

### **CONCLUSION**

Contemporary Art-Trends change constantly. A certain art trend may gain popularity for a short period of time, only to be replaced by a new contrasting style. These either develop from the previous trend or seen to be a reaction against it. The contemporary art-trends of India cannot be easily categorised. To seek a contemporary identity uniformly applicable to the whole country at a time is futile. No single simple trend is common to the whole region. The area is too huge the implication vast. Too many ethnic and indigenous factors decides the contemporary identity. Thus if an identity is to emerge out of any study it has to be of a particular region, pertaining to a particular time and related circumstances. A study of these regional variations may help draw a more appropriate conclusion.

Recognising a contemporary trend is in itself a social act. It is necessary for a trend to be spotted by many at a time for it to gain prominence<sup>en</sup>. Recognition being a social act, automatically a number of similar qualities are noticed as a consequence. So society plays a vital role in giving prominence to a certain type or style. Therefore appreciation or eminence of any quality is a social attitude. This gets vitalised when the expresser and the appreciator reciprocate and a continuity is established as a result of which a particular feature gets more prominence than the others. To a large extent this sequence of events is automatic. There is no predecided agreement on appreciation or expression and therefore the recognition. In fact the expresser may contribute as a reaction to or supplement an already existing state. And often the difference between a style initiated by an artist and a style which inspired the artist to recognise latent features already in existence is difficult to demarcate.

So there seems to be a lot of interaction in between the person who creates, the person who appreciates, the society, the style and its recognition, time, region, trends etc. All these together in various form contribute to the 'Contemporary Identity'. This identity is not an imposition on an existing state - it is a part of it, changing and moulding along with it. As a part of the whole. Similarly when a specific regions features are emphasised as a contributor to a Contemporary Art - identity it is as a part of the whole identity. In this study if the salient features of a particular region i.e Baroda are noticed as contribution to the Contemporary Art identity- it is as a part of the larger identity formed from various region during that particular time. Baroda's contribution supplement an already existing Contemporary identity.

However it is important to realise the universal features which is a typically Baroda's as noted here. This means that the typical trends which are pointed out as pertaining to this specif region, are recognisable due to their universal characteristic. They may be Barodas stylistic trends here but given similar circumstances, similar stylistic trends can appear in any other region and gain significant. So once again there is an interchangeability of parts - an area as a part of the whole and at the same time the universal aspect of it.

The initial two chapters of this study deals with the history of the Printmaking technique. It is a brief study regarding the changes that this medium underwent as a technical invention to duplicate easily and speedily to a fine art - expression; from being a text reproduction technique to one of image and finally acknowledged as a medium of expression, unique and original. In India the Printmaking mediums acceptance as a fine art has been gradual to say the least considering the century deep history behind it evolvement. Printmaking infact becomes a fine-expression at the time when Indian art

was striving towards a Modern identity. Thus most fine expression in the Printmaking medium coincide with the time when very significant and thought out changes were taking place in Indian art. Indian art at this time i.e the post independent period was striving towards an Internationally Contemporary Image and all efforts were towards making Modern what had been Traditional and insular. As pointed out in the second chapter the art institution in our country have always played a vital role in contributing to trends and styles in art. This is because the institution were centre-stage tape in providing a continuous and lively area of interaction and activity. They provided a constant place for artistic endeavour. Therefore the artistic community that grew in and around that area provided a foundation for pockets of activity in different region of the country. Other than the institution no national organisation, except for the National Lalit Kala existed which could provide this kind of structures as this scale. Moreover art-institutions were independent organisation with claims to specific trends and styles and took pride in nurturing this image.

As an institution the Faculty of Fine art in Baroda was supposed to start with a clean state - without any previous nation of traditional or modern ideology. It's aim was to provide the best of method of teaching art according to the most advanced international standard. This is duly noted in the third chapter. The initial two decades from 1950-1970 gradually saw an evolvement of art from Baroda which while not confirming narrowly to a typical style could be called unique and unlike the art produced elsewhere in the country. This was Baroda contribution to the contemporary art identity. This art was unique in the way it was executed often with materials innovatively used; it was unique in the imagery with its particular blend of regional ethnicity along with modern trends like cubism, abstraction; it was unique because its artist had definite ideas about individual

expression, striving towards a perfection, they were innovative with techniques and trends and had a healthy approach towards interaction amongst themselves. Perhaps one of the reasons that made Baroda a prominent center for art was that the artist teachers and students seemingly evolved quite similar language so that certain typical characteristics in expression gained strength through the number of artists expressing in that particular manner. The teachers were totally involved in developing their individual language of expression. They came from the most prominent art institutions from various regions of India, they demonstrated and allowed the students to participate in their pursuits. The students got first hand exposure to prominent artists at work and developed a keen sense of observation. They were able to discuss and judge the works and decide on their own style of expression. There was no pressure on them to blindly follow their teachers—they were allowed to develop individual choices in midst of exposure of art expression from different parts of the country. This interaction and awareness of each other's work led to certain typicalities in the manner of expression. Recognition of this and appreciation of this may have led to many innovative expressions which started from the same module but developed into different tangents. This explains the coexistence of individuality amidst very similar expression. Each artist's work was an attempt at evolving or developing a personal language but the styles chosen were common for everybody. However, the styles whether abstraction, cubism, ethnic etc. or were not chosen in the same sequence by everybody at a time. All of them did not go from realism to ethnic to cubistic to abstraction. Rather they incorporated one or more of these elements into their work whenever they found it necessary. This ensured an individuality whereas strictly following from one style to another in sequence by every artist would have led to a stagnancy. Thus in these decades too some of the main characteristics were individual expression amidst interaction, close and critical observation of each other's work and exposure of arts from different

regions of the country. So the artists were in an active community and aware of it and responded accordingly. Krober states in 'Style and Civilization' that 'geniuses are found in clusters'. While it cannot be said that all the artists from this Faculty were genius (indeed there is a strong argument against the concept of genius) - the noticeable factor is that at a certain time in Baroda a number of extremely unique works came into existence and most of the artists seemed to have the ability to produce these unusual works. Recognizing these as unique or unusual was in itself the main aspect since this is how they gained prominence. In fact over the years from the commencement until the present, all outstanding work seems to have evolved in clusters. And there seems to be years when prolificacy of expression rose and other times when there was dearth of good art. This proves the fact that whenever art with any significant characteristic evolved it seemed to be born out of mutual likes and dislikes. Since the significant characteristics appeared in many works at a time. So obviously like-minded attitude and choices led to such works. This may have been due to the close interaction in a conducive atmosphere. However though those works were unique, they were a part of the Contemporary identity because the concerns were universal. It was not insular - evolved out of a small area of active interaction. Till the 1970's, the art from Baroda discussed in the study is of all the mediums of expression. From 1970 to 1990 the focus shifts to Printmaking since by then this department had become fully equipped and started offering a full-fledged degree course which ensured a steady and constant stream of works produced and in the longer run quality as well as quantity.

In the previous two decades till 1970's the printmaking department as a subsidiary one had provided scope for experimentation for various artists. The difference was that these artists worked in the Printmaking medium exploring the technique rather than considering it as an independent medium of expression. So any attempt at developing an

individual language was in another medium such as painting or sculpture. When these artist took up Printmaking the image was from their main body of work in another medium and printmaking remained only a technique in which some innovation was possible such as strong incised lines, texture, black and white rendition transparency, tones, overlapping of flat colours etc. So the subject or image was predecided. By the 1970's the difference was that printmaking department offered a two year course for Post Graduation of Post-Diploma. This meant two concentrated years of working in this medium by the artist and the output of a large body of works. It also meant that Printmaking was in itself considered the main medium of expression and not merely an innovative technique. It also meant that for two years a batch comprising of students coming from various parts of the country were able to work together. Since Printmaking as subject was not offered in the Graduation course, it ensured an influx of students interested in pursuing printmaking as a specialisation from all over the country. This naturally lead to mutual exchanges. Along with this since the students enrolled for an advanced courses, they already showed very strong individual styles of execution. And it is combination of these two aspects which became the main features of this department Individuality coexisting with mutual exchange.

One of the main points to be considered is that there is complete freedom of expression Choice of subject, manner of execution, technique are decided by each student according to their own needs. Since they are supposed to have four to five years of experience behind them already their work shows strong particularities. Whether they change or continue with their chosen style is left to them. There is no pressure from the teacher to confirm to any typical style, choose new one, in response to new surrounding and environment. This complete freedom to choose and develop once own expression allows for the co-existence of many forms of expression. But the artist is not isolated, so there is an interaction of ideas views and technical expertise. This automatically leads to a careful scrutiny of each others work. Exchanges take place - often a certain aspect -

technical, stylistic or thematic in a fellow artist work may be of interest leading to incorporation of the same in some form or the other within their own work. Thus many kind of combinations evolve. Technique is traded freely. It is exchanges in manner of expression which is more significant. A way of handling the figure or the compositional elements in the works of a particular artist coming from a region where a typical manner of expression is encouraged, many appeal or be criticised. This awareness of each other work and a reaction to it - which inevitably follows sooner or later many bring about changes in works. In fact most artist works do undergo drastic transformation in the time span of two years. The point to be noted is that the changes are due to working in company of artist from various region for two years. The conducive atmosphere in the department encourages exchanges. Therefore there is total freedom to decide and choose one's own way of expression without any supervisory pressure. This situation in a way reflects the atmosphere prevalent before the 1970's with freedom to choose and develop one's own expression in multi regional exposure. Mutual exchanges and absence of pressure form supervisors to confirm. Moreover Printmaking being a medium which thrives amidst group activity, exchanges of all sorts naturally occur.

When such exchanges take place for several years certain significant features evolve. One that each student gets the opportunity to interact with fellow artists from various region of the country. As each of these region whether East, West or South has its own very strong stylistic characteristics in the two years of exchange there is basically the exchanges of the same styles every year-of course the difference is in the combination. A batch may have a strong Southern base while its senior may have more Eastern indigenous influence. Within a batch, the works of a student with a strong regional style may be appreciated by fellow classmates. So the different combination of styles, in which much interaction takes place year after year could lead to typical characteristic. It is important to analysis this in the light of the fact that the process is automatic. There is no manipulation

in how the exchange would take place, or even which regional groups should interact. So the combinations which work out of such a situation are natural and unforced. It is this aspect of these special characteristics arising from such combinations, that give the Printmaking from Baroda a unique place and a definite identity amongst other arts. It is almost impossible to list the typical characteristics which evolve out of stylistic combination of region year after year, with precision and detail since doing so is limiting an automatic process - the significant factor in that these exchanges and art that evolves from it are relevant probable because it corresponds to the requirements of the stylistic situation of that particular moment to which they belong. So the art is once again not an isolated insular and departmental one. Had it been so the works would not have changed in correspondence to the greater Contemporary identity. Since it develops from numerous regional tendencies and is different from year to year. So the elements which form the combination remains stable but the work which <sup>also</sup> gives change from year to year reflecting the contemporary issues. Broadly categorising certain typical ways of expression, which gradually gain prominence over others are exemplified in the fourth chapter. What makes these more acceptable or recognisable than the numerous other opinions possible? There is no obvious code or rule which stipulates that a face has to be in profile, hand gestures just so or a certain mood has to prevail etc. In viewing works made during the span of a few years it seems as if certain formats were mutually in greater use than many others, and became more popular over the years.

Another factor is that manner of expression may become popular and is often chosen by artists who have no contact with each other during that time. So the possibility of one influencing the other gets cancelled out. One may question as to how does such coincidence occur? Is it in the behaviour pattern and choices that human nature makes in similar situations? Or perhaps the similar academic background allows the artist to subconsciously imbibe certain norms which appear and reappear in their works.



It is these aspects of the work of Printmakers from Barodas that contributes to a unique identity in the Contemporary arts. The freedom of choice of expression which ensures individuality at the same time the choice are made due to group interaction. The groups are formed out of a combination of the same regional elements year after year. They inevitably entertain similarities. Over the years, these seem to gain a general acceptance and this whole phenomenon is a evolves naturally.

This becomes more significant than a detailed account of the individual accomplishment of each artist or categorising the trends according to issues such as feminism, expressionism, figuration, nonfiguration abstraction, modern post modernism etc. Rather the contribution of artists from Baroda towards Modern Art Trends is illustrated through the manner in which art evolves at a particular time and situation in a conducive atmosphere which is active, dealing with contemporary issues and has a freedom of expression.

Nature of response to a particular situation is often similar for most individuals. Whether this is intuitive, involuntary or an outcome of acquired and accepted social norm, reactions are often alike. It is this ingrained ability in the human race which ensures that expressions are mutually shared and understood. In the history of Printmaking medium, one comes upon facts that illustrate this very well. In Ukiyo - e form of art, the artist mostly just indicated through written words on a sketch, the colour he wanted to be applied on a print. It was the task of the Printer who cleverly imitated the exact shade, which often met the artist demands. In the Western world similar situations can be found in the guild system where the artist and the apprentice shared an affinity arising from working in close commune in a conducive atmosphere. Examples from more recent times is available in the affinity that a Master Technician and Printmaker shares when taking out a Print. This one can state that in a conducive

atmosphere, exchanges can take place without any obviousness - almost as a silent, unspoken sign or signal. Individual can communicate without verbal acknowledgement.

Since the way of communication or in this case expression is not innumerable, similarities in expression occur. For example, the contemplative mood can be expressed in only certain regulated ways. It is not different for each individual. That is there are not as many ways to expression 'contemplation' as the number of humans. so the mood is recognised as 'contemplation' due to its universal applicability.

So it is possible to state that within a time and space when interaction takes place, exchange occurs and appears similar due to their universal nature. It is this unique feature which generates the Identity of a region. Baroda's Graphic Art Department has evolved this identity over the years - within its terms of reference. It is moreover a reflection of and part of the larger contemporary Art Identity.