

CHAPTER - IX

RISE OF BARODA SCHOOL

This brief account of the rise of Baroda School is included here because what is now a separate State of Gujarat was a part of the Bombay Presidency upto 1960. We have already noted the role of Ravishankar Raval in stimulating art activity in Gujarat but in particular in Ahmedabad, during the 1930s and 1940s. Ravishankar Raval had been an old student of the J.J. School of Art, Bombay and was a pioneer of the 'Indian style' painting in Western India. In Gujarat he had attracted a number of pupils but we may briefly mention the work of Somalal Shah as the typical kind of 'revivalist' painting practiced in Gujarat until the inception of Baroda School in 1950. Somalal Shah painted the subjects derived from the rural life of India. His paintings were depicted in sober colour schemes and the forms were bounded by a thin and very sensitive outline which had a rhythm of its own. His painting 'Sarika' (Plate 32; fig.72) is the best example of his style. The woman standing near the cage talking fondly with the bird is treated with a mellow colour scheme. The details of the cage, the bird and the female figure, are rendered with very thin and delicate line. The delicacy of line and soft tonal values were closer to Bengal School style paintings than the style of Ravishankar. However, the way in which he has shown the roundness of the cage and the receding background is unmistakably the result of Ravinshankar's training. A certain amount of influence of Jagannath Ahivasi is also discernible.

Incidentally Markand Bhatt, the first Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, had been a young pupil of Somalal Shah at Bhavnagar before proceeding to Bombay for his further art training. Moreover, two Bombayites N.S. Bendre and V.R. Amberkar, contributed significantly to the ideological formulations of the teaching system, the former as an active teacher of Painting and the latter as a leading member of the Board of Studies and for some years as a teacher for art criticism. Thus the new spirit emerging in the Bombay art-scene had its direct repercussions at Baroda more than any other city which had been culturally connected with the great metropolis.

The rise of Baroda School during the 1950s brought the art education of India to the threshold of the most contemporary and progressive thinking which had developed in the European countries. Though the Fine Arts Faculty of Baroda was established actually in 1950, the new experiment in art-education was given a thought some time earlier in the minds of several able personalities. The root goes back as early as the period when the Hansa Mehta Committee prepared its report on the educational policy for the then Bombay Presidency. Soon after the report of the committee was out, the M.S. University was founded at Baroda and Mrs. Hansa Mehta became its first Vice-Chancellor. Hansa Mehta, who had her college education in Bombay and who was herself amongst the group of talented students of the Wilson College, Bombay, was keenly interested in the new developments in the educational field. Hansa Mehta knew V.R. Amberkar as a young graduate of English who was equally

interested in the new trends of art and had acquired a name as an artist painting in the bold impressionistic style. He had his initial training in painting at Haldankar's Art Institute, near French Bridge, Bombay. Securing the post-graduate degree in English, he also completed a correspondence course of a well-known British Institute in Applied Arts. He was well-read and deeply interested in the current developments in the European art-world. Well aware of this, Hansa Mehta called him for discussion regarding the system to be introduced in the new Faculty of Fine Arts in Baroda. The Final shape of the courses in Fine Arts at Baroda took place from their discussions.

Another person who was equally keen on the new trends in the art/education was Markand Bhatt who belonged to Bhavnagar. He had completed the Diploma of Fine Arts from Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay where he studied under Ahiwasi and painted in the Indian 'decorative' style. He exhibited his paintings all over India and won several awards. Encouraged by his success in Bombay as a commercial artist during the years 1941-1945, he decided to join the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, for a summer course in Mural Decoration and Illustration, in 1948.

Markand Bhatt was fortunate to have the opportunity to study at the Barnes' Foundation. Barnes' approach was based on the teaching of art with design orientation and pictorial analysis. He wrote a number of books on art and artists. His book 'Art in Painting' is still useful to teachers and artists. Barnes had his own Museum of Art where he had collected the original works

from various periods of modern European art. His students had the opportunity to study them at first hand. After the education was complete Barnes encouraged the students to visit prominent ^a Art ^g Galleries in Europe, even giving them stipends for their way-back to their native place. At the Barnes Foundations, Markand studied various subjects like aesthetics, art/appreciation, art/education, advertising design, several graphic processes etc. The training under Barnes opened up his mind and made him receptive to new concepts in art.

Markand had developed a friendship with Amberkar in Bombay and through his letters kept up a contact with him. From the United States he often described his experiences to Amberkar. Amberkar also wrote back about his own ideas regarding art education which thought would be most advantageous to Indian environments. According to him training in the use of the ^b Basic ^d Design elements was the most essential aspect of the ^a Art ^e Education. Markand was surprised to find a striking similarity between the ideas of Amberkar and the education he was receiving at Philadelphia. His letter to Amberkar expressing his feelings about it assured Amberkar that he was in the right direction and so when the programme of the art/education in Baroda was envisaged, he readily put before the authorities his plans regarding the new syllabus of art-education, which was accepted and adopted. When the plan of establishing the Fine Arts Faculty was finalised, the old Art Department of the Kala Bhawan of Baroda was taken over by the University and turned into a full/fledged art institution. Markand Bhatt was

appointed as the first Dean of the Faculty. He taught History of Art, Applied art as well as aesthetics. His own painting style too changed from the Indian decorative type and inclined now towards more vigorous expression (Plate 71 ; fig. ¹⁵⁷ 71).

The teachers under whose guidance the Fine Art Faculty took its shape were Bendre, Subramanyam and Sankho Chaudhari. The two latter teachers had been trained in Shantiniketan and were among the most forward looking artists to come out of that nationalistic institution. Thus they brought with them different experiences, but were equally involved with the ideas of coming to terms with new art movements from the west. These, by their lively teaching inspired generations of art-students who afterwards attained significant place amongst the leading artists of India. The theoretical side was developed by Prof. Amberkar who stayed at Baroda for a few months every year and often had his classes of art-history and criticism in the open-air in informal manner. The teaching of Bendre, Subramanyam and Sankho Chaudhari not only moulded the minds of the young art students but even proved advantageous to the growth of their own creative work. We find that in this period these artists produced works which have subsequently been considered as most significant.

N.S. Bendre who came to Baroda as the head of the Department of Painting had already acquired a name as a well-known artist. He also had just returned from his tour of the European countries. Earlier he had attracted the attention of the artists and art-lovers through his paintings revealing the effect of bright sunlight. In his tour to western countries Cubism had made a deep

impact on his mind. Bendre also was of the opinion that there was a need to bring a change in the existing system of art/education. In Baroda he got the fine opportunity to put his ideas into reality. His experiments in his own painting style were responsible ~~to~~ ⁱⁿ provide ^{ing} inspiration to the painting students. First major influence which reflected in his paintings after his tour abroad was that of Cubism. His paintings now conveyed his attempts towards structural analysis of colour as well as form. The painting 'Sunflowers' and 'Barwas Women' showed these features very conspicu^usly. Considering his handling of colour modulations, careful blending of tones and methodical and very precise application of colour, Ratan Parimoo has compared Bendre's paintings with those of the 17th century French painter Poussin. He remarks, "Like him (Poussin) Bendre represents, in his painting at once a classical and romantic attitude, his structure being classical and his approach to colour romantic".

Around 1958 Bendre turned to abstraction. He used to pour liquid paints on canvas surfaces allowing them to spread and merge at selected places. His paintings of this phase were equally ^a fascinating due to the richness of the colour and the varied combinations. His 'Kena' (Plate 37; fig.83) painted in abstract style gives an effective rendering of contras^sting tonal values and careful blending and conveyed Bendre's capacity as a colourist. Bendre came out of this phase as suddenly as he plunged in it. Bendre has now settled on the essentially figurative type of painting. Though he retired from the Faculty as a Dean in 1966 and is now settled in Bombay, his regular shows every year are eagerly

awaited for by the art lovers. His themes are usually concerned with the activities of the village belles. At times he uses meticulous pointilistic technique for colour application and occasionally paints landscapes too.

Bendre's work as a teacher in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Baroda is far more significant in the sense that to turn from the then existing system of art education and to mould the minds of the students was a difficult job. Bendre accepted the challenge. He had given a thought to this matter of bringing a change long back. Ratan Parimoo has noted his memories about how Bendre, particularly during 1956 or 57 had spoken to the advanced students regarding the relevance of Indian traditional painting in the context of modern art. He drew attention to the quality of line, the process of simplification of forms, the reduction of space and volume, a certain characteristic type of colour relationship, and the essentially intuitive mind of the Indian artist. Bendre's awareness in those days about the indigenous elements reveals the working of his mind and the secret of his own experiments.

Bendre has expressed his thoughts about the essential aspects in modern art-education at several places including in seminars and in some of his own articles. He writes, "Art is something much more than a mere manifestation of skill. It is the product of a mind. In planning art-education, therefore, one has to think of both faculties - namely, the acquiring of skills and the preparation of a receptive mind. The time needed for the acquisition of skills differs from person to person. But skills can be

acquired. To develop a sensitive mind is a difficult matter and no educational system can guarantee it. A receptive mind being important, it becomes the main criterion for admission to art institutions". He further says, "It is futile to advise an artist as to what exactly he should do. It is ^bbest to help him to educate himself, and his mind aesthetically, let him react to his environment in the light of his knowledge and freely allow him to produce... .. his knowledge, his inspiration and proficiency in the use of his medium will decide his form. No one can dictate his form. His very existence in certain surroundings forces him to pose his own problems and he has to solve them himself. His art is his solution". Thus he recommended in the art/educational system a congenial atmosphere directed towards developing a lively mind capable of thinking on its own. Bendre tried to create such an atmosphere at Baroda. His success lies in the fact that the several notable artists who emerged under his guidance still remember gratefully his teaching and influence on their mind.

Another significant artist who contributed in moulding the minds of the students was K.G. Subramanyan. Born in 1924 in Kerala, he had his college education in the Presidency College, Madras. He then joined Shantiniketan where he had the opportunity to study under the most talented personality like Binodebihari Mukherjee. He also worked with him in execution of the large murals in the Hindi Bhawan at Shantiniketan. Subramanyan was appointed as a lecturer in Painting in the Faculty of Fine Arts in 1951, and worked there upto 1980. For a few years he worked as a Deputy Director of Designs in the Handloom Board, at Bombay.

The work which he produced there was much significant in the sense that it not only gave a new direction to the Designing Department but it also influenced deeply his own work which is reflected in the two-dimensional aspect in his paintings and murals as well as his fine sense of design. He has also worked in the capacity of ^athe consultant to All-India Handloom Board. After gaining this experience as a designer, he again entered the Fine Arts Faculty at Baroda as a Professor ^{of} for painting and became the Dean in 1968. He left Baroda recently and is now working in Shantiniketan as a Professor of Painting.

Mani (as he is popularly known by this abbreviated name) experimented in various media and tried to innovate the form according to the nature of the material and its possibilities. Gulam Shaikh has rightly pinpointed the significance of his achievement when he remarked, "Subramanyan's work assumes much greater significance when it is reviewed in the context of the communicative purposiveness of art. Deeply conscious of the alienation of urban art from its social context, he has always sought to find avenues of contact with people and environment. The desire to make toys, design childrens's books and stage decor, weave or print textiles, comment on art in writing and above all to undertake large murals for public buildings, is guided by the impulse to address a larger millieu. The challenge to find the transformation of the same form when the media was changed was exciting to Subramanyan. Thus he handled various types of materials and media^s, everytime contributing some innovation to the previous one according to the need of that material and the purpose of the object.

Subramanyan's works include three major types. Firstly, his large murals and terracottas which embellish the architectural complexes at New Delhi, Lucknow and Baroda. Secondly, his paintings ranging from oils upto the recent glass and acrylic variations and thirdly his innumerable drawings and prints.

Like other painters and sculptors of Baroda in those days, Mani too started his painting in 1950 with cubistic experiments. One of his early paintings, 'Fruitseller' (Plate 72; fig.160) which is now in the collection of Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay gives some idea of his early style when he used large masses of flat tones, suggesting the structure of the object, juxtaposed in contrasting tonal values which also shows an attempt towards economy of lines. His later paintings were based on the interiors and the various interesting images connected to them (Plate 72; fig.159). In these pictures all sorts of objects in the interior of a room, the photoframes on the walls, the furniture and pots and pans are represented in flat colour areas while the orientation of the objects and division of the painting into rectangular panels create interesting spatial arrangement and a sense of mobility too.

From 1980 he has turned to glass painting and the use of acrylic medium. In these also he has innovated his own method of rendering the main forms in gouache, then filling the background with oils and by placing a gold paper which is seen through the blank areas of glass. What is most interesting in this is that when we change the angle of viewing the painting, the gold of the paper changes its tone due to the change of light. This gives an

exciting combinations.

Although ~~also~~ ^{also} involved with the activity of graphics and drawings, his work as a muralist is far more significant. Mani's murals become one with the environment. They are rendered according to the specific need of the building as well as that of the surroundings. According to his own opinion, 'To be properly itself, a mural is not just any painting or sculpture but it grows out of a wall and works with the environment and effects thereby a presentational change. This should be evident both in the design and concept. Of course this needs the cooperation and the understanding of the architect.' Mani uses for the murals the pre-fabricated units which are then assembled on the wall. On the facade of Ravindralaya Theatre at Lucknow, he executed a mural on the theme of Tagore's 'King of the dark Chamber' in glazing terracotta. Through the stylized figures and other forms created by the assemblage of various terracotta units of interesting textures, the theme is symbolically presented. In his mural at Gandhi Darshan, New Delhi, he combined the quotations from scriptures and Gandhiji's writings with the symbolic forms. In 1971 he used the theme of Bangladesh tragedy for his terracottas and through the facial expressions of the soldiers, their uniforms and medals, and the bodies of victims effectively brought the horror of atrocities that happened in that country. With the same spontaneity he executed the terracotta reliefs depicting the subjects related to children (Plate 72; fig.161). The simple gestures in the upper part of the terracotta and the expressions of faces, convey the sense of wonderment as well as

the innocence of the child. The simplicity and the sensitive modelling with which the faces, especially eyelids and lips as well as the parts of the drapery are treated is remarkable. This can be achieved only by a mind which is extremely sensitive and talented.

Subramanyan's achievement in the literary field is also noteworthy. He has written several articles, papers and reviews in important magazines like Marg, Lalit Kala Contemporary Vrishchik, Art Heritage, Leonardo, Vishva Bharati Quarterly and several others. A collection of his articles on art was published under the name 'Moving Focus' by Lalit Kala Akademy in 1978. Government of Madhya Pradesh has honoured him recently by offering him the national award of 'Kalidas Samman' for the arts in 1982. He truly combines the best elements of modernity and tradition.¹⁴

I am discussing here the work of only two young painters trained in the milieu of Baroda School, to serve as examples, namely Jyoti Bhatt and Bhupen Khakhar who have achieved national significance but who represent two different attitudes.

Jyoti Bhatt, born in 1934 in Saurashtra, proved to be one of the most talented students from Baroda. He belongs to the first batch of students and studied painting under the able guidance of Bendre and Subramanyan. He was the first to receive the gold plaque of the Lalit Kala Akademi in 1955 for his painting executed in Indian miniature style in opaque tempera technique. Very early can be discerned the impact of Cubism in his

paintings in the way the shade and light patterns are treated emphasizing the structure of the figures. Next phase of his painting started when the forms were prominently delineated in heavy black line. Thus the linearity² increased in his painting, replacing the effect of cubistic planes. His lamp-series painted in 1958 (Plate 74; fig.166) consisted of still-lives with lamps. These were rendered in flat patterns and bold black outlines revealing the structural analysis of the form. Jyoti Bhatt painted several versions of these motifs. The manner of colour application and rendering of the form changed invariably in some still-lives of this series. His still-life with the lamp exhibited in the Bombay Art Society's exhibition in 1956-57 and the second one exhibited in the next year revealed considerable change. The later one showed less contrast in the tones though it had the flat tones like the those depicted in the earlier one. However, the second version expressed greater linearity and inclination towards two-dimensional aspect. The areas connecting all the objects, were filled with dotted lines. This created a single unit of a whole. However, his another still-life 'Break Fast' continued the previous style.¹⁸ In 1961 he painted a series of paintings depicting a figure of a woman carrying a Bird Cage (Plate 74; fig.167). In these he used distortion of forms with thick broad outlines. The forms gradually became simpler and the lines broader.

During the ~~last~~^{late} 1960s he developed a style which is derived from the folk embroidery of Saurashtra. Sometimes the dotted outlines suggested the lines with embroidery stitches like in 'a'Kantha' design. In the same period he got involved more and

more ^{with the} graphic processes. During his stay in America he had mastered the Intaglio processes in graphics. His famous print 'Lost Pandit' (Plate 74; fig. 165) is done in coloured Intaglio. It depicts an owl seated on a human head. The precision of the drawing along with the execution of details in a decorative manner is noteworthy. His etching reveal the meticulous craftsmanship, and the fine textural surfaces give the relief effects. Jyoti Bhatt has also executed collages or various materials ranging from pieces of wood, metal sheets, sand and liquid mortar. Areas covered with coal-tar are melted by the hot blow flame which render accidental results with striking effect.

Bhupen Khakhar has evolved a style desived from popular imagery. He comes from a middle class family of Gujarat. Bhupen had his college education in Bombay and got his degree as a Chartered Accountant from the Bombay University. He turned to painting in 1961 due to an inner urge and joined ^{the} Baroda School. It is said that in 1963 he came into contact with a certain British painter who acquainted him with the new 'Pop' trend.¹⁹ Bhupen started his experiments by cutting pictures of ^gods and ^goddesses, ^film stars and political leaders etc. Thus on bright coloured background are pasted the bazaar prints of ^gods and ^goddesses with many arms, legendary animals or birds, mythic monsters and local saints. To this are added shop signs like ^Lipton tea-label, or match-box label or a cigarette packet; Sometimes newspaper cuttings with photographs of political leaders are pasted. He also linked the collages with his own

drawings which changed at once the association and gave the images ^a of feindish look. The enamel colour as a base material added to the banality of the result. Sometimes small mirrors were also used by him in his collages. Thus the popular images were used to create art objects. This reflected a kind of link with mass reality as Nissim Ezekiel has pointed out. He further remarks that, Khakhar 'creates his own work of visual appearances linked at every point to world with which we are familiar'.²⁰ Thus the first phase of his paintings was covered with these 'pan-shop' paintings.

In 1966 began the second phase of his paintings, based on a combination of various perspective view-points, of gardens, rows of buildings and courtyards. He developed a systematic method for it. What was^s painted in the distance was slightly shifted above, thus bringing in another eyelevel for it. The figures and the landscape were carefully painted by him without resorting to collage or pasting. The figures are painted with stiff poses like those in the old photographs. For these paintings he also used popular illustrated maps of holy cities. Though he took inspiration from Indian and particularly Rajasthani paintings for delineating bricks, steps and minarets very carefully and minutely, his paintings show a naive element because a certain degree of refinement is lacking in the manner of execution as well as conception.

Geeta Kapur, the critic, has raised a controversial point here by her statement about this phase. According to her, Bhupen's paintings of this phase are not mainly emphasizing the people or the objects and environments, but about how these images are

represented in popular pictorial conventions. Though the individual images are naive, the overall aesthetic with which they are presented is sophisticated. The particular kinds of relationship between the source and the pun, between the manner of painting details and the complete configuration, makes it incorrect to call his work naive.²¹

After 1969, the ^gfigures became prominent in his paintings. His recent paintings show landscape vistas with figures in the foreground. The figures suggest their environment and even psychological mood. Sometimes the satirical aspect also is expressed. His subjects are now taken from the local surroundings. His 'Janata Watch Repairing' (Plate 71; fig.158) depicts a watch repairer engrossed in his meticulous work while the watches of all sizes on the wall create interesting patterns. The sign board with the name of the shop becomes a part of the composition. In the whole painting the three-dimensional recession is restricted. Khakhar's paintings have gained a significant place due to his representation of the language of popular images.

The other Baroda trained painters include Shanti Dave, Santosh, Trilok Koul, Shanti Dave, Vinod Shah, Gulam Sheikh, Vinodray Patel, Jayant Parikh and Ratan Parimoo.

Jeram Patel, though he has been teaching in the Applied Department, ~~but~~ is an active painter. He is being discussed here for this reason as well as for the fact that he belongs to Gujarat. Jeram Patel was trained in the Bombay School when A.A. Bhonsule was the Principal. His teachers were Ahiwasi and Palsikar. He completed his Diploma in painting with first class and got a

in the J. J. School of Art.

fellowship for one year. In the examination most of the students painted in Oils while Jeram painted ^{in oils} ~~in water colours~~ and in Indian ^{figurative} ~~decorative~~ style at the same time adapting elements of the miniature paintings and their harmonious linear compositions. Thus Jeram started his career in painting with the Indian ^d Decorative ^s Style. However, he was continuously involved with new experiments. In 1957 his painting 'Rasikapriya' (Plate 73; fig.162) won an award in the National Exhibition at Delhi.²² In it he controlled large flat areas with distant landscape and figures in the foreground were outlined with thin lines, conceived in simplified forms and certain angularity. The award for this painting gave Jeram due recognition further elevated by other awards which he won in the Bombay Art Society's Exhibition as well as the State Art Exhibition in Maharashtra. ^{for his landscape.} In the same year his 'Swara-Madhuri' won the cash prize of Rs.200/- by the Sun Process work in the Bombay Art Society's annual show. This success encouraged him to take the first opportunity to go abroad which he did in 1957.

Jeram joined the School of Art and Crafts at London for ~~the~~ ^{two} years and got the National Diploma in Design in 1959. In the same year he also had a show of his oil paintings and ^{landscapes} ~~Indian style drawings~~ in the Woodstock Gallery, London. In these paintings he combined landscape with figurative compositions emphasizing the linearity in the rendering. In 1961 he was a member of the Indian delegation visiting Eastern countries, including Japan. ^{them} Most significant experience which thrilled him was the opportunity to see the Retrospective Exhibition of the paintings by Paul Klee.²³ It probably inspired the resolve in his mind to discard figures

from his paintings.

He also thought that his painting should not be confined to canvas as the only surface. This led him to think more about destroying the basis of the accepted approach to painting in order to find out a totally new expression. In 1962 he started using thick plywood for this purpose and obtained the result by burning areas of the surface to create different depths, (Plate 73; fig. 163). The thickness of the plywood enabled scope for various possibilities. He says about this experience that, "I destroyed all the norms of painting; destroyed the old notions of aesthetics and created a new way of expression".²⁴ In 1962 he held his first big show at New Delhi in the Kunika Art Centre. The catalogue of this exhibition had an introduction by Richard Bartholomew. Jeram's works on plywood created quite a sensation in Delhi, as this technique was totally new.

Another group of his works are the collages in which he used different materials along with plywood (Plate 73; fig. 64). The nails stuck on the board created a striking effect due to their elevation from the ground. Such collages convey a curious sense of adventure, as he himself puts it "one who tries to create will always be destroyed".²⁵ The act should come out spontaneously from the subconscious. Nibha Joshi has ~~highly~~ commented on this quality of his paintings, "It is this I see in the sun spots of his blow torch or in his nails crowning this vortex, a crucifixion safely beyond the dream and lyric flight, safe in its interludes of discovery of layer after layer of the true and therefore unerring

subconscious".²⁶

Jeram's drawing too have immense power and potential. His drawings inspired^y by the Vietnam war suggested the imageries of pistol and gun which seem to grow from the earth symbolising evil and violence. In his later drawings at the time of the riots in Gujarat he drew the fragments of bone scattered, which according to him was the unpremeditated sacrifice before premeditated violence of unthinking bombardment. Along with the richness of the concept, his drawings have also the finesse of execution.

The eminent painter G.R. Santosh has brought out very rightly the qualities of Jeram's drawings that they "have an extra/plastic dimension pulsating with basic life energy. These graphic images reveal a powerful concept of anatomy through emphatic contours ranging from the deepest black to fibrous highlights. The forms often have the haunting quality of an ominous stone against an evening sky".²⁷

The achievements of Baroda School was even more significant in the field of sculpture. The activity in sculpture at Baroda started with Sankho Chaudhuri who came in the Faculty of Fine Arts as a Reader in the Sculpture Department. Sankho had his initial training in sculpture under Ram Kinker at Shantiniketan. He also had a sound intellectual background as he had completed his graduation from the Calcutta University as early as in 1939. His visit to Europe in 1949, enlightened him further, by getting acquainted with the works of the well-known sculptors of Europe and his sensitive mind quickly absorbed the new conceptions

which had inspired the modern trends in sculpture.

At Baroda Sankho got the opportunity to experiment freely. As Ratan Parimoo has rightly pointed out, "During the 1950s he was the first Indian artist who reacted to and made an effort in assimilating new developments in sculpture as they had gradually evolved during the first quarter of this century."²⁸ The only exceptions were Sadanand Bakre²⁹ and N.G. Pansare.³⁰ Bakre was a founder member of the progressive Artists' Group and he too experimented in clay, plaster, wood and bronze. However, he did not rest at any one point to patiently explore fully the possibilities of the material and to experiment various techniques for it. Soon after the spectacular success of the Progressive Group, Bakre went abroad and disappeared from the art-field of India. After few years he even gave up sculpture and turned to painting. After a short period he did achieve recognition as a significant painter. However, he stopped his activity as a sculptor. Thus though he had the calibre and expressed a dynamic quality in his sculpture, he could not establish far reaching influence. As for Pansare, he used stone, bronze as well as wood and was successful in adopting indigenous element in his images. However, his premature death ended his explorations towards a new direction. Thus the credit goes to Sankho who by his continuous experiments and achievements contributed significant innovations in the field of sculpture.

Sankho started from plaster and cement and then turned to stone, wood, metal and terrazzo. Starting from his early work he always retained interest in portraiture. But in his figure-

sculptures he preferred utmost simplification. These are generally carved as tall vertical forms in rhythmic stances resulting in a slight undulating or spiral movement. Though he did the 'Woman with pitcher' (1945) in cement and seated woman (1956) in black marble, it was his wooden sculpture that was admired more. His 'Standing Figure' (1956), 'Figure' (1957) and 'The sisters' (Plate 75; fig. 168) were done in wood. The lyrical line in the posture and the slight modulations as well as the hollows which add beauty to the spiral movement are comparable to the sculptures of Henri Matisse. Henri Matisse was mainly a painter and as in his paintings, so in his sculpture, he was in search of 'ease', ^{and} harmony, of 'arabesque' and was concerned with certain linearity and lyrical aspect.²⁶ Matisse's 'Madeleine' (1901) or 'Seated Nude' (1925)²⁷ conveyed this sense of arabesque instead of the usual concept of mass and volume. The same qualities we find in Sankho Chaudhuri's sculptures of this period. Instead of expressing sense of volume and weight, the stress is on their lyrical stance. However, this linearity is even sharper in Sankho Chaudhuri's sculpture, may be due to his training in Shantiniketan, which followed the linearity of the painting of Bengal School. The hollows in these sculptures create inner as well as outer tensions. This quality was fully explored by Henry Moore. Sankho seems to have taken the inspiration from Moore's sculpture and used this aspect of voids increasingly in the later sculptures.²⁸ This phase of his figurative abstractions continued approximately upto 1960.

After 1960 the third phase of his sculptural style started when he was more inclined towards expressing pure forms and abstract concepts or we can say the new conceptions of "substitution" as introduced by the Cubist sculptors.²⁹ Instead of using a method of representation of the phenomenal image, they used in its place an elaborated symbol created by the artist's own ideas, which might still retain the reminiscence of the phenomenal subject but no longer sought to give a faithful report of the optical image. His 'Chemist' in brass (Plate 75; fig.169) is the best example of this phase. The colour and the strength of the brass and its shining surface, reflecting the surroundings, become here the part of the total design; which changes according to the movement of the spectator. In this also he made a skillful use of hollows which create a feeling of openness in the sculpture. His 'Music' (1966) and 'Head' (1966) done in aluminium are treated with a style similar to that of the 'Chemist'.

Sankho also initiated the study of the traditional stone carving practices. He himself went to the marble quarries at Makrana in Rajasthan and worked there in that environment. He also conducted a camp of sculptors sponsored by Lalit Kala Akademy at Makrana in 1962. This inspired many young sculptors of Baroda like Girish Bhatt, Nagji Patel, Balbir Katt and several others who explored the possibilities of stone sculpture.

Sankho's later experiments were in terrazzo (the mixture of cement and the marble powder). He found this material very convenient, it was cheaper and the process required less space and

no complicated technology. His sculpture in terrazzo 'shell' shows his attempts in the direction of expression of purity of form.³¹ It shows a close similarity to the sculpture of 'Barbara Hepworth' and especially her 'Pelagos'. Sankho also used sometimes wire, as in his sculpture 'Cock' (Plate 76; fig.170). In his work 'Totem' in wood, he used burning with flame for obtaining surface patterns. Around 1970 he also experimented with fountain designs, where he synthesized function and beauty, art and technology. In these he tried to create spiral movement by the weight and pressure of the water falling on its parts. "My fountains are sometimes apart from mobiles and stables" he said, "They use the function of sprinkler principle and put it to aesthetic use".³² These fountains revolve only with the weight of water and there is no mechanical device involved.

Sankho resigned from the Faculty of Baroda in 1970 in order to devote fully to his own work. The zeal and versatility with which he worked at Baroda, created a stimulating atmosphere in the Department of Sculpture at Baroda which continued^s upto the present day.

Mahendra Pandya was born in 1927. He took over as the Head of Sculpture Department since the departure of Sankho Chaudhury. He started his career in the field of sculpture with wood and stone carving. He was mainly concerned in the beginning with the rounded volumes. His stone sculptures of early period displayed the skillful use of sandstone creating the effect of the softness of the skin. His 'Mother and Child' (Plate 76; fig.171) in stone belongs to this period. It not only gives a sense of volume but also the

suppleness of the skin by its soft~~y~~ textural surface.

Pandya's sculptural activity entered a second phase when he started working in wood and developed a technique of assembling various parts of wood in a constructivist fashion. The surfaces of these parts were chiselled with bold continuous chisel marks running along the natural wood grains. After this he used a blow-flame which enhanced the effect of the textured surface. His sculpture, 'family' (Plate 77; fig.174) was carved in the same period. Gradually the forms of his sculpture went towards more abstraction and they were mainly assembled from geometrical forms. His other sculpture with the same title 'Family' (Plate 77; fig. 172) does not show human forms but the assemblage of abstract volumes which create a feeling of the shapes belonging to the same family group.

His recent works done in a series of sculptures under the title 'House' are most interesting in the sense that they not only reveal the economy with which he brings the forms together but the way in which he expresses his concept about the houses having windows and doors and the figures peeping out through them. They impress with their frontality. One of the sculptures of these series was exhibited in the 'Indian Sculpture To~~y~~day (1983) exhibition at Bombay which is one of his characteristic works. His other sculpture 'Shrishesha^oshainji' (Plate 77; fig.173) also is a presentation of abstract form of Vishnu reclining on the Great Sheshanaga.

Mahendra Pandya has also designed a very interesting modern 'Fountain' at Baroda. Its design is planned in a very characteristic

way and when the water gushes out from several outlets the lines of falling water integrate with the massive parts of the fountain in an intricate pattern as a whole.

Raghav Kaneria was born in a peasant family in a village near Gondal, in Gujarat. A curious combination of strength as well as enthusiasm is found in his personality which is reflected in his sculptures.

In the beginning he worked with cement, concrete and ~~un~~carved wood for his sculpture^s ~~pieces~~. His early works include rowing boat^wmen, flying figures as well as birds which expressed powerful force. However, later on he mainly concentrated on metal. His metal sculptures exhibited at Bombay Art Society's annual viz. 'Cock' (1961)³⁸ and 'Bull'³⁹ (c.1959) which won the Gold Medal, attracted the critics as well as the art/lovers by their dynamic force and vitality. Both these through their stances and skillful use of metal sheets expressed immense inner strength.

The next phase of Kaneria's work was seen during 1960's in series of works created by welding together wide range of junk pieces. Sometimes he also juxtaposed machine parts with these pieces which brought out a strange imagery and significance to the new form. His metal sculpture 'Man' (Plate 78; fig.175) is the best example of assemblage of junk forms. The skillful welding is used for this process. The ultimate result due to the uneven contours of the junk pieces and the rusty textural surface ⁿis creating an expression of a distorted form of male figure. This sculpture has an affinity with the sculptures of ^JTulio Gonzales.

In the later years Kaneria had gone through a chain of experiments. He gradually gave up the method of assembling the junk and 'found' pieces and evolved a new type of sculpture shaped from tubular forms in metal. These sculptures were highly polished. Here is a combination of tubular and spherical forms in which the former is dominant. These sculptures rise from a very small rounded form at the base and emerge upward into tubular forms which are in between dented into small curves. At the height of nearly 6 feet, they split like a snake-tongue. Kaneria says, "I choose metal as it is the most suitable material for my forms. No other material will have the strength necessary for it."⁴⁰ It is true that no other material will be able to hold a heavy and tall structure like this on a very small base. His 'untitled' sculpture of this type (Plate 78; fig.174) is nine feet in height and its tubular and rounded forms present with their polished surface a sensuous effect. His sculptures of this phase are mostly untitled because the form is here more important than the subject. According to Gulam Shaikh the initial influence for this phase was provided by the works of well-known sculptors like Bryan Kneale and Philip King. However, he says, "There is something uncanny in the biomorphic structures of his sculptures that distinguish them from the more formalistic works of English sculptors".⁴¹

Nagji Patel, another Baroda sculptor, works mainly in stone and marble. He was born in 1937 in the village of Juni Jithardi, Gujarat. He completed his post-graduation in sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts under a cultural scholarship offered by the

Government of India. He uses the basic shapes together with contrasts in effects of textured surfaces and polished surfaces. Thus he builds his form by the volume and the surface quality bound together. His 'Animal' in the black marble reminding the form of bull and 'Bird' in pink marble have simplicity of form as well as effective contrast in textural surfaces. His series titled "Deity" (Plate 79; fig. 177 and 178) reveal the similar quality of combining varied textural surfaces creating an interesting result.

Nagji's works have been shown in the Biennales at Sao Paulo and Antwerp and in the exhibition, Modern Asian Art, at the Fukuoka Museum of Art, Japan in 1979 and 1980. He was invited to participate in an International Symposium of Sculpture in Yugoslavia in 1979. There, in Arandjelovac, he worked in a marble quarry with a team of international sculptors in executing a monumental sculpture in the sculpture park.

In the absence of any specific credo, only certain generalizations about the Baroda School can be made on the basis of their obvious achievements. It may be briefly said that Baroda School created for the students a proper atmosphere for learning the essential basic elements about art-expression, and developing their own personality. They were given knowledge about the formal elements of painting and sculpture. They were also encouraged to explore freely a variety of materials and media. Their curiosity was aroused about the diverse problems concerning art and to look at various art-traditions of the world with an open-mind. They were also made aware about the relevance of the environment in which

they were living and develop an introspective attitude towards our own art/heritage. All these together helped to increase their sensitivity and developed their own style with indigenous character. Over the years the suspicions had developed in the minds of many regarding the effectiveness of institutional training and that it cannot lead to creativity on the analogy of the belief that, "Poets cannot be produced by training". This persistent suspicion has been ^{believed} ~~believed~~ by the art-educational experience from Baroda, through the past three decades as Ratan Parimoo has observed elsewhere, Baroda has proved "....that institutional training can stimulate creativity, which has been a new experience for India. They have aimed at giving due place to individuality and proving that dichotomies between 'traditional' and the 'contemporary' can be resolved given the fertile ground for genuine urge for artistic expression".⁴²

REFERENCES

1. From the personal interview with Prof. V.R. Amberkar.
2. From the Book 'Art in Painting' by Bernes, Pub.
3. Op.cit., fin. No.1.
4. This quality of Bendre's paintings has already been discussed in the Chapter on Indore Painters. ~~For his paintings of this style, see plate , fig.~~
5. From personal interview with N.S. Bendre.
6. Given in the small pocket book published by Lalit Kala Publication on 'Bendre'.
7. From P.48 of 'Studies in Modern Indian Art', by Ratan Parimoo. Published by Kanak Publications, Books India, New Delhi in the year 1975.
8. From the catalogue of the 'Retrospective Exhibition, Kalidas Samman' with the title 'K.G. Subramanyan'. Published by the Department of Culture, Madhya Pradesh, Government, Bhopal.
9. From the unpublished article of Ratan Parimoo on 'Influences of Indegeneous Factors on Modern Indian Art'.
10. From article 'education', by N.S. Bendre, 'Artists of Art', Seminar, Dec.1960.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., Gulam Shaikh's article on K.G. Subramanyan's paintings.
13. Subramanyan's article 'Thoughts on Murals', expressed in a small article incorporated in the above catalogue.
14. From 'Citertion' in the above catalogue.

15. This painting 'Krishna Lila' was reproduced in the catalogue of the national Exhibition of that year (1955).
16. See the catalogue of the Bombay Art Society's exhibition of the year 1956-57.
17. This is reproduced in the catalogue of the Bombay Art Society's Exhibition 1957-58.
18. Ibid.
19. From the article on 'Bhupen Khakhar' in the 'In Quest of Identity' by Geeta Kapur, Vrishchik publication.
20. From article 'Modern Art of India - a point of view' by Nissim Ezekiel. Date and the name of the Newspaper is not known.
21. Op.cit., f.n. no.19.
22. This particular painting was also reproduced in Lalit Kala Contemporary No. 19. but with a different title (Landscape) which has no significance with the paintings.
23. From personal interview with Jeram Patel.
24. Ibid.
25. From the article 'Jeram Patel' by Nibha Joshi in the Lalit Kala Contemporary No.19 and 20.
26. Ibid.
27. From the catalogue of the 'All-India Exhibition of Drawings', 1975-76, organised by Lalit Kala Academy.
28. From the article 'Contemporary Art in Gujarat', by Dr.Ratan Parimoo.

29. Bakre's sculpture pieces to show variety of materials as well as ways of expressions, his 'contaur' (Wood), 'Mother's pride' (Poster), 'Narielwala' (Bronze) provide fine evidences for this.
30. Pansare's big reliefs were carved in Malad stone while he used wood and bronze for his small statuettes as well as portrait sculptures. His big equestrian Shivaji was done in bronze.
31. Matisse was found of using this word 'Arabesque' which is a linear conception, it is also related to the decorative conception found in Oriental Art. From Herbert Read's Concise History of Modern Sculptures.
32. See fig.25 and 30 from Herbert Read's Concise History of Modern sculpture', pub. Thames and Hudson, London, p.34 and 37.
33. See Sankho's sculpture pieces 'Head of the Girl' (Aluminium) done in 1958 and 'Woman' (Bronze) done in 1960.
34. Herbert Read 'Concise History of Modern Sculpture' p.54.
35. Ibid., p.196.
36. See the article on 'Sankho Chaudhuri', title 'How Sankho creates his sermons' in stone by Pushpa Sunder, Published in Sunday Standard dated Sept.12, 1971.
37. Ibid.
38. This sculpture was reproduced in the Bombay Art Society's Exhibition Catalogue of the year 1961-62.

39. 'Bull'

40. Personal interview with Kaneria.

41. "The Indians abroad' Three Young Painters', by Gulam
Mahammed Shaikh.

42. Article 'Indigenous Culture and the Function of the Art
Education' by Ratan Parimoo.