

Design for All



Partha Mondal, Dance of Democracy, Tempera on Paper, 2016

"Beyond the Loop of Convention"

Guest Editor: Associate Professor Dr. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India

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GUEST EDITOR:



Dr. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy has studied Fine Arts in Visva Bharati University Santiniketan and did her doctoral research in Visual Culture from the Department of Design, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. She is currently working in the Discipline of Fine Arts, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences as an Associate Professor engaged in teaching and research in the area of Art and design.

She is a painter and printmaker with many national and international exhibitions to her credit.

Editorial

“All conventional wisdom has an element of truth to it, but good design requires more than an element of truth - it requires an ensemble of correct assumptions and valid calculations.”-Henry Petroski

Most of us in today’s world hold an overblown image of our adherence to either a conventional wisdom or an independent thinking. Convention is often seen as a troubleshooter to avoid failure. Our idea of ‘rule’ is often synonymous to formula.

“Some of these rules were summed up in traditional four-word phrases which the disciple could learn to memorize by chanting,” - E. H. Gombrich, (Art and Illusion, page. 149)

As design researchers the question is rather lopsided and the answers are unattended for obvious reasons. In order to overcome contradiction in our thinking process we must first try to understand what does an institutional knowledge really do to us. This is for sure that convention provides us with a tried and tested remedy for a successful design outcome. It empowers us to jump into anything without inhibition.

Formula ensures access to the very map that each time fetches us the desired treasure at the end of the hunt. On the other hand, predictability tires us to the extent of initiating newer experimentations beyond the loop of convention. We venture without the perpetual fear of failure to attend success.

As the invited Guest Editor of the April issue of Design for All India, I decided to expose the wide range of research pursued by the young research scholars from the discipline of Fine Arts, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences and Department of

Design, at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. I solicited nine researchers to share their recent research endeavours in the form of articles on the aspects of new experiments in visual culture.

All the authors come from a diverse academic and cultural background resulting the articles discussing varied aspects of looking, thinking and doing with a common interest of investigating the conventional construct of design culture and identifying the building blocks that made it stand steady. Following which the researchers tried to look beyond the structure to identify its existing pattern and then develop newer constructs by restructuring them.

In this collection of essays titled 'Beyond the loop of Convention' the authors question institutionalization of certain mediums and materials over others to contextually discuss on the merit of new and alternative mediums. Objects of all kinds potentially became materials for the new expression, practices evolve with their concern for waste and refuse, demotivating the condescension of accepted materials in art. It sees convention as a loop that is ongoing, continuous yet repetitive. That keeps coming back as a recurring decimal to remind us to remain grounded indicating the never-ending flow that also wipes out old blemishes. There are discussions on alternative space where true learning can take place. Alternative ways of dissemination of tacit knowledge for rural livelihood. Symbolic patterns that evoke ambiguity in interpretation that are intertwined to form perspectives with visual and oral inferences.

Dr. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy



Aranya Bhowmik

He is a curator, art writer and researcher. He is currently doing his doctoral research in Fine Arts discipline, Humanities & Social Sciences Dept. Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. He has done his graduation in History of Art in Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan and Post-Graduation in Art History and Aesthetics in Faculty of Fine Arts in M.S. University of Baroda. He has also taught in various art institution over the past years. Modern and contemporary art and art history has been his field of interest which also enabled him to work on his curatorial projects like Material Metaphor in 2021. He has also written in Art Magazines, Journals and Blogs like Art & Deal, Art East, Art Facts, Insignia, Astanzi.com, Searching Lines, Artsome.co and others. He is currently based in Kanpur.

Thread of Thought: Understanding Embroidery in the Context of Contemporary Indian Art

Aranya Bhowmik

Abstract

There are certain mediums and materials that are institutionalized, where they are taught and practiced in art academies as well as predominantly found in the studios of many artists. But there are certain mediums and materials that emerge out to be unconventional physically as well as conceptually. Embroidery or thread-based works have emerged as a significant practice in contemporary Indian art. Embroidery has often been used in craft and utility based works and often avoided or used as a peripheral medium in mainstream art practice. The flexibility and diversity that the medium offers tend to be an important element for certain artists, who have located the potential of the medium and have used it in their works.

In order to understand the adaptation and implication of embroidery in Indian contemporary art, the paper will critically discuss the works of Rakhi Peswani and Sumakshi Singh. Both the artists employ embroidery in distinctive manner which enables conceptual and critical discourses that challenges the status quo of embroidery as a craft medium. Rakhi Peswani signifies as well as questions the stereotypical role of a woman and the often-ignored labor involved in the process of embroidery through her work. Whereas Sumakshi Singh is interested in creating and understanding the dynamics of space, where her thread-based works are skeletal and illustrative in nature that creates an

interaction with the surrounding space as well as memory, time and existential ideas. The objective of the paper is to bring forward a discussion on diverse aspects of embroidery as a medium in the context of contemporary art as well as address the issue of institutionalization of certain mediums over others.

Keywords- Embroidery, thread-based work, institutionalization, unconventional, medium, art practice, contemporary

“Women have always made art. But for most women, the arts highest valued by male society have been closed to them for just that reason. They have put their creativity instead into the needlework arts, which exist in fantastic variety wherever there are women, and which in fact are a universal female art, transcending race, class and national borders. Needlework is the one art in which women controlled the education of their daughters, the production of the art, and were also the audience and critics.”¹

The debate over visual art’s hierarchy in terms of what is high art? And what is craft? Have been going on for ages. Institutionalizing certain mediums or artists favouring certain mediums and material over the other has created critical discourses both in the west as well as in the east. Challenging the patriarchal system of art, female artists throughout ages have created a distinctive practice through the medium of embroidery or needle work. But it was always counted as domestic work or recreational work rather than a piece of art like a painting done in oil or a sculpture carved out of a stone. Embroidery has been an important visual language

¹ Mainardi, P, “Quilts: The Great American Art”, *Feminism And Art History Questioning The Litany*, Edited by Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, Routledge, 2018, p. 331

for women in different cultural contexts at different times, which helped to express their experience, ideas and artistic skill through needle work. "Art history views the art of the past from a certain perspective and organizes art into categories and classifications based on a stratified system of values, which leads to a hierarchy of art forms. In this hierarchy the arts of painting and sculpture enjoy an elevated status which other arts that adorn people, homes or utensils are relegated to a lesser cultural sphere under such terms as 'applied', 'decorative' or 'lesser' arts. This hierarchy is maintained by attributing to the decorative arts a lesser degree of intellectual effort or appeal and a greater concern with manual skill and utility" (Pollock, Parker, 50).

The hierarchy between art and craft emerged in the renaissance and by mid-nineteenth century there was sharp distinction between art and craft both in practice as well as in pedagogy. (Pollock,Parker,50). The amount of serious and critical agency given to artworks like painting and sculpture was not given to embroidery as a medium which had functional and decorative characteristics attached to them. The sheer discrimination between art and craft was also made on the line of class and gender, where embroidery became a female craft practiced for domestic and utilitarian purposes. The skill and creative agency was trivialized in terms of embroidery or such applied or functional art forms and was stereotyped as feminine artwork or craft. Whereas painting and sculpture were admired and given a higher status than embroidery which was seen as a craft practiced and admired by working class people.

"For the British Women's Suffrage Movement it was a connection they believed they could use to advantage. In their hands, embroidery was employed not to transform the place and function

of art, but to change ideas about women and femininity. Far from desiring to disentangle embroidery and femininity, they wanted embroidery to evoke femininity - but femininity represented as a source of strength, not as evidence of women's weakness. The movement left behind numbers of embroidered marching banners: some identifying local groups, others representing individual campaigns and professions, and a series celebrating great women of the past and present." (Parker, 197) The suffrage movement had challenged the social hierarchy and exclusivity of art that was admired, practiced and catered to a particular class of people who had relegated needle work to an inferior form of craft with feminine characteristics. The suffragists were able to break the stereotype and classification attached to embroidery by making it a public art form through embroidered banners and posters that signified femininity as a source of strength and inspiration. The slogans and images that were stitched up on the banner also challenged the monopoly of certain agencies that were involved in printing and painting banners and posters for political and social rallies. The suffrage leaders were able to channelize the domestic, feminine quality of embroidery tradition into a device of protest for the civic rights of women in England. The feminine quality that was often attributed to embroidery was devised into strong political images through embroidered banners; the suffrage movement was one of the first to bring serious attention towards the practice of embroidery in western society.

One such example of protest banner dating back to the early twentieth century, when the women rights movement was at its peak. The banner depicts words and images that signifies the boldness and strength of the movement which was entirely formed and led by women. The contrasting depiction of iris flowers, hammer and horse motifs signify the idea of equality

between men and women, the flower represents the feminine quality but at the same time hammer and horse represents the labor and strength of the working class where the gender should not be the determining factor for any kind of employment in the society. The iris flowers were one of the most popular motifs in needlework of that period juxtaposing the hammer and horse with the slogan "Deeds Not Words" represents an important idea of equality. The embroidery practice transforms from being a beautiful decorative object to a strong revolutionizing language that challenges the rigid patriarchal structure of the society. The banner was made by the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) that aggressively protested against the inequality in the society.



Suffrage banner, Museum of London, London. c 1911 . Paint, embroidery and applique.

Image source- <https://marshallcolman.blog/2019/09/23/may-morris/>

Judy Chicago's 'Dinner Party' (1979) was one of the important feminist artwork that employs embroidery in a distinctive manner. The work consists of triangular tables with plates and runners that depict different women's names from the history, where it addresses the lacuna of historical and mythical accounts on

several women who played an important role in their own context. The process of the work is also significant as Chicago had employed almost four hundred men and women to create the piece. There is a sense of collective effort to revisit and revive the historical and mythical female figures who were often shadowed under the patriarchal structure of the society. The embroidery was also applied in a way that evoked the different embroidery traditions of different periods and cultures. Judy Chicago explains the process, "We examined the history of needlework - as it is reflected in textiles and costumes, sculptures, myths and legends and archaeological evidence - from the point of view of what these revealed about women, the quality of their lives and their relationship to needlework." (Parker, 209).



Dinner Party, Judy Chicago, 1979

Image Source: https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner_party/
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/a-Judy-Chicago-The-Dinner-Party-1979-detail-Judith-plate_fig3_254958376

In India embroidery played an important role in domestic life as well as artistic tradition. There are different embroidery traditions in different provinces primarily practiced by women (but men also

take part in some of the traditions). Traditions like Kantha from Bengal, Dhadki from Gujarat, Chikankari from Lucknow and Phulkari from Punjab are some of the most popular and fascinating traditions that embody different cultural ethos of India. However the hierarchical segregation was there as these traditions were classified as decorative arts that are mass produced and lack the intellectual property needed to become a part of so-called mainstream high art. In the modern art context the gap between art and craft grew wider except few exceptions like the works of Mrinalini Mukherjee and Meera Mukherjee who have adapted and experimented with knotting and needle work with dyed hemp and yarn. However in contemporary times some artists have been able to develop artistic practice that embodies embroidery in an unconventional manner that challenges the hierarchy of art and craft and the notion of femininity through their work. In order to broaden this discussion, the paper will look into the works of Rakhi Peswani and Sumakshi Singh.

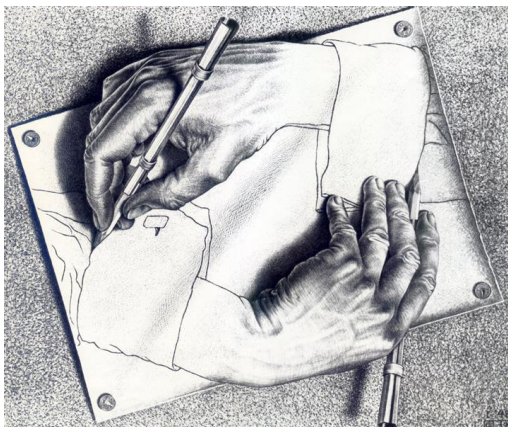
Needlework and diverse fabrics and material surface plays an important role in the works of Rakhi Peswani. Her works evokes a cerebral understanding that connotes multiple trajectories related to society, gender identity, memory, history and materiality. She plays around with diverse materials and processes that creates an individual and distinctive language. Parul Dave Mukherjee talks about her practice, " Rakhi Peswani belongs to this rare moment in the history of contemporary art that stages complex conversation between conceptual art, minimalism and figurative art, At the same time, she undoes academic hierarchies set up between art and craft, painting and stitching, sculpture and sewing by weaving stories, knitted forms and embroidering concept." (Mukherjee,5). Rakhi amalgamates academic knowledge with traditional knowledge where her stitched forms and figures

often involves art historical trajectory as well as images from local and personal contexts. The embroidered contours have a distinctive characteristic that resembles drawing and sketching but more visceral and tactile in appearance.

In the work titled 'On the Rules of the Game' (2008) Peswani projected the procedural complexity involved in the process of embroidery. The diptych consists of text and image that challenges the notion of embroidery as a manual labor rather than a conceptual process. The first image depicts two hands, one in motion with a needle stitching the other hand with a text- "Every stitch is also a Trick". Peswani's interest towards history of art can be traced here as one is reminded of M.C Escher's illusionistic work 'Drawing Hands" (1948). Peswani brilliantly embodies the western reference with a pun that not only challenges the art and craft hierarchy but also represents the intellectual involvement in the process of embroidery which is often neglected and trivialized. The other image of the diptych depicts two hands engaged in stitching a velvet fabric with a stitched text- "Every stitch is also a Prick" connotes the painstaking labor involved in the process of needlework. The two images trace the important aspect of embroidery as a process that involves physical and mental involvement from the artist which is equal to any conventional medium like painting and sculpture. The work has both visual and tactile sensibility which is distinctively found in Rakhi Peswani's work.



On the Rules of the Game, Materials: Hand embroidery and velvet appliqué on muga silk, 2008



Drawing Hands, M.C. Escher, lithograph, 1948

Image Source-

http://www.rakhipeswani.com/on_the_rules_of_the_game.htm

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/m-c-escher/drawing-hands>

"Rakhi explores the interface between drawing and stitching, between two dimensional silhouettes and three dimensional extensions between the language of naming and that of seeing. It is in the gaps and overlaps between our sensations of sight, touch, smell and taste that experience occurs in continuum, language is necessarily governed by fragmentation and repetition-

the sources of its order and condition.” (Mukherjee, 4). Peswani’s work is not only dependent on visual sensation but also experiential through the conversation between text, image and tactility of the material surface. In the work ‘Misnomers (Reconstructing the Body)’ Peswani plays with words and images as well as its connotation. Instead of representing a human body, Rakhi depicts parts of a body juxtaposed with texts that connote the function or purpose of the organ. In one of the works she depicts lungs made of cotton and translucent fabric adjacent with words- ‘hope’ and ‘breathe’ which signifies the function of that organ and its role in keeping a human being alive. The diverse material and process of embroidery and applique on a mundane fabric like towel creates an interesting dialogue between three dimensionality and two dimensionality. In another work of this series represents an ear juxtaposed with a false braid and the text- ‘hear’. The image delves deep into the subject of gender identity, social construction that dictates certain parameters and rules for women. The braid represents the traditional concept of beauty and the word ‘hear’ connotes the idea that women have to listen and obey the norms and ways dictated by the patriarchal society. Rakhi Peswani experiments with materials and the methods where mundane objects transform into conceptual elements in her work. As Avijna Bhattacharya points out that the work of Peswani’s practice involves displacement and redefinition of mundane objects and forms from its “established socio-cultural etyma and replacing it within a different context” (Bhattacharya,17). Rakhi Peswani’s works are critical towards the compartmentalization of feminine characteristics as well as the hierarchical classification of embroidery as craft, Her profuse use of embroidery and fabric based material challenges the notion of academic art that doesn’t allow interaction with unconventional material and technique. She is able to create a language that

embodies both academic and craft idiom diminishing the art and craft distinction.



Misnomers (Re-construing the Body), cotton hand towel, hand embroidery and appliqué, 2009

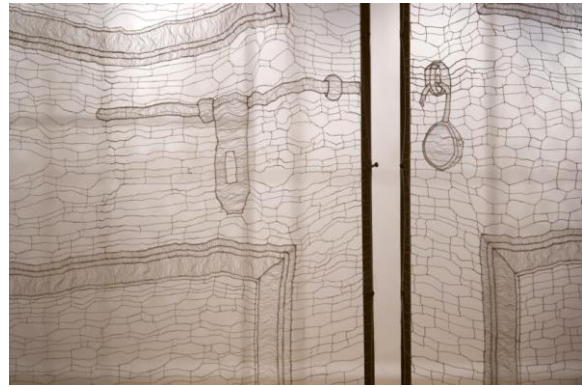
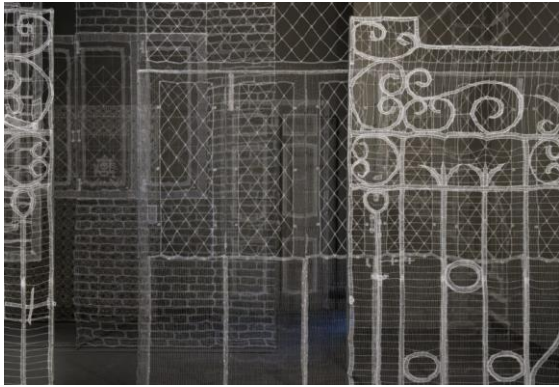
Image Source- <http://www.rakhipeswani.com/misnomers.htm>

“Embroidery also has a place in the feminist effort to transform the conditions of art practice, the relationship of artist to audience and the definitions of what constitutes art. Because embroidery is an extremely popular hobby, and a skill taught in schools, it is considered by many to be a more accessible medium, reaching a wider audience, than painting.” (Parker,208)

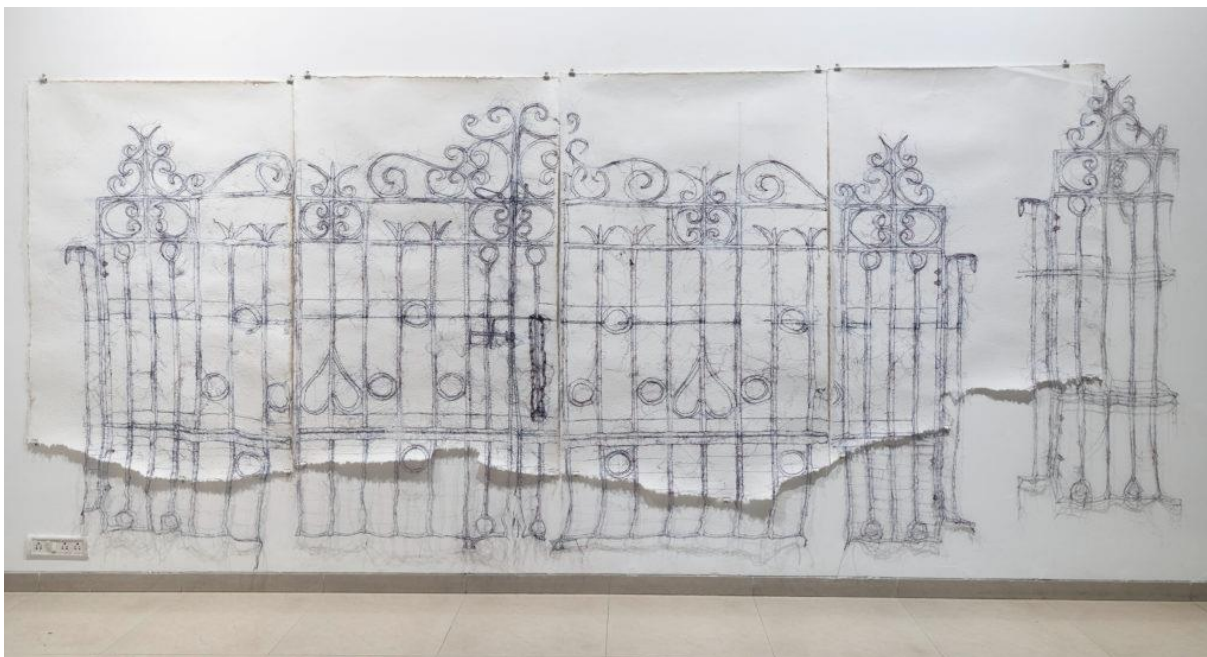
Throughout the ages the definition and application of embroidery has transcended from being a domestic hobby art to contemporary artistic practice. Sumakshi Singh is one such artist who employs embroidery at multiple scales- from organic forms carefully preserved in glass vitrines to life size architectural space that inhabits the entire gallery through its gossamer appearance. Her works are both visual and empirical in nature. The intricate and

delicate rendering of thread based works create a sense of temporality but at the same time embodies visceral sensation of memory and time. One of her most significant works is "33 Link Road ", which is the address of her grandparent's residence, built when they migrated from Pakistan to India, after the partition. The space where generations of memories are layered within the walls of the house. She recreates an exact replica of that house in the gallery with thread work. Sumakshi was able to transform a space with minute detailing of all the staircase, walls, door locks, windows and facades of the original 33 link road residence. The entire body of work was rendered through delicately done thread work on supporting frames to hold the embroidered pieces.

The work inhabits the gallery space as a transient entity that tries to create a corporeal body of the fragments of memories the artist had of that residence. The sense of fragility and fragmentation in the work resonates the impermanence of the moment and the making of memories, where some memories stayed but others were lost over the time. No matter what a house is made of it is temporal in the context of time and space. The skeletal form constructed through intricately stitched threads creates a visceral experience of the space. The artist explains her practice, "I think of embroidery as a way of making image which literally ties itself to the ground (usually fabric) and therefore, feels more permanent and fixed than many other forms of mark-making- for example, one can't easily erase it, like a drawing; with thread, an undoing is required. Ironically in this body of 'groundless thread drawings' that I am currently working on, this 'securing' of image to the ground is challenged, as the fabric itself is removed after the embroidery occurs, leaving behind what appears to be a thread skeleton- are apparition which levitates without support that was used to create it." (Shivram,29).



33 Link Road, Sumakshi Singh, Thread, 2020



33 Link Road, Sumakshi Singh, Thread, 2020

Image Source: <https://sumakshi.com/project/sakshi-gallery-mumbai-india/>

The medium and the technique applied for the work signifies the temporality of existence in the space time continuum. Freeing the embroidery from its ground lets the artist create a porous space potent with memories and histories of people and their lives attached to that space. Through the groundless embroidery Singh breaks away from the traditional method of embroidery and creates a language that goes beyond the conventional

understanding of drawing. The work is spatial drawing of memories and ideas attached to a space but not limited to it.

It is evident that embroidery throughout the ages have contributed to a great extent to shape artistic ideas that go beyond the academic study. Where traditional knowledge gained through generations of women gets translated in modern and contemporary works of women artists who have challenged the conventions and created a language that is potent with new possibilities both cerebrally as well as technically. The works of Rakhi Peswani delves into the critical issues of gender identity and social classifications and addresses the question of femininity and the hierarchical classification of art and craft.

Whereas Sumakshi Singh's work also goes beyond the conventional norms of drawing and the limitation of embroidery. Her work tries to create a space that archives the memory of a home that has served as a permanent address for a family for ages but over time people move away but their history and memories are left behind like shadows inhabiting the nooks and crannies of that house. The work also addresses the idea of temporality of time and space and questions the idea of permanence; it is the memories and moment that keeps that space alive in the minds of the people who had inhabited that space once.

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Debasish Ghorui is a doctoral candidate in Fine Arts discipline at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. He has completed his BVA and MVA in Painting (Indian Style) from Govt. College of Art and Craft, Calcutta. His keen interest in Ancient and Modern History of Indian Art and Aesthetics along with Methods and Techniques of Painting helped him grow a penchant for age-old Opaque Watercolor painting tradition of India. He is a practising painter, and his interest addresses contemporary urban issues through traditional opaque watercolor painting techniques.

As a practising artist, he has worked as free-lance in advertisement agencies and private organizations, while participated in several national and regional exhibitions and workshops including, the Annual Exhibition of Birla Academy, Kolkata, All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, Rajya Charukala Parshad, Kolkata, and Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, and also organized several group exhibitions. Apart from these, he has participated in the international seminar of Academic Research Conferences in 2019 (Singapore) and 2020 (Malé), International Conference on 'Performance Art and the Prospects of Folkloric Tribal Culture of

Eastern India' (West Bengal) and national seminar on 'Innovations and Research in Arts, Culture, Literature, Languages, Philosophy and Spirituality' organized by 'Krishi Sanskriti' (New Delhi). He has also served as a Full-Time Assistant Professor at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata.

Being acquainted with the opaque watercolour painting techniques his on-going research work encompasses the Opaque Watercolour painting tradition in post-millennium West-Bengal.



Dr. Ritwij Bhowmik serves as an Associate Professor at the Deptt. of Humanities & Social Sciences and Design Programme at IIT Kanpur, India. Trained as a painter, Bhowmik obtained MFA from Visva-Bharati University. Later he studied PG. Dip. from Northeast Normal University, China and earned Doctorate from National Chiao-Tung University, Taiwan. His research interest lies in the area of Visual-Culture and Art-History. He spent a tenure as a Guest-Professor at the University of Bonn and also delivered lectures on Indian-Art at the Universität zu Köln (Germany), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the Aalto University (Finland). He has participated in various national and international exhibitions and conferences and received with prestigious awards including the DAAD Research Stays Fellowship, Golden Bamboo Scholarship by National Chiao-Tung University, Chinese Govt. Scholarship by the Govt. of India, Award Grant by Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation (Canada), Institute Fellowship by IIT Kanpur, and Fulbright-Nehru A.P.E. Fellowship 2020-21.

Beyond the Loop: Contemporary Opaque Watercolour Painting Practice in West Bengal

Debasish Ghorui

Dr. Ritwij Bhowmik

Abstract

Since the dawn of the nineteenth century, the Indian art world has witnessed a pluralist mode in art practice while shrinking the perimeters of imported and indigenous. Concurrently, the global network of the international art world has successfully manifested a uniform mechanism of producing a standard for art and its aesthetic value – a loop where similar expressive forms have found repetitive conduits. Fashionable practice of new media, digital and interactive art encompassed fashion, design, technology, consumerism, and global economy, and side-lined the conventional mode of art practices. Beyond this loop, however, a group of studio-based individual young painters in West Bengal has taken up the opaque watercolour as a determined medium – with a new idiom and vision, to continue the conventional mode of painting. By incorporating the close encounters of some of these artists and detailed analysis of the painting techniques, this article would probe how an age-old painting medium found its contextual relevance in the contemporary context.

Key Words: *Contemporary Indian Art, Globalization, New media art, Digital art, Opaque watercolour, West Bengal.*

"Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were."

– Marcel Proust (in *Search of Lost Time*, 1993)

Cultural Assimilation to Cultural Dependency

Foreign influence in the Indian cultural field is not something unprecedented. Since ancient times to the eighteenth century, India was invaded by many extraneous forces, which had later settled in this land and disseminated their culture to the native people while assimilating the pre-existing one. However, the rising political concern of the modern world and the invasion of the British, and especially their subsequent changes implemented in the Indian socio-cultural arena, brought forward a complex situation, which can be perceived as 'cultural dependency.' Umeogu and Ifeoma (2012) define cultural dependency as a scenario where the culture of a given society is "consciously or unconsciously dependent" on another for its source of "cultural beliefs and practices." During the British regime, Indian society adopted the culture, values, and lifestyle of its Western rulers to get adjusted with the changing state of affairs, (Chatterjee, 1997). Mostly Eurocentric in nature, this dependency in the post-independence era, inclined to Marxist ideology at large. The formation of Progressive Groups, their activities, and agendas, reflected this inclination that was mostly borrowed from the cultural arena of the USSR and China (Sherlock, 1998). This influence was later side-lined by the American culture through the means of electronic media and financial capital, which has a steady growth in the history of India.²

² See 'Retrieve Indian culture from American influence: historian', *The Hindu* (<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/retrieve-indian-culture-from-american-influence-historian/article4151511.ece>)

During the grim political situation of post-World War II, the primary goal of U.S. foreign policy was “to contain Soviet power within the geographical boundaries” (Sempa, 2002). The ideological conflict between these two superpowers made U.S. extend their foreign aid to the underdeveloped nations, especially Western Europe, “to withstand communist subversion” (Reddy, 1997). India became a part of this aid during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (i.e., 1953–1961). Concurrently, an American philanthropist John D. Rockefeller III (1906–1978), who had fostered his deep interest in Japanese and Asian culture in post-World War II era, founded the Council on Economic and Cultural Affairs (CECA) in 1953 to assist Asian farmers.³ In its initial year, the corporation functioned as a charitable organization to support economic and cultural activities in Asian countries. In 1954 by closely observing the cultural affairs of Nepal, India, and Pakistan, Douglas Ensminger (1910-1989), a sociologist, explained to Rockefeller III that countries like USSR and China are influencing the cultural field of India by “intensifying their cultural activities and support of cultural societies,” and that to “develop mutual understanding and reduce tensions” between India and the U.S. it is much needed that the latter should initiate “mutual cultural contact” (Ithurbide, 2013). His explanation was supported by the formation and concurrent activities of the Progressive groups in India.

Within the next few years, Rockefeller III’s Asian-American Organization and the CECA took up the objective to stimulate and continue various cultural activities that include visits of music, drama, and dance groups from Asia, along with the exchange of

³ See John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, 1906-1978 (<https://rockarch.org/resources/about-the-rockefellers/john-d-rockefeller-3rd/#:~:text=John%20was%20released%20from%20active,Japan%20and%20all%20of%20Asia.>)

art materials and exhibits. More than three hundred cultural events were organized all across India, while art books, art materials, and reproductions of American artworks were disseminated with the aspiration of benefit to the Indian artists. Ithurbide (2013) cites that Indian artists like V. S. Gaitonde, Jyoti Bhatt, Akbar Padamsee, K. G. Subramanyan, Adi Davierwalla, and Tyeb Mehta had received grants from the JDR III Fund between 1963 and 1975 to visit U.S., meet American artists, and study and observe the cultural activities – especially the visual and performing arts – for one year.

Alongside, in the international sphere, the vanguard of the arts was switched from Paris to New York, owing to the political tensions occurred post-World War II. Art historian Joao Florencio (2016) explains that critics like Clement Greenberg advanced the role of art as a cultural weapon during the Cold War regime by criticizing the development of art in Europe as a “progressive flattening of the pictorial space” and an effort to imitate the visible world. Florencio further writes,

Against a USSR perceived as totalitarian and oppressive, with state-sanctioned socialist realism coming across as kitsch and formulaic propaganda. Abstract expressionism, with its variety of individual voices and painterly styles, would eventually become a symbol of the autonomy, liberty and creative freedom allegedly enjoyed by all in the West. These were values that, from then on, become manifest in the generalised perception of the US as the ultimate beacon of Western culture. (2016, para.11)

Such “liberty and creative freedom,” perceived by many scholars as a “global inclusive system” (Velthuis, 2015), were further exemplified during the closing decades of the Cold War when artists of many nations, ethnicities, and cultures (including India) achieved critical and commercial success in the West. Indian

artists, during this period, participated in the international biennales, exhibitions, and art talks, and got the opportunity to rub their shoulders with their contemporaries across the world. However, within India's geographical territory, the scenario was quite interesting. Delhi-based art writer and curator Kishore Singh mentions that artists outside this privileged community were virtually unaware about (and therefore bereaved of) any sort of scopes or grants to achieve such success. This is no surprise as Porter McCray (1908-2000), a long-time official of the Museum of Modern Art, was appointed as the executive director of the JDR III Fund in 1963 to promote artistic and cultural exchanges between the U.S. and Asia. To perform his job McCray had travelled extensively in Asia to meet new artists and find new potential grantees. Welcomed in the U.S., these handpicked grantees, on return to their native land, maintained close connections with the American art world, and many of them sought aids and assistance from JDR III Fund, Charles Brand Manufacturer, Museum of Modern Art, and many such allied agencies, to develop the pedagogy and infrastructures of Indian art institutions, museums, curation, and exhibition design. Furthermore, people associated with these American agencies presided to supervise the activities within these Indian institutions and provided their advice and recommendation on the materials – sometimes through the promising amount of grants (Ithurbide, 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that the Indian art world would flourish with a new vision taking the American culture as its parameter and consciously or unconsciously would become dependent on the same for its source of cultural beliefs and practices.

Transition and Transformation

Since the nineteen nineties, unprecedented technological advancements in electronic media permeated the Indian social arena from the Western world (especially the U.S.) started transforming Indian cultural identities (Khanwalker, 2014). Such development linked itself to innovative broadcast and private reception modes, and gradually the world-view of a new generation of Indian artists was broadened, owing to the sudden encounters with almost all of the on-going events in the international socio-political and cultural domain (Seid, 2007). Installation art, hyperrealism, new media creations, and digital representations swayed the post-Cold War global and Indian platform almost at the same time, laced with the personal “conceptually coded signs” of the artists (Pijnappel, 2007; Kapur,



Image 1. Sudharshan Shetty, 'Love', Stainless Steel and Fiberglass, 2006 (Source: Google Arts and Culture)

2000). Existing art theories were challenged to understand the “social value” of these new media, and artworks were displayed in the lived and deconstructed gallery spaces (Khanwalker, 2014).

Laced with this idea of creative freedom and technological development, territorial and cultural borders were shrunken in the virtual sphere and brought forward a pluralist mode blurring the perimeters of imported and indigenous (Alexander & Sharma, 2013). In order to contest the conventional notions of style, originality, and materiality, artists like Atul Dodiya, Shibu Natesan, Surendran Nair, Jitish Kallat, T.V. Santhosh, and Subodh Gupta started exploring various mediums and materials, hitherto unconventional in the field of Indian art, including factory-made and found objects, digital representations, installations, videos, and even organic excretions like cow dung, body fluids, artificial limbs, and body parts, along with regular household things, like utensils and the artists' body itself (Image 1, 2).



Image 2. Jitish Kallat, 'Rickshawpolis – 1', Acrylic and Gold Pigment on Canvas, bronze sculpture, 2005 (Source: Nature Morte)

Concurrently, artists within West Bengal like Chhatrapati Dutta, Chitrabhanu Majumdar, Paula Sengupta, Jayashree Chakravarty, Adip Dutta, Bhabatosh Sutar, and Sumantra Mukherjee were not far behind in this endeavour. The artworks of these artists embodied considerations like post-colonial diaspora, environmental crises, gender discrimination, and nostalgia (Image 3-5).



Image 4. Adip Dutta, 'Requiem', Fiberglass, painted acrylic sheets, lights, 2000 (Source: Aicon Gallery)

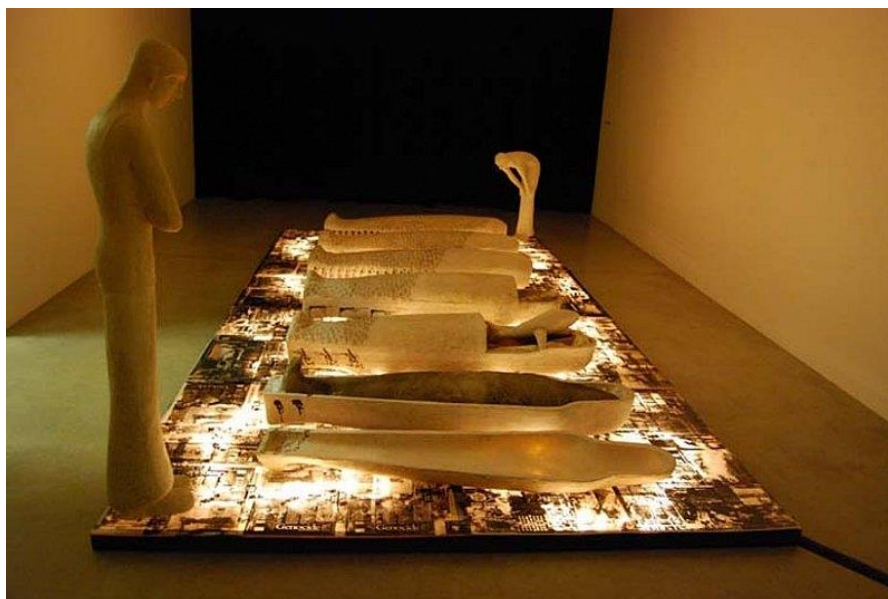


Image 3. Chhatrapati Dutta, 'Monocular-Binocular', Wood, found objects, textiles, iron, glass, serigraphy, video, light & sound, 2008 (Source: Ganges Art)



Image 5. Paula Sengupta, 'Rivers of Blood', Wood and fiberglass almirah, found objects, corn paper lining, 2010 (Source: Critical Collective)

Influenced by these artworks, many young emerging artists developed a fashionable practice, almost without any contextual relevance (Image 6, 7).

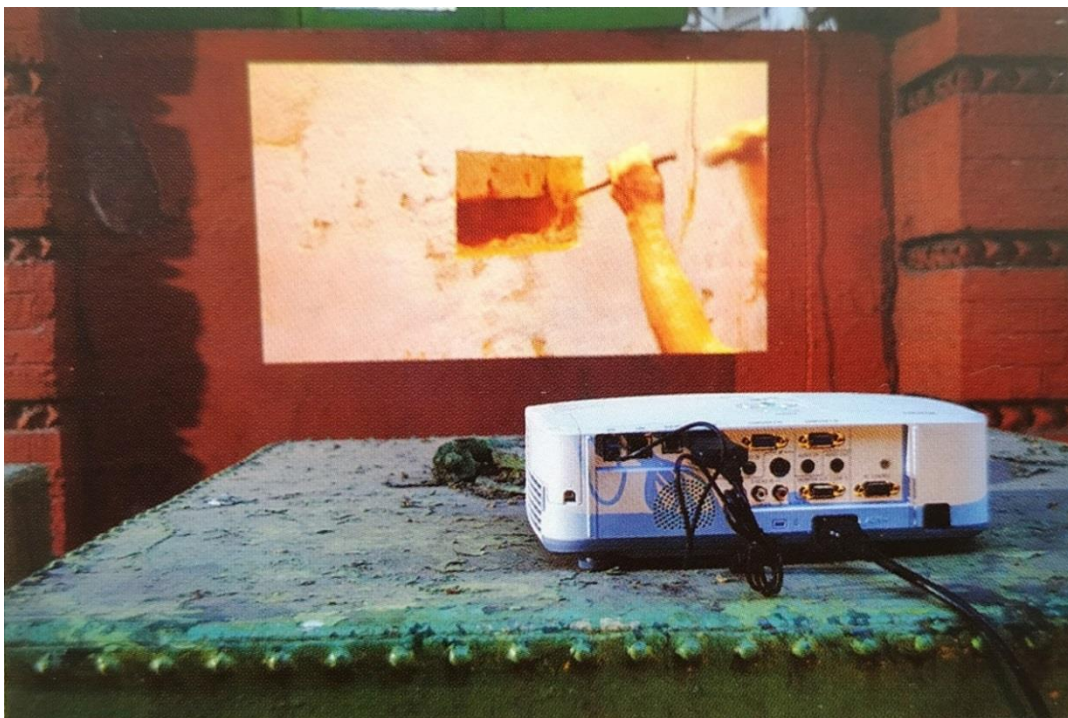


Image 6. Akash Dubey, 'Video Art', 2018 (Artist's collection)

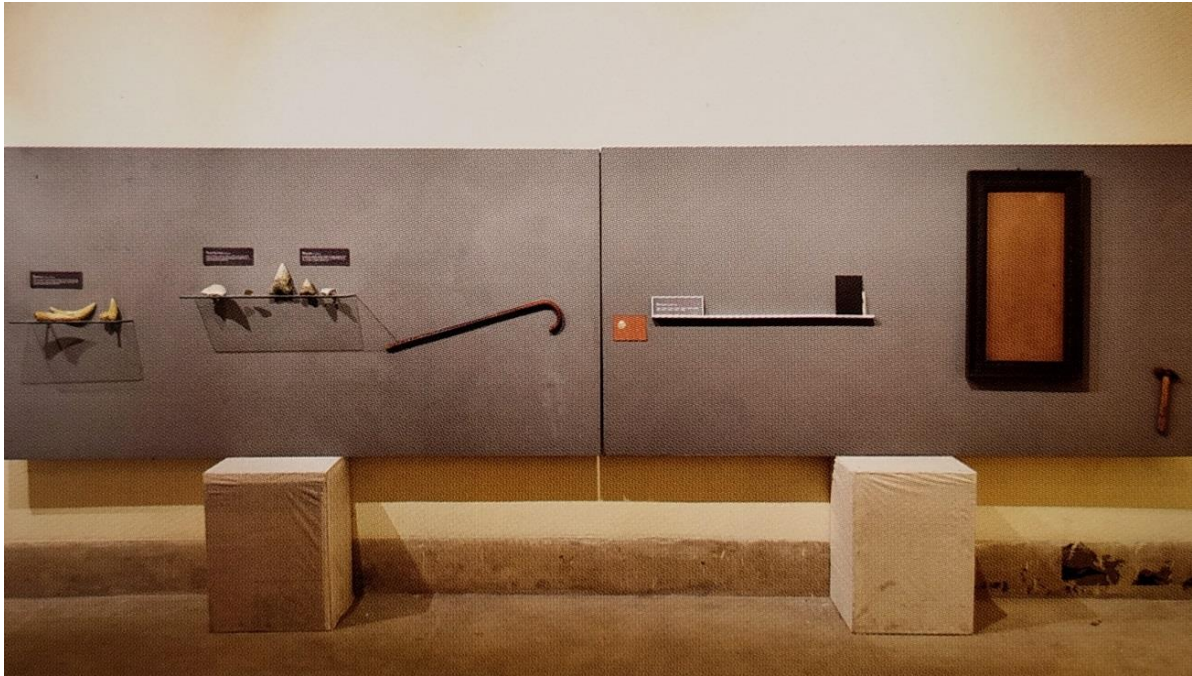


Image 7. Abdul Quadir, 'Installation', 2018 (Artist's collection)

Simultaneously, as soon as the art world expressed itself as a system encompassing fashion, design, technology, consumerism, and global economy, all these pluralist expressions gradually started manifesting a uniform mechanism of art-making (Stallabrass, 2004). It is time to admit that this mechanism is nothing but a 'loop,' where similar formal and technical experimentation keeps recurring and resurfacing. A major impact of this hegemonic scheme has befallen the practice of painting worldwide. In regard to this new hierarchy Susan Hudson (2018) explains that art practices during the nineteen sixties and seventies bore out a new orthodoxy, wherein painting was considered as "retrograde" and conceptual art as "challenging in ideology and means." All at the same, through the "systematic interconnections" between museums, artists' collective, residencies, biennales, and art fares, the "flow of capital" wielded its influence on the contemporary art practice to such an extent that both the global economy and art market were witnessing their dramatic growth proportionately to each other (Shanken, 2016). Stallabrass (2004) emphasizes that apart from "a zone of

purposeless free play," the art field had become "a minor speculative market" to be used for investment, tax avoidance, and money laundering.

Post-millennium contemplations

This was the premise when certain young artists in West Bengal swam against the stream. Despite their exposition to various media and the proclivity of many of their contemporaneous practitioners towards new media, digital art, and unconventional materials, they have emphasized the conventional model. In this regard, they chose the medium of painting as their mode of expression, while an age-old painting medium – opaque watercolour, served as the predominant medium for their practice. Most of these artists are in their mid-thirties and gradually marked their footsteps in the Indian art world with their individuality. This article discusses two of these artists – Avijit Pal and Partha Mondal.

Avijit Pal (b. 1984)

On completing his bachelor's and master's degrees, specializing in Modelling and Sculpture, from the esteemed Govt. College of Art & Craft, Calcutta, Avijit Pal engaged himself in exploring the domain of painting. In his own words,

I always had a predilection for painting, besides executing sculptures. Then, when I completed my masters and passed out of the college, I found it quite difficult to continue with my own set of sculpture or stylization – particularly due to the commissioned works. Doing commissioned work and experiments in the same medium is quite a difficult task. So I was in search of a mode, which is other than sculpture... so that I can explore it, can experiment with the medium

without any hesitation. The domain of painting provided me that freedom. (Personal conversation, 10 April, 2019)

He could have delved into the trajectory of the fashionable practice of site-specific installations, likewise his contemporaneous sculptors. However, in a conversation with the



Image 8. Avijit Pal, 'The Cloud', Iron and marble, 2009 (Artist's collection)



Image 9. Avijit Pal, 'Cloud Messenger', Wood and White Mrble, 2009 (Artist's collection)

researcher, Pal explained that he feels the site-specific installations and new media artworks displayed in contemporary art galleries are either blatantly imitating their Western counterpart or lacking contextual relevance in Indian soil. Furthermore, he believes the medium is crucial while executing an artwork. The bodily experiences attached to the manipulation of art materials are also important. Therefore, he personally did not find himself attuned to ephemeral forms of digital media. On the

other side, he thinks art materials and methods are subjective by nature. So, while executing most of his sculptures, he had used stone as a major medium since they deal with architectural influences, which can be best expressed in a medium closely related to concrete, bricks, and blocks (Image 8, 9). Same goes with his application of opaque watercolour, for his series of paintings, entitled 'Queen Dom' (Image 10, 11). He explains,

Since I'm portraying a domain govern by a Queen, I thought it would be better if I choose the medium of opaque watercolour – as it was used in medieval India. In the

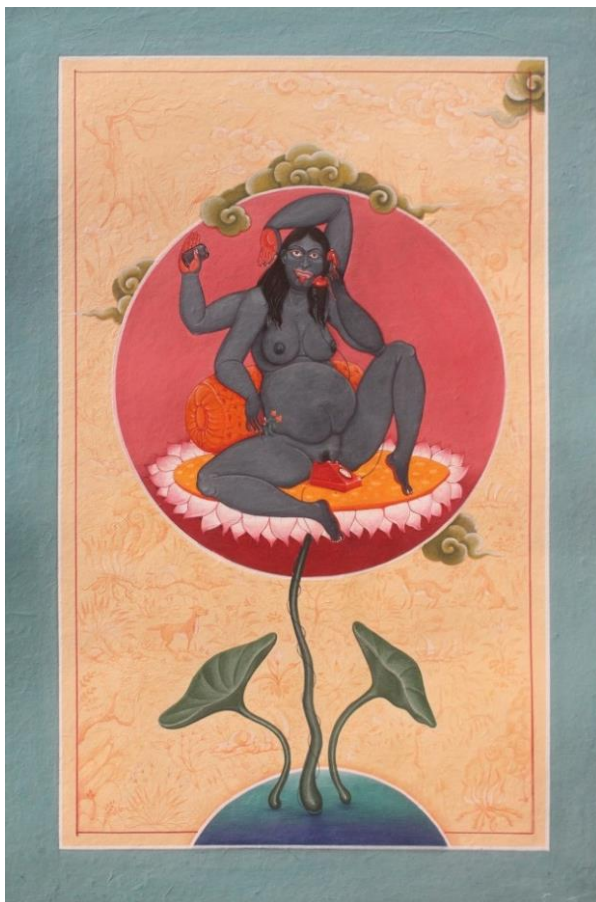


Image 10. Avijit Pal, 'Dirty Conversation', Tempera on Nepali Handmade paper pasted on Board, 2017 (Artist's collection)

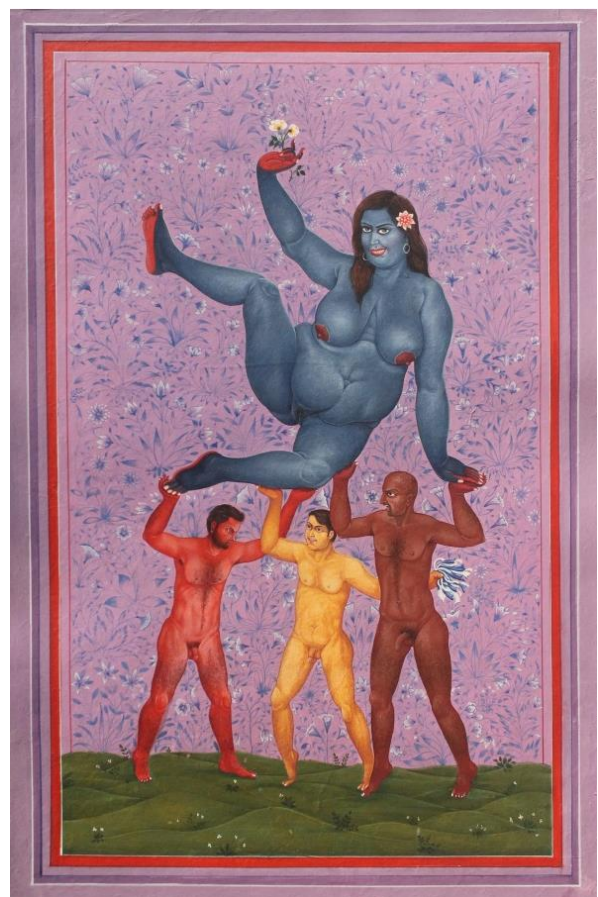


Image 11, Avijit Pal, 'The Cheerleader', Tempera on Nepali Handmade paper pasted on Board, 2018 (Artist's collection)

medieval period the medium was used to execute royal portraits. Besides, the luminosity, intensity, and the radiance

that the paints embody, are unmatched. So, when I decided to portray the land of a Queen, I couldn't but think of any other alternative. There should be a contextual relevance between the subject and the technique. (Personal conversation, 10 April, 2019)

Most of these paintings are executed on Nepali Handmade paper pasted on imperial size cartridge paper. Like traditional painters, he finely grinds the raw earth pigments, mixes them with natural emulsion-based adhesive, and patiently collects rainwater. He uses a thorough process of painting, where each layer is applied with utmost care. After filling up the major colour fields, he finishes off the painting with meticulously employed brush strokes with the help of thin and long tip round sable hair brushes. This technique resembles the treatments of Indian miniature painting, where ornamental designs and minute details were accomplished by laying the thinnest of brush strokes, side by side so that it could optically fuse and appear as a thin veil. Anyone who has observed a miniature with a magnifying glass would notice such detail unmistakably. For Pal, this predilection for opaque watercolour can be traced back to his upbringing in the vicinity of Kumartuli, where potters and clay idol makers have used this medium – however, in another form – for ages. Apart from this, his close inspection of Indian miniature paintings is influenced. All these inspirations culminated inside Pal, only to be expressed in his varied formalistic expression that he posits against the uniformity perceived in the contemporary art world.

Partha Mondal (b. 1986)

Painter Partha Mondal is quite younger than Avijit Pal. Interestingly, like Pal, he too was drawn towards the age-old tradition of clay idol-making of Bengal from an early age. At the

same time, he used to make copies of the popular images of deities from calendars hanging from his house walls. However, his proclivity towards devotional themes is expressed in a different conduit – social criticism. His interest in mythologies and popular culture allowed him to interpret them in his parameter, culminating in his sarcastic artworks (Image 12). Regarding his inclination to popular culture and mythologies, he says,

I do not perceive mythologies as mere anecdotes, narratives or scriptures. They are very much living entities to me, active within our social structure. Since most of our daily lives and practices are shaped by the teachings we find in mythologies, many of the instances happen around us often recur to mythological accounts, mostly through metaphor. (Personal communication, February 14, 2021)

Such perspective is supported by one of his paintings, entitled



Image 12. Partha Mondal, Dance of Democracy, Tempera on Paper, 2016 (Artist's collection)

'Group Photo of D-Voter' (2009), which portrays a group of Hindu deities (Image 13). Most of them are clad in clothes that we encounter people wearing in a typical Hindu marriage these days. All of them are standing or sitting still in front of the viewer as if they have given pose for a group or family photo in front of a camera. In Mondal's own words,



Image 13. Partha Mondal, Group Photo of D-Voter, Tempera on Paper, 2009 (Artist's collection)

The idea [of the painting] came into my mind during the controversy regarding the growing issue of CAA [Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019] and NPR [National Population Registration] that had raised turmoil across the country. All of a sudden it comes to my mind, how it might feel if these deities – who are a part of our culture and lives from the time unknown – were ever be called on to take photographs for their identification? It is this instance, where I started

imagining these characters wearing sherwanis and banarasi sarees adorned with ornaments, which is typical in middle class people in India, since most of them prefer to be photographed well clothed and well posed, instead of a candid snapshot. (Personal conversation, 15 May 2020)

Instead of merely depicting the deities like the typical calendar art, Mondal made them contextually relevant by deliberately placing them against the backdrop of a contemporary context. Concurrently, against the minimalist practice of the contemporary art world, where the physical labour of the artist is brought to a minimum, his constant search was for a mode of expression, which is attuned with his embodied practice of making clay idols that connects him with the grounded culture of Bengal. Therefore, he relied on the practice of painting, where he could attach physically to the act of creating something. To make the subjects more relatable, he chose the traditional practice of opaque watercolour. The other reason to select this medium lies in his experiences of making clay idols and his liking for Indian miniature paintings, which had allowed him to opt for earth pigments. He says,

"I'm very much influenced by the Indian miniature paintings, particularly the Rajput miniatures. The vibrant colour palette of these paintings attracted me. This is a reason why I choose opaque watercolour. Also, there are the influences of Bengal School painters. But, I have always wanted my paintings looked as if they are made out of clay. So I use the same process of applying paint that I do usually when I paint clay idols... I don't feel comfortable in any other medium besides this." (Personal conversation, 15 May 2020)

He usually pastes a smooth-grained cloth or Nepali handmade paper on a paper and applies a few coats of *Khori Mati* (usually recognized as chalk), mixed with natural adhesive as a ground on his support. The glossy effects of synthetic emulsion-based acrylic paints seem unfit to him for his paintings. Thus, he uses adhesives derived from the Neem tree and gum arabic. Although it is a painstaking process to purify the raw lumps of pigment and make paints out of it, he is willing to compromise with this labour in favour of gaining the desired outcome for his paintings.

At the formal and thematic level, Pal and Mondal's paintings coincided with the post-modernist approach. Therefore, issues such as originality, materiality, and stylistic individuality of image-making are often questioned through pastiche, collage, and borrowing images from open sources. In this way, their paintings have become both the hybridization and fusion of past and present, where the medium of opaque watercolour found its relevance in the post-millennium context, with new vigour.

Conclusion

In its short span, the article could but discuss the endeavours of two young painters in post-millennium West Bengal. While abandonment of painting as a medium has virtually become a precondition to the major portion of art practitioners, these young painters are unearthing new possibilities. They are doing so by, firstly, adopting the practice of painting. The extent of their experimentation with the thematic and formalistic aspect of the medium has manifested it as more of an embodied thinking. Secondly, they are doing it by choosing an age-old medium. Since ancient times, the fast-drying, fluid nature of the water-based opaque paint, and its subdued appearance, have drawn the attention of many artists. Added to this, within the span of almost seven centuries, a particular application method – a manner – has

been developed within the territory of the Indian subcontinent. Thin and even layers of opaque paint are applied on top of each other until it forms the desired body. Later, the painting is finished by employing intricate details and designs with thin brush strokes. This particular manner has resurfaced in the practice of these young painters, despite their exposition to various other mediums. Viewed against the stream of a uniform mechanism manifested by the global art system/network, the endeavours of these young artists bore out new possibilities to consider and probe into the conventional art materials and method. By remembering the past practice of opaque watercolour, the artists did not necessarily remember or imitate the same, rather in an urge to connect themselves with the historical past, however imaginatively, they altered the course of the practice and contextualized it in the post-millennium era.

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Neha Geeta Verma is a Practicing Artist exploring her work with her Ph.D. Research at Dept. of HSS, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. She is interested in the area of Art and architecture, miniature art, fractal art, geometry, and decorative symbolic expressions in Mughal art.

"Tree of Life: An analytical transformation of symbolism from history to multimedia design"

Neha Geeta Verma

ABSTRACT

From pre-historic cave paintings to WhatsApp emojis, symbols are the tool to depict the notions and feelings of masses and individuals. In the current info age, a Logo is a graphic mark or an emblem that identifies a commercial organization using a symbol, signature, or mark. Symbols are a meaningful way of simply representing a layered, complex idea. In the informative contemporary age, one can see thousands of symbols ubiquitous in multimedia design. Some prominent symbols have been carried since early human civilization and are still used in the design. The application of the "Tree of Life" is one significant symbol that has been used universally for ages. This symbol has an enriched history spanning cultures and centuries; considering that in mind, this present study takes

the "tree of Life" as a case example to explain and elaborate on how the design continuum evolves and creates a loop. This study will explore the roots of this complex and cherished symbol and investigate the present association of the same symbol in the contemporary multimedia design field.

The study will evoke multiple interpretations which are looped to form multi-layered symbolic expressions and perspectives with visual and verbal implications. Consequently, the symbol will be categorized and classified by using online research methods (ORMs) to focus on the fluidity of socio-temporal changes that accord with the contemporary expressions.

KEY WORDS: *Symbolism, history, logo, design, multimedia.*

INTRODUCTION:

When we ask someone to depict the "Stars" and "clouds" on any two-dimensional space, they often represent them through a simple symbol and color to which they associate. The viewer will also identify and perceive it in the same form. We human beings tend to denote a tangible and intangible object with some symbol and color through our intuitive understanding. Such is the power of association color and symbols. They help us to represent expressions which otherwise impossible to present.

The world around us is full of diverse symbols and images we perceive daily. The dawn of these symbols can be traced back to the pre-historic period. Through time these symbols transformed and became the foundation for present-day emojis. The journey of symbols might have even started before documenting pre-historic activities and events on the cave walls of the caves. After an uncounted number of alterations and modifications over time, today, we can conceive of the age of metaverse VR (Virtual Reality), where every image is a digital and symbolic representation representing reality, and we get even our digital avatars. We choose our metaphorical or symbolic elements to create our virtual personality.

These symbols in VR have often adopted and inspired through their representation in art. Thus, according to Smithsonian Library, in art, symbols are drawings in the solid and identifiable form used to represent an object or living thing that would otherwise be hard to show in paintings and Sculptures. For example, Symbols are tools to depict the notions and feelings of masses and individuals (Myths in words and Pictures, n.d.)

Additionally, we can further understand as a symbol is the amalgamation of abstraction to a specific expression, and the Symbols are thoughtful expressions of our intelligence and emotions. Throughout the centuries, various symbols have been cast-off in various forms and ideas associated with them. Different values and traditions are associated with these symbols worldwide. In a world packed with diverse cultures, earlier symbols had their association, often linked with religious, intellectual, and philosophical representations of various elements for communication. It includes the constant process of changes and modification because humans are perpetually looking for deeper meaning; they are associated with them.

In this quest, the symbol is famously known as the "Tree of Life" and is an iconic example of such a symbol that traveled across time and witnessed most major and minor religions worldwide. If we dig deep into the history, culture, traditions, and religions, we can find that the depiction of this symbol is present in various altered shapes and forms .all are a part of just the same extended family. This continuation is an ongoing process that creates a loop in the perpetuation of symbols and design.

In the current information technological age, where QR codes have revolutionized the world, These colors are often associated with various brands due to their symbolic value. Additionally, one of the most profound manifestations of humankind is branding. Such symbols are considered a logo that entails an integral part of the company's message, goals and values to the viewer. The idea of branding has always influenced our culture. This paper attempts to explicate the meaning of the tree of life from a few examples of the everyday use of logo and multimedia design to understand the purpose of its representation in the contemporary era.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Trees were used as symbols and literal emblems of religious beliefs for humankind. Various cultural and symbolic values were ascribed to the trees in numerous communities and cultures in the distant past. One of them is "The Tree of Life", which many cultures share. It is a most significant symbol or concept illustrated in various cultures and forms throughout the documented history. The "Tree of Life" concept undertones and has been used in diverse fields of biology, philosophy, mythology, religion, and theology; hence, the 'tree of life' is a widespread metaphor (Lock, 2016.). The idea of a tree of life pervades the world around us – from movies to coffee shops, science hypotheses to divination cards – the influence extends beyond a few references to the ancient Near Eastern texts and Christian writings. (Estes, 2020). The symbol has been incorporated in many perspectives, some time as a pictorial depiction and other times as a metaphorical depiction, to facilitate the concept of a tree of life, holding various meanings to it.

One of the most significant examples of understanding this perspective is Darwin's evolutionary theory tree of life (TOL), confirming fundamental Truths. It states that all life is related and enables us to construct a complex tree representing life's history. In his notebooks on transmutation from the late 1830s, before he developed his theory of descent by natural selection, he invoked the Tree of Life to visualize the living being's interconnected history and classification (HELLSTROM, 2012).

The tree of life refers to the entangled life on the earth and serves as a metaphor for common descent in the evolutionary sense. The term tree of life also represents and is associated with a similar idea like the sacred tree, tree of knowledge, and tree of geneses. Such trees are believed to be linked to knowledge, paradise, and

hell. Thus, tree of life works as a medium to connect all forms of flora and fauna. It works as it works both tree of the world and the Cosmic Tree. This whole concept grew over the ages, but still, the pictorial and metaphorical depiction is a popular trend in design. It transformed with time and took various shapes and meanings over time.

Considering the above discussion, this study explores the roots of this complex and cherished symbol and investigates the present association of the same symbol in the contemporary multimedia design field. This research used online research methods (ORMs) to focus on the fluidity of socio-temporal changes in contemporary expressions to achieve the findings. The symbol will be categorized and classified using visual semiotics and analysis methods. Second, Secondary data was collected from various online library searches, Journals, Books, and web sites pages.

Additionally, this study explores the roots of this complex and cherished symbol and investigates the present association of the same symbol in the contemporary multimedia design field.

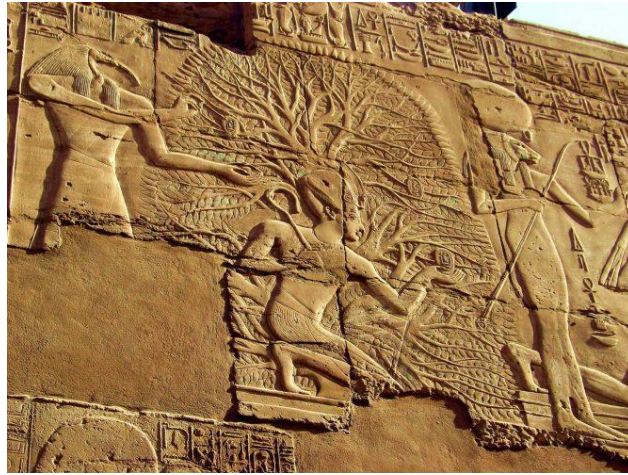
DESIGN TRANSFORMATION:

Transformation is changing state to facilitate new or enhance an existing functionality (Singh, et al., 2009). Design transformation is a process that seeks to create a desirable and sustainable change; it begins with transforming a cave wall into an imagined world of people and animals. Furthermore, it continues to transform materials into new objects. Similarly, visual and philosophical ideas associated with symbols also transform spatiotemporally. This study brings light to the design's continuous journey that evolves and generates a loop in this quest.

The Tree of Life often represents Communication in Everything on Earth. It symbolizes union and reminds us that you are not alone or isolated but rather connected to the world. It also represents Descendants, Family, and Descendants and shows how a family grows and expands over many generations. The tree is a global symbol of strength and growth as it stands tall and robust worldwide. It symbolizes personal growth, immortality, rebirth and peacefulness (Tree of Life Meaning & Symbolism, 2019).

The 'Tree of Life' is a mystic tree recognized all over several ancient cultures, expanding back into the distant past to the oldest cultures and civilizations in the world. Different religions call out it by different associations, each with its mythology. However, they all have similar spiritual or literal meanings addressing the source of life. The symbol "tree of life" is widely used to present the divine connection and interconnection with other beings.

The relationship of trees with Life, both in the plane of the earth and that of the gods, is a universal concept that reaches into space and time. Evidence of the people who gave trees of special status and linked them to the spirit world can be found in almost every religion and culture. The Tree of Life represented events that made all things possible for the ancient Egyptians. The framework of the Tree of Life reflects the order, process, and creative process. The ancient Egyptians worshiped the Sycamore trees' sycamore trees, which they considered to be shrines of the holy spirit. Dense, green trees are one of the oldest species known for their longevity and durability. (The Tree of Life: Meaning and Symbolism, 2022)



*Depiction of the tree of life at Karnak temple, Luxor, Egypt
Image Source: (Ancient Egypt Axis , n.d.)*

Along with Christianity, the concept of the Tree of Life is part of the Christian, and Islamic version of the creation of life, often referred to as Genesis. In Christianity is depicted as the Genesis in the Old Testament Bible. Its emphasis on the tree of knowledge and their symbolic relationship with God. The Islamic concept of a tree of life can be seen on the woven carpets, engraved, and sculpted on monuments, and it is likely to have been inspired by Sassanian and Assyrian art representing the Earth Tree / Tree of Life. It is called Sidra, or Tuba, which grows in Paradise in Islamic literature. In Christianity, it is figuratively connected with divinity (Bose, 2018).



*Sidi Saiyyed mosque, Ahmedabad
Image link: (Artstor , n.d.)*

In Hindu mythology, "kalpavrisha" known as Kalpataru, is a mythological wish fulfilling decline, the charismatic tree said to fill

all the desires. It is described to be originated during the churning of the ocean. The idea of Kalpavriksha emerged from nature worship, an integral part of all ancient cultures, including India. Like us, the firm belief that trees possess a soul of their own has led to such reverence that we can still find groves held sacred if we look around. It is believed that the abode of souls and deified gods bring us good fortune with rain, sunshine, good harvests, growing livestock, and women's fertility. While most tree spirits are considered to be kind, some appear to be evil, "evil spirits," or "ap-devta." Such winds cause damage, so people avoid approaching the trees where they live.



*The Kalpavriksha (a mythological wish-fulfilling tree) leaf carved in marble at the Adinatha Jain temple at Ranakpur, Rajasthan.
Image Source: (Kalpavriksha , n.d.)*



*the temple built by Asoka at Bodh-Gaya, around the Bodhi tree.
Sculpture of the Satavahana period at Sanchi, 1st century CE
Image Source: (wikipedia , n.d.)*

The idea of Kalpavrisha, the tree of life that fulfills wishes and is believed by Hindus and many cultures. In Buddhism, "Bodhi tree" is a sign of knowledge, as it is a well-known fact that Buddha attained enlightenment under this tree.

Representation of the Bodhi tree is seen in Sanchi. While we can say that the Bodhi tree symbolizes knowledge, kalpataru, on the other hand, signifies wealth, kindness, and spiritual guidance for those seeking (Bose, 2018). According to Jain's cosmology, in three hours (unequal times) of the descending arc (avasarpini), kalpavriksha provided everything needed but yield by the end of the third aara from them declined. Other texts describe eight species of trees, each of which has a unique appearance (What is Kalpavriksha in Jainism?, 2008).

Other than the major religion, the depiction of tree of life can be observed in the various folk arts in India. These folk arts and their culture are rooted back in centuries, and at present, people are still involved in a similar process, with the addition of contemporary implications.

Tree of Life in the Gond painting signifies all the goodness in life. It represents tree of life with the happy birds inhabiting the tree, it stands for harmony and togetherness. It symbolizes that when a tree is nurtured with love, it thrives and strives to bring peace and happiness to the people who nurture it. The many intertwined branches signify the many facets of life itself and how they are integrated.



**Madhubani painting, 'Tree of Life', by Artist Vidushini from India.
Image source: (unicefusa.org, n.d.)**



**Kalamkari - Tree Of Life
Image Source: (flickr.com , n.d.)**



**Gond - Tree of Life.
Image Source: (Shyam, Bai, & Urveti, 2020)**

In the northern region of India, Madhubani paintings, another leading folk art from India, depict the tree of life in their pictorial depiction. It is believed that trees provide for all the necessities humans require to live a basic life, not limited to humans but also birds and animals. The tribe worships nature in various forms rather than idol worship. The motif in the Tree of Life can be seen in the hand-drawn textile Kalamkari, which again symbolizes the mythologies and a metaphor for the common descent of life on earth.

After learning the depiction of Tree of Life in various religions let us find out its reflection in the painting of a prominent artist. This beautiful mosaic mural piece by Austrian Symbolist Artist Gustav Klimt, was created between 1905 and 1911 and is known as "The Stoclet Frieze". It is a series of painting with three panels called "Expected" (left), "Tree of Life" (center), and "Fulfillment" (right) (Heather, 2018). It was made during Klimt's 'Golden Age' period when he often adorned his art with a gold leaf. The materials used by Klimt, include Ceramic, Gold-plated tiles, Pearls, and marble. Klimt said of the work that "it was probably the last phase of my decorative development," and he was praised with Art Nouveau whimsy. (Heather, 2018)



The Stoclet Frieze, Detail: The Expectation, Tree of Life, 1905-1909. Artist: Klimt, Gustav (1862-1918)

Image Source: (gettyimages, n.d.) (gettyimages, n.d.)

In this artwork, Klimt deals with the ancient symbols of the tree of life, which represents the connection between all things in heaven, hell, earth, life, and death. The "Waiting Panel" includes a woman in a patterned dress that appears to have been inspired by ancient Egyptian art. Her dress is very ornamental and stretchy as she approaches the floor. The "Fulfillment" panel includes a couple locked in a hug. Her clothes appear to bind them both together. The interiors of the garments with mathematical patterns mimic those found within the tree itself.

This iconic painting later inspired the exterior facade of the famous building "New Dwelling Hall (tree house)" at the Massachusetts, College of Art and Design in Boston.

Another interesting example to discuss is a contemporary installation work by a Delhi-based Artist by Delhi-based designers Sarthak and Sahil at the Victoria & Albert Museum, which welcomes visitors with Kalpataru wishing tree.

Artist stated, "The installation is a modern-day interpretation of the Kalpataru that doesn't only celebrate light in its literal sense but also as a metaphor for the celebration of hope, prosperity and ecology" (kalpataru wishing tree, 2015).



kalpataru wishing tree at v&a museum spices christmas spirit with hindu mythology

Image Source: (kalpataru wishing tree, 2015).

Tree of life in games of thrones: In the popular series, Game of Thrones represents a tree called "heart tree" is the center of a godswood. A Weirwood tree with a carved face played an essential role in the series. Weirwood is a deciduous tree found throughout Westeros with bark and blood-red leaves and has magical properties. The trees superficially tap into a magical

network running throughout the world, and trees are the sacred tree connected in some ways to the old gods of the forest.



Image source: (Game of Thrones (Telltale Games) - The Weirwood Tree, n.d.)

Tree of Life in the movie "Avatar", the Mother tree, also known as the tree of souls, was an important spiritual site for the Omaticaya family. It is also called the voice tree because it is associated with the ancestors' words. Their voices are heard in contact with the emotional line and the tree.


The fictional story of film science is based on an unknown planet that contains a home tree so ancient that the trees of the alien Na'vi tribe could inhabit it.



***Tree of souls from Avatar
Image source: (Jr., 2019)***

the Tree of Souls, is represented to serve as a way for them to communicate directly with the earth through the tree's seeds. The tree has the ability to connect directly to the human nervous system with physical contact with extended root fibers, even though humans do not have a nerve line (Jr., 2019). The sacred Tree symbolizes the cultural and spiritual traditions, love, and respect for those Walking the Red Road of spiritual understanding and personal growth (Jr., 2019).

Following the works of individual designers and examples of movies and series which contain the use of similar symbols in different other aspects, this table below will put some more light on a variety of representations by some of the brands and other expressions, which defines that how the symbol "tree of Life" is inspired from and concepts in the time loop.

S.N	Logo	Image	Description	Symbolic Representation
1.	Banyan Tree: First logo of State Bank of India (from 1955-170)	 <p>Image Source: (SBI LOGO, 2022)</p>	The first sign of the State Bank of India was adopted in 1955, representing the Banyan tree. However, the sign was abandoned as it invited criticism that the Banyan tree did not allow any other plant to grow in its place.	This represents solid roots and branches that can spread and grow in all directions, signifying growth, success, and stability, reflecting the purpose of the financial institution and




				its approach (SBI LOGO, 2022).
2.	Bihar Museum 2015-present	 <p>(Bihar Museum Identity, 2015)</p>	<p>Based on the Bodhi Tree, the attractive logo signifies the Tree of Knowledge. A clear, concise design that successfully represents the museum and its history. (Bihar Museum Identity, n.d.)</p>	<p>This symbol renews the glory of Bihar by associating it with the bodhi tree. The Trees depicts great masters, knowledge, and a way of life as the Board of Wisdom (Bihar Museum Identity, 2015).</p>
3.	Dabur		<p>Dabur India Limited is a leading Indian consumer goods company for more than 100 years. The brand represents itself by providing natural</p>	<p>The tree symbolizes nature and is regarded as a provider of shelter, food, and protection. It also</p>

		Image source: (Dabur Logo History, n.d.)	Image source: (Dabur Logo History, n.d.)	solutions for a healthy and complete lifestyle. The company's original logo was the Banyan Tree. (Dabur Logo History, n.d.)	represents its relationship with nature and the use of natural elements in the products.
4.	Foreset Essential	 <p>Image source: (Tree of Life , n.d.)</p>		Its luxury brand shows Tree of Life with many branches as its logo. It reflects the idea that their products are close to nature. (Tree of Life , n.d.)	The corporate gold and white color scheme of the visible company reflects beauty, elegance, and splendor. It makes the logo look classy and evokes a sense of quality and efficiency. According to the company, the Tree of Life symbolizes the Law of Nature and the fact that all living things on our planet are related.

A balance between modernity and tradition creates endless design opportunities for designers in the contemporary world. After discussing examples from history to tradition to contemporary, we can see that various religious traditions seem to differ when analyzed according to their outer characteristics. But, The amalgamation of the same symbol with modern material/ expression gives them a new identity in different associations. If looked at from a generalized perspective, their doctrines and practices reveal that they share similar features, represented symbolically in the 'tree of life.'

CONCLUSION:

The current paper highlighted the evolution and application of the tree of life symbol in various cultural narratives, contemporary visual media narratives, and various brands' emblems. Multiple versions and interpretations have been observed throughout the transformations. Right from ancient times, tree worship resulted from humans' natural reverence for nature which provided for basic needs and much more. Tree worship is globally inherent in all major and minor religions, art, literature, and other social narratives, showing the continuation of veneration to trees. Trees were always considered more than ordinary. They have been seen as representing life itself.

In the contemporary world, the idea of including trees or the tree of life symbol by multiple brands or as a narrative representation in films and art is more than a notion of worship. Today thematic inclination is more towards the environment, representing the tree of life or related symbol for abstract the connection between brand and nature. It shows their intention to associate and represent themselves as a nature cohabited brand. In the film, narrative depiction enforces tree of life as a source of life and a chain connecting the human and god.

Over time and across spaces, the multiple variations and variegated meanings of one single symbol have been created. This design transformation and narratives show how design and patterns evolve and transform over time and space. Sometimes, keeping their core value intact or sometimes mutate with incomprehensible complexity. This is possible as the interactions and transitions of the symbols create information loops that serve as feedback to initiate and innovate further transformations resulting in multiple variations and interpretations. Further research should be guided towards understanding interactions and transitions and the creation of information loops they trigger and how these information loops further influence new visual and associated interpretations.

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Nikhil Sharma is a Ph.D. student and teaching assistant in the Visual Art Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur (U.P).

His doctoral thesis is about designing effective Art Education for Primary Classes. In Addition to his research, he focuses on Art History, Teaching pedagogies, Education policies, focusing on Primary art education in Indian contemporary scenarios. He also served as the student representative and organized various experts' various events, conferences, and talks. The researcher holds Junior Research Fellowship from UGC and A master's Degree in Visual Arts from Rajamaan Singh Music and Art University, Gwalior (M.P). Before coming to IIT, The Researcher has also served as Assistant Professor at ITM University, Gwalior and Image infotainment, Chennai.

A Contextual Study of 'Abhivyakti': An Alternative School

Nikhil Sharma

Abstract

Nation-wide uniformity in school curriculum poses a major challenge to a culturally divergent country like India. Alternative schools have appeared as one way to serve many of our children who have not been comfortable in the traditional public-school setting. In Alternative Schools, Special emphasis is given to the students' individuality without comparing them to their peers. Here the education is not limited to rote learning, but the students have gradual but comprehensive knowledge. The child's holistic development takes place by relegating competitions and grades in academic evaluation. For this purpose, primarily students with disabilities, majorly with emotional/behavioral vulnerabilities and learning disabilities, are included in the population of students educated in these settings. Researches that lead to pragmatic solutions are inadequate in Indian context. As a case study, this paper considers "Abhivyakti: An alternative school" located at the foothills of Himalaya in the state of Uttarakhand. The research attempts to address critical issues, and challenges for alternative educators and administrators are identified and discussed. Issues focus on governance and policies guiding the operation of alternative schools, the purpose of alternative schools, needs of the students and implications for service, conscription and instruction, maintaining high expectations and standards, and measuring outcomes and effectiveness. The paper aims at establishing the need for contextual study that describes, analyses and interprets the case from an ethnographic

perspective by following an observation and interview method to collect data and form a narrative.

Key Words: *Art education, Alternative School, Primary School education.*

Introduction:

There is a building in the centre of the village with similar rooms. All the children wear identical clothes, are expected to behave a certain way, and speak and express themselves only when permitted. They all sit in rows, wherein an adult comes and instructs and demands to hear the same answer from everyone. Think from a child's point of view and decide if this is the future we want to provide for our kids? Will this help them to live a successful life? Will it help them to maintain their individuality and confidence? Indeed, we can laugh at this system and consider it an outdated education model. However, so far, we have not created a viable alternative but imagine the education which is not bound under the four walls but free to explore in nature, where every child is unique and dealt with great care and compassion. The knowledge is not the synonym of heavy books but into the real-life experiences and in the lap of mother nature. The school is where the students learn and polish their critical thinking, observational skills, and learning instinct. Alternative schools provide such learning methods. For instance, if kids have a chapter in their book about Birds, unlike memorizing it, they would go in the woods and experience the different sounds and birds and bird watching. This not just provides them with an opportunity for experiential learning and brings them closer to life. This child-orientated education makes the students reluctant

to go back home even after the dispersal time prefer to stay at the Abhivyakti, an alternative school situated in the Avni Campus in the hills of Uttarakhand.

According to the encyclopedia of Children Health, An alternative school is an educational system designed to accommodate childrens' academic, moral, and medical needs that cannot be adequately addressed in a regular school environment. (Alternative school, 2001). Alternative schools like Abhivyakti have unlocked a new avenue for the students who are not comfortable in the mainstream setup of education. These schools are committed to assisting the children in discovering their talents, gifts, and interests at their own pace with the help of their teachers' parents, and friends. This method empowers these children to be proud of their village, neighbourhood, community, and the environment they live in. (Pathak, 2016). Therefore, alternative education systems began working on the holistic development of an individual by including arts, crafts, sports, and environment, among others, as part of the curriculum. There are various philosophies at work, but a common thread is that these are all child-centred. Unlike mainstream education, everything revolves around the child, mainly teacher-centred and inflexible syllabus and examination-oriented evolution methods.

Such a concept of Alternative schools is neither unique nor new to humankind. It ages back to the early Vedic period in India. It persisted and survived through all the significant events of history. It is even reflected in the education of many prominent religions like Buddhism and Jainism and later developed as the international community education center's like Vikramshila and Nalanda.

During the British Raj “Education in India under the British Government,” says author Kalpana–Pathak, “was first ignored, then violently and successfully opposed, then conducted on a system now universally admitted to be erroneous and finally placed on its present footing.” (Pathak, 2016) Later during the pre-independence era, some concerned social leaders came up with alternative schools like Mahatma Gandhi Rabindranath Tagore, J. Krishnamurti, Sister Nivedita, and Gijubhai Badheka etc. explored the idea of alternative education for those who were not satisfied with the mainstream education. Though they all have different philosophies of education, they all worked towards the holistic development of children, confidence, and teaching nationalist values. These schools laid the foundation of the modern alternative schools, wherein their style of studies and teaching is distinct from the run-of-the-mill schools. These schools have faith in the ideology to allow the child to follow their own pace while learning without the regimented structure of formal schooling. Children's overall growth is paid attention to, and teachers are not authority figures. Punishment is not part of the system, and students are not forced to study. Class sizes are deliberately kept small, and student-teacher ratios are healthy. Art and craft are paid as much attention as academics. Even though mainstream schooling has declined—from bad to worse—government schools are sometimes dysfunctional and the private sector increasingly commercialized. (Malhotra, 2007)

Over the past few decades, people have established different alternative schools; one of them is Abhivyakti School, established in 2011 as a child-friendly learning atmosphere at the Avani centre in Tripuradevi Uttarakhand in Kumaon Region. The school's vision is to deliver experiential learning for the children of Avani's

staff, weavers, and neighbouring families in and around Avani, thereby providing a child-friendly space. Abhivyakti is located in learning centres, educational programmers, and interventions. The alternative school includes many different aspects of philosophy, objectives, and practices. Often, there are traces of Gandhi's educational philosophy, Tagore, Freire, Montessori, Aurobindo, the Mother, Krishnamurti, etc. Like so many pieces in a puzzle, if we look at a number of these alternatives, we find an image of silver lining emerging out of the frenzied present. (Malhotra, 2007) This paper explores how alternative education can facilitate the child's knowledge, skills, and values and the challenges these education centres face. This kind of education, therefore, depends heavily on experiential learning.

Methodology:

The database has been mainly gathered through ethnographic research wherein the researcher stayed at the school campus for more than a month to analyze and understand the impact of education on kids. Along with the Ethnographic research, the researcher used the interview method to generate the data and document the classes on video. This study is based on the unbiased experience of the researcher and his interaction with the environment. During the data collection, the researcher relied on the question asked from the ward's parents and teachers, including the school principal. The researcher prepared a questionnaire mentioned at the end of this paper. This study takes an honest effort to showcase the impact of the environment and the kind of education involved in delving into alternatives to existing educational norms. Even though the study has been intensively done, it does not generalize the efforts of all the alternative schools elsewhere. This study leaves you to determine

how far they succeed in their efforts. As a disclaimer, this study is only specific to the "Abhivyakti: an Alternative school" it does not compare or say that alternative education is better than mainstream education. Thus the experiences can be subjective based on the experiences. Through this study, we will come to a better idea of alternative schools' ideas and why they always persisted, along with the challenges these centres' education face.

Case Study:



Abhivyakti signifies "self-expression," a quality that is intrinsic in all of us but often lost in the process of turning out to be adults. Children need space to learn and express their creativity in an environment that supports this inherent connection. (Abhivyakti-School, 2022). Abhivyakti School is the effort to provide this space. The school was founded as a primary school for children aged three to eleven. At the time of its commencement, the school had only five children. However, by November, the number increased to twenty in the same academic year. The pedagogy and learning methods adopted and encouraged at Abhivyakti were initially met with hesitation and apprehension in the local community. Placing paramount importance on creative and

experiential learning and pedagogies explicitly developed to cater to the unique needs of each child, today, Abhiviyakti has a total enrolment of twenty students and functions from nursery to class five.



Image 1: Front view of Building 1 and 3

The School aspire to overcome the challenges and assure progressive education in the present set-up. Located in the remote area of Uttarakhand, This school provides education to the less privileged population. All other education systems glorify city life; this school fosters sustainable living values. Manifesting their dreams requires a passionate and determined team and sustainable economic and infrastructural resources. The traditional schooling system in the Indian context often emphasizes memorization and rote learning. Children perpetually find themselves under dominant pressure to perform and score well in the numerous standardised tests which begin right from the primary school level.

At Avani, it is their firm and sincere belief that creative learning and exploration in a structured manner is far more conducive to a child's growth and development than just rote learning. Here, they aspire to create a friendly and open environment for the students to express themselves creatively and with the utmost freedom.

Here, the children channel all their energy into 'learning by doing and experiential learning. Thus, activities and experiments are fundamental to our academic curriculum. The school make it a point to treat every student equally, with teachers primarily playing the role of a facilitator. They work on mental and academic development here, and moral, physical and creative development are gauged, supported and advanced.

Concept of Education:

The concept of Abhivyakti School is to treat every child individually, acknowledge and appreciate the uniqueness of the child. Since every child is unique, they all have other talents. Therefore, alternative education systems began working on the holistic development of an individual by including arts, crafts, sports, and environment, among others, as part of the curriculum. At Abhivyakti, they provide a platform where students can discover their talent by providing various opportunities in various mediums in the different fields of arts, sports, and education



Classrooms at Abhivyakti School

We also believe that each child is vastly different from the other and blessed with a unique potential, so they strive to bring out all of these facets by exposing the child to different teaching styles and activities designed for learning. Let us now dwell on the various aspects of this school.

(i) Meditation:

Apart from the teaching-learning activities, a unique feature of Abhivyakti school is the quiet time set aside for daily meditation. Coupled with some counselling, this has helped the children become more confident, participatory, aware and focused on their studies.

(ii) Child Centric Pedagogy:

Unlike the mainstream school, All the activities and education revolve around the child's interest. Most of the education is experiential and training activity-based. Teachers try their utmost effort to come up with impeccable planning. The I school principal takes daily meetings with the kids and the teachers, providing cohesive learning to each kid.

(iii) Art Connect:

During the initial years of Education, the child was to train in essential craft, allowing them to pursue it as an occupation after completing their course. Crafts to be taught include spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture, fruit and vegetable gardening, pottery, metalwork, basket-making, or any other art concerning the local and geographical conditions. As a part of this, the kitchen is also getting in construction, and the kiln was newly installed.



Students doing clay Modelling

(iv) Music:

The school has a collection of many musical instruments, through which elementary musical education is also provided based on the volunteers' visit. Music was to teach students beautiful songs. A child's natural sense of rhythm and time was introduced by beating with the hand. Group and choral singing were critical.



Students practicing musical instrument

(v) Campus Advantage:

Since the school is on the campus of Avani, a community built on sustainability and local empowerment principles, they get an advantage to learn the art of fabric making and give children the knowledge of weaving, embroidery, block-printing, dying of thread etc. Children also refine their motor skills and improve concentration power through these activities.



Nature walk on an event of Childrens' Day

(vi) No Competition:

The philosophy of this school has also been inspired by J. Krishnamurti that there is no competition when teaching, no

dominance, and learning is a simultaneous process in the present and where the educator and the educated both participate in the act of learning.

(vii) Nature Connect:

One of the advantages of this is the Location. Students are free to explore various activities to foster an appreciation of nature and sustainable living. The school also organizes trips and workshops to help them understand the importance of nature, herbs, and natural products.



Children are observing the sounds of tree

(viii) Self-Designed Curriculum:

Unlike the mainstem schools, which are always in constant pressure to complete the syllabus and most of their time spent taking exams and rote learning to the kids. Schools like Abhivyakti have an advantage over them. Since this school is only up to Grade five, They focus on experiential learning instead of mugging the kids. There is no competition; the teachers innovate creative, vibrate, and interactive ways to evaluate each child's progress. The other advantage is that this school has the authority to decide what is the best to introduce to kids according to their standard. Teachers customize their teaching aids to suit the interests and knowledge levels of the students. Teachers are also engaged in designing attractive books according to the intellectual of the students for various subjects.

(ix) Inculcating a sense of responsibility and duty:

The definition of education includes academics and arts and a daily routine of physical exercising, cooking activities in the kitchen, cleaning, sweeping, gardening, and various other activities on campus. Another program in Abhivyakti, which we thought was a drag, was to keep the school clean. Students had to do all the cleaning of classrooms daily; they always made sure to keep the class neat and organized at the same time. Every Saturday, they clean all the classrooms, playgrounds and everything around. That is how they learn cleaning and create psychological belongingness to the school day.



A young student cleaning the windows as a part of weekly cleaning drive

(x) Administration:

It is conducted in a democratic and somewhat flexible manner. With hierarchical structures being less and less prevalent, these schools experiment in rotating responsibilities, arriving at significant decisions through consensus, and taking collective ownership for the institution and what it stands for.

These are the points where Abhivyakti is still working and making a difference in many students' worlds. There are specific camps of people who consider constructive, while some are cautious and others are a pessimist. This idea of alternative schools like Abhivyakti is more popular among the progressive parents

working at the Avani campus or those who wish to provide their ward with the education with a difference. In order to deal with some of these, it is helpful to discuss brief challenges as they unfolded during the visit of the researcher

1) **No Exam System:**

One of the primary stigma attached to alternative schools is the exemption of exam patterns, which eventually creates an artificial bubble around the child; however, it is not the truth. The focus of Abhivyakti lies in fostering cooperation among the students. Though children are exempted from the formal exam, the teacher takes the continuous assessment. The child is only evaluated on their progress while consciously exempting them from competition among the other classmates. Children are accepted to learn at their own pace without interruption but motivated them whenever required. The evaluation is meant for the teacher to figure out where more effort is required. The teacher better understands the child where they can achieve the milestone. Consequently, the learning does not fade with time but remains long.

2) **Are alternative schools specific to differently-abled?**

The notion in the country is such that Alternative Schools are associated either with specially-abled students or slow learners. Those who find it hard to learn, write and read. Abhivyakti has not been spared from this image too. Since the inception of this school, the owners have been fighting against this stigma; however, when you see the list of alternative schools like 'The Rishi Valley School' or 'Ananda Wardha Niketan'. They are not just catering to specially-abled students. This place is a harbour for parents aware of the dark side of mainstream education and for the parents who want to provide a balanced life to their kids.

Alternative Education like Abhivyakti is meant for slow learners is also a misconception. The researcher spent a considerable amount of time with students and engaged in teaching. Based on his experience, he concludes that those students have unique learning times, but none are slow learners.

3) Shift From One Abhivyakti to the Mainstream School:

Multiple factors make the students leave the school, such as transferring their parents or getting a higher education. Through the interviews, it is revealed that the students who get shifted from Abhivyakti to another mainstream school must face many issues and take some time to get settled to it. Some students take only a few months while the others take more. The other school has a strict timetable and discipline, while Abhivyakti celebrates the uniqueness of the children. It takes a toll on students' mental and eventually reflects on their performance in studies. Therefore, each school should be taken on its own merits and see whether one's child will fit in there. It is different strokes for different folks when it comes to schools. Many alternative schools can be pretty different, even when they follow the same model as mainstream schools.

4) The Dearth of Competent Teacher

Finding competent teachers and a long-time commitment has always been a challenge for Abhivyakti because of the low funding and geographical location. Abhivyakti has been lucky to get some good teachers in the past, but it was hard to retain them. Another challenge is that teachers from mainstream schools find it hard to settle with them. Unlike the other schools, being an alternative school, it is more demanding in planning and constant

experimental learning with much patience. To attract the attention of more volunteers for teaching and contributing to society, the school can promote their requirements online on various platforms and send a pamphlet along with their Avni products.

5) **Expensive School?**

Such unconventional services come with misconceptions of being expensive in the mind of mass. Since this school provides an abundance of services, people often relate them to being expensive; however, the fees are pretty affordable. The fees have been decided by keeping the convenience of the weaker section in the plan. There is no provision for donations from parents. Most of their budget comes either from government or philanthropist organizations.

6) **Limited Budget and Recourses**

Abhivyakti still has lower student strength because the school does not charge higher fees from the students. If the strength of the students increases, the school will be bound to provide more resources for the students. The founder does not want to bring commercial touch due to manageability issues. Her vision lies in providing better education and exposure to kids with limited budgets and recourses.

7) **Financial Aid**

Finances have always been a struggle for the organization. Since the primary funding source is online or any philanthropist volunteers to donate for the welfare of society and children would be appreciated. The school is always searching for an organization that can fund such a school. They have also connected with a

proposal to many national and international NGOs. Since the parents of the students fall under the less privileged section, the school should find continued funding for smooth conduction.

8) **Less Pressure and Social Stigma**

The place where Abhivaykti is located is the remote place in the hills of Uttarakhand. Some of the students are first-generation learners. Their parents are still fascinated by mainstream education. At the same time, the idea of alternative education is to provide a flexible curriculum that also includes light bags and less homework at home. However, some parents seem apprehensive about this idea. They constantly ask to apply formal teaching methods contrary to the fundamentals of alternative education. To satisfy their desire, also they appoint home tutors. This is one of the significant explanations why Abhivaykti still has fewer students in their school as parents are not aware of the idea of Alternative Schooling. The school should organize frequent orientation and Parents Teacher Meetings to retain their Faith in it.

9) **Policy and Affiliation:**

Abhivaykti is affiliated with the state board of Uttarakhand, though it takes the liberty to design its curriculum based on the objective and eligibility of the class. However, this does not mean that such schools do not prepare their students for government-approved examinations to complete schooling and enter universities.

To empower such more schools that dare to get into experimental learning and their sole objective is not to earn money but the welfare of society. The Government must create some policies for their assistance. Such schools are assets for the community; we

must collectively share the responsibility to keep their existence alive.

10) Slow Development:

Since parents are already apprehensive about alternative schooling, they tend to compare their ward to counterpart students enrolled in any mainstream school, which is not justified and eventually creates more doubt in the mind of the parents. The truth about alternative schools is that, unlike mainstream schools, these schools provide slow but comprehensive education, which students take some time to absorb. If the parents do not have faith in such education, they will always compare it to the other systems and eventually lose hope.

It is difficult to see how such small schools like Abhivyakti work around the clock to make a difference. Consequently, there is a sense of urgency in currently considering alternative schools and helping them sustain the joint efforts of government and public organizations. In the absence of this, we will not be having more children getting to connect to nature and valuing their surrounding and natural resources, art and culture.

Conclusion:

Abhivyakti is a joyful place; what began as a small contribution to society has grown organically, over the years, into a more prominent institution. However, no education system is perfect and serve equal demands to everyone. Abhivyakti is also having its challenges but is committed to providing quality education despite all of this. It has an open campus with a few classrooms belies the necessity of heavy infrastructure like a music room, Kitchen, computer centre etc. No doubt, learning is going on here,

and enjoyably. The ingredients for this outcome are not the tangibles that contemporary society consistently emphasizes! As an effort that dissatisfied mainstream schools, the parents initiated. Abhivyakti is an eye-opener on what is genuinely essential for making a difference in the field of education: no vast buildings, no swimming pools to boast of. Just a few rooms with sustainable infrastructure and an open yard.

Moreover, a student who showed visitors around pointed out, 'Those are Oak trees, and we have a Himalayan Mountain Quail (Bird). Oh, and here is Golondrina. Indeed, such students will respect entirely different values and virtues from today's teenagers. More importantly, Abhivyati is evidence of the possibility of bringing about a change in the education system and doing it with children.

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Partha Dutta is currently pursuing doctoral research at (HSS) Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, under the supervision of Dr. Ritwij Bhowmik. He has completed BVA from University of Burdwan and MFA from SN School, University of Hyderabad. He awarded a Gold medal in printmaking from University of Hyderabad. He is deeply engaged with printmaking and its innovative execution. He is very keen to explore bridging new technology in the printmaking process.

He has worked as a designer in an advertising agency in a private organisation and also served as a lecturer in a media college named ICAT Design and Media College, Hyderabad. He has participated in several exhibitions and workshops such as Academy of Fine arts, Kolkata; Kala Academy, Goa; Srishti art gallery, Hyderabad; Lalitkala National exhibition, Delhi; Emami chisel, Kolkata; Hyderabad literary festival and many others. He also attended 'Vice-Versa' international woodcut workshop at Goa; lithography and Tribal workshop, university of Hyderabad; zero waste Khadi workshop, IIT Kanpur. Apart from this, he has participated in ICIDR Social Sciences Conferences-2021; International Paris Conference on Social Sciences – VI, AVID; XIV International Conference AVID-ARC, Male 2020.

AN ACADEMIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE NEW PRINTMAKING METHODS IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ART

Partha Dutta

Abstract:

In the field of visual arts practices, printmaking for centuries reveres as a significant position as a medium of expression. Moreover, it is considered part of the modern cultural milieu. Any change in the culture would affect one's artistic expression. Printmaking has reflected this phenomenon more than any other form of art. Paul Revere's work Boston Massacre, Kathe Kollwitz's revolutionary print, and Chittoprasad's Bengal famine prints successfully depicted the vile effect of protest, war, and poverty on society.

In the contemporary academic and professional scenario, the whole notion of printmaking carries a distinct meaning. Specifically, in the Indian context, the academic practice of printmaking is based on traditional techniques. Students produce extraordinary artworks through manual printmaking methods such as woodcut, etching, lithography. However, these age-old techniques are not popularly applicable in the twentieth-century professional/commercial platform. Furthermore, due to the limitation of new techniques, most Indian students and professional printmakers are often unable to get the chance to vividly explore the possibilities of this medium. On the other hand, at the end of the twentieth-century invention of the modern computer made a massive change in the industrial print world.

Now, printing is not limited to the two-dimensional form. It also shifted into a three-dimensional output. However, all those techniques have been used in the commercial field till recently. Therefore, it is high time to innovate and introduce new technology and conceive a user-friendly attitude in printmaking practice. Yet, the ambiguity among art practitioners on using computer-aided technology is prevalent.

Within its small fold, this study aspires to - 1) review the current printmaking practice at Indian art colleges and individual studios, and 2) study the possibilities of new printmaking methods (Hybrid print) in India. In addition, it will also attempt to discuss the traditional and technological imperatives that could encourage the practitioners to diffuse more comprehensive art activity and industry involvement.

Keywords: *Printmaking, Industrial practice, Digital technology*

1. Introduction

Print media has been inextricably interwoven with our lives. It is the source of information, communication media, and a way of expression. The impact of printmaking on the daily lives of all people is immense; morning newspapers, books, outside advertisements, and many others. P.H. Muir once famously quoted, "There are few inventions that have more radically affected the outlook and lives of every one of us and almost every invention since owes a great deal to printing" (Muir, 1945). In the world of art, printing was not considered an art medium until the seventeenth century. Before that, print media was only considered a commercial reproduction tool rather than creating original art. At present, in the field of visual arts, printmaking holds a

significant position as a medium of expression. Printmaking refers to artwork by various printing methods like woodcut, intaglio, and lithography, even with modern printing technology, such as inject printing, 3D printing, and laser printing.

In the current academic and professional scenario concept of printmaking carries different meanings. Specifically, in the Indian context, the academic practice of printmaking is based on traditional techniques such as woodcut, linocut, lithography, and many others. On the other hand, a drastic technological change in society has come up in this twenty-first century digital era, and the invention of the computer made a massive change in the print world. "Passport Size photograph within two minutes" is a famous slogan of a printing shop at this time. Therefore, the expansion of computer training, learning, practice, and evaluation of a work is the current state of the contemporary practice of printmaking. This research explores the possibilities of coalescence between the traditional method and industry procedure to investigate technology-aided pedagogy for tertiary art education. In this case, the study needs careful observation of certain points related to artistic practice: To review the current status of printmaking practice at art colleges and individual studios, find out the cases of new printmaking methods (Hybrid print) in Indian art scenarios. Furthermore, to look towards the new possibilities in the digital printmaking medium in the Indian market.

2. Attempt of the study

The demand for printing elements has been increasing day by day. Human beings are trying to modify the existed printing press or invent new technologies. Johann Gutenberg, a blacksmith, goldsmith, printmaker, and publisher of Strasbourg, Germany,

developed the first known printing press in the fifteenth century. In the modern digitalised era, print is more affordable and fast. Computer made a drastic change in the commercial print market. However, Indian academic printmaking practices stick to old traditional methods that do not follow the commercial printing sector. However, It could be beneficial for students to learn simultaneously new technology and traditional techniques together. Students will get more paths to explore their work vividly, and technological knowledge helps build more job opportunities. In education, starting a new curriculum requires a pedagogy. So, this research attempt to investigate technology-aided pedagogy concerning tertiary art education and the professional practice of printmaking. This study aims to establish a good understanding of modern technology and traditional methods among the students and need a modified studio that could facilitate aesthetic and industry-oriented professional practice.

3. The Literature reviews are as follows

The traditional print process is long, time taking, cost-effective, laborious. On the other hand, computer-based digital print is easy, less time-consuming, and many processes are less cost-effective. In the modern era, traditional print value is decreasing in a commercial area. Today, colleges have removed printmaking because of financial restraints and other extraneous factors, especially lithography. Digital printmaking can establish the importance of printmaking Studios. Graphic Designer and printmaker Paul Hamilton explained in his one paper how American artist Myra Chan had redefined the term 'print'- 'The artist creates the master image that is either in a metal plate or computer' (Hamilton, 2003). Renowned designer, illustrator,

author John Foster describes various printing techniques by using various methods and materials. He shows that low-tech to modern technology enables the printing development process. Stencils and woodblock printing are used extensively to create print, sometimes in conjunction (Foster, 2014). A San Francisco commercial artist John Pilsworth developed a multicolour method for screen printing, referred to as the Selectasine method, which proved wildly popular in the commercial sign market. Robin M Snyder Describes new age printing technology, 3D printing. He distinctively describes the past, present, future of printing technology development and cost reduction. 3D printing machines are two types: additive devices that build up layer upon layer of material to create a 3D object and subtractive devices that cut the material layer by layer from the block so that the artefact produced remains (Snyder, 2013). A professor of computer science, Erik Brunvand describes Micro-Scale Printmaking on Silicon. According to him, Printmaking is an artistic activity that includes many different mediums, such as lithography, relief, intaglio and screen printing. Silicon photolithography print is the modern technique used to produce micro-scale chips for the technical device. He also says that as an artist, some innumerable concepts and ideas can provide a fruitful outcome in this technology, with the collaboration of computer science-based technical knowledge, artistic skill and thought (Brunvand & Denyer, 2011).

Many other artists allied traditional, modern printmaking techniques and information technology as hybrid practices to establish their idea. Paul Hamilton is an educator and graphic designer, nicely collaborated linocut and digital print methods and computer software. A laser print image was transferred on a Lino sheet with applied cellulose thinners and cut traditionally. Rather

than traditionally applying ink, the block was scanned into the computer and applied software effect to traditional print. Finally, he took digital print on Fabiano paper. It was distinguished as a traditional print by a majority (Hamilton, 2003). As technology develops, traditional print is being challenged. Whereas Johanna Love works on photographic print with graphite pencil drawing. She used landscape and architectural subjects to create unstable and changing material surfaces as well As visually complex images (Love, 2015). Christiane Baumgartner used images from different sources such as still photographs or video footage, and after computer manipulation, an image can be traced down to large blocks of wood, and finally, he took to print on Japanese paper manually (Coldwell, 2015). Jeremy Gardiner is a contemporary British landscape painter who also shows interest in computer-based technology. He has spent several years on the Jurassic coast to explore ancient history through his art practice, using a combined techniques like drawing, printmaking, painting, and even 3D printing technology. ("Virtual Landscapes Made Tangible," 2012).

History validates that righteous image plays a significant role to create a revolution in society and printmaking does that more in the art field because it cheap mass production. Many printmakers consider it a moral responsibility to support the cause for human rights through their prints. Those prints help unit people and create a revolution for justice. Paul Revere represented the American struggle for freedom through his print. His print of the Boston Massacre remains one of the most enduring symbols of the American Revolution (Tomolillo, 2018). Francisco Goya, one of the famous Spanish artists, was a respected employee of the Spanish monarchy even though he illustrated the horrors of war with his series of prints that were published in eighteen sixty-three

(Feldman, 1992). Garman artist Kathe Kollwitz utilised her bold crayon-drawn lithographs to illustrate people's suffering and harsh conditions in the time of World War I. Now, her works became a revered universal symbol of compassion for the abused working class (Prelinger, 1994).

In India, print is not considered a preferred medium for artistic expression till the early twentieth century. Maximum artists followed the oil on canvas method for their creative artwork in the post-independence era. However, many Indian artists later worked with various mediums, and their experimental printmaking works popularised them. Renowned printmaker Haren Das worked on multi-block woodcut print like Ukiyo-e print. However, Instead of water-based ink, he used oil-based printing ink. According to the director of Delhi art gallery, Ashish Anand stated that honourable artist Haren das refining both his skills and his suited expression in singular quest. This quality has made him one of the most revered names in the history of printmaking in India (Senguta & Karode, 2008). Somnath Hore's paper pulp techniques are most convenient to detect his subject matter. His selection of materials metaphorically helps to generate a meaningful conclusion in his artwork ("Somnath Hore," n.d.). Professor Ajit Seal's planography is an amalgamation of traditional and industrial print techniques that show a new artistic print method. Eminent artists Anupam Sud and K.Laxma Goud experimented on etching and aquatint processes and worked in their unique way. In some instant, both worked on similar subject matters like a man and woman relation and sexuality. However, concept, line, form, texture are unique; K. Laxma Goud works on the semi-abstract form, and Anupam Sud works in a more realistic way. The researcher observed that the above-mentioned artists belong to the academic field, and some are also continuing the

same. Their artistic style and invented technique practising by pupils, young artists or influenced them.

4. Methodology

This study combined literature reviews and interviews for a more comprehensive understanding of the different facts of this research, such as the process of printmaking, application of new media and point of success. Literature review incorporates a variety of data sources, for example, empirical and research articles. The purpose of the literature review is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic of interest (Wallin, Nokelainen, & Mikkonen, 2019). The researcher has interviewed gallery curators, practising artists, professors to figure out the initial label of printmaking practice in the Indian context. The advantage of interviewing different people working in various domains of print technology and printmaking as an art practice provides insight into economic, experimental and developing academic structural perspectives.

Literature review entails problem identification, way of possibilities, to formulate the initial research framework and questionnaires. In contrast, interviews are helping to understand the contemporary practice, the necessity of this research, requirements for developing studio, additional problems and updating the research framework (Adams, 2015). The researcher also visits the commercial printing industry to observe the different printing procedures and find the possibilities of using modern technology into the academic scenario.

5. The traditional printmaking and commercial printing press

Traditional manual printmaking technique holds a significant part of Indian art collegiate system, and very few art practitioners practise the same after completing a college education. However, many art practitioners continue their practice with other mediums such as painting and installation art. The researcher produced some artwork with woodcut and etching techniques, and that hands-on learning experience is the best way to understand the advantage and disadvantages of those traditional techniques. Computer-generated prints may lose the physical attachments with the artist and sense of physical surface. The bodily attachment with printing process that might develop hands-on learning and expand the scope of immediate experiment. In contrast, manual techniques are laborious and time-consuming. The researcher visited practising artists' studios to understand their working procedures, thinking about contemporary practice and the future of printmaking.



Image 1 – Relief print Partha Dutta (Author) , Another World, Relief print, 72 x 48
Image 2 and 3 – Intaglio print
Image 2 – Sumanto Chowdhury, Untitled, Intaglio, 20 x 28 inches, 2016
Image 3 - Samedutta Mallik, Untitled, Intaglio, 7 x 19 inches, 2014

In the commercial printing sector, ideologies are different compared to artistic practice. It is a general instinct that commercial printmakers ponder profit rather than aesthetic quality. Nevertheless, it is fascinating to know the pre-press to post-press process, operating the printing press, ink management, handle the whole procedure. The commercial printing process acquired some systematic, structured and error solution process which is methodical and constructive. It also provides systematic procedure to make appropriateness in the end product. The technical process might boost up the artistic printing process and enrich them aesthetically. This knowledge expands the researcher's view on the advancement of Indian artistic printmaking studios.



Image 4 – Flex printing



Image 5 – Offset printing

6. The attempt of a new method of printmaking

The researcher is trying to bring out some significant points of the new method of printmaking from the literature review section. However, those techniques are not visible in Indian printmaking practice. Those ideas are below:

- ***Micro-Scale Printmaking on Silicon.***
- ***Collaboration of lino or woodcut with digital print.***
- ***Works on print, drawing, and photographic languages.***

- ***Computer manipulated still photographs or video footage can be traced down to large woodblocks.***
- ***A combined technique like drawing, printmaking, painting even 3D printing technology.***

7. The traditional and technological imperatives

In fine arts, artistic print value is often the lowest because people perceive it as a product rather than an artistic work. In this context, a renowned Indian printmaker says, "In our society, art means beautiful painting on canvas, Sculpture or watercolour on paper." Printmaking workshops for non-artistic field people can help make awareness about artistic print value among mass people. Simultaneously it requires more initiativeness for printmaking exhibitions. On the other hand, traditional printmaking has lost its popularity among art practitioners because the old traditional printmaking technique is laborious and time-consuming. In contrast, Modern technology-oriented prints in the commercial area have vibration, market, sales, value, demand, and faster. However, artistic areas have not used those techniques very well. It requires crate awareness among art practitioners about technological possibilities in artistic printmaking practice.

The educational sector faces many restraining factors to continue the conventional techniques while introducing new. Today, financial constraints and other extraneous factors of art colleges debase facilities and art practices. Students lack their interest in working with conventional methods. Therefore, introducing the computer-based print technique and proper guidance can reinstate the curiosity of printmaking among the students. Even interdisciplinary work is beneficial for printmaking students,

especially design or applied art students, to learn the software. However, controlling the whole student and providing equipment is difficult. Technological knowledge development is beneficial for the student in different ways. Artwork demands a perfect and suitable medium or mixed medium in fine arts because each medium has its own expressive and tactile quality. So, knowing conventional and industrial printing techniques, various kinds of paper, ink, and other material understanding are helping to select the appropriate medium. Students and art practitioners will get the chance to experiment or explore their thought vividly. Nowadays, many industries have good demand for digitally knowledgeable people who has aesthetically sound to develop creative output. However, In fine arts, very few students have the quality to accumulate the various process for print making. Including new technology in academia could increase job opportunities in various sectors. The traditional and technological imperatives could encourage practitioners to diffuse a wider sphere of art activity and industry involvement.

8. Conclusion

Throughout this study, the researcher attempted to find a parallel line to connect new media technology into academic and artistic printmaking practices. In India, most printmaking practices follow an old school of methods. Artists may not be very confident regarding industry-academic synergy. Although the literature shows that many worldwide renowned artists are experimenting with industrial technology to develop their print, it has succeeded at a certain point. Therefore, industry-academia technological synergy has the potentiality to develop hybrid practice in the Indian contemporary art practice. In this study, the literature survey and inference of expert review indicate that both traditional and modern print technology are equally essential for

printmaking education. This study established an understanding and importance of modern technology-based printmaking studio. Simonteniously, it required to develop a methodology, evaluation criteria, and pointed out the significance of learning computer-aided technology in association with contemporary printmaking practice.

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Rohit Kumar is currently pursuing Ph.D in Design. His areas of research interests are graphics, illustration, and comics. His recent work is on designing and developing health information material for the low-literate population. He takes interest in working with the rural community, healthcare experts, and students for social change.

Graphic in Health Care: Understanding Graphic Narrative Approach to Represent and Communicate Health

Rohit Kumar

Abstract. Communication between doctors and patients is many a time not effective. Problems such as technical terms, complex messages, amount of information, etc., come into the picture. Given these problems, healthcare providers and practitioners are now using graphic medicine and graphic narratives as a source of health communication. The term 'Graphic medicine' is coined by an allied group of artists, researchers, and health practitioners. Graphic medicine refers to graphics and visual narratives representing health information specific to a health topic. Graphics/illustrations and text to compliment the illustrations are used to represent health messages. This visual medium can be used to educate, inform, entertain, and re-frame an individual experience about health care and medicine. Health practitioners have used graphics and visual narratives (comics) to communicate health information to people for over decades; this health information ranges from cancer, AIDS/HIV, smoking, mental health, and other health-related information for the public good. Overall, medical research and relevant public health focus on this medium's utility to communicate (a) health information specific to certain content (b) the health experience of an

individual. Narrative is one of the basic modes of acquiring information. In the field of health communication, narrative as a health communication approaches is emerging to bring health- behavior changes. This paper aims to (a) describe graphic medicine and graphic narrative, (b) the effect of graphic narrative/narrative in health communication, (c) recommend for potential application of graphic narrative as a health communication approach.

Keywords: *Graphic medicine; Graphic narratives; Health communication; Health behavior*

1 Introduction

Graphic medicine and graphic narratives are the forms of health communication medium and have emerged over the past few decades. With more work on graphic health information coming every year, this field is expanding its health contents. Many of these visual health contents were illustrated and framed in narration by skilled and unskilled artists. These artists illustrate and narrate their personal experiences with specific health conditions or caring for loved ones with specific health conditions. These authors are quite successful in expressing their health experiences to their audiences in a narrative way that is more engaging. The narrative is one of the basic modes of acquiring information. In the field of health communication, narrative as health communication approaches is emerging to bring health-behavior changes.

2 Defining the term Graphic medicine and Graphic narrative

The term Graphic medicine, as Czerwicc defines, an intersecting space between comic medium and health information, used along with the principle of narrative and comic elements to represent an emotional/physical condition [1]. Graphic medicine requires a skillful representation of picture and text, arranged sequentially to describe a particular health information/experience [2].

Different researchers define the graphic narrative in many ways and has no universally accepted definition. This is evident from the studies which includes 'narrative' as a subject. Lack of understanding of the term 'graphic narrative/narrative' can create difficulties in further research in the context of graphic narrative as an approach for persuasive health communication. Taking references from studies describing similar themes and concepts on narratives [3,4,5,6], we attempt to define Graphic narrative as "A Graphic narrative is a plot of the coherent story represented through series of illustration-text combination incorporating characters and events to create a beginning, middle and end of a story to provide information about events, characters, unresolved conflicts, resolution and raises unanswered questions".

Use and application of graphic narrative to create health awareness and bring health-behaviour change can be viewed in many forms. Schank (2002), in his study, mention five different story/narrative types, each used under different context and purpose, first-hand stories- telling experience of an individual, secondhand stories- retelling someone else story, invented stories- stories with fictional characters and events, cultural stories- stories of cultural events handed down generation to generation, official stories- also fictional and created to communicate the specific event to an individual or a group. A

graphic narrative/narrative could belong to any of these categories while using it as a communication medium [7].

3 Why use Graphic narrative/narrative approaches in health awareness and health-behaviour change.

We often communicate and share our experiences with others in our everyday lives with narratives and stories. The use of narrative for communicating health awareness and health-behavior change seems promising because of its fundamental nature of human interaction. The use of narrative is quite common among social and political events for sharing information with the targeted population. Its use can be seen in journalism and news reporting and this is how we learn about our surroundings [8]. Product advertisements, services, and T.V programs are shown and introduced every day using different narratives [9]. Also, it is a common and familiar way of sharing information.

Another important viewpoint to consider graphic narrative/narrative approach for health awareness and health behavior change can be understood by Bruner's study. Bruner mentioned two different ways of understanding and knowing about new things: first- the pragmatic way, second- the narrative way [10]. The pragmatic way is more toward a scientific way, including experiments, methods, data, facts, tests, and validations, etc., about the concerned topic. [11]. In contrast to this, the narrative way is more toward a storytelling way, including gripping drama, characters, events, historical accounts, personal or someone's else experience, etc. In his study, Schank [7] mentioned that understanding a particular event or situation requires storing information in our memory and retrieving the story associated with it. This narrative communication mode may

be effective while addressing themes like health experience, personal values, social relationships, morality, and other themes that have less support of reason and logic [11].

The scientific (pragmatic way) and the storytelling (narrative way) are necessary to understand new things around us. Both are effective in their specific circumstances.

4 Narrative approach in transmitting meaning.

While considering graphics/comics and health communication, few questions seem to be addressed first. What is the process by which particular information is transmitted to an individual/viewer? What kind of images (picture, graphics) and stories are more effective for creating meaning and communication? How narrative plays a role in health communication and how it can be used effectively for graphic health representation.

Studies on Psychological research mention how a narrative affects an individual (listener/viewer/reader). Green and Brock coined the term 'transportation imagery model' (TIM) [12,13]. TIM describes how an individual is transported to an imaginary space when going through a narrative story. This transportation results from 'an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings, focused on story events' [14]. Narrative both in the form of visuals(graphics) and the text probably act and affect an individual in the same way.

Comic theorist, Martin Baker, describes the work of Maccoby and Wilson (both psychologists), who studied observational learning in the context of films [15]. Maccoby and Wilson described the learning process as 'identification.' They described 'identification' as a process through which individuals momentarily place themselves in the scene and role of character and feel the same as

character. In his study, Baker suggests this learning process of 'identification' is related to problematic assumptions. However, understanding through narration (as described in TIM) is different from the 'identification' process. TIM requires the active participation of an individual. The individual's transportation or 'mental product' while going through a narration/story is attributed to the reader's response to the story, character, and events. In this way, imagery transportation is based on the strength (quality) of the narrative and reader's active participation. Once the reader engages actively, the reader experiences the events, emotions, and feelings of the character and gains additional information. With this imagery transportation, graphic narrative/ narrative can change and influence old beliefs, attitudes, and practices in the viewers/readers [12,13].

5 Recommendation

5.1 Narrative as a tool to enact real-life situations.

Using narratives to teach real-life situations, Cole used this narrative approach for decision-making exercises under emergencies. Cole developed a narrative of an emergency scenario for coal mine workers [23]. The narrative scenario consisted of many decision-making points. The worker can read the narrative of this emergency situation. Throughout the narrative, they are forced to decide (how one should act under an emergency). With every correct decision taken, they proceed through the narrative, and with every incorrect decision, they proceed to choices where again they have to rethink and make choices. This narrative application to teach real-life scenarios suggests that narratives can create scenarios where individuals or

groups can be trained to make proper decisions under certain circumstances. Moreover, many narrative communication approaches are engaging, thus making health information more contextual and acceptable to the intended audiences.

5.2 Narrative as a tool for Model health behavior

As mentioned above, the witness project is one such example of narrative as a tool for health behavior change. The project shows how cancer survivors (acting as a model) sharing their stories/experiences to the community results in increased responses on self-breast cancer screening [24,25,26]. Another such example is the CDC AIDS project- a community-based demonstration project to prevent HIV/AIDS [27]. Personal stories were collected from the audience and shared among their peers. The project also included other supports such as distributing AIDS prevention information and condoms. So, the entire credit could not be attributed to the project intervention's narrative aspect (collection and sharing of stories). However, these projects show how narrative can be used as an intervention tool to bring specific behavior and how it can be used in health awareness intervention for the broader community.

5.3 Narrative as a tool to reach a population with oral tradition.

Use of narrative as a communication tool to reach population having oral tradition. For example- many Indian states (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, etc.) still have a tradition of folk paintings where chitrakar (painters) shows the painting and narrates it orally to the audience in the form of songs. Paintings

themes were usually from mythology and community stories, but over the past few years, new themes were incorporated with the help of NGOs working in child marriage and AIDS awareness programs. Hence, such initiatives can be made using narrative to reach a population group with oral traditions.

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Sharat Jyoti Kuli is a Research Scholar in the Department of Design, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, Master of Design from Indian Institute of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing Jabalpur, India, Bachelor of Technology from NIT Agartala, India. His areas of interest are human factors and ergonomics, crafts and culture, architecture, product design, frugal innovation, rural design and furniture design. He has worked as a product developer in Sickle Innovation Pvt. Ltd. IIM Ahmedabad and worked on designing and developing affordable equipment for Indian farmers. Currently, working in the domain of Rural Design and interior space of Vernacular Architecture.

Rapid Entire Body Assessment (REBA) based work posture analysis of small-scale dyeing unit in Bhadohi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Sharat Jyoti Kuli

Abstract

Dyeing is one of the steps of carpet making process. In Bhadohi, the Carpet City of India and its neighbouring village areas, there still exists traditional manually operated dyeing units. Due to the weights of raw materials (Wool/Jute), poor workstation setups, usage of improper tools and lack of ergonomics awareness among workers, the tasks involved in these dyeing units are strenuous. Improper work methods performed by these workers lead to work-related Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). As such, to understand the risk level of improper work-method practices, it becomes important to do work posture analysis of the workers. In this study, the Rapid Entire Body Assessment (REBA) method was being used to conduct a work posture analysis. The analysis was conducted on five workers working in a small dyeing unit in Bhadohi. The work activities were being observed and video recordings were being made. Lifting of raw materials from the ground, loading raw materials to the *Charkha* (spinning wheel) and spinning the loaded *Charkha* were the three major tasks selected for the assessment. The study based on the result manifests the need to investigate and implement changes in work methods in such dyeing units. Implementation of ergonomics design intervention is needed for prevention of Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) risk among the workers of the unorganised small dyeing unit in Bhadohi.

Key words

REBA, dyeing, Posture analysis, unorganised small-scale unit, Ergonomics, work related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs).

Introduction

Bhadohi, a district in Uttar Pradesh is famous for carpet manufacturing, especially hand-knotted carpets. It is known as the carpet city of India. The carpets of the Uttar Pradesh region received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2010(Punekar & Yadav, n.d). Dyeing raw materials is one of the steps of carpet making process. The small-scale dyeing units in Bhadohi mostly use the traditional *Kuda* (pot) dyeing method (Figure 1). But it has been observed that “the *Kuda* dyeing method has been largely replaced by machine dyeing in closed chambers”(Carpet Exporter promotion council India , 2022). Now-a-days carpet-making industries present in Bhadohi use modern machines and equipments in carpet making process but there still exists small-scale traditional *Kuda* dyeing units in unorganized sector. These dyeing units present in Bhadohi do washing and dyeing raw materials manually, in the sense that, many still use human-powered equipments and earn money for their family. These traditional dyeing units cannot afford boiler dyeing plants, which are machine powered, as they are expensive (Karimi, 2015).

Traditionally, the pots used for boiling water were used for dyeing raw material, locally called *Kuda*. Now-a-days such pots are replaced by concrete pots. There is a Charkha (spinning wheel) on the top of a *Kuda*, which now-a-days is fixed to an iron stand cemented to the *Kuda*. The *Kuda* and the *Charkha* are made by local masons and welders. The whole arrangement of the workstation is arranged by them. The dyeing process is done manually and it needs numbers of workers for dyeing raw

materials. The workers stack the raw materials on the *Charkha* and the *Charkha* is rotated using its handle by workers while the dyeing master supervises the coloured water in the *Kuda*, which is boiled using coal and wood underneath the *Kuda*. Both chemical and natural dyeing agents are used in the process. The *Charkha* is spinned until the raw materials are properly dyed (Karimi, 2015). The capacity of the *Kuda* is 150-180 kilograms of raw materials. It was observed that rings made of aluminium wires (Figure 2) were used to hold raw materials which were then stacked into the *Charkha* for dyeing of the raw materials. Lifting, loading, and spinning are the activities involved in the traditional manual dyeing process. Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5 represents Activity-1 (lifting of raw materials from the ground), Activity-2 (loading of raw materials on the *Charkha*) and Activity-3 (spinning of the *Charkha*) respectively.



Figure 1: Human powered Kuda dyeing machine **Figure 2: Aluminum wire ring**

The workers practice awkward body postures while lifting of raw materials from the ground because of the weight of raw materials and also while loading raw materials to the *Charkha* due to poor workstation design. These factors negatively impact the work performance of the workers. These workers work for five to seven hours a day and their work involves lifting, loading and spinning of raw materials in repetitive motion in the *Charkha*. As the raw

materials absorb water, their weight increases making it difficult for the labourers in spinning the *Charkha*. All these factors which contribute towards the practice of awkward body postures can lead to work-related Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) among workers (Godwin & Ndubueze, 2013). So, this study was conducted to examine the risk levels involved in practicing awkward body postures by analyzing the work postures of workers in a small scale *Kuda* dyeing unit of Bhadohi using the Rapid Entire Body Assessment (REBA) method.



Figure 3: Activity-01



Figure 4: Activity-02



Figure 5: Activity-03

Method and materials

The research study was conducted on a small-scale *Kuda* dyeing unit present in Bhadohi in Uttar Pradesh, India. Prior to this visit a pilot study was conducted for 3 days at "Bhadohi Carpets", a carpet making industry located at Bhadohi. The owner of the industry gave an overview of the industry and the whole process of carpet making performed in the industry was observed. The owner of "Bhadohi Carpets" informed that they have a dyeing plant in their industry but some industries still do the dyeing process through small scale dyeing units. Taking this information and after going through secondary literatures on unorganised

dyeing units and dyeing processes the visit to the small scale *Kuda* dyeing unit was made. This dyeing unit is located at a distance of 12 to 15 kilometres from Bhadohi railway station. The owner of the dyeing unit was the resource person during this visit, who showed his dyeing unit and his workers were observed while they were carrying out the dyeing process manually.

The study was conducted on five workers selected for the study. It was done by observing the methods used by the workers during the process of dyeing and it was observed how the raw materials were handled by the workers. Video recordings were made throughout the observation process to capture the awkward postures of the workers while they were performing their work. After that different snapshots were taken of the awkward postures of the workers from the video footages to conduct posture analysis. The snapshots were mostly of the side views of the workers as it helps minimize errors while measuring the angles of different body parts. REBA analysis was then carried out by measuring the angles of awkward postures of the body parts using a protector. The selected postures were then analysed to fill the scores in the REBA worksheet. The REBA method, which was developed by Hignett and McAtamney in the year 2000 to assess the risk levels associated with work-related MSD is being used in this study, the worksheet of which is shown in Figure 6(Agarwaal, Nair, Kartik, Pardeshi, & Sarawadw, 2016).

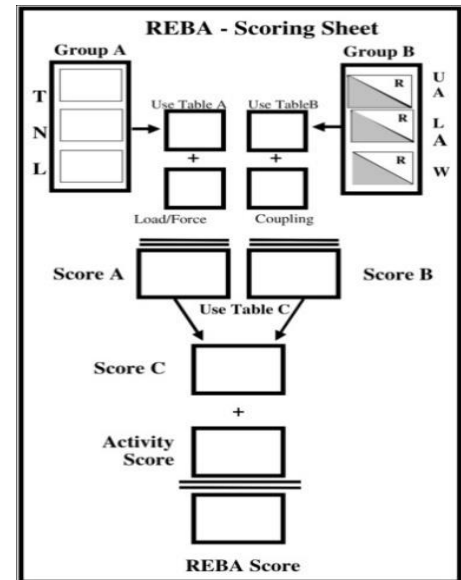
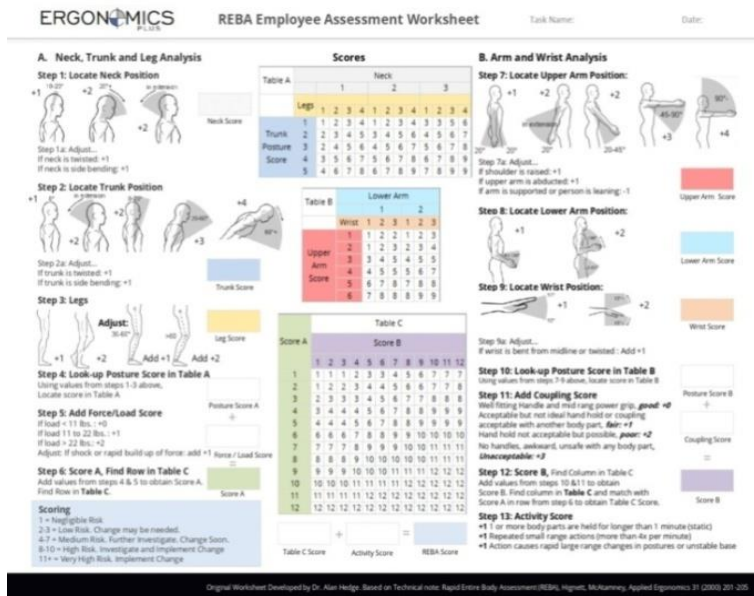


Figure 6: REBA Worksheet

Figure 7: REBA calculation system

This REBA method is based on observational technique used on workers to observe their postures while work activities are performed. The REBA calculation system is shown in Figure 7 (Stanton, Hedge, Brookhuis, Salas, & Hendrick, 2005), where the body parts are divided into two groups, that is, Group-A (Trunk, Neck, and Legs) and Group-B (Upper arms, Lower arms and Wrist). The posture scores of Group A are tabulated in Table A in REBA worksheet and the Posture Score A is evaluated from scores of Group A using co-ordinate straight line. The posture scores of Group B are tabulated in Table B and the Posture Score B is evaluated from scores of Group B using co-ordinate straight line. Load/Force score and Coupling score are added to Posture Score A and Posture Score B respectively. The value of the Posture Score C is obtained by combining Posture Score A and Posture Score B, as tabulated in Table C, using co-ordinate straight line. The final REBA Score is obtained by adding Posture Score C with Activity Score.

Score Group	Level of MSD's Risk	Action level
1	Negligible risk, no action required	0
2-3	low risk, change may be needed	1
4-7	Medium risk, further investigation, change soon	2
8-10	High risk, investigate and implement change	3
11+	Very high risk, implement change	4

Table 1: REBA score groups, MSD's risk level, Action level

The final REBA score indicates Musculoskeletal Disorder's risk level due to awkward postures. The risk level of MSD is divided into five groups, which are 1, (2-3), (4-7), (8-10) and (11+) that is, Negligible risk, Low risk, Medium risk, High and Very High risk respectively. The REBA score is also divided into five Action level categories, which are, 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 as shown in Table 1. If the Action level obtained is 0 then it indicates that there is 'No action required' and if the Action Level is 5 then it indicates 'Very high risk of Musculoskeletal Disorder' and there is need to implement immediate changes.

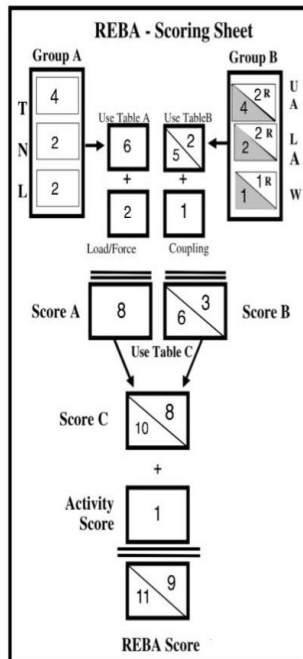
Result and Discussion

The personal characteristics of the five workers selected for the study are given in Table 2.

Characteristics	Male workers
Age	38.5 years \pm 2.05
Weight	67 kg \pm 5.50 SD
Stature	1.673m \pm 0.30
Years of involvement	12 years \pm 3
Working hours per day	5-7 hrs
Literacy	100%

Table 2: Personal characteristics of workers

For the study REBA Employee Assessment worksheet was used to analyse the awkward postures of the workers in the dyeing unit. According to the REBA worksheet result it is observed that in Activity-1 risk of getting MSD is 'very high' on the left side of the body and 'high' on the right side. The calculation of REBA on Activity-1 is shown in Table 3. In this activity the worker used to lean down towards the ground to lift the raw materials. As such the left upper arms and shoulders were raised above the normal position. The weight of the raw materials was more than 10 kilograms. The workers used aluminium rings to hold raw materials together and also to lift raw materials from the ground. Due to the thinness of the aluminium rings, it puts repetitive pressure on fingers of the workers at one particular point. Therefore, this handholding is acceptable but not ideal. The final REBA score is 9 for right side and 11 for left side of the body. The final REBA score indicates that the action level of Activity-01 is 4 for left side of the body and 3 for right side of the body.

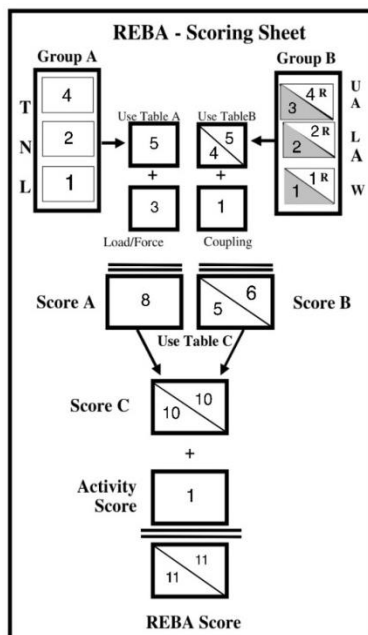


REBA			
Sl. No.	The location of the	Description	Score
1	Trunk	20°-60° flexion=3, twisting and side bending=1	4
2	Neck	0°-20° flexion=1, twisting and side bending=1	2
3	Leg	Bilateral weight bearing=1, knee(s) between 30°-60°=1	2
4	Table-A from Table REBA	The value of table-A taken from the coordinates a line from step REBA 1,2,3	6
5	Load & Force	More than 10 kg	2
6	The value of A from table REBA	The score A retrieved from the addition of the step-4 and step-5	8
7	Upper Arms (R)	20°-45° flexion=2	2
	Upper Arms (L)	45°-90° flexion=3, arms is abducted =1	4
8	Lower Arms (R)	<60° flexion >100° flexion	2
	Lower Arms (L)	<60° flexion >100° flexion	2
9	Wrist (R)	0°-15° flexion	1
	Wrist (L)	0°-15° flexion	1
10	Table-B from Table REBA	The value of table-A taken from the coordinates a line from step REBA 7,8,9	L: 5 R: 2
11	Handle	Handhold acceptable but not ideal	1
12	The value of B from table REBA	The score A retrieved from the addition of the step-10 and step-11	L: 6 R: 3
13	The value of C	The value of table-C taken from the coordinates of the straight line no.8 and 6 for left; 8 and 3 right	L: 10 R: 8
14	The value of the activities	The action causes rapid large range changes in postures or unstable	1
15	Final REBA score	Add table-C score and activity score	L: 11 R: 9

Table 3: Calculation of REBA on activity-1

The next activity, that is, Activity-2 was loading raw materials to the spinning wheel. The REBA score for this activity was 11 for both sides. The weight of the load of raw materials was more than 10 kilograms and the task involved rapid build-up of force. The right shoulder was in a raised position as compared to the left shoulder. It was due to the inaccessibility to the spinning wheel from the position where the worker stood, also creating an unstable base for the worker as his feet was not firmly fixed to the floor. There was not enough leg space for the worker, which can be seen in Figure 4. Here, handholding is acceptable but not

ideal because of the thin aluminium ring equipment they used. Due to the thinness of the equipment, it creates pressure on fingers, palms and wrist. The final REBA score indicates that the action level of Activity-02 is 4 for both side of the body.

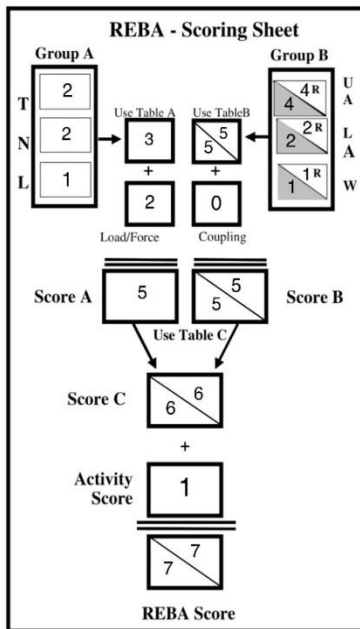


REBA			
Sl. No.	The location of the	Description	Score
1	Trunk	20°-60° flexion=3, twisting and side bending=1	4
2	Neck	0°-20° extension	2
3	Leg	Bilateral weight bearing=1	1
4	Table-A from Table REBA	The value of table-A taken from the coordinates a line from step REBA 1,2,3	5
5	Load & Force	More than 10 kg=2 Rapid buildup force=1	3
6	The value of A from table REBA	The score A retrieved from the addition of the step-4 and step-5	8
7	Upper Arms (R)	>90° flexion=4, Shoulder is raised=+1, Person is leaning-1	4
	UpperArms (L)	45°-90° flexion=3, Shoulder is raised=+1, Person is leaning-1	3
8	Lower Arms (R)	<60° flexion >100° flexion	2
	Lower Arms(L)	<60° flexion >100° flexion	2
9	Wrist(R)	0°-15° flexion/extension	1
	Wrist (L)	0°-15° flexion/extension	1
10	Table-B from Table REBA	The value of table-A taken from the coordinates a line from step REBA 7,8,9	L: 4, R: 5
11	Handle	Handhold acceptable but not idea	1
12	The value of B from table RABA	The score A retrieved from the addition of the step-10 and step-11	L: 5, R: 6
13	The value of C	The value of table-C taken from the coordinates of the straight line no.8 and 5 for left;8 and 6 right	L: 10, R: 10
14	The value of the activities	The action causes rapid large range changes in postures or unstable	1
15	Final REBA score	Add table-C score and activity score	L: 11, R: 11

Table 4: Calculation of REBA on activity-2

The Activity-03 was spinning the *Charkha* (spinning wheel). The weight of the raw materials used to increase due to the absorption of boiled water from the *Kuda* while spinning the *Charkha*. Dyeing colour agents were mixed in the boiling water for the dyeing process. This task involved spinning the *Charkha* in repetitive motion (4x per minute or more) which made the task strenuous.

The final REBA score in this activity is 7, which indicates medium risk.



REBA			
Sl. No.	The location of the	Description	Score
1	Trunk	0°-20° flexion=2	2
2	Neck	0°-20° flexion=1, Twisted or side flexed=1	2
3	Leg	Bilateral weight bearing=1	1
4	Table-A from Table REBA	The value of table-A taken from the coordinates a line from step REBA 1,2,3	3
5	Load & Force	More than 10 kg=2	2
6	The value of A from table REBA	The score A retrieved from the addition of the step-4 and step-5	5
7	Upper Arms (R)	>90° flexion=4	4
	Upper Arms (L)	>90° flexion=4	4
8	Lower Arms (R)	<60° flexion >100° flexion	2
	Lower Arms (L)	<60° flexion >100° flexion	2
9	Wrist(R)	0°-15° flexion/extension	1
	Wrist (L)	0°-15° flexion/extension	1
10	Table-B from Table REBA	The value of table-A taken from the coordinates a line from step REBA 7,8,9	L R 5 5
11	Handle	Well fitting handle and midrange power grip	0
12	The value of B from table RABA	The score A retrieved from the addition of the step-10 and step-11	L R 5 5
13	The value of C	The value of table-C taken from the coordinates of the straight line no.5 and 5 for left;5 and 5 right	L R 6 6
14	The value of the activities	Repeated small-range of actions occur, e.g., repeated more than 4 times per minute	1
15	Final REBA score	Add table-C score and activity score	7 7

Table 5: Calculation of REBA on activity-3

Parameters	Activity No.01		Activity No.02		Activity No.03	
	L	R	L	R	L	R
REBA Score	11	9	11	11	7	7
Risk Level	Very High	High	Very High	Very High	Medium	medium
Action level	4	3	4	4	2	2

Table 6: REBA score, Risk level and Action level

In this study, the result presented in Table 6 indicates that the Action Level for Activity-01 is 4 and 3 for left and right side respectively. This shows that there is immediate need to implement change and investigate as recommended by action score of REBA. For Activity-02 the Action Level is 4 for both sides of the body, which according to REBA action score recommends immediate implementation of change. Again, for Activity-03, the Action level is 2 for both sides of the body, which indicates medium risk of getting MSD and for that further investigation is recommended.

Conclusion

The work method practiced by the workers in the unorganized *Kuda* traditional dyeing units needs ergonomic improvement. The ergonomic factors are not considered in these dyeing units due to lack of ergonomic awareness. Ignoring ergonomics in manually operated dyeing units will impact negatively on workers' health in long term and risk of getting work-related MSD would increase. Workstations and equipments in these dyeing units are not designed by keeping ergonomic factors in consideration. This study therefore suggests that while redesigning traditional *Kuda* dyeing units, there is need to keep ergonomics in consideration. There is also need of an ergonomic design intervention to improve

the awkward body postures of the workers to help minimize the risk of getting MSD. This study therefore can be vital in building knowledge base for future studies and comparisons based on this study could be made after design interventions are taken.

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Tanvi Jain is a research scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, working under the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences (Fine Arts discipline). Her current research takes into account the repurposing of materials and objects in art with a special focus on the use of waste/trash in contemporary Indian art. Her research interest lies in the field of visual culture and material culture. She has engaged in various collaborative and participatory art projects with local communities. Alongside her research, she has started experimenting with pro-environmental materials and production processes as an artist. She completed her B.F.A. (painting) from Amity University, Noida in 2013, and M.F.A. (painting) from Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, in 2015. In 2014 she was invited for a semester exchange program at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, The Netherlands. She was awarded Junior Research Fellowship and Lalit Kala Akademi National Scholarship in 2015. Tanvi has been a part of several international and national exhibitions and biennales, including Third Kunming Biennale, China, 2016; 17th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh, 2016; Kolkata Art Festival, India, 2017 to name a few. She has also been an active participant in national and international symposiums, workshops, and panel discussions.

Shock of the Mundane: Tracing the Miraculous Afterlife of Waste in the 21st c. Visual Art Through a Material Culture Approach

Tanvi Jain

Email: tanvi.jain500@gmail.com, tanvi@iitk.ac.in

Postal Address: C-403, GH 2, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, 208016, India

Abstract: The transgressive art form of the early 20th c. anticipated the dissolution of barriers between life and art; hence, objects of every sort became materials for the new expression of art. Consequently, the proliferation of a multitude of objects and environments in art and the rapid move towards multi-sensory experiences questions the visual dominance prevalent in art historical analysis. Thus, enormous experimentation in terms of unconventional (banal/non-art) materials calls for art analysis to transition from the domain of visual culture to material culture studies in order to understand the aspects of contemporary life. Since Picasso's collages of synthetic cubism, art has witnessed the 'shock of the mundane,' specially with its use of waste or refuse. The realm of visual arts unveiled the aesthetic potential of trash, reassigning it a new purpose, thereby altering its social and cultural value. Since then, artistic practices have predominantly evolved with their preoccupation with waste or refuse, challenging the hierarchies of accepted materials in art.

The 21st c. global India's relentless drive towards material excess led to excessive experimentation with waste in Indian art. Artists have transmogrified the waste into unimagined constructions, from using it as signifiers to alienating it entirely from its

functionality and identity. From urban industrial excess to the lowest form of waste, the corporeal waste, Indian artists of the 21st c. have potentially surprised and disturbed the audience at once. By engaging with these idiosyncratic practices, the study takes a material culture approach to explore the myriad ways and artistic strategies in order to understand the cultural significance and effect of materials in artistic expression. With the help of case studies, it intends to build on the growing interest into the role and meaning of materials in art. The study will be a critical analysis, looking at multiple narratives and discourses of trash in the 21st c. Indian art.

Keywords: *Visual Art, Visual Culture, Material Culture, Indian Contemporary Art, Art and Waste.*

Introduction

“The world at once present and absent which the spectacle makes visible is the world of the commodity dominating all that is lived” (Debord, 1970: 37). “This is the principle of commodity fetishism, the domination of society by “intangible as well as tangible things,” which reaches its absolute fulfilment in the spectacle, where the tangible world is re- placed by a selection of images which exist above it, and which at the same time are recognized as the tangible par excellence” (Debord, 1970: 36).

Situationist Guy Debord (1970), in his polemic work ‘The Society of the Spectacle,’ presents a powerful critique of the contemporary consumer culture and commodity fetishism. Debord problematizes our technology-driven modern society, lacking an authentic social life, and instead is a mere

representation of it. According to him, social life has declined from 'being' to 'having' and 'having' into 'appearing.' Debord profoundly reveals how mass media has drastically invaded our society and pacified human behavior, thoughts, and rationale. Commenting on the superficial manifestation of mass media, he asserts, "the spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among people mediated by images" (Debord, 1970: 4). This proliferation of images marks the dominance of visuals and hence that of visual culture studies that involve contextual and formal analyses of cultural images. Alongside relying on images to decipher the cultural expressions, visual culture studies also take into consideration the prevailing tendency and the obsession to picture our modern existence.

However, this restricted understanding of the culture dominated by visual senses alone ignores the increasingly multi-sensory aspects of cultural forms and expressions. Thus, the study argues for embracing material culture studies for a holistic and multi-dimensional understanding of cultural expressions. As anthropologist Augustus Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers (1906: 23) describes material culture as "the outward signs and symbols of particular ideas in the mind", in the form of any "human-constructed or human-mediated objects, forms, or expressions" (Bolin and Blandy, 2003: 249). Material culture studies encourage cultural interpretation through sensory engagement with artifacts and expressions. Further, the realm of visual arts has long transcended the boundary of visual representations to embrace tactile and multi-sensory expressions, becoming the defining feature of contemporary art. This being the case, studying art from a material culture perspective offers advantages over visual culture.

The study advances on Jules David Prown's ideas laying benefits of studying artworks from a material culture perspective. According to him, works of art are "direct and often overt or intentional expressions of cultural belief" (Prown, 1982: 2), possessing "theoretical complexity (as opposed to technical or mechanical complexity), embodying by definition aesthetic and even ethical decision making" (Prown, 1982: 12). The meanings and associations of artworks are shaped and, in turn, shapes society's culture. He further proposes that we can "use the work of art as an autonomous artistic sign, as an affective link with the culture that called it into being, because of our shared physiological experience as perceivers and our sensory overlap with the maker and the original perceivers" (Prown, 1982: 16).

In this commodity-driven world, visual art is arguably an essential constituent of material culture studies, especially since visual art anticipated the dissolution of barriers between life and art. Hence, objects of every sort became materials for the new art expression since the early 20th c. Artists carried enormous experimentation, especially in terms of material, reinscribing the everyday products of the culture back into culture with different artistic potentials and intentions. The use of often overlooked banal objects in art provides the rich potential of capturing the essence of our everyday existence. As Latour (1993) unveiled in his polemical work, to understand society, we must relearn to ascribe power to non-human agents in the field, i.e., to 'things.' Such art expressions offer valuable insights, "that does not pertain to things, even when they are represented in the work, but to a certain attitude toward things, a certain attitude on the part of man toward the entire reality that surrounds him, not only to that reality which is directly represented in the given case" (Mukařovský, 1978: 228). Thus the material components of the

artwork are the key to understanding its cultural implications. "The ways in which materials are combined or modified into things allocate to them meanings that are culturally determined" (Yonan, 2011: 244).

Through the works of Picasso and other cubists in 1912, art witnessed for the first time, what I call, the 'shock of mundane' in terms of employing the most banal materials of everyday life and vernacular culture. Picasso's collages appropriated industrially manufactured refuse symptomatic of the modern industrial age. As Gioni (2007: 11) wrote, "collage is a dirty medium, infected as it is by waste. It appropriates residues and leftovers, trafficking with what is deemed to be valueless." In resistance to the rigid modernist aesthetics, Duchamp introduced the anti-aesthetic concept of readymades (unassisted and assisted readymades) with his heterogeneous collection of found objects since the early 1910s. As Ganotis (2017: 54) notes, "found object is a fragment of everyday life becoming part of a new reality which depending on the artist's purpose and inspiration can be oneiric, disruptive, debunking or denouncing." The cubist collages and Dadaist readymades (excluding first-hand purchased objects) are the primary and vital constituents in the genealogy of trash art, which evolved more complex with unrelated permutations of waste material in the works of surrealists in the 1930s. The collage ideas further expanded into Kurt Schwitter's environmental assemblages (Merzbau) since the 1920s. The Duchampian boom broke again in Neo-Dada, exemplified in the assemblages of Robert Rauschenberg (combine paintings) and many other significant artists of the late 1950s. From newspaper cuttings, discarded bottle racks, use of dust as a means of coating to even artists' shit, waste/residue in all its form has been embraced in the realm of art since the early 20th c.

In a similar vein, there is an underlying presence of trash sensibility in the material evolution of the 20th c. Indian art. With the earliest experimentations in the 1930s, Ramkinkar Baij's earthy monumental sculptures made of local natural materials like pebbles, cow dung, cement, etc., do not solely portray his experimental zeal but also the third world's intuitive logic of resourcefulness. Subsequently, since the 1950s, Nek Chand's mega construction, Rock garden, exploiting tons of everyday industrial and discarded household waste, was emblematic of the burgeoning industrialized and commoditized New India. As Sambrani (2008: 5) notes, "the process of excavation, recycling, and reassembly serve to explore the ruptures and sutures that characterize modernity and its immanent experience of turbulence." Vivan Sundaram, a pioneering figure, explored the hysteria of waste through his astonishing body of work (1990s-2010s), both materially and conceptually derived from the trash. Throughout the 20th c. a plethora of artists challenged the hierarchies of art materials by embracing this new genre of material (waste/refuse) whose very essence lies in constant and infinite transformations and unprecedented growth.

The 21st c. global India's relentless drive towards material excess led to accelerated experimentation with consumerist debris in Indian art. From using it as signifiers to alienating it completely from its functionality and identity, Indian artists have transmogrified the waste into unimagined constructions. From urban industrial excess to the lowest form of waste, the corporeal waste, Indian artists of the 21st c. have potentially surprised and disturbed the audience at once. By engaging with these idiosyncratic practices, the study takes a material culture approach to explore the myriad ways and artistic strategies in order to understand the cultural significance and effect of

discarded material in artistic expression. It intends to build on the growing interest in the role and meaning of materials in art. By looking at the works of four individual artists, it seeks to understand the range of narratives and discourses of trash in Indian art, located within diverse social, cultural, and geographical contexts. Waste, an elaborate database of our contemporary material culture, metaphorically and materially, will reveal the complex structures of our cultural and social existence. "One place where the character of most cities can be felt is in the waste" (Odoh et al., 2014: 2).

Cosmopolitan Waste: Introspecting the Rift Between Nature and the City Through Arunkumar HG's Works

French author Marcel Proust beautifully articulates, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes" (Rafi and Ahmed, 2016: 169).

Arun Kumar HG exposes the obscure forms of domination underlying the often ignored and trivial aspects of the banal, making our everyday consumption culture and disposable lifestyle hypervisible. As Lefebvre reveals, "things do not call attention to themselves – they are so integrated in our lives, being at the same time the most obvious and the best hidden" (Olsen, 2003: 94). 'Things' often go unnoticed until the byproducts of our consumer existence haunt us in the form of ceaseless and monstrous trash. Hailing from a farmer family in Karnataka, much of Arun's practice deals with ecological issues that arise out of his experiences of negotiating as a city dweller and a native of rural Western Ghats. Arun's expansive oeuvre includes photography, sculptures, performative works, and other collaborative initiatives equipped with multi-layered meanings draws references from his

extensive research and lived experiences. Arun's ideas are manifested in his careful choice of material, where meaning is always inclusive of the work's materiality. As the artist notes, "I have learnt to address the issue effectively through the choice of materials and medium, which is evocative.... materials have a history or a story to support the artist's thought process" (Quadri, 2018). Feeding on the everyday rejects from scrapyards, roadside, trashcans, Arun's works repurposes the solid waste, evoking the concept of 'recuperative husbandry' (Wyma, 2018a).

"The sea lovingly washes, polishes, takes away all utilitarian vestige and deposits the trash ashore so that it may reincarnate in a life not pragmatic, but aesthetic" (Cabanillas, 2015: 46).

In 2015, Arun presented a powerful critique of the burgeoning disposable lifestyle and the depleting water bodies through a monumental installation *Droppings and the Dam(n)* (Figure. 1) made of plastic lids. The form reminds of Richard Serra's gigantic works where the phenomenological experience becomes crucial to the work's meaning. Arun's work encourages the viewers to move in and around, demanding kinaesthetic involvement. However, painstakingly made by manually connecting around one lakh discarded plastic bottle caps, the work defies Serra's industrial fabrication; it rather gradually weaves into a tapestry of the detritus of our society. The work's scale and material are evocative of the volume of plastic waste precipitously ending up in the water bodies. Overwhelmed by the disposable plastic culture, the artist collected the lids from his neighborhood for over a year, culminating in this gigantic plastic mound. "Plastic has become emblematic of economies of abundance and ecological destruction" (Gabrys et al., 2013: 3).



Figure 1: Arunkumar HG, *Droppings and The Dam(n)*, 2015, Nearly 100,000 plastic bottle tops and steel wire.

In 2018, Arun’s recent body of work was eventuated in a mega exhibition CON-struction (Figure. 2). The title carefully applied in the context of encroachment brings forth the commentary on the unapologetic exploitation of natural resources by the intrusion of a human-centered society. By looking at the inherent ecological cost of metropolitan development and global production, Arun directs our attention to adopt ‘recuperative husbandry.’ The same is manifested in Arun’s thoughtful appropriation of waste as his dominant material. As he notes, “waste is a painful reality we see each day of our lives, and I was struck with the idea of viewing it as potential material” (TERI, 2018: 28). The choice of material and its treatment provokes additional layers of meaning. The majority of works in the exhibition were made from reclaimed wood of large packaging cases used for shipping that Arun collected from industrial sites and pavements of Gurugram. His works deliberately evoke the absent histories of material origin, the under acknowledged natural resource, the forest. While Arun’s huge human and animal forms are suggestive of historical and

cultural icons, the material and surface treatment at once rescues the viewer back to the tethering ecological issue. Though he uses recycled material like paper pulp, packaging wood, etc., the industrial method of casting the figures from mold directs our attention towards the homogenizing effect of assembly-line production. He often renders his organic forms like that of trees, animals, and humans in a rather industrial morphology, strikingly juxtaposing the natural and synthetic. Thus Arun's eclectic approach towards materials and forms is encoded with multiple histories and references. Kathryn draws parallels between Arun's practice and object lessons in the exhibition catalog essay. "Object lessons once promoted an acute awareness of origins through a step-by-step analysis of a given commodity that wove through visual descriptions, localities of production, propagation, cultivation and manufacture and trade" (Wyma, 2018b).



Figure 2: Arunkumar HG, Con-struction I, 2018, Reclaimed packaging wood from an industrial scrap yard, recycled paper pulp, cement, wood glue etc.

Gendered Waste: Narratives of Contested Identity Through Shine Shivan's Practice

"Read as impurity and disorder, the most virulent subset of dirt—feces—coalesces the most emotional and extreme reactions to filth and manifests in the figuring of excrement as shit—low, horrifying, disgusting" (Morrison, 2015: 30).

Charting the conflict between entrenched conventionalism and idiosyncrasy, Shine's bold metaphorical language of work proudly embraces waste in almost all its forms. From the old glittery sequins and beads to the most repulsive dead animals, fresh bones, hair, and animal feces. Extracted from their familiar or intimate surroundings, the materials and objects are represented as fetishistic appropriations. Shine's astonishing use of everyday material and unpredictable formats simultaneously seduces and repulses the spectator. As Nikos Papastergiadis (2010: 33) notes, "In the new art there is both sensuous absorption with the present, a shameless fascination with the abject, and a candid representation of the banalities of everyday life." Shine's staggering body of work deals with fraught issues like gender identity, perceptions of beauty, and gender roles, redefining the experiences and roles associated with masculinity. Often depicting an aggressively masculine yet androgynous identity, Shine explores homosexual and homo-social desires, where he projects gender as a social construct rather than a biological given. Having spent childhood in Kerala's lush green landscape, Shine's connection with nature has only grown since he shifted to Faridabad with his family and started spending most of his time in the Aravalli forest. While forests are the storehouse for Shine's organic material, all other found and waste objects in Shine's

work come from his extensive practice of collecting and preserving things for years until he discovers the significance of the same in his works. He amalgamates mythological references and his personal experiences with surroundings, nature, forest, and its artifacts. As Olsen (2003: 88) notes, "things, objects, landscapes, possess 'real' qualities that affect and shape both our perception of them and our cohabitation with them."

In two sensational solo shows, *Sperm Weaver* and *Suck Spit*, Shine presented a post-feminist position. Concerned with the vulnerable masculine and homoerotic identity, Shine cleverly tweaks the supposedly feminine elements by his symbolic use of the material and role reversal. In work titled *Used Dicks*, Shine painstakingly weaved a layer of his mother's hair (her mother collected and gifted him) over several abandoned baya weaver nests, which he collected for years from the forest. Although weaving is assumed to be a domestic, feminine activity, in the case of baya weavers and Shine, the roles are reversed, thereby subverting the ascribed gender roles. Though the act is feminine, the form in most of his works is phallic. While discussing his source of inspiration and references, Shine conveys that "the works are loaded with Freudian implications" (Shine Shivan, 2019, personal communication). In most of his work, the discomfort of the material itself served as a constant reminder of the pressing issue. In *Sex Fumes*, thousands of glazing black beads, meticulously arranged in a monumental wall panel, demand close introspection. Drawn close by its visual complexity, the spectator encounters tonnes of deer feces that Shine has collected around the Aravalli hills. Though repulsive but the excrement becomes the vehicle of multi-layered meaning. While discussing such unconventional character of contemporary art, Stallabrass (2004: 1) asserts, "there flourishes a strange mix of

carnival novelty, barbaric transgression of morals, and offences against many systems of belief, alongside quieter contemplation and intellectual play.”

Shine’s fascination for the dead is evident in a costume made of thousands of cock heads and another work titled Cock Dump (Figure. 3). It consists of a large number of taxidermied cocks (used as a symbol of masculinity) arranged in a manner of dreadful contortion, with body parts broken and distorted by the conquering feminine quilt. The installation defies the traditional taxidermy ornamentation, instead relies on abjection to evoke Shine’s ideas. As a New Zealand-based artist Angela Singer says, “the aim should be to create botched works that are transformative, that shock the viewer into a new way of seeing and thinking about the animal” (Johnson, 2016: 78). Shine’s encounter with the dead dates back to his childhood, as he shares, “selling dry fish was my father’s part-time job. I have seen rooms filled with fish and how my father used to preserve it. So I feel this experience of the dead and need for preservation subconsciously arrived in my works” (Shine Shivan, 2019, personal communication).



Figure 3: Shine Shivan, *Cock Dump*, 2011, Taxidermy, steel, wire, used blanket.

Unlike other exhibitions, *Glimpse of Thirst* predominantly employs found objects that Shine had collected and stored in his collection for years, every material and object having a personal narrative or a story behind it. Used dentures, used fabric, artificial hair, latex, sequins, beads, marbles, old mannequins, the objects are reminiscent of our voguish modern existence. It is an elaborate series of hybridized fictional characters draped in flamboyant sculptural garments. Through transvestism and role-playing, Shine rejects binary oppositions associated with gender, exemplified through Shine's pregnant man and other antithetical imagery. The disfigured characters having undercurrents of violence reminds of Chapman brothers' (members of Young British Artists) grotesque and abrasive imagery. *Glimpse of Thirst* "represented an obvious brutality like his other works which often have an undercurrent of violence in them" (Grewal, 2015: 1801). Materials become the driving force of Shine's exploration, where waste itself acquires a gender symbolism.

Materiality Matters: A Formal Exploration of Waste in Manish Nai's Practice

"The artist perpetuates his culture by maintaining certain features of it by 'using' them. The artist the model of the anthropologist engaged" (Kosuth, 2008: 182).

"Hidden behind Nai's work is his love for Mumbai, and his passion for finding value and desire in discarded elements of the city, from its blank billboards to undervalued everyday objects" (Art Fervour, 2019). Hailing from a family of jute traders in Mumbai, Nai started exploring the artistic potential of jute when his father's business suffered loss and left them with an abundant

stock of jute. In such cases, "artists are more likely to shop at home-improvement rather than art-supply stores" (Costache, 2012: 34). Since then, Nai's intimate engagement with the material has been manifested in his intricate and tactual ensemble. Scarcity of supplies steered Nai's imagination to embrace a vast array of discarded objects where "the recuperation of trash as art... exemplifies a strategy of resourcefulness in a situation of scarcity" (Whiteley, 2011: 7). Nai's choice of cheap, ubiquitous materials comprising discarded clothes, old newspapers, discarded packaging cardboard, metal, and burlap is not arbitrary. Instead, it is a means to extend his inquiry into the texture, materiality, and dimensionality with precision. Nai's preoccupation with humble and quintessentially Indian material and the very industrial process of his work is emblematic of Nai as a city dweller coexisting with the 'stuff' of a hyper-consumerist Mumbai. "Foregrounding material factors and reconfiguring our very understanding of matter are prerequisites for any plausible account of coexistence and its conditions in the twenty-first century" (Coole and Frost, 2010: 2). From earthen jute, old romance novels, judicial manuals to newspapers in nineteen vernacular languages, Nai sift through the endless pile of raddiwallas, Chor Bazar, and other informal traders, procuring these various cultural markers.

At the time when figurative rendition dominated Indian art, Nai's early experiments revived minimalism and abstraction to create a complex, idiosyncratic language. Starting a meticulous engagement with the warp and weft of the jute, Nai created complex collages by pasting multiple layers of jute cloth onto the canvas. Having an appearance of embossed embroidery, Nai's collages are instead crafted by his rigorous extraction of warp/weft, unveiling the layers underneath, thus giving a three-

dimensional illusion. The extracted jute from the collages instinctively acquired space in his three-dimensional sculptures. After almost a decade, Nai began to explore the sculptural dimension in his work by repurposing discarded material. Though mostly organic, Nai's material acquires a somewhat geometric industrial refashioning, locking the ephemeral malleable objects into solid concrete forms. The mundane objects are de-familiarized by systematic compression into cubic molds, which once de-molded ejected vibrant cubes and cuboids (Figure. 4). Nai's procedural practice refers to the historical antecedent of 1960s Italy, *Arte Povera* (poor art). His geometric forms and the use of discarded clothes are a striking reminder of Michelangelo Pistoletto's "Little Fabric Walls," critiquing the triumphant of the consumer society of the glorious sixties.



Figure 4: Manish Nai, Untitled, 2018, Used clothes and wood.

Nai's obsession with space, time, and materiality is evident in his works, where the city of Mumbai is a constant source of visual and material inspiration. His fascination and engagement with the city is distinguishably captured in one of his work resembling a series of high-rises of Mumbai. Made of recycled books, hues of yellows and ochres stacked one over other with a subtle tonal play and scrupulous symmetry. Natasha Ginwala (2018) beautifully

articulates in the catalog, the books “come to stand in for bodies cramped in chawls and being tightly packed inside hurtling local train compartments—there is a folding of scale and disfiguration in order to coexist as a mutant urban organism”. Nai’s abstracted minimal yet complex ensemble brings forth a formal inquiry of the material remainder of our consumer society. “An apparent simplicity of materials and forms notwithstanding, Nai’s prescient works lay bare our profligate tendencies forcing us to reflect on the complex challenges of the Anthropocene” (Shah, 2019: 85).

Waste as the Contingent Object of Reality: Exploring the Fragile Experiences and Objects Through Prashant Pandey’s Practice.

“Trash is as resilient as cockroaches, but less repugnant to some people and much less alien to human nature: we universally share (and fear) the fate of trash; we understand putrefaction, because putrefaction, ultimately, is what awaits us” (Zubiaurre, 2015: 38).

Through his critical commentary on modern life, Prashant Pandey rekindles our perception of life in poetic fancy. Love, death, desire, loss, the fragile experiences of human life is what fascinates Pandey. In his eloquent orchestrations, the spectator encounters the inevitable yet obscure human conditions and the by-products of their existence. From the artist’s urine, expired chocolates, blood-stained glass slides, cobwebs to thrown away cigarette buds, all become evidence of our corporeal presence. The perishable material and contingent character of Pandey’s work advocates that “rubbish is a metaphor for life itself” (Assman, 2002: 77). “The material both literally shapes the work as well as figuratively assists in telling the story of the work through symbolism imbued in the material and its process of

inherent weathering” (Kromholz, 2016: 18). Pandey’s sheer artistry of elegant forms distorts and defamiliarizes the material, drawing the viewer closer, and only on close encounter does one experiences repulsion and surprise.

In a solo show, Shelf Life, as the title suggests, Pandey reincarnates materials that have been doomed to oblivion. The perishable material questions the resilient nature of human experiences and the effect on the environment. Commenting against female infanticide, Gift (Figure. 5) is a large deformed skull of an infant, giving much an appearance of glittery diamond-studded Damien Hirst’s skull. On close inspection, one’s own materiality drives disgust and discomfort when confronted with a mosaic of hundreds of little pouches filled with the artist’s urine, sweat, and tears. As Adorno (1982: 133) expresses, “Life is merely the epitome of everything about which one must be ashamed.” Pandey continues to deceive the viewer’s perception in Universe, a flower tapestry meticulously knitted to create a lacework-like pattern, reminding of an old Victorian doily. The seemingly tiny flowers are flattened cigarette buds with hues of white, yellow, and ochre that the artist has collected over months. Material obsolescence also becomes a premeditated and integral part of some works. In an Untitled sculpture, Pandey constructed a headless boy entirely covered with slabs of expired chocolate. Echoing Baudelaire’s idea of ephemeral as an eternal condition of modernity, the melting of chocolate slowly reveals the inner armature, much like our life is always in a state of flux. As Kromholz (2016: 18) states, “the temporary artwork’s material is therefore structure and signifier in its presence, and also in its absence.



Figure 5: Prashant Pandey, Gift, 2010, Urine, sweat, tears, formaldehyde and iron.

Though the starting point of Pandey's investigation is waste, in *Shelf Life II*, he explores the by-products and discards in a new light. Elucidating the fact that "waste is not a stable category," Pandey explores the experiences of attachment and detachment attached to objects (Uccia, 2018: 9). By reclaiming and subverting the mundane by-product of human activity like marble blast stone, road tar, used copper wire, etc. Pandey proclaims that waste is the "matter out of place" (Douglas, 2002: 36). He evokes the implications of shifting value inherent in objects that surrounds us. Coming from a family of traditional stone carvers in Jaipur, Pandey's *Love*, a massive heart made up of marble blast stone, is evocative of his childhood fascination and engagement with marble chips. He revisits the old family craft but only to embrace what was regarded as the discarded and impure, the by-product of the sacred sculpted deities. Pandey's practice acknowledges and conceptualizes waste, not in terms of celebrating recuperations; he instead alters our commonplace perception of it.

Conclusion

"Understanding of the world is often fuelled through representations that mirror cultural values or established social practices. Encounters with these representations, whether they

occur along the avenues of mass media, the sites of social media, or within the esteemed spaces of the art gallery have the capacity to crystallise issues and catalyse judgements about a set of topical issues” (Wyma, 2018b).

As observed, visual art representations are the approximations of the critical rethinking that contemporary artists are calling. “Society and culture are inextricably intertwined, and their study cannot and should not be isolated” (Prown, 1982, p 5). Bringing visual arts in dialogue with material culture provided a holistic and emancipatory understanding of the contemporary culture we live in. An account of the production, artist’s intention, spectator’s encounter, and reception, as well as the economic, cultural, social, and ideological context of the artworks, enlightened the readings of our late-capitalist culture, thereby offering a potential answer to the mysterious and ubiquitous waste and associated stigmas. The artists brought forth myriad histories, discourses, and narratives of waste in Indian art, rooted in individual geographical and cultural contexts. One man’s trash became another man’s treasure through a broad spectrum of expressive and sensory appropriations, reinscribing value to the obliterated or repulsive waste.

By challenging the hierarchies of accepted materials in art, visual artists of the 21st c. passionately embraced the banal, every day, and the non-art, both materially and conceptually. As Lefebvre emphasizes,

“The concept of everyday life can illuminate the complex ways in which subjects exercise their potential to be emancipatory and critical.” Thus, “making art by taking what is close at hand. Thinking about the biggest philosophical abstractions from the

position of our most intimate experiences” (Papastergiadis, 2008: 70-74).

In these myriad ways of exploration, there lies a shared principle of bricolage. Claude Levi-Strauss invoked the concept of bricolage, projecting an ancestral lineage of combining the leftovers of the immediate culture and interrogating “all the heterogeneous objects [objets hétéroclites] of which his treasure is composed” (Johnson, 2012: 363). The process and ideological base of bricolage deal with the mundane, the leftover, and the residue of human activity. Through repurposing and recycling, the artists do not intend to celebrate the utopian faith in recycling; instead, they lay bare a genre of material whose very essence lies in infinite transformations and ceaseless growth. As Žižek (2010: 35) beautifully writes,

“The properly aesthetic attitude of the radical ecologist is not that of admiring or longing for a pristine nature of virgin forests and clear sky, but rather of accepting waste as such, of discovering the aesthetic potential of waste, of decay, of the inertia of rotten material that serves no purpose.”

The material culture approach relocates attention on the material practices and process of the increasingly multi-sensory artistic expressions within the purview of visual arts. It lay forth the complex interaction of the materials, ideas, and bodies at play in every art process.

The study urges the discipline of art history to advance from stylistics and iconographic analysis of visual representation to having direct knowledge of processes of making and encountering the material manifestations for a holistic understanding of cultural expression. Because artworks convey the artist’s attitude towards

reality and society's belief system at large not only through visuals but also through their physical presence.

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Arman Ovla is presently pursuing PhD in Fine Arts, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Kanpur, as an international student from Iran. He is passionate about folk and traditional arts and has special interest in research in the field of native and ageless pottery and terracotta. He feels that a timely intervention to address the concerns of potters may help the cause of sustainable development of the traditional craft clusters.

The Women Tradition Bearers of Kalpourgan in Iranian Baluchistan

Arman Ovla

Abstract

The art of pottery is one of the most ancient living crafts practised in different parts of the world. Sistan and Baluchistan province located in South East Iran has some important centres of native pottery. Sharing a common border with Afghanistan and Pakistan, Sistan and Baluchistan remains one of the poorest and the most deprived provinces of Iran. Sistani in the north, which is in minority and the Baluch who are a majority are two main ethnic groups spread over a larger area of this province. Known to be Aryan descendants, the majority of the Baloch are Sunni Muslims who have a rich culture and language of their own. Traditionally, most Baloch living in the central and northern parts of Baluchistan were nomads, and this nomadic culture gets reflected in their ways of life even to this day. They are strongly class-conscious people who have always followed old social structures of cast systems.

Handmade pottery has very strong roots in Baluchistan where most potters are women. Cultural taboos prohibit these women from participating in agricultural practices or engaging in field work. They remain confined to their homes restricted by the shackles of a male dominated society. Conventionally, they engage in needlework craft and pottery that could be practised from the four walls of their home. Their hardships and unfulfilled desires find expression in their craft. They use the language of art to communicate with the world outside.

This article is a study on the hardworking women potters from Kalpourgan village of Baluchistan. The diligence and dedication with which these women potters managed to break the traditional boundaries was recognised by the World Crafts Council (WCC) in the recent past. They declared Kalpourgan as 'The World Craft City' in 2017.

Key words: *Nomadic, Baluch Pottery, Woman Potters, Kalpourgan, Baluchistan, World Crafts Council.*

Where is Baluchistan?

Baluchistan is a land for the Baluch, who are a group of tribes that have pastoralist nomadic characteristics and live in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Khan 2017). In Iran, they live in the Sistan & Baluchistan province which is the second largest province and one of the driest regions of Iran. This province is the least developed zone in Iran. Most Baluch people are Sunni Muslims and speak Baluchi which is one of the oldest living languages of the Western Iranian group among the Indo-European languages. (Britannica n.d.).



Big Baluchistan (pakistantoday.com n.d.)



Kalpourgan village in Iranian Baluchistan (Google n.d.)

According to the available archaeological evidence, Baluchistan in Iran was one important area for making pottery in the Parthian Empire (247 BC – 224 AD). This craft is continued till today. The form, decorative techniques and kilns are similar to those in the

past. Pottery is now made in Kalpourgan, Kohmytag, and Holanchakan villages (Reza 2013). The Kalpourgan potteries are the same as the ancient pots of 3000 B.C in Baluchistan (Gluck 1976). In this article, we will discuss the pottery of Kalpourgan village.

Kalpourgan village

Kalpourgan village is located on the border between Iran and Pakistan. The distance between Kalpourgan and the province capital Zahedan is three hundred and ninety kilometres. In this village, people make some handicrafts such as mat-weaving, needlework and pottery (wccinternational n.d.). These crafts were first mentioned by Jay Fred Gluck, an American archaeologist, who was invited to study Iranian handicrafts in 1975. At the time, the Queen of Iran was interested in using the Baluchi needlework on her official clothes and made several exhibitions of Kalpourgan pottery in Iran and outside. The Government established a pottery centre with an oil kiln in Kalpourgan and invited potters from different villages to settle down there and produce pots. Elina Sorainen, a Finnish art professor, wrote her Ph.D. thesis about making the Kalpourgan pottery centre, a live museum. She was a visiting faculty at the University of Art in Tehran in the 1970s. The research was published in Alto University in 2006. Later, the Iranian government also introduced Kalpourgan Clay Living Museum in the village. In 2017, the village was identified as World Craft City by the World Crafts Council (WCC).



Kalpourgan Pottery Centre



Women potters in the Pottery Centre

In most of the book and articles which are about Baluch women potters, it is mentioned that here, potters are considered to be the keepers of the ancient heritage and art of pottery. The motifs of Kalpourgan potteries are influenced by the beliefs and faiths of the Baluch race and have symbolic functions created by women. The style and ethnic patterns have been passed down through generations since ancient times. But the most fundamental role in the pottery process is played by gender that makes a significant difference in both form and decoration (Iman 2015) (wccinternational n.d.). There are many women potters across the world that follow primitive methods but none of them looks like Kalpourgan pottery. A similar kind of Baluch decoration of pots can be found in Gujarat in India where women decorate pots with the black and white colours. There, potters are men who work on the wheel. Baluchistan is a place where pots are made and decorated by females, and they have feminine impressions. The author tries to look into why women are making and decorating them in a specific way that are so different from others. So, besides the method of making and style of decorations, the role of women in Baluch society and different crafts made by females will also be studied.

Making process

It is the Dhvary tribe women who are engaged in making pottery in Kalpourgan. They call pot *Kapal* and *Hapalkshan* means potter.

The men carry the soil from some heap near by the village which is known as 'Moshtok', and then they use a sieve to spread the extra materials. The soil is kept in a pool and mixed with water, after which the watery clay is poured through a fine sieve and put in another pool to dry till the extra water is evaporated. It takes two days in summer and longer in winter for the clay to be ready. When it is finally ready, the potters knead it and if required, add some soil powder to it (Amir 2014). The color of the clay is green which turns red after baking because of rich iron oxide octant in it. The clay has a high plasticity character rendering it very difficult to make pots on wheels. The potters with experience never use pottery wheels and pots are kept in sunlight immediately after giving the shape for drying. The form, technique and decoration of Kalpourgan pottery are based on the raw materials and the tools they use. Women take a clump of clay and put it on a deep plate (*Bono*) which acts as the wheel in this kind of pottery. In this style, the potters use their toes to turn the plate and keep the hands free to give shape to the products. The plate is filled with soil and covered with a piece of cotton cloth that can absorb the moisture of the clay so that the base of the vessel is hard enough to carry the walls. Potters use pinch and coil methods to make pots. They first use the pinch method to shape the bottom or the base of the product. Then by adding coils, the pot is formed. They use a wooden paddle to beat the walls with one hand inside the product for support. Beating helps the coils join and guide the clay to other parts till the thickness of all the parts becomes the same. If the vessels need any additions like handles, it is added in the leather-hard time (before drying completely). There are very few tools that women use for pottery such as wooden paddles, a bowl of water and a plate of soil with a cotton cloth.



First stage of making the base

When the pot is made, it is kept in the shade to help evaporate the extra water and let it become leather hard. The potters trim the products using a sharp metal tool and keep it later in the sun for drying. Apart from utility products, women make clay toys for their children. The horse and camel are common toys. Potters decorate all the pots and toys by drawing different motifs on them, so they need a soft surface to get better results. When the pots reach the bone-dry stage, potters wet the surface with a wet cloth and then burnish the pot with the help of a stone. Then they polish the surface again with an oily piece of cloth. As a result, the surface becomes slightly waterproof and it becomes easier to control the link. The colour is made by adding a few drops of water to two black stones called '*Tituk*' and rubbing them against each other. It is a kind of dark black ink which is rich in manganese oxide and iron oxide. Women cut a small narrow stick from a native palm, the size of a matchstick. They hold the stick between the thumb and the index finger. The index finger is dipped in the ink so that some amount of ink gets stored in between the fingers and the colour reaches the surface through the stick. The potters can control the amount of ink with their fingers.



Trimming and burnishing process (isna.ir 2016)



The stone which produces colour



Drawing motif on pot with the stick

They decorate their pots by repetitive patterns. The patterns are geometric and have symbolic impressions. Circle, triangle, lozenge and lines are some of the patterns which potters use as motifs for decorating their pots.

The next stage is baking the products. The kiln made by bricks has a separate fireplace at the bottom and a chamber with four chimneys at the top. The fireplace is a small channel about 40 cm to two meters through which the oil pipe is passed till the centre, where there is a round hole (20 cm diameter) connecting to the chamber. A circular oil burner is there to fire the chamber. The chamber is above the fireplace and is about two by two meters and two and a half meter high covered by a dome. There is a cylindershaped space inside along with a fixed shelf of one-meter distance from the base of the chamber. As potters put the vessels on top of each other, they don't need any other shelves. There is a hole on top with a 70cm diameter. During firing, it is covered and after firing, the cover is completely removed for cooling. The

thickness of the walls is one meter and the roof is about 30 cm. The chamber has a small gate 30 cm by 70cm high and one metre deep so that the potters can go inside to load pots; the kiln has four cross drafts around. Potters with experience know when they have to stop the fire, average 10 hours. There is no mechanical measurement, and for these products the temperature goes up to 800 - 900°C. Firing process is always done in oxidation atmosphere All the products are baked at single firing and women do not use any slip, glaze and double firing.












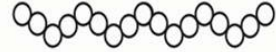










The chamber gate









Loading pots in the kiln

Motifs on Pots

After baking, the pots turn red because the clay body has Hematite (Fe_2O_3). The ink is rich in manganese (III) oxide (Mn_2O_3) but has less silica (SiO_2). So, with use, the motifs disappear. The best way to fix the colour is to add some silica or increase the temperature which will change the feature of Kalpourgan pottery (Farhad 2010). For decoration, potters use different motifs that reflect their environment and their culture. They draw abstract and symbolic motifs that represent the mountain, flower, butterfly, lock, wheat cluster, etc. Some motifs are made by repetition of simple forms as circle and some are made with a combination of simple forms that create new patterns, for example the flower pattern is made by combining some circles together.

Number	Name	Meaning	Original Motives	Motifs
1	Tekkok	Red point		
2	Tekkok Gardin	Flower		
3	Gilu	Circle		
4	Gilo Gardin	Flower		
5	Chutel			
6	Kobl	Lock		
7	Sarok	Mountain		
8	Khoshe Gandom	Wheat Cluster		
9	Balok	Butterfly		
10	Khoshe Gandom Konrak	Wheat Cluster and Konrak		

11	Srzih	Border		
12	Chat	Repulsed the Repelled Spirits		
13	Konarok	lozenge Shape		

The Kalpourgan's pottery motifs (Iman 2015)

In the dry nature of Baluchistan, plants, water, and even mountains are the sources of water flow and life. The expression of Baluch people about mountains, water, plants and even butterflies are shown in abstract forms and are the medium for decorating the pottery. Eventually, these elements become signs. The triangle, which is related to the sun and wheat, is also a symbol of fertility. In this desert area, fertility for both agriculture and humans is very important and people use these symbols in different crafts and products.

The lozenge shape is a Mesopotamian motif which is used to discharge the negative energy (Amir 2014). The Baluch people draw this motif on most their embroidery products and pots as well.

The wheat cluster is another motif on pots. The wheat is one of the most important agricultural products for Baluch that they grow in their farms. In the past, wheat wasn't just food. It was the money and currency. People used to buy or exchange their products with that.





Balok or butterfly is only an animal motif in Baluch pots. People believe that it is a symbol of mystic and positive power known as

'Mollaok' (Amir 2014). They made that motif to give a nice and clean energy to them.

It is a fact that crafts and artworks from a traditional region have common roots and influence on each other. Sometimes an artisan would make different crafts so that the motifs could be transferred to another craft. Apart from pottery, women in Kalpourgan make very fine needlework. There are so many similarities between the motives which are influenced by Baluch beliefs and nature.



Baluch Needlework (Burbur 2018)

Number	Name of Motif in Needlework	Needlework's Motif	Name of Motif in Pottery	Pottery's Motif
1	Goarkesh		Srzih	
2	Shaida		Khoshe Gandom Konrak	

3	Parivar palivar		Chat Parivar	
4	Kesh Sadeh		Tekkok	
5	Jok Chutel		Konarok Chutel	

Some Common Motifs in Baluchi Needlework and Pottery

Baluchistan is dry and hot by nature, so there are fewer green lands or gardens. People are more introverted specially women who spend their lives at home restricted by religion and culture. Women are more engaged in household works and making handicrafts. By tradition, they are busy with needlework and pottery. Almost every potter in Kalpourgan knows how to make Baluchi embroidery as well. So, some motifs get exchanged within these crafts. Women share strong bonds together and have regular gatherings in their houses where they can sit and have discussions or gossip. At the same time, they teach the crafts and keeps the traditions going. Also, knowledge is transferred from older to younger members of the community. Only after opening the pottery centre, women have come out of their houses and started working outside. At the Centre, most of the workers are

women and only one or two men help them carry the soil to the workshop and load products in the kiln. They always have to wear their hijab and cover their face in front of visitors. It is difficult to distinguish one from the other. One way to identify them is by the colour of their cloth embroidery as each one would have different motifs and colours on their sleeves. The young ones have bright colours and old people have darker colours. Baluchistan has a religious fanaticism in the environment. Men can indulge in polygamy. Girls are forced to marry at an early age, so the number of girls who can actually continue their education is very few.

According to The Ministry of Health and Medical Education of Iran, the second largest population of women smokers are in Baluchistan (17.8%). They form a group of their own and smoke hookah in their gatherings at home. The reasons can be stress reduction, lack of entertainment and the interest in continuing with the membership of their group (Atiyeh Azarshab 2019). Women are always worried about their position in the family as their husbands are allowed to have more than one wife.

The effects of social consequences such as insecurity, migration, mass conflicts, class divisions, cultural delays, underdevelopment, discrimination against women, violation of civil rights and cultural stagnation have affected the people of this region over the years (Asma 2020). Some research showed that compared to other ethnic groups such as Sistani and Fars who also live in Baluchistan, the Baluch women have poor mental health because of high-stress conditions, feelings of deprivation and lower socio-political background (Osman Kord 2018). There are multiple reasons why women feel stressed and deprived. Living with the husband's family, superiority of son to daughter, the permission of divorce being in the hands of men who can do divorce without any valid reason, having an addicted husband, marriage for the

sake of bloodshed, continuation with life for the sake of children, fear of remarriage, different kinds of psychological, physical and economic violence are some of them. The society always insists that women be patient and discourages them from leaving home, which sometimes leads to suicides (Somayeh 2021).

Conclusion

Even to this day craftsmen use pottery as a medium for transfer of ideas and expressions. There are many places in the world where women by tradition are potters, but it is rare to find this kind of the symbolic expressions using geometric motifs. By the studying the motifs, it can be derived that because of the desert climate and their culture, Baluch women are mostly introverts. They make very tiny motifs on their pots which are similar to their needle works motifs. Both have duplicate patterns and symmetrical composition. The designs are different because materials used are not the same, but they have an overall similarity. The main difference, however, is that needlework has colours which decorate some parts of the Baloch women's clothes. Yet both the artworks help the Baluch women to interact with external surroundings. The colours and motifs of needlework change according to the age of the customers.

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Letter from the Chairman's Desk By Sunil Bhatia PhD

One day I was passing from a remote village where the influence of the urban lifestyle was having no impact and it was not visible in their actions. A woman was using a piece of cloth dipped in a paste of mixture made in water with earth soil and cow dung for painting around the ground as well as the outer walls of the house made of mud. Out of curiosity, I stood and observed her style of painting with mud and realized that as paste gets dried it leaves a film over it as we do a painting of walls with emulsion paints. Painting is required for controlling the damage to the house from environmental effects as well as protection from the germs and bacteria that may weaken the house. While standing there I thought our people initial idea might have used a sprinkle of water around the house to control the dust entering the house that might damage and weaken in the long run. They might have realized that as long as the water is not evaporated, the dust of the earth is under control. They worked to increase the life of holding dust and they improved the use of mud paste for painting. It was a better solution where after evaporation of water a thin film of mud leaves but quickly turned to more dust. They wished to hold that earth soil of paste. They added a binding agent as cow dung that holds the soil earth dust particle and stays longer compared to the previous attempt. I salute the ancient wisdom where they have realized fine powder of earth soil is the solution and for that use water for turning into fine powder paste and cow

dung as binding agent. They migrated to lime for painting and in some cases, they added copper sulphate for killing the insects and which also prevents the insects from crawling over the wall. In modern times this concept is still in practice. The only thing is that we use chemicals for painting.

I moved from that house and that made me a little wiser as I entered the city and found the skyscrapers standing in front of me and it was not creating any sensation but wisdom of that woman was more excited for me.

When I looked at the tiles used for making the outer surface of the walls of the building I realized this journey was started by our ancient people. We have learned that the use of tiles/stones on the outer surface of the building gives protection from the environmental effects of further damage and gives an aesthetic sense also. What we are today, the foundation was laid by our ancient people.

A piece of sandpaper was lying on the road and I realized the use of dust particles for rubbing and cleaning the surface of the walls by rubbing sandpaper made with applying glue to hold the sand particles on paper made me more amazed.

Ancient people in early life realized that for conversion into dust particles there are two ways one is applying the external forces for crushing and grinding by pounding and another is the use of the internal weakness of the particle for disintegration into dust fine particles. Design of mortar and pestle or grinding stone for grinding into small particles was thought. They have understood that earth soil's hard lumps turned into a fine paste when soaked in water for a few hours and it was possible because of its internal character of disintegration. Limestone is hard but when dip into

water it idistitgrate and turns without any external force into fine paste of small particles.

Sometimes we use yeast or curdling for breaking the fat into small particles for making curd. There are various ways for turning the material into small fine particles. I imagined the students conducting chemistry practical where they do the precipitation by mixing the different chemicals in correct proportion and it produces fine solid powder. Natural evaporation is used for making salt powder by farming the sea water. When we blow our saliva turns into small particles. Similarly, we use the airgun for painting the chemical paints for making the finer coated film by small fine particles of chemical paints. Use of electricity for electrolysis helps in getting the finer particles makes the film of desired objects.

I am thankful to Dr. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences & Design Programme, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, India for accepting our invitation of Guest Editor and invited authors of her choice for contribution of articles.

Lambert Academic publication for celebration of 150th special issue by publishing a book by compiling editorials "Design For All, Drivers of Design" translated in eight different languages from ENGLISH into French, German, Italian, Russian, Dutch and Portuguese. Kindly click the following link for book. "Morebooks", one of the largest online bookstores. Here's the link to it:

<https://www.morebooks.de/store/gb/book/design-for-all/isbn/978-613-9-83306-1>

With Regards

Enjoy reading, be happy, and work for the betterment of society.

Dr. Sunil Bhatia

Design For All Institute of India

www.designforall.in

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Forthcoming Issues

May 2022 Vol-17 No-5



Dr. Christopher Lee

I have a Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Instructional Design, a Masters of Fine Arts in Writing and Poetics (MFA) and a Masters in Education (M.Ed). My research interests center on Universal Design for Learning. I love to write and teach. Whenever teaching I learn a little more about what Universal Design for Learning means and how much students enthusiastically embrace its principles. My philosophy of education centers around the learner. As an instructor, I am much like a coach and so, strive to listen to what students are saying and then facilitate their learning as much as possible. As an administrator, I listen to students, staff and everyone I work with to learn more about Universal Design and how I can be a part of helping to make life better for all. I love technology and the doors it opens for everyone. I love hiking, reading, writing, weight lifting, and most of all, being with my family.

June 2022 Vol-17 No-6



Mark Watson MDIA – M Des. (Industrial – By Research) RMIT – Design Providence / DesignThinkers Group

Founded in 1990, Design Providence is a multi disciplinary practice in the field of Interior Architecture and Product Design. Working in Service Design and Design Thinking since 2010 becoming a Partner with Amsterdam based DesignThinkers Group & Academy in 2013 facilitating rapid prototyping workshops, including the Global Goals Jam with Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and the UNDP.

Mark held office as Vice President with the Victorian Chapter of the Design Institute of Australia, also as Director with Arts & Recreation Training Victoria, and Artists & Industry.

Mark has presented on Design in India since 2003 at Design Sutra Conference Mumbai, participated in the International Council of Societies of Industrial (ICSID) [now World Design Organisation] Interdesign Workshop "Humanising the Metropolis" Mumbai, also presented at IIT Delhi, IIT IDC, Mumbai, NID Ahmedabad and DYPDC Center for Automotive Research & Studies, Pune as well as the NatCon InDesia in Kolhapur in 2014 for the IIID.

He is advisor to the India Design Festival, the Delhi Design Festival and Odisha Design Council as well as judge of the India's Best Design Studio / Project Awards 2017, Guest Editor of the 'Design for All of India' Journal July 2017 Vol-12 No-7 and

keynote speaker at the 17th CII NID Design Summit 2017 in Hyderabad.

In 2017 participated with the Australia India Institute as Incoming Leaders Fellow researching Air Quality in Delhi incorporating World University of Design and CSIR – NEERI.

Mr. Mark Watson

**Unit 1 / 52 Fenwick Street,
Portarlinton 3223, Victoria, Australia**

July 2022 Vol-17 No-7



Lourdes Arreola Prado

Built Environment Program Manager

International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP)

G3ict : The global Initiative for Inclusive ICT's , USA

María de Lourdes Arreola Prado is an international consultant in accessibility, inclusion and diversity and is CPACC and CPABE (Level 1) certified. She is also a member of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP). Lourdes is the creator and founder of Linkenium, a consulting firm through which she accompanies institutions and companies in the construction of inclusive environments. She is also a member of the Latin America Advisory Group for CBM.

Lourdes has participated as speaker, consultant and lecturer of accessibility, inclusion and diversity topics in various national and international forums. She was part of the Mexican committee to develop the accessible ICTs Standard. She has led the efforts to develop the first accessible tourist guide for Mexico City and, to enhance accessibility around all the nine buildings of ASUR's airports based in Mexico, among other projects.

In 2013 she was a finalist at Cartier Women's Initiative Awards. In 2015, she received the State Award against Discrimination, granted by the CODHEM, for promoting equality and non-discrimination in the workplace. She is an Engineer in electronics from the Universidad Iberoamericana and received a diploma as "Expert in Information Technology and Disability" by Creática Fundación FREE (Spain) and CETYS University (Ensenada, B.C.). She is multilingual in English, French and Portuguese, with solid knowledge of Italian.

August 2022 Vol-17 No-8



Prof. Dr. Jurgen Faust, PhD

Professional Experience

2021 – current Professor SRH Mobile University, Germany

2013 – 2020 President Macromedia University Munich, Germany

2010 – 2013 VP for Academic Affairs and Research, MHMK Munich, Germany

2008 – 2013 Dean, MHMK, Munich, Germany

2007 – 2021 Full Professor Media Design and Communication, Macromedia University Munich, Germany

2009 - 2012 International Strategic Advisor, Istituto Europeo di Design (IED) Group, Milan, Italy

2007 - 2009 Chief Academic Officer, IED group, Milan, Italy

2007 – 2009 Professor Monterrey Tecnológico, Monterrey, Design and Theory, Mexico

PhD, University of Plymouth, Planetary Collegium, England

Thesis title: Discursive Designing Theory, Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Design

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Derrick De Kerkhoeve, Prof. Roy Ascott, Prof. Antonio Caronia, Prof. Mike Phillips

1982 - 1984

Postgraduate Studies, Free Academy in Nuertingen, Germany (painting/graphic and sculpture), Fine Arts degree

1979 - 1982

Undergraduate Studies, University of Applied Sciences, Reutlingen in Cooperation with

University of Bremen, Germany, Diploma in Chemistry (Dipl. Ing.)

Jurgen Faust (born 1955 in Germany) is a design professor, researcher who has worked in four different countries, US, Mexico, Italy and Germany as a Professor for Design, Theory and Media as well as an administrative Dean in four countries. He is a co-founder of a private university in Germany, as well as a developer of many undergraduate and graduate programs in a variety of fields in design. His PhD research was about designing design through discourse within the design community. His research work let him to create a comprehensive theory describing design processes and models.

Over the past decades he has specialized in managing through designing and published about the idea of transferring design methods and processes into the management field.

He was as well teaching design and design theory. He contributed to a variety of books and publications. In addition, he is a practicing researcher, designer, and artist, who showed in many places, including museums and galleries in Europe, Germany, France, England, Italy, Poland and Slovakia as well as the United States.

Jurgen Faust was the President Macromedia University of Applied Sciences in Munich for 8 years and since March 2021 he is a professor at SRH Mobile University Germany where he currently develops a new Design School Design focused on distance education with the master programs in Design Management and UX & Service Design.

December 2022 Vol-17 No-12



Ivor Ambrose

Managing Director, ENAT asbl.

Ivor Ambrose has worked in the areas of accessibility and disability inclusion for over 40 years as a researcher, university lecturer, project manager, policy advisor and independent consultant. Born in England, he has lived and worked in the UK, Denmark, Belgium and Greece. He holds a Master's degree in Environmental Psychology from the University of Surrey, UK and a university lecturer/Ph.D. qualification from the Danish Building

Research Institute, where he specialised in User Evaluation of Environments and new Information and Communication Technologies.

In 2001 he turned his attention to accessibility in the tourism sector, which generally lacked awareness of the needs and specific access requirements of people with disabilities, resulting in inadequate provisions for these travellers. As a researcher and advocate of 'Design for All, which germinated in Europe in the late 1990s, and 'Universal Design' which took hold in the same period in USA, he was part of a movement which challenged policy makers and practitioners in many fields to re-think the way environments, products and services were conceived and designed. Through his research and observations of life, behaviour and cultures, Ivor has developed a driving ambition to make tourism accessible for everyone, everywhere.

In 2008 he co-founded the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) non-profit organisation (www.accessibletourism.org), with a group of European organisations active in the tourism industry and disability advocacy. He was elected as its Managing Director and has continued in that position since then. ENAT has become the premier membership association for about 300 organisations, business and individuals who support and want to learn more about this area of tourism development. As its director, Ivor manages ENAT's activities and projects including curriculum development and vocational training courses for hospitality management and staff, European and international standards work on accessibility and tourism, destination management consultancy, certification and provision of accessibility information through online platforms including Pantou, the Accessible Tourism Directory (www.pantou.org). The ENAT Board also maintains links with the UN World Tourism Organisation, the

EU Tourism Manifesto Group, the International Social Tourism Organisation, Blue Flag International, Zero Project and many national and regional tourist bodies.

Email: enat@accessibletourism.org

Athens, April 2022

New Books



ISBN 978-613-9-83306-1



Sunil Bhatia

Design for All

Drivers of Design

Expression of gratitude to unknown, unsung, u nacknowledged, unmentioned and selfless millions of heroes who have contributed immensely in making our society worth living, their design of comb, kite, fireworks, glass, mirror even thread concept have revolutionized the thought process of human minds and prepared blueprint of future. Modern people may take for granted but its beyond imagination the hardships and how these innovative ideas could strike their minds. Discovery of fire was possible because of its presence in nature but management of fire through manmade designs was a significant attempt of thinking beyond survival and no

doubt this contributed in establishing our supremacy over other living beings. Somewhere in journey of progress we lost the legacy of ancestors in shaping minds of future generations and completely ignored their philosophy and established a society that was beyond their imagination, I picked up such drivers that have contributed in our progress and continue guiding but we failed to recognize its role and functions. Even tears, confusion in designing products was marvelous attempt and design of ladder and many more helped in sustainable, inclusive growth.

www.lap-publishing.com

it is available on www.morebooks.de one of the largest online bookstores. Here's the link to it: <https://www.morebooks.de/store/gb/book/design-for-all/isbn/978-613-9-83306-1>

The Ultimate Resource for Aging in Place With Dignity and Grace!



Are you looking for housing options that are safer and more accommodating for independently aging in place? Do you want to enjoy comfort, accessibility, safety and peace of mind – despite your disabilities, limitations and health challenges? The help you need is available in the Universal Design Toolkit: Time-saving ideas, resources, solutions, and guidance for making homes accessible.

This is the ultimate resource for individuals and professionals who want to save time, money and energy when designing, building, remodeling or downsizing a home. The Universal Design Toolkit will help you take the steps to design homes for your clients or yourself while eliminating the costly trial and error challenges you'd inevitably encounter if faced with this learning curve on your own.

Rosemarie Rossetti, Ph.D., teamed with her husband Mark Leder in creating this unique Toolkit. They bring ten years of research, design and building expertise by serving as the general contractors for their home, the Universal Design Living Laboratory– which is the highest rated universal design home in North America.

Within the Toolkit's 200 richly illustrated pages, you'll find: Insights that distinguish *essential* products, services and resources from the *unnecessary*.

Proven, realistic tips for finding the right home.

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Handy home checklists and assessments.

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Photographs that provide a frame of reference to inspire, clarify and illuminate features and benefits.

Valuable resources to save you time, money and energy.

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Space planning dimensions for access using assistive devices such as wheelchairs and walkers.

And so much more!

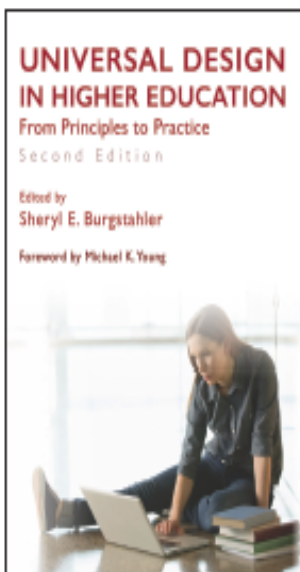
If you want useful, dependable advice and easy to implement ideas from respected experts who know the ropes, you'll love Rossetti and Leder's perspective. As a speaker, author and consultant who uses a wheelchair, Rossetti has helped hundreds of people design their ideal homes. Now her comprehensive Toolkit is available to help and support you!

Get the Universal Design Toolkit now to start your project!

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—STEPHAN J. SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND DISABILITY

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

From Principles to Practice, Second Edition

EDITED BY SHERYL E. BURGSTAHLER • FOREWORD BY MICHAEL K. YOUNG

This second edition of the classic *Universal Design in Higher Education* is a comprehensive, up-to-the-minute guide for creating fully accessible college and university programs. The second edition has been thoroughly revised and expanded, and it addresses major recent changes in universities and colleges, the law, and technology.

As larger numbers of people with disabilities attend postsecondary educational institutions, there have been increased efforts to make the full array of classes, services, and programs accessible to all students. This revised edition provides both a full survey of those measures and practical guidance for schools as they work to turn the goal of universal accessibility into a reality. As such, it makes an indispensable contribution to the growing body of literature on special education and universal design. This book will be of particular value to university and college administrators, and to special education researchers, teachers, and activists.

SHERYL E. BURGSTAHLER is an affiliate professor in the College of Education at the University of Washington in Seattle, and founder and director of the university's Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) and Access Technology Centers.

“Sheryl Burgstahler has assembled a great set of chapters and authors on universal design in higher education. It’s a must-have book for all universities, as it covers universal design of instruction, physical spaces, student services, technology, and provides examples of best practices.”

—JONATHAN LAZAR, PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES, TOWSON UNIVERSITY, AND CO-AUTHOR OF *EN SURE IN DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH PROCESSES AND POLICY*

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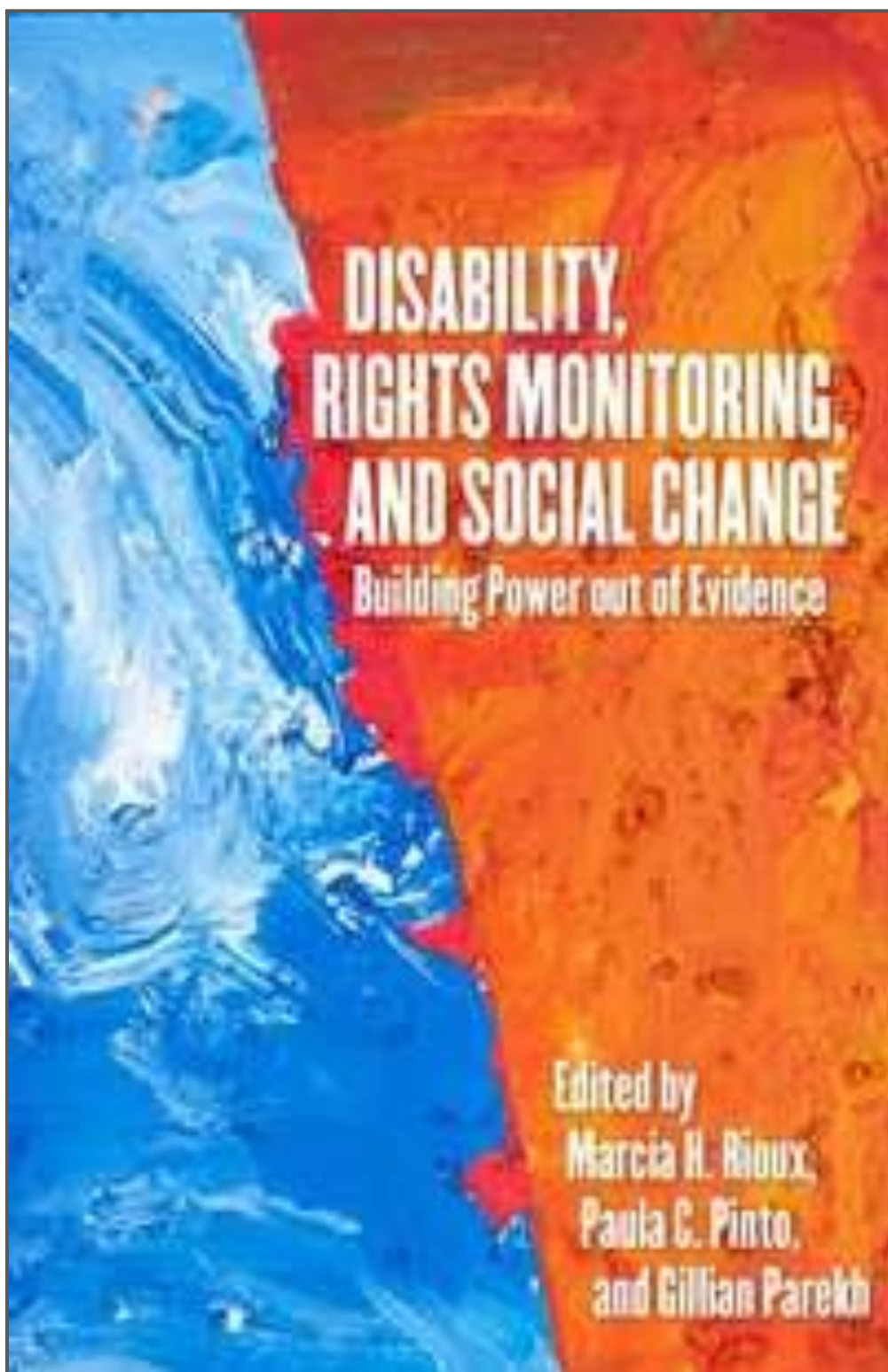
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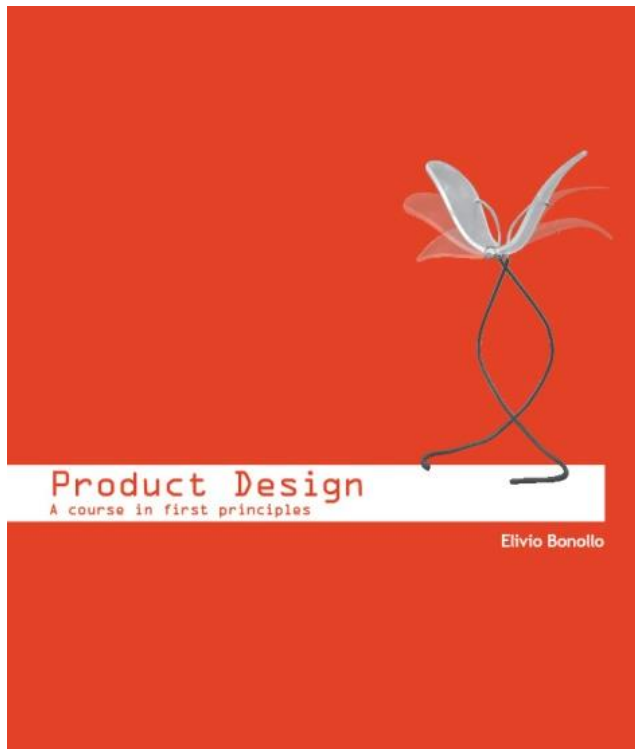
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Disability, Rights Monitoring and Social Change:



New Update: ELIVIO BONOLLO (2015/16) PRODUCT DESIGN: A COURSE IN FIRST PRINCIPLES



Available as a paperback (320 pages), in black and white and full colour versions (book reviewed in *Design and Technology Education: An International Journal* 17.3, and on amazon.com).

The 2018, eBook edition is available in mobi (Kindle) and ePub (iBook) file versions on the amazon and other worldwide networks; including on the following websites:

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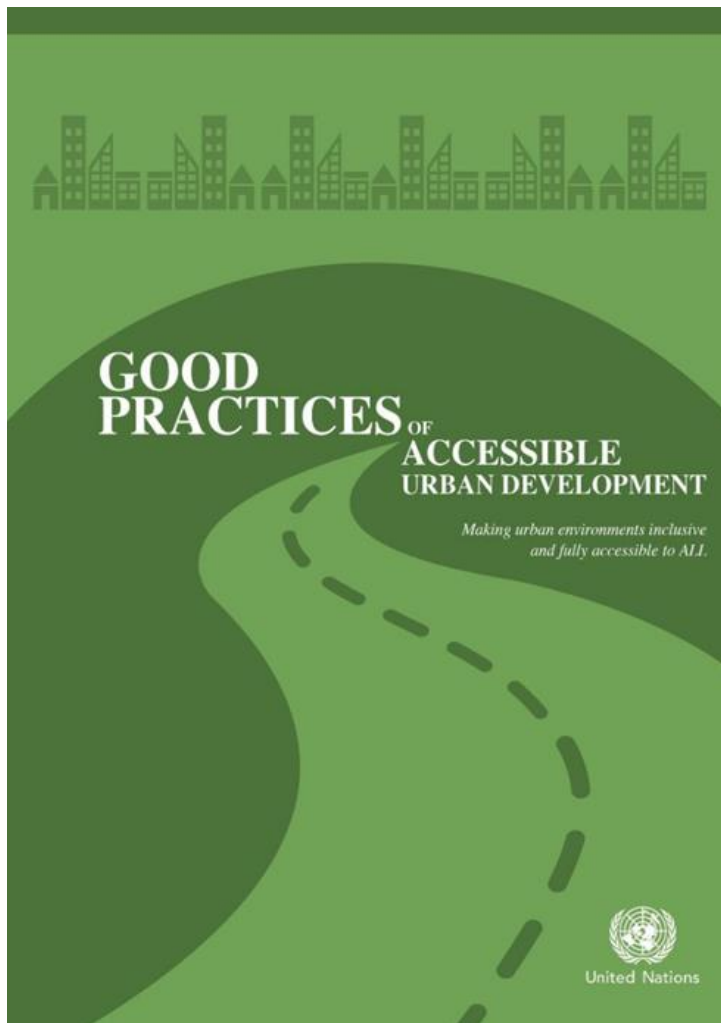
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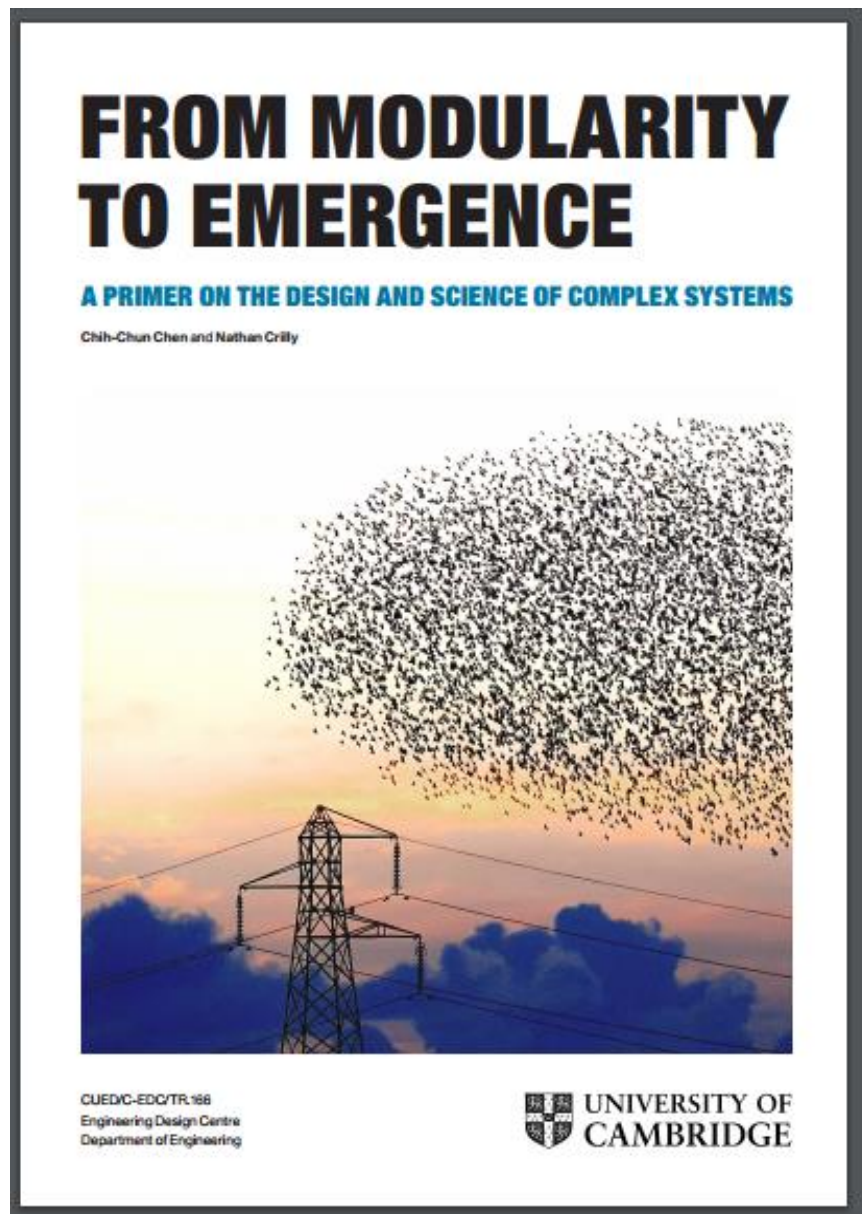


In light of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) and the imminent launch of the New Urban Agenda, DESA in collaboration with the Essl Foundation (Zero Project) and others have prepared a new publication entitled: "Good practices of accessible urban development".

The publication provides case studies of innovative practices and policies in housing and built environments, as well as transportation, public spaces and public services, including information and communication technology (ICT) based services. The publication concludes with strategies and innovations for promoting accessible urban development.

The advance unedited text is available

at:http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/good_practices_urban_dev.pdf



Dr Chih-Chun Chen and Dr Nathan Crilly of the Cambridge University Engineering Design Centre Design Practice Group have released a free, downloadable book, *_A Primer on the Design and Science of Complex Systems_*.

This project is funded by the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EP/K008196/1).

The book is available at URL: <http://complexityprimer.eng.cam.ac.uk>

Changing Paradigms: Designing for a Sustainable Future

Editors:
Peter Stebbins
Ursula Tischner

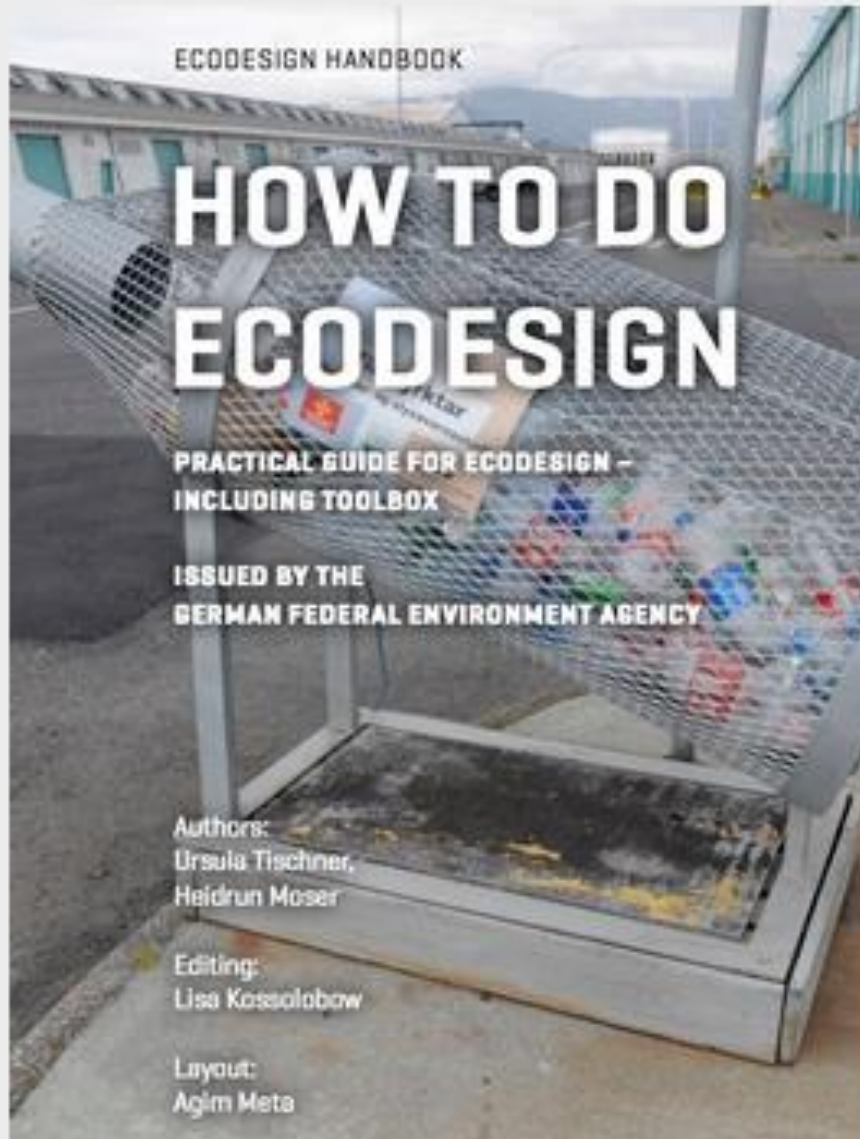
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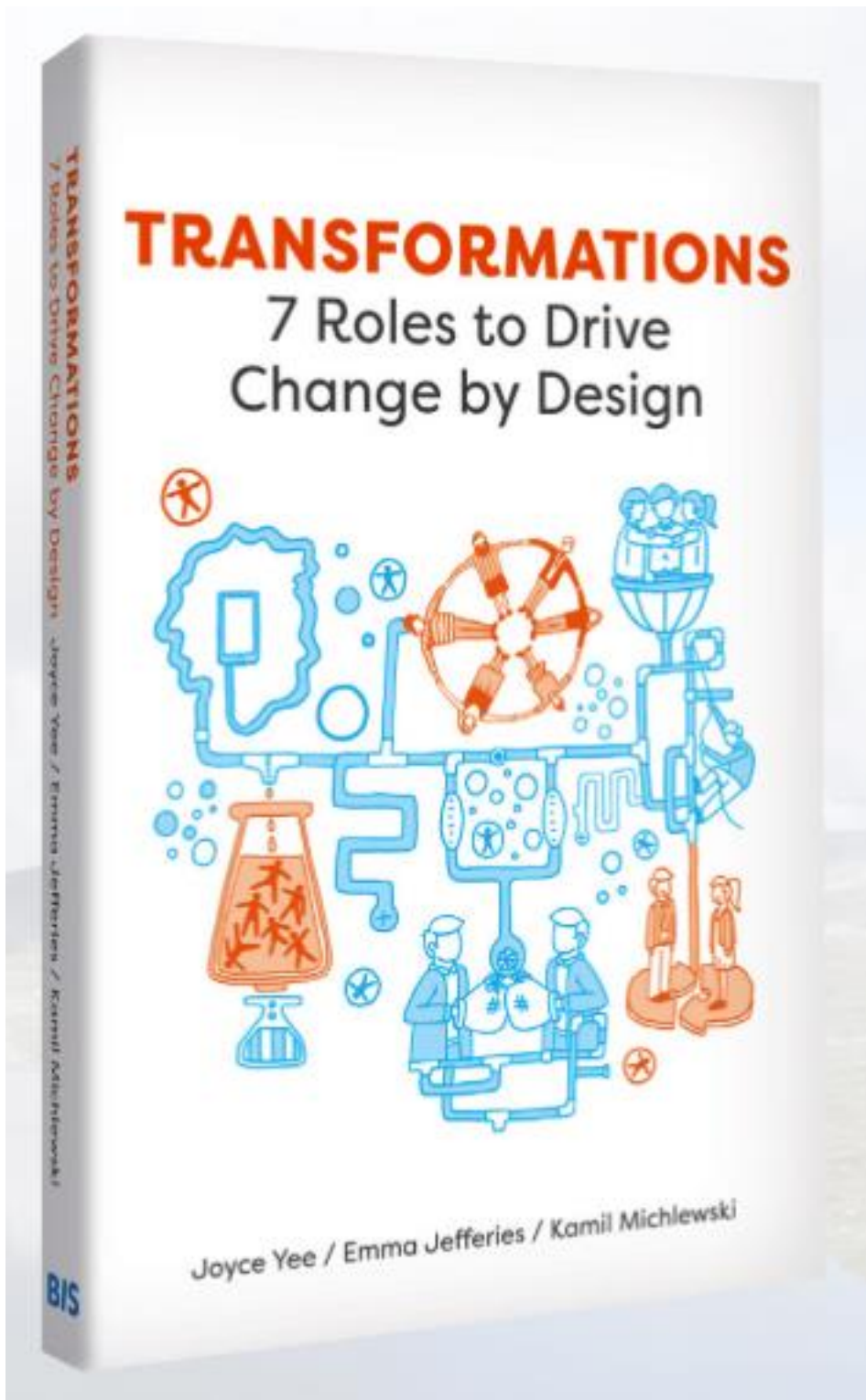
Changing Paradigms: Designing for a Sustainable Future

New iBook / ebook: HOW TO DO ECODESIGN



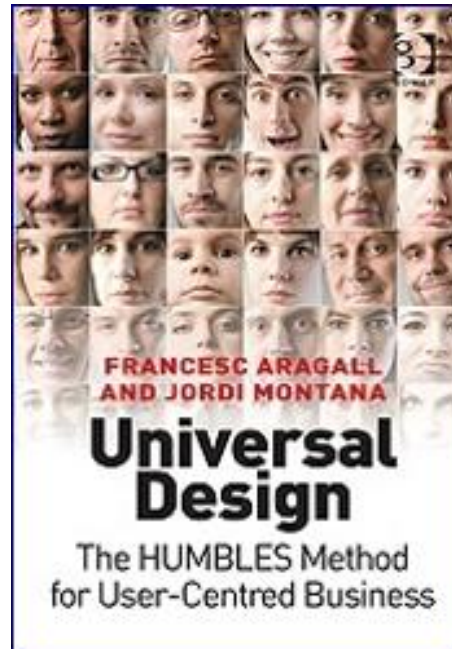
Practical Guide for Ecodesign – Including a
Toolbox

Author: Ursula Tischner





Universal Design: The HUMBLE Method for User-Centred Business



“Universal Design: The HUMBLE Method for User-Centred Business”, written by Francesc Aragall and Jordi Montaña and published by Gower, provides an innovative method to support businesses wishing to increase the number of satisfied users and clients

and enhance their reputation by adapting their products and services to the diversity of their actual and potential customers, taking into account their needs, wishes and expectations.

The HUMBLE method (© Aragall) consists of a progressive, seven-phase approach for implementing Design for All within a business. By incorporating the user’s point of view, it enables companies to evaluate their business strategies in order to improve provide an improved, more customer-oriented experience, and thereby gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. As well as a comprehensive guide to the method, the book provides case studies of multinational business which have successfully incorporated Design for All into their working practices.

According to Sandro Rossell, President of FC Barcelona, who in company with other leading business professionals endorsed the publication, it is “required reading for those who wish to understand how universal design is the only way to connect a brand to the widest possible public, increasing client loyalty and enhancing company prestige”. To purchase the book, visit either the [Design for All Foundation website](#)

Appeal



News

1.

Registration open for accessible and inclusive design series



A new cross-unit collaboration is focusing on ways to create more accessible and inclusive classes for students.

The [Accessible and Inclusive Design workshop series](#) is a collaboration between the Teaching Engagement Program, UO Online, the Accessible Education Center and UO Libraries. It offers practices to create more accessible and inclusive classes for students, particularly students with disabilities.

The practical sessions focus on the needs and recommendations identified in student experience surveys, which are summarized in the [Academic Data Analytics unit's Practitioner Guide: Accessibility](#).

Upcoming virtual sessions are described in detail [on the series' webpage](#) and include:

- April 13, 1-2 p.m.: Accessible Documents Part 1, Creating New Documents.
- April 13, 2-3 p.m.: Accessible Documents Part 2, Remediating Existing Documents.
- April 20, 1-2 p.m.: Developing and Revising Assignments with Universal Design for Learning.
- April 27, 1-2 p.m.: Using Open Educational Resources.
- May 4, 1-2 p.m.: Rethinking "Participation" with UDL.
- May 11, 1-2 p.m.: Canvas Accessibility with Pope Tech.
- May 18, 1-2 p.m.: Centering Neurodivergent Learners.

"We want students to dedicate their full attention to lessons taught by faculty and GEs, but some students are too exhausted by the time they've figured out how to navigate non-web-accessible content," series coordinator Laurel Bastian said. "Our teaching practices and structures are not neutral. So our hope is to highlight those doable actions students have asked us to make, to practice them more ourselves, and to support faculty in practicing them."

Bastian also notes that many faculty members and staff have worked to be flexible and responsive to students throughout the pandemic and feel stretched thin. Series collaborators have kept

that in mind while taking steps to make accessibility resources and information an easy part of course design.

They encourage faculty members and graduate employees experiencing challenges with accessibility to get focused, one-on-one support through the Teaching Engagement Program and UO Online's website contact page. Faculty and graduate employees with questions about specific accommodations can contact the Accessible Education Center at uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Consultations with the center and the Teaching Engagement Program together also may be available.

Workshops are Wednesdays from 1-2 p.m. on Zoom through spring term. Faculty members, students and staff at any level of knowledge are welcome. All sessions will be recorded, and the [webpage for the series](#) includes detailed agendas, slides and resources.

(Courtesy: Around the O, University of Oregon)

2.

Disability in the 21st Century: A Virtual Talk with Advocate Valerie Fletcher



Long-time executive director of the Institute for Human Centered Design to discuss short film The Changing Reality of Disability in America: 2020

April 7, 2022

Dana Ferrante

Valerie Fletcher's life's work has centered on one overarching question: who are we not thinking of?

Describing her career as divided between design and public mental health, Fletcher says, "I've had a very lucky arc. I went from working in direct care at a state psychiatric hospital to being the deputy commissioner of operations in the [Massachusetts] Department of Mental Health." There, she helped guide the state's transition away from institutions towards community-based mental health services. But since 1998, Fletcher has used design to enhance the experiences of people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in her role as executive director of the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD).

A Boston-based nonprofit, IHCD aims to go beyond legal accessibility requirements to "design places, things, communication, and policy" that work for all people, tackling everything from how to make cultural institutions more easily navigable to comprehensive user testing of websites and apps. IHCD also houses the New England ADA Center—one of just 10 ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) centers in the country—which seeks to make disability rights laws and codes more accessible to businesses, government bodies, and the broader public.

On Friday, April 8, Fletcher will speak about the IHCD's latest project, a short film titled The Changing Reality of Disability in

America: 2020 at a virtual event hosted by BU's Staff and Faculty Extend Boston University Disability Support (SAFEBUGS). The presentation is part of BU Diversity & Inclusion's Learn More series and begins at noon.

The film, and the accompanying 40-page research report, sought to document the evolving patterns of disability in the US population—such as the relationship between environmental exposure and learning disabilities and the rise of chronic illness—identify gaps in knowledge, and understand how people relate to the concept and term “disability.” The project was funded by the Allan R. Meyers Memorial Project, which continues the legacy of Allan R. Meyers, a former BU School of Public Health and BU School of Medicine professor, who was deeply committed to disability rights and creating physical environments where all people could flourish.

Although it is not required, Megan Sullivan, a College of General Studies associate professor of rhetoric and a SAFEBUGS leadership board member, recommends registrants check out IHCD's film—or the accompanying 40-page report—before the talk. “In my 25 years at Boston University,” Sullivan says, “I have always tried to broaden our discussion of disability,” adding that she hopes that attendees of the talk will come away thinking more about “how it is that we define disability.”

BU Today spoke with Fletcher in advance of her talk about the goal of human-centered design and how the conversation around design, access, and disability has changed over the course of her career.

This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.

Q&A

VALERIE FLETCHER

BU Today: What is human-centered design?

Valerie Fletcher: The original name of the Institute [for Human Centered Design] was Adaptive Environments. We renamed the organization in 2008 because it no longer seemed appropriate: we were doing a tremendous amount of pioneering consulting and design work in what was called, in various parts of the world, “universal design” or “inclusive design.” At that time, the debate over which term to use was still raging. So, we opted for “human centered design.”

For us, human centered design is about anticipating the ordinary diversity of ability, age, and culture. Secondly, it’s about the power of design to really change our experience: design can minimize limitations. It can enhance skills and talents. And it can enrich experience, but you’ve got to be thinking about it. It’s way beyond, “just tell me what I have to do.”

It is our rock-solid conviction that the engagement of people at the edges is actually a very reliable route to the richest experiences. And I think BU is taking some leadership in that. But we still have miles and miles to go to really recognize that a pattern of siloed isolation—by race, by gender, by age group, by education, by economic status—does us all a disservice.

The IHCD’s film focuses on the changing reality of disability in America. Thinking about this project, and your career more generally, how has the conversation around design, access, and disability changed in recent decades?

When we decided to do the film and the report, in 2020, it was in the context of the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and our frustration with a habit of thought about disability that has grown over time. This habit of thought was born partly of the legal standards [of disability] and partly of the remarkable moment that was the birth of the disability rights movement in America—a movement that said “disability is an identity.” “Disability” came to mean people who use wheeled mobility, people who read braille, or people who are deaf and use American Sign Language. All of those are incredibly legitimate and important categories of the experience of disability, but they’re small categories. For example, there’s 10 times more people who have trouble walking than use wheeled mobility. Probably more than 90 percent of people who are legally blind have some sight. But if we forget that, we really miss creating opportunities for an equitable experience.

Funded by the Allan Meyers Memorial Project, the IHCD’s film *The Changing Reality of Disability in America: 2020* reexamines the experience of disability in America, highlighting the voices of veterans, those impacted by environmental exposure, and those aging in place.

Now, one of our big priorities is to focus on who’s left out—who are we not thinking of? In the late fall, our New England ADA Center [which is housed within the IHCD] began a five-year research project that looks at attitudes towards the word “disability,” and whether that word does or doesn’t work for people. For some people, it may resonate as a reality, but not as an identity, so we’ve got to figure out how to talk about it.

The other thing that we’re [now] looking at is the extraordinary rise of the spectrum of brain-based reasons for disability. And that

includes all kinds of things: mental health, learning disabilities, neurodiversity, brain injury, neurological conditions. So, we're looking at that spectrum and trying to figure out: what changes can we make to the physical, information, and communication environment to be more inclusive?

We've also learned a tremendous amount through the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. First of all, we learned that people [could work effectively] at home. Many people with disabilities have been begging for that accommodation for years, but were told that they couldn't be trusted to get the work done. Now, for many people, working from home is a means of being more productive. Zoom is way friendlier than a live event for people with all kinds of issues, including a lot of brain-based issues. So, we've come to appreciate where design can help level the playing field, and now we've got to figure out what to carry forward [as COVID wanes]. We've learned that [disability] is not just another subcategory, it's really a human experience, like the vulnerability and isolation we all felt during COVID.

As a university community, how can we better incorporate human-centered design into our everyday practices?

I think it's a really good question. One of the realities today is that the overwhelming majority of people don't disclose a disability. You might have had an IEP [Individualized Education Program] in high school, but when you go onto college, it's not anybody's responsibility to identify whether you have a disability or not—it's on you. You either seek out an accommodation, or you keep your mouth shut and take your chances. That's a really pervasive norm. In a sense, we're kind of missing an opportunity to share those experiences and to figure out what would make life better and easier for those people.

COVID left us with some very big opportunities for change, including a pretty radical new way of thinking led by young people about mental health as a disability. I come from a generation that was very invested in changing the world, and we did change the conversation, but I think the conversation is changing again. Young people are leading the climate change movement and the movement to remove the stigma of mental illness. I'm talking to young people, undergraduates, and even high school kids who are saying: "What's the issue? This is the same thing as somebody in your family with heart disease or diabetes." Young people are also interested in issues like counting disability among people in jails and prisons—it's probably more than 50 percent of the population! Anyway, I'm really optimistic. I've been at this a long time, and I think it's the first time I've actually thought we might be "there." I really do.

(Courtesy: BU today)

Programme and Events



berkeley prize

BERKELEY PRIZE 2022 LAUNCHES IN ONE MONTH

This year's topic:

DESIGN GUIDED BY CLIENTS' NEEDS:

Applying Social Factors Research to Architecture

A NEW QUESTION ON THE SOCIAL ART OF ARCHITECTURE AND A NEW
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AS ALWAYS, THE POTENTIAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TO WIN
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RAISE MONEY AND RECEIVE A STIPEND TO PARTICIPATE IN A LOCAL
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IT ALL STARTS ON SEPTEMBER 15

TELL FRIENDS, STUDENTS AND FACULTY - FORWARD WIDELY

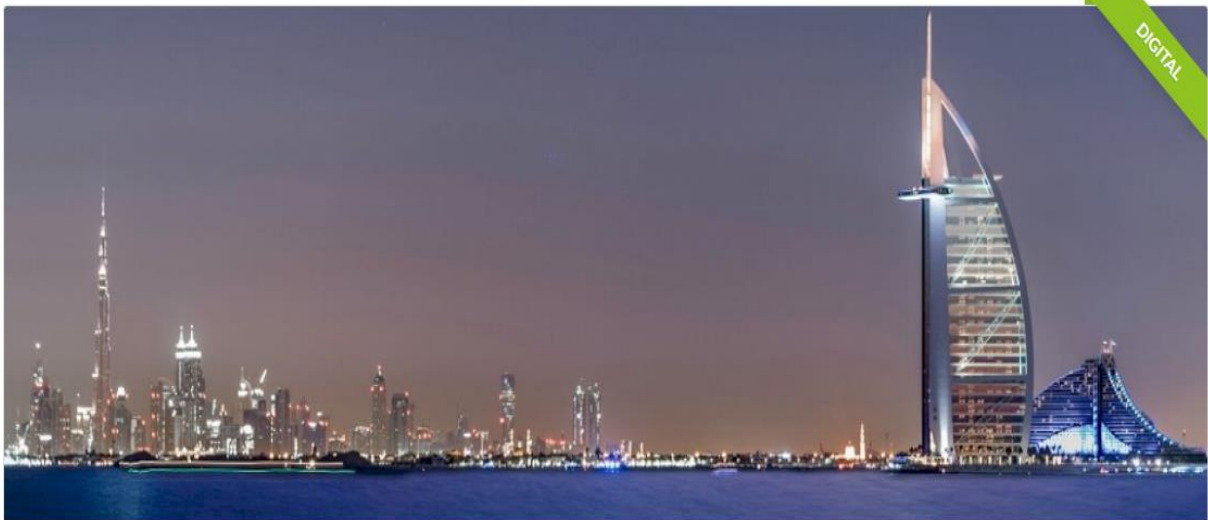
ICPDPD 2022: 16. International Conference on Product Development and Product Design

March 03-04, 2022 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



ICPID 2022: 16. International Conference on Product and Industrial Design

April 07-08, 2022 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates





UIA COMPETITIONS
18 JANUARY 2022



INTERNATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY SYMBOL DESIGN COMPETITION

The International Union of Architects (UIA) and Rehabilitation International (RI) are jointly inviting submissions for a **twenty-first century symbol of accessibility** to represent their core values of rights and inclusion, independence, physical and virtual accessibility for all, including people with disabilities.

The challenge is therefore to develop a new symbol of accessibility that better represents the variety of people who use buildings and other types of built environments. The competition invites **professional architects** and **graphic designers** as well as **architectural and graphic design students** to design a new graphic symbol of accessibility, to be proposed to the **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** for adoption as the new international symbol of accessibility.



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Joint International Conference on
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Chief-Editor:



**Dr. Sunil Kumar Bhatia Faculty Member,
13, Lodhi Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-
110003(INDIA)
E-mail: dr_subha@yahoo.com
Editor:**



**Shri L.K. Das
Former Head Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of
Technology (Delhi), India
E-mail: lalitdas@gmail.com
Associate Editor:**



**Prof Dr Rachna Khare, School of planning and Architecture ,
Bhopal, India
E-mail: rachnakhare@spabhopal.ac.in
Editorial Board:**



**Prof Dr. Gaurav Raheja, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee,
India Email: gr.iitroorkee@gmail.com**



**Prof Dr. Sugandh Malhotra, Indian Institute of Technolgy,
Mumbai, India
Email: sugandh@iitb.ac.in**



**Prof Dr Ravindra Singh, Delhi Technological University, India
Email: ravindra@dtu.ac.in**

Special Correspondent:

**Ms. Nemisha Sharma,
Mumbai, India**

Nemisha98@gmail.com

Address for Correspondence:

**13, Lodhi Institutional Area,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003India.**

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**Special request should be addressed to
Dr_subha@yahoo.com**

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