

Graphics

Synopsis

This module engages with visuals that have a graphic quality to them. These could be imagery created by printmaking and photography; these could be visual representation of information and data; or these could be logos and brand identities.

Lectures

4.1 Graphic Imagery

4.2 Visual Representation of Information and Data

4.3 Logos and Brand Identities



Fig 4.1.00

4.1 Graphic imagery

Visual imagery that rests on the strength of lines and shapes (and only uses tonalities that can be built through techniques such as hatching, stippling and aquatint) is said to have a graphic quality. Typically these are works that are rendered in black (and its play with spaces that are left blank) or a single colour. However at times, this definition may be somewhat relaxed if the use of tones and colours is such that it gives the work a distinctly different quality from a painting or an illustration. High contrast photograph, for example, has a graphic quality and is also thought of as graphic imagery.

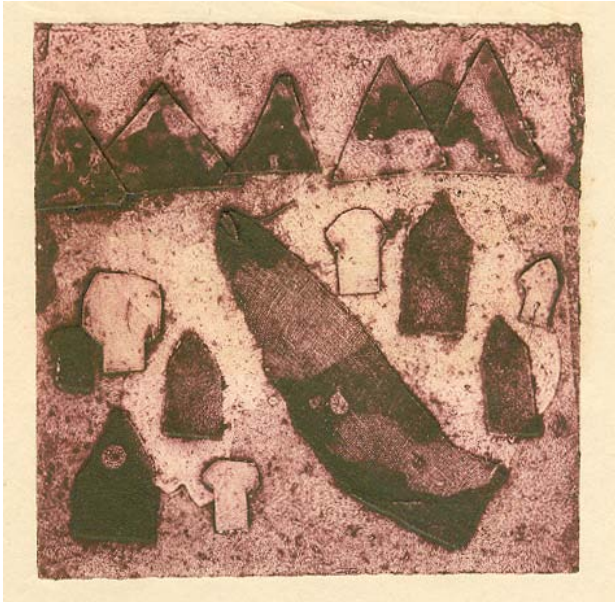


Fig. 4.1.01a

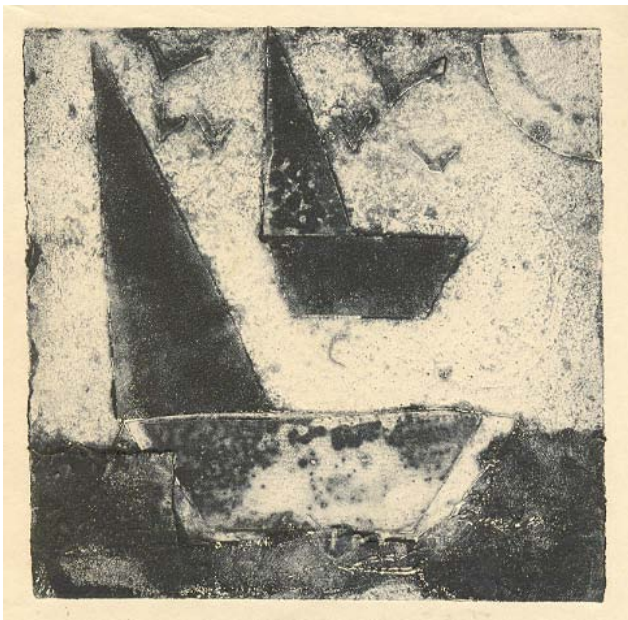


Fig. 4.1.01b

These collographs done by children during a workshop were used as graphic visuals in a set of three books titled, 'Yes'. 'No' and 'Maybe'.

Collography

Collography is the technique of making prints by using textures of different kinds pasted on a cardboard sheet. Different textures associated with materials such as jute, fibre, sandpaper, textiles are cut into desired shapes and stuck on a cardboard sheet. After these have dried, the collage of materials is given a coating of transparent adhesive (diluted with water for facilitating application with a brush). The collograph is then inked with printing inks. The dried film of adhesive makes it easy to remove the excess ink that is wiped off with a cloth. The inked collograph is placed on a metal bed with a moist paper over it and passed between rollers in a hand-press.



Fig. 4.1.02a
A single colour screen-printed image from the book, 'An Old Hat': A silly tale.



Fig. 4.1.02b
A screen printed image with three colours from the book 'On Inheritance'.

Silk-Screen Printing (serigraphy)

A fine screen made of silk (synthetic in present times) is stretched on a wooden frame. The screen is coated with a light sensitive emulsion and then has a cellulose film pasted over it. A high-contrast artwork in black (carrying the image to be printed) is placed on the film after which the screen is exposed to sunlight (or ultra-violet light in a light chamber), Washing the screen after an appropriate exposures, removes the film where it has not been exposed. Effectively, the film seals off portions of the screen where there is no image. Ink is squeezed out through the open areas of the screen to make a silk-screen image.

The Japanese have taken silk-screen printing to great heights to create multi-colour imagery of great beauty. Hokusai, who called himself an artist whose love for creating illustrations bordered on madness, created graphic prints that demonstrate an eastern sensibility. Many European artists, including Van Gogh were influenced by the work of Japanese printmakers,

On account of being relatively easy and inexpensive, silk-screen printing is widely used in India for purposes such as wedding invitations and visiting cards. However printers who regard this as a special printmaking technique and use it sensitively are few.

Etching



Fig. 4.1.03

Etching involves incising metal plates (typically zinc and copper) with a fine needle and combining this with other techniques such as aquatint and viscosity, to create a latent image made of fine grooves and depressions. The edges of the metal plate are beveled and the top surface is first polished, then cleaned and waxed. The back of the plate is protected with an acid-resistant film. Drawing on the waxed surface results in fine lines that get etched when the plate is dipped in an acid bath. The wax layer is then removed and the plate covered with fine resin dust for the aquatint process. The aquatint process is similar to stippling as it helps build tonalities through fine dots in areas where the plate is not covered by resin dust. Other techniques to create tonalities involve direct etching with gum-arabic mixed with acid. The etched plate is inked and wiped clean so that ink gets deposited in the grooves and depressions. A moist paper is placed on the plate, covered with felt and passed between rollers for creating a print.

Woodcuts and Linocuts



Fig. 4.1.04

Other materials that have their own unique quality that is imparted to the graphic image, include wood, linoleum and stone. Special woodcut and linocut tools are available for incising lines in wood and linoleum. These incisions make up the image and carry the ink that is transferred to the graphic print. The process of transferring the ink requires placing a paper on the inked surface and rubbing over the entire area of the image with the back of a metal spoon.

Another printmaking process is lithography, though lithographs often have a quality that would possibly not qualify as a graphic, Lithographs are created using special stone that is first ground and polished. A wax crayon is used to create the drawing after which the surface of the stone is etched with acid. The etched surface is inked with rollers and a print is made with the help of a litho-press. Lithography is the forerunner of the offset printing process,



Fig.4.1.05

A shadow puppetry performance has a very graphic quality in which shadows cast by puppets appear as silhouettes on a cloth screen..



Fig.4.1.06
Graphic footprints created using coloured chalk. These motifs were created by students as a tribute to a majestic tree on their campus.



Fig.4.1.07a



Fig.4.1.07b

This terracotta mural by Bidyut Roy, besides alluding to natural forms such as insects and plants, has a very graphic quality to it.



Fig.4.1.08

A mural by K.G. Subhramanyan on the walls of the graphics department at Santiniketan.



Fig.4.1.09

Graphic motifs painted by students on terracotta plates.



Fig.4.1.10

Photography can have a very graphic quality when it seeks to play with shapes, line and composition.