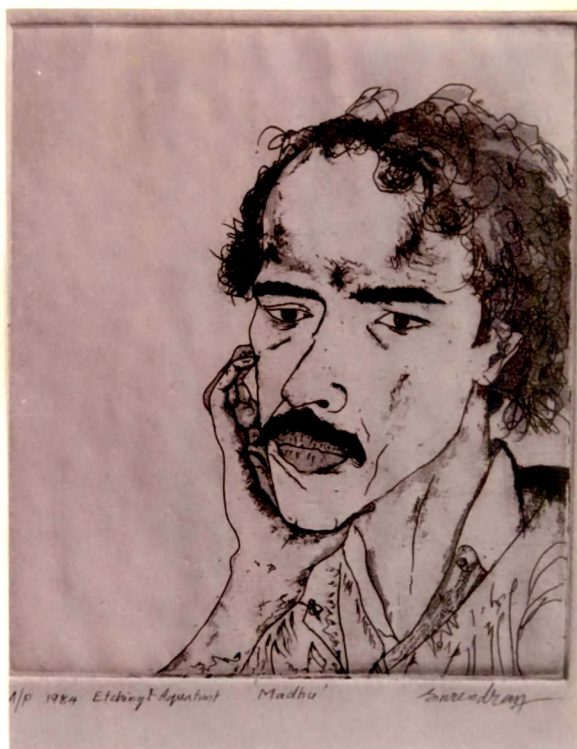
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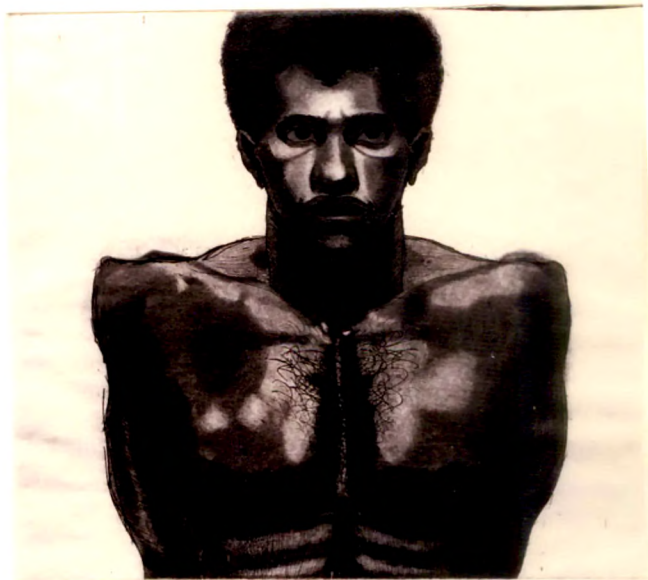
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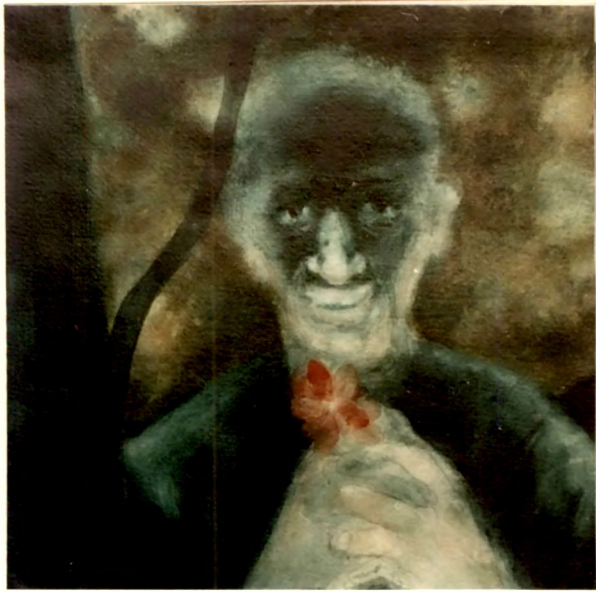
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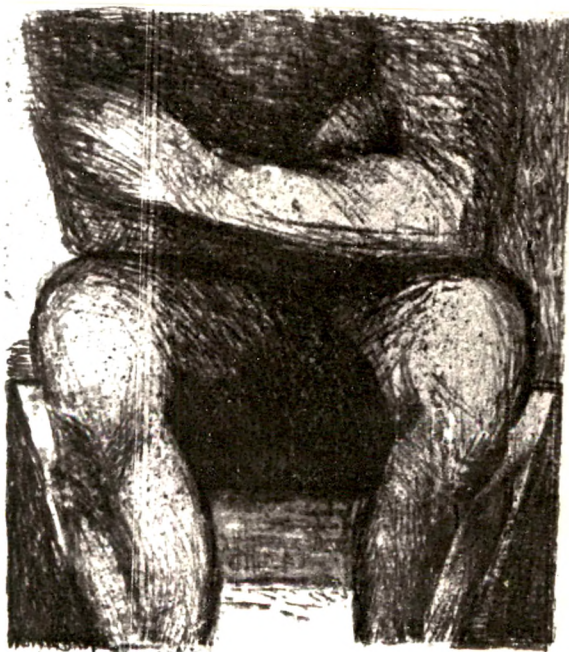
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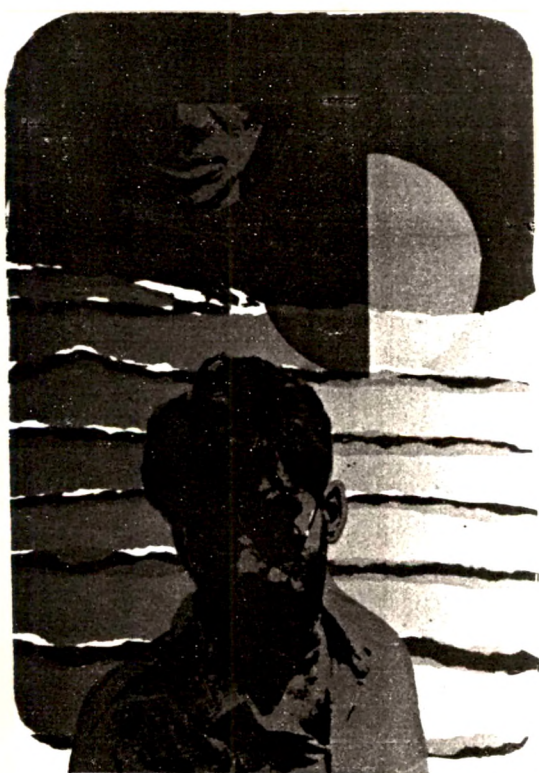
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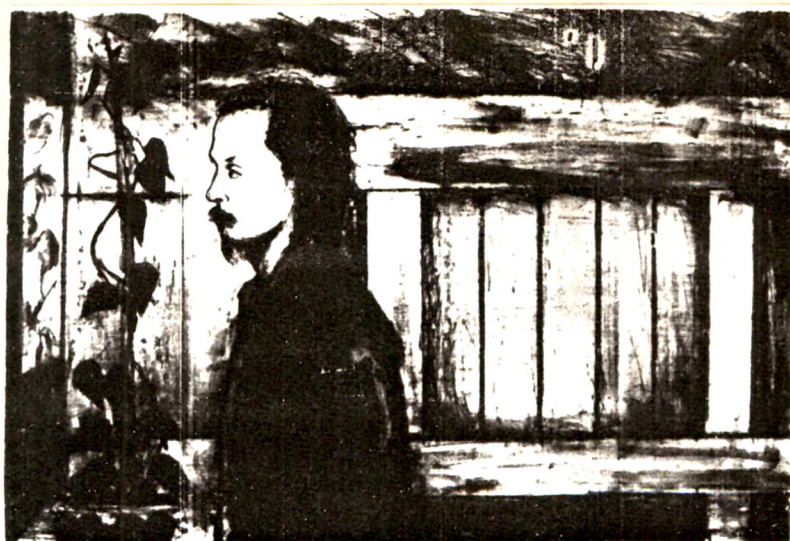
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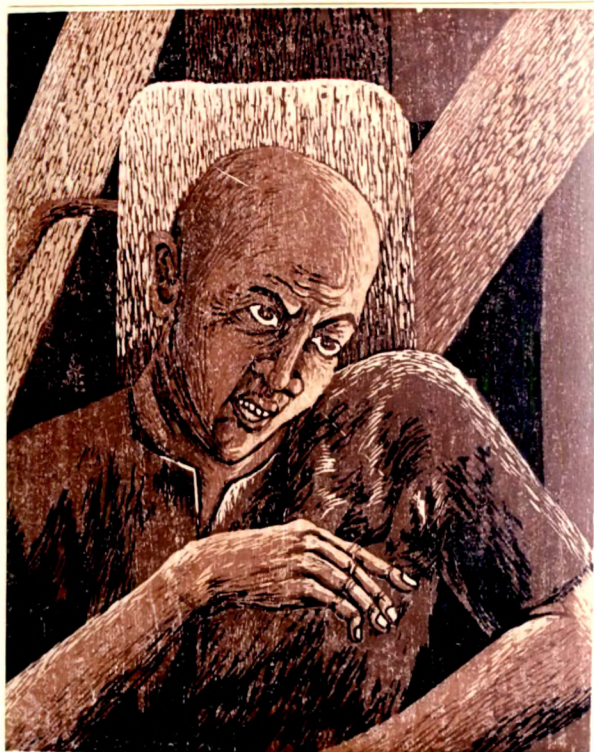
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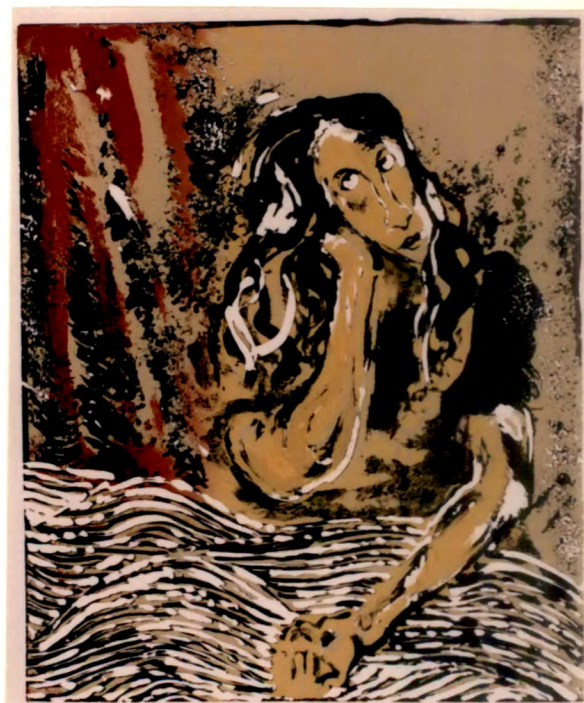
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by E. S. S. & S. S. S.

Karlson S. S.

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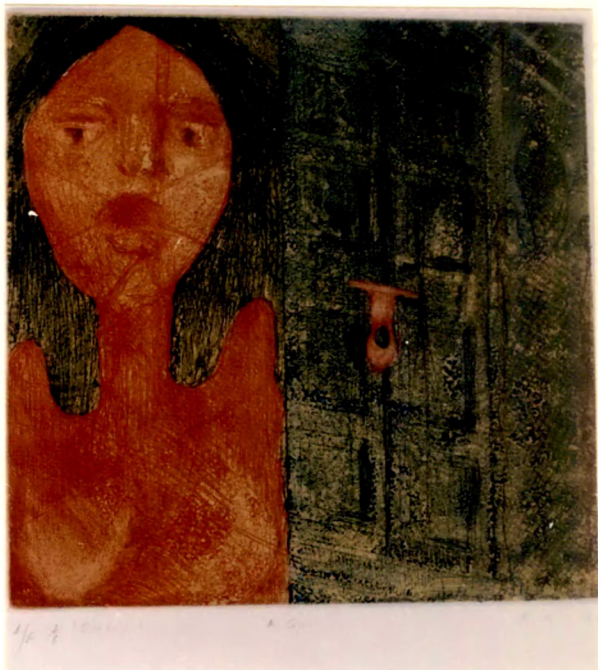
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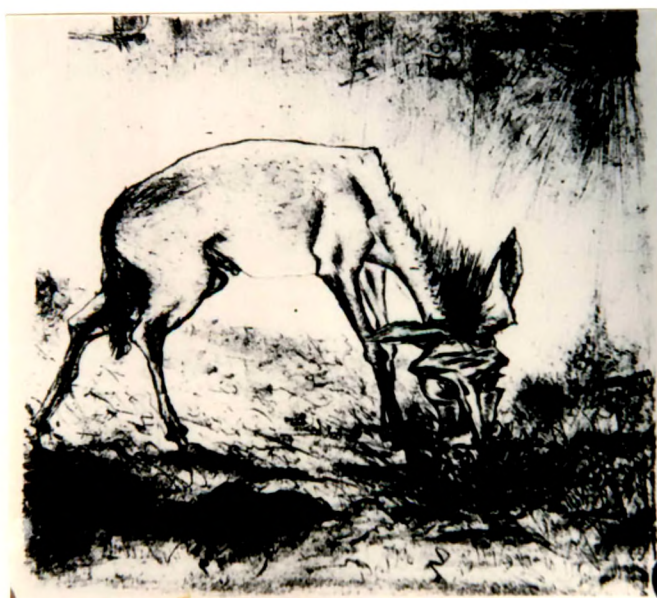
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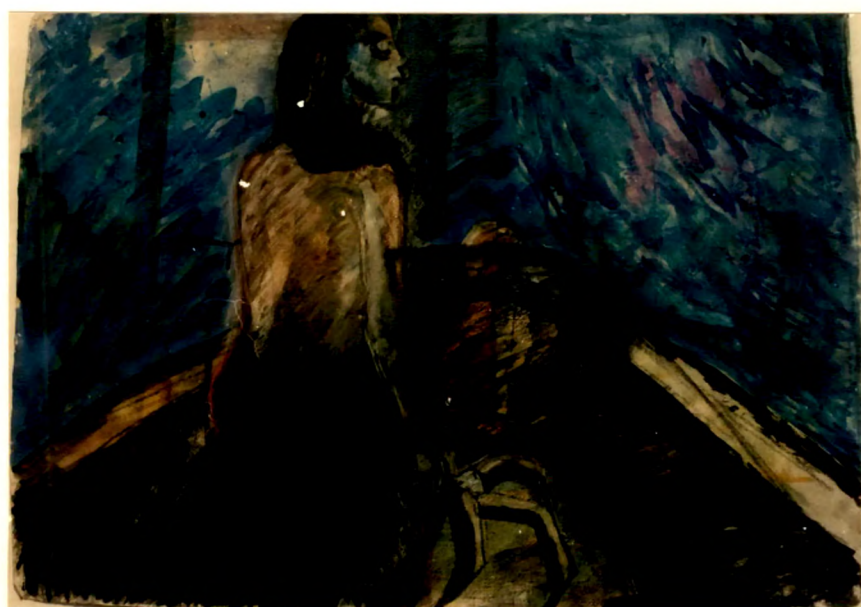


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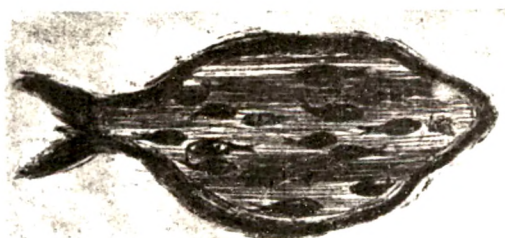
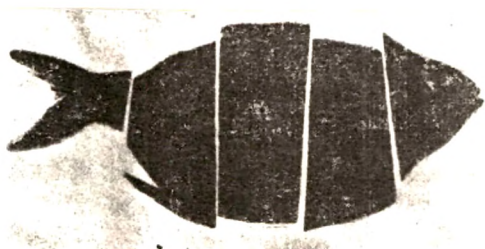


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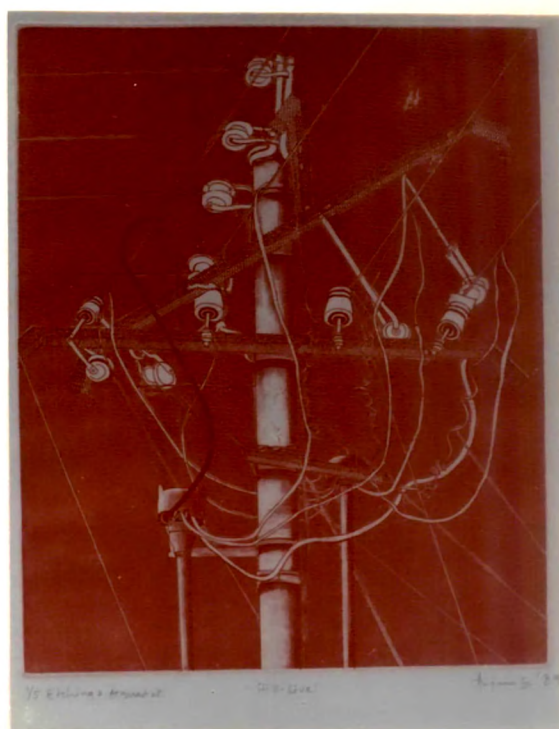
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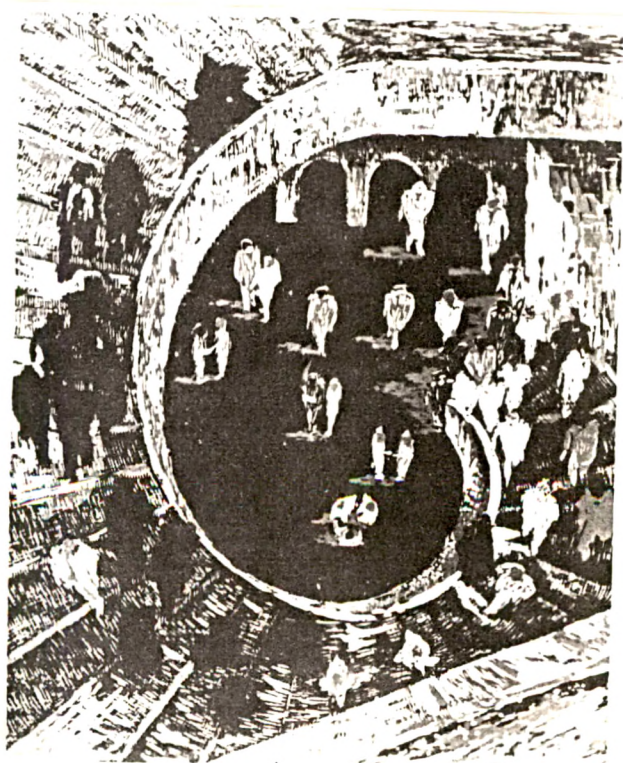
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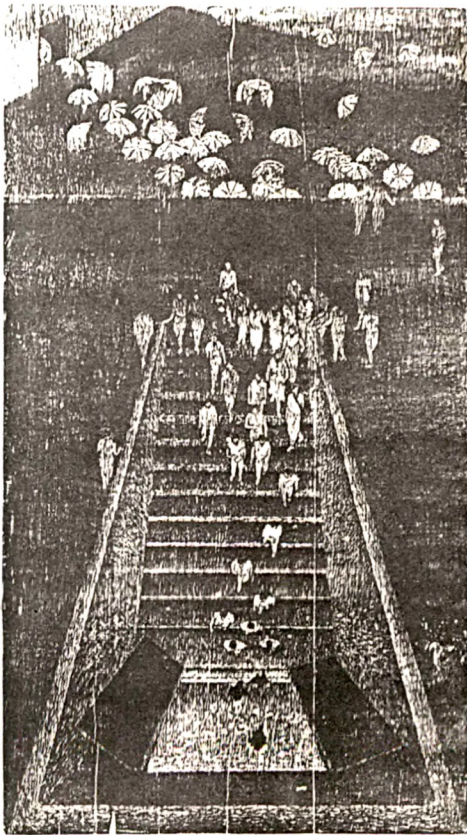
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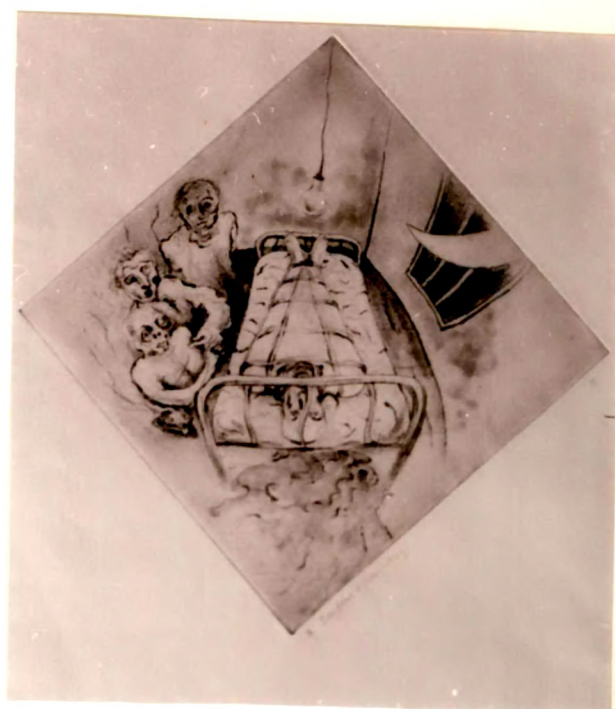
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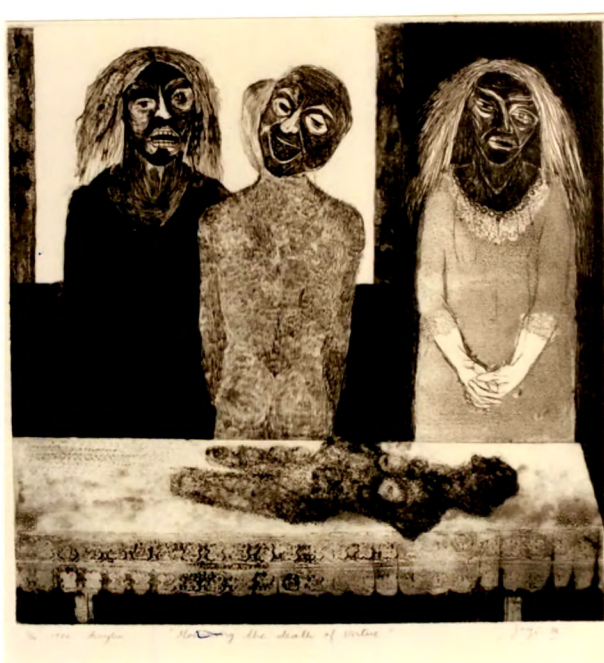
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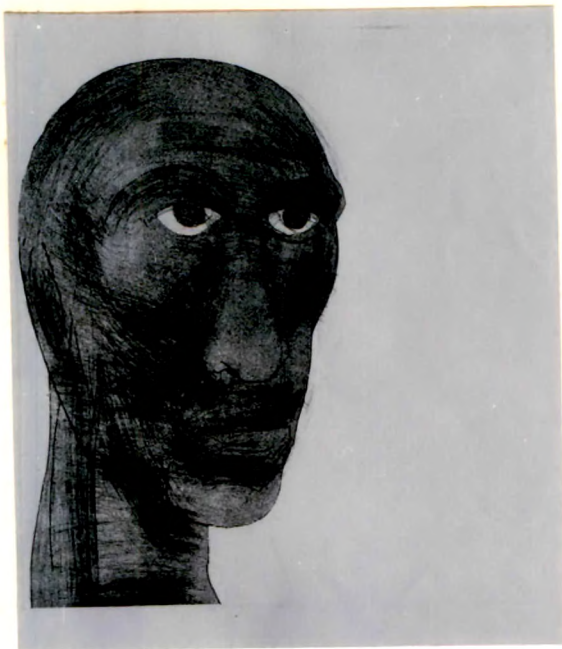
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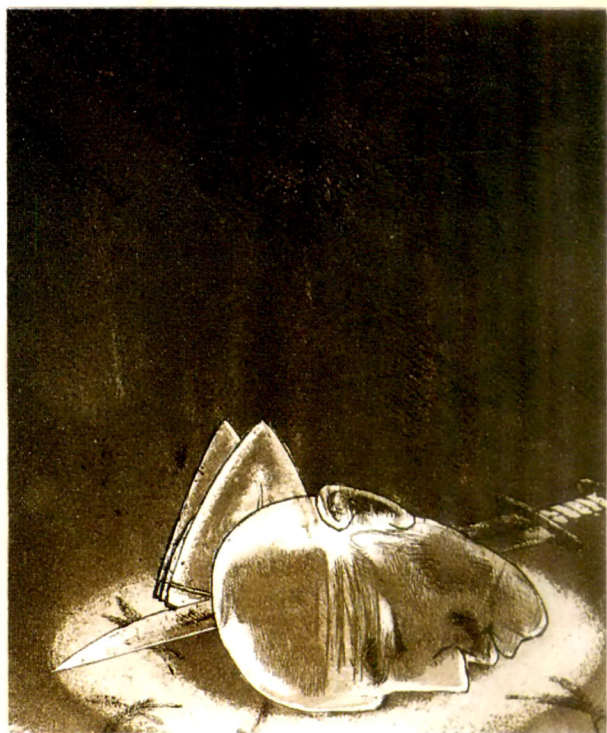
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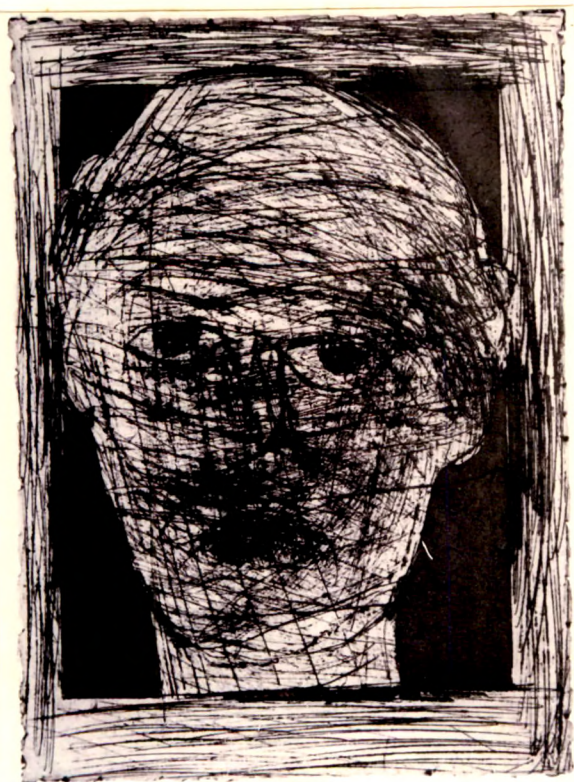
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Plakina

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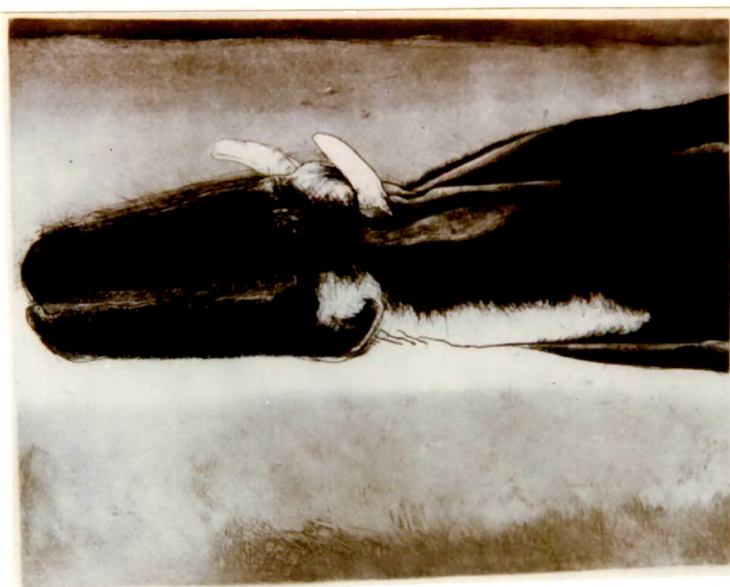


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Animal head

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3/5 Etching

Dubey

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Parivartan (1984): Ajit Dubey
Etching and aquatint

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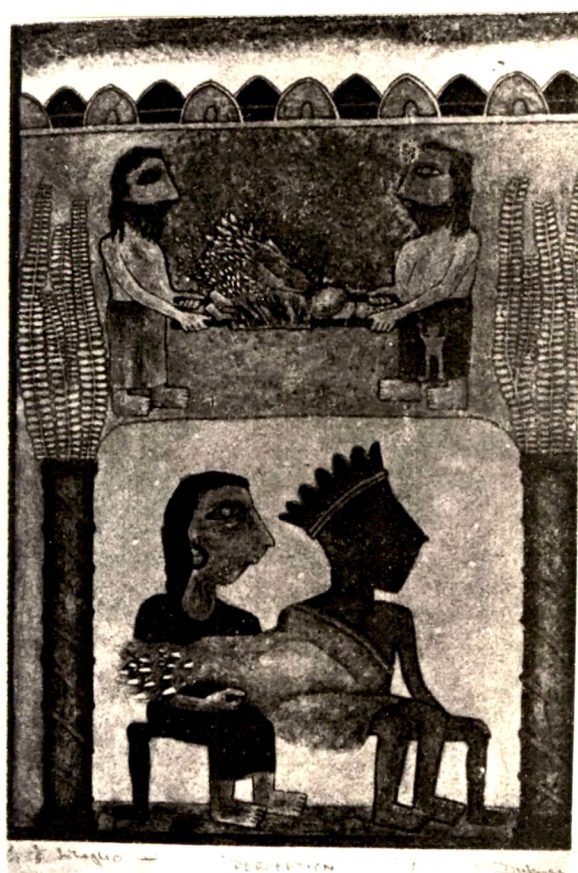
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*Hawks and Sparrows (1983): Madhu
Etching*

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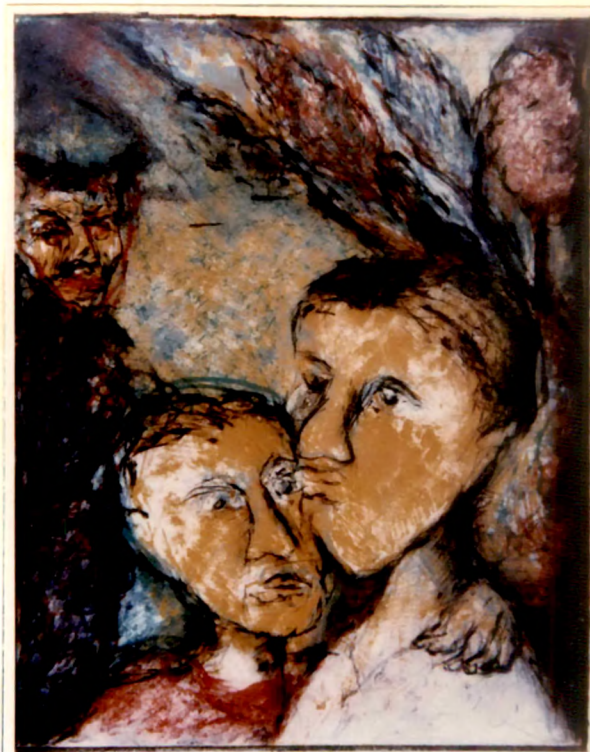
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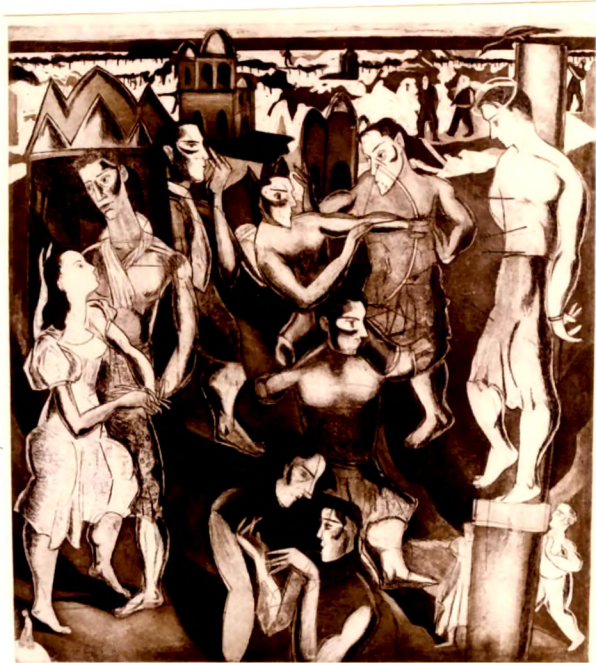
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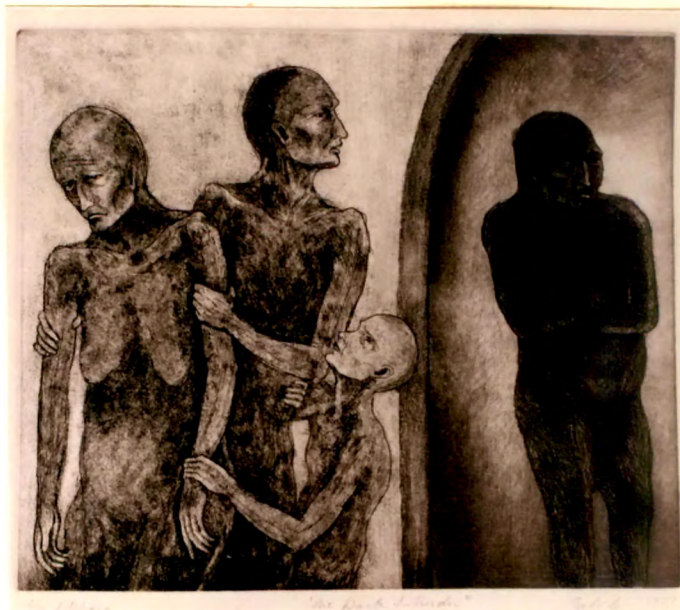
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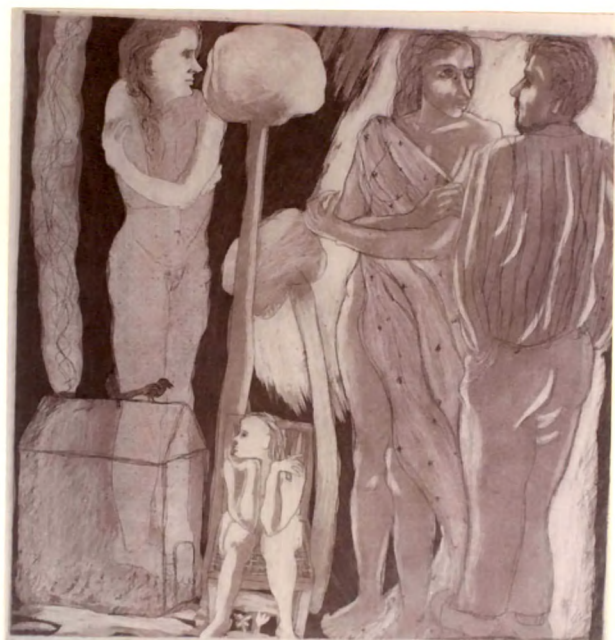
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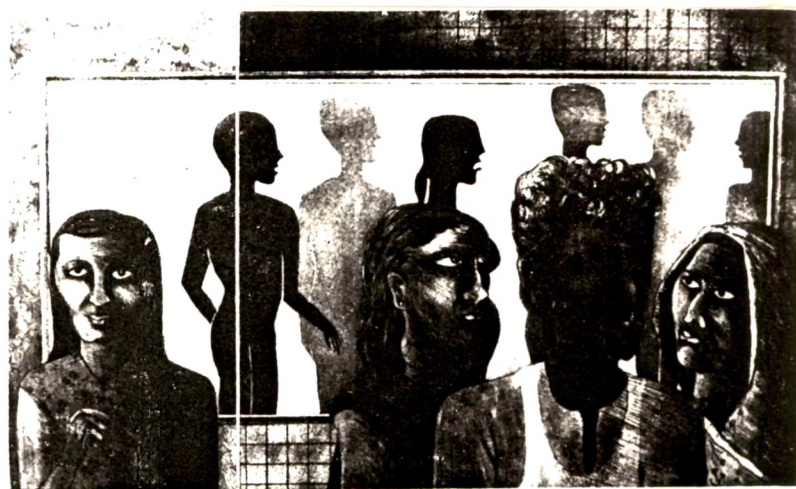
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