

## PRACTICES OF TRADITIONAL PRINTMAKING TO DEVELOP LOCALLY AND INCREASE THE POSSIBILITIES WITH CONTINUOUS PRACTICES IN SANTINIKETAN

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### Abstract

This paper proposes a discussion regarding the traditional practice of printmaking in the Santiniketan. Here comes the argument that how the continuous practice of printmaking within students, teachers and significant artists transcend local histories and conventions. Besides, local histories santiniketan's departmental environment of the Kala Bhavana helps us to maintain the traditional practice with its own glory. The statement does not portray the relation between contemporary and traditional art as necessarily antagonistic but instead as productively dialectical.

**Keywords:** Traditional Practice, Visual Art, Printmaking, Planography.

### Introduction



The aim of this paper is to discuss the traditional practice of printmaking in Santiniketan. Hence, I analyzed historical references and contemporary techniques to develop the conventional approach in Santiniketan.

The development encouraged artists to explore and understand the potentiality of printmaking and used it to reproduce works of print in visual art. Those techniques and final images are significant evidence of traditional practices.

Development of subject matter may derive from the work initiated by newly formed ideas and aspirations. The definition of appropriate subject matter is determined after the discussion of student and teacher. The traditional practice suggests and agrees upon a program of research and development. For a student, the research program is closely allied to the work completed in preparation. Students are expected to produce a portfolio of print; associated with

sketchbook of drawings, written and visual materials. Moreover, they also need to demonstrate thematic and technical research of experimentation in technique, format, and media. Completed prints should be executed with high regards to make a presentation and printmaking convention; wherever appropriate. Thus, work should be entirely edited and presented professionally.

- Development of practical printmaking skill
- Different activities help to develop the traditional practice of printmaking
- Development of creative working and professional conduct in the production of a portfolio of print
- Development and encouragement of teamwork and students interaction occur during the workshop-based activity

### **Traditional Practice of Printmaking:**

Traditional printmaking is an introduction of ideas to the basic printmaking processes. Emphasis will be based several things, such as making and printing prints, understanding the history of various printing processes, developing original concepts and via ideal presentations. The printmaking practice also provides creative, innovative as well as traditional mediums. Printmakers have their imaginary way of innovations. The world of contemporary print is traditional and cutting-edge innovation. More than any other media, printmaking has evolved and adapted many of the latest ideological, material and processes of its time. At the same time, it also represents different substances and their own cultures and traditions.

Historically speaking, print media has always been on the cutting edge of artistic practice—usually, taking a process and turning it into a new method of art production.

Artists initially used printmaking techniques for mass-production of an origin. In fine art, printmaking is a process of producing artwork, where creating an image on a single surface is called a ‘Matrix’. The method of transferring the image is repeated many times. Works printed from a single plate is called edition. A limited edition is formed from a single plate. Some prints, after binding together in a book format; are called ‘artist books’.

### **Development of traditional practice in Santiniketan:**

Nandalal Bose was the pioneer of establishing the Graphic Department, at Kala Bhavana in Santiniketan. Initially, only a few artists demonstrated and taught the various printmaking processes at Kala Bhavana. However, with time, more artists got connected with printmaking techniques as an art form. Ramendranath Chakravarty, Binode Bihari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Baij, Mahindra Bhushan Gupta and Biswarup Bose are some Indian artists who generated and sustained great interest in printmaking during the 1930s and 40s. They experimented with all these various techniques and produced several intaglio and relief prints. They practiced this medium freely, which was India's turning point for printmaking. They concentrate on using the printmaking practice to bring a revolution in fine art.

Somnath Hore is another artist who contributed significantly to the development and practice of printmaking in Santiniketan. He was experimenting and continuing a research process with

various practices in practical printmaking. His multi-colored intaglio gave a tremendous challenge to others artists at that time in Santiniketan. He also started lithography on stone in Santiniketan.

Other prominent printmakers of that period followed Sanat Kar and Lalu Prasad Shaw. They also practiced engraving and lithography. Therefore, their continuous printmaking practice maintains the traditional method of printmaking technique.

In the syllabus of Santiniketan printmaking practice, students follow a body of work with combined technique and concept. Practices and communication skills relevant to the discipline are taught, preparing students and encouraging the application of critical and visual thinking. In Santiniketan, working closely with teachers and student helps to build a solid conceptual, technical and research goal. Thus, the whole processes of the project are relevant to contemporary printmaking and the development of traditional print. Individual projects match each idea and creative work in printmaking.

The art school maintains the tradition by practicing all techniques initially to build up basic skills and knowledge. However, they are also trying to keep different conceptual thought processes within students. Therefore, another question comes to mind that how can a printing image define the traditional practice. However, when artists and students work on different mediums unboundedly, the environment of Santiniketan automatically help them to concentrate on their prints. There are few artists who are still experimenting with nature and produces excellent vibes of Santiniketan's in their work.

Another way derived from traditional practice is by stylization. Some artists maintain the style before practice. Ajit Seal, a known printmaker in India, who works in Santiniketan at Kala Bhavan. His regular exercise and experimenting with all printmaking mediums prove the traditional approach. The other Santiniketan continuous practice of printmaking take a different place than other university and colleges in India. Present Santiniketan department of printmaking has mushroomed into a printmaking hub under the guidance and efforts of printmaker Nirmalendu Das, Ajit Seal, Salil Sahani, Arpan Mukharjee and Aditi Ganeev Sangwan.

#### **Different activities develop the traditional practice of printmaking:**

Organising several workshops through exchange program, and interactive artist participation, maintains a continuous practice in departmental environment and automatically encourages the artists to be deeply involved with their new ideas. Students' involvement with these collaborative workshops for sharing ideas and producing several new works continuously maintains Santiniketan's traditional practice. There are few possibilities not only to invent printmaking techniques but also maintain conventional techniques and new ideas for building a career in printmaking.

#### **Conclusion:**

To conclude, all the evidence has been collected from the Graphic Department at Visva Bharati University, West Bengal. Those evidences are images, videos and recorded interviews of

different workshops. All those evidences are significant for this paper to validate. Moreover, supporting evidence could be granted that traditional practice is flourishing as an extraordinary artistic practice held at Graphic Department, Kala Bhavana. However, the Traditional Practice of different techniques in printmaking identifies the place. This practice involves new audiences and helps them to get nourished with a unique experience.

One core issue was discussed during the session, how printmaking had artistic and aesthetic value in contemporary practice. Here, I am explaining that these are best understood by considering the categories of function, process, materials and helps to organise a write-up to provide a set of reading information in this paper. In this paper, I explained the categories and functions of printmaking processes with my best understanding which I gained throughout those productive workshops. This reading information can benefit those who are interested in working in printmaking medium as an artistic practice.

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