CHAPTER V

CONTRIBUTION OF DIGITAL ARTISTS IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ART

The evolution in computer technology opened vistas for art designing, and gifted the new millennium with a novel art concept known as ‘Digital Art’.\(^1\)

Alike traditional artists, digital artists also experience, feel their surroundings and translate these observations into artistic work. The environment remains the same for digital as well as non-digital. The only difference is that they use digital technology in expressing their thoughts and imaginations. In doing so the cultural values are also reflected in the artwork in accordance with the artist's personal vision.

As our culture becomes increasingly digitized, digital artists are successfully progressing in exploring and defining this new culture of art.\(^2\) The wide acceptance and admiration for digital art has created new benchmarks and milestones for Indian digital artists and their worldwide popularity has resulted in the runaway success for many artists. These digital artists are loaded with innovative ideas, ingenious thoughts and technologies to execute this implicit as well as explicit imaginations.\(^3\)

Digital artists are proficient in clubbing, art with proper technology and they created many pathways for the aspiring artists. Their works become a topic of discussion in social and cultural circles. Younger generations of growing artists across the world are following those digital trendsetters in making their artistic work more attractive and communicable.

The new generation of artists is experimental as well as expressive in blending traditional art forms like drawing, painting, photography, collage with technologically driven art medium like video, graphic and animation. In the modern approach they are impressively creative and rationally sensitive to highlight the complex issues of the present era. The new digital medium equipped them to visualize their ideas and thoughts. They have assimilated in observing the events around them and they are pretty successful in getting the attention of worldwide audiences through their stimulating images.
The generation of young and unconventional artists like Sheba Chhahhi, Atul Bhalla, Anita Dube, Vivan Sundaram, Chhatrapati Dutta and Gigi Scaria, uses video, photography and digital technology to make their works more interactive and effective. They have been acclaimed in portraying the sensitive global issues of the world like consumerism inequality, racial discrimination and terrorism with adequate care, sensibility and utmost human responsibility. This class of revolutionary artists initially stores their imaginations on the computer and after adding more value to their thoughts they subsequently transform it into a physical form.

Traditional art elements and principles are the body and soul of digital art which can be regulated by electronic brushes and tools and allow an artist to adjust colors, themes, textures, shapes in a more desirable and calculated manner, to create an exact replica of the artist's imaginations. They also work on some special sets of image creation tools known as plug-ins or filters to modify the screen images which were next to impossible with traditional tools. These tools redefined the fine arts and created a distinct role in this revolutionary art form.

The technology embedded in digital art is both challenging and convincing for those unstoppable artists who strive to explore the world beyond imaginations. Novel and unconventional, this new art form encompass artistic expressions, creative vision and a technology to nurture their creative expressions. These computerized images have given a new dimension to the art world and many prominent artists are passionately engaged in this revolutionary and interesting medium.

To carve their own groove many digital artists are vigorously working and have accomplished brilliant works. Some of these famous digital artists are Ranbir Kaleka, Gogi Saroj pal, Ananda Moy Benarjee, Paramjeet Singh etc.

Furthermore, I planned to focus on their lives and works through interviews and visiting their work place. I have tried to discuss with them their background, initiatives and approach towards the developing new media art. A brief discussion about their lives and works of these famous digital artists is given below.

**Ranbir Kaleka**

Ranbir Kaleka is an innovative contemporary Indian artist. He was born in a Punjabi family in 1953. Having studied art at Punjab University in Chandigarh, he
moved to London in 1985, where he completed his M.F.A. in painting at the Royal College of Arts and stayed in England till his final return to Delhi in 1998.\textsuperscript{7}

In the same year, he also participated in the ‘Contemporary Indian Art’ showcase at the Royal Academy of Art, London during the festival of India. His works were exhibited and taken from New Delhi to Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{8} It may be stated that this diversity of exhibitions of his art will give him a recognition which may enable him as one of the most significant artists of the 21st-century in India.\textsuperscript{9}

In the year 2013, when I visited New Delhi to collect my research data, I interviewed Ranbir Kaleka at Sarvapriya Vihar, New Delhi in his studio. That was a charismatic experience for me when I got the appointment with Ranbir Kaleka, I was really excited to meet such a wonderful and creative artist.

I entered his studio with curiosity and a number of questions arose in my mind. During discussion when I asked about his life and experiences as an artist, he told me his childhood memories.

Mr. Kaleka stated, “I remember my very early childhood, I grew up in a haveli. It was a feeling of a few people in a large haveli. My father, mother, and two uncles, brother and I lived together. In front of us, the family didn’t talk of the violence outside the Haveli. There was sound of violence, but it was there. So, my experiences of Haveli were also womb-like…! All my sensations became very strong in terms of my relationship with the outside world, I was living in a state of comfort, I always felt that I could investigate more and would never be hurt.”

After a conversation about his life I asked about his inspirations and philosophy of work.

Mr. Kaleka replied, “Along with sketching and painting, my practice comprises video and sculpture too. The source of inspiration is not always obvious, thoughts; ideas emerge from a pool of events: The event is more or less a psychological state which employs images that have a universal familiarity and tap into a sort of collective memory. The ‘pool’ I am referring to has submerged in my early childhood stretching up to contemporary events around me. Great books, cinema, theatre, storytellers and art history too nurtures this pool.”
Mr. Kaleka further added, “Curiosity about the self and the world” is an integral part to the work of an artist.”

His journey as an artist started from his childhood with great support of his family. He continued, “As a child I used to draw with charcoal from the kitchen fire on the walls of our village Haveli. When I was about four, my father said, "When he grows up we will send him to an art school". Rest of the family concurred, and that was that...”

His first solo exhibition ‘Sweet Unease’, (plate-8) evokes Mr. Kaleka’s childhood in Punjab, where traditional wrestling is a common sport, with no obvious beginning or end, the video depicts an unending cycle that doesn’t give viewers the satisfaction of watching complete events.  

His works in various mediums like oil, watercolor painting and mixed media on different shapes of wood and board, digital photographs and complex video installation. His new media works, particularly his painting, installation have been developed recently in his career. His painting, both on paper and canvas, in oil as well as mixed media, are quite surrealist in their treatment of scenes from everyday life. The lines are suggestive, instead of being sharply traced, and the colours are deliberately used with care restraint.

During the discussion when I asked him about the concepts of surrealism, trauma and eroticism in his paintings.

Mr. Kaleka said, “I like the idea of surrealism as in Art history. My paintings has been described as surrealist, but the idea of trauma comes from the stories of people I knew, the stories of cruelty, torture and murder related to them. As you know Punjab can be very violent, which I have always seen from a distance, but physically it never happened to me.

Regarding eroticism, I was thinking of my painting which are sexual in nature, of frontal nudity- for example my work 'Story Teller', (plate-9) or ‘Family’, (plate-10). Here, I would mention that the body was thought of as that which contained violence along with the sensuality. But, the characters in the painting are situated within a kind of complexity which gives these characters a 'mental life'.
He started working with different mediums such as oil, mixed-media. He continued experimenting in different areas like digital prints such as ‘Done, Undone menaced by Dragonflies’, (plate-11) and ‘A-Panoramic-Spectrum Ground’, (Plate-12), as video installation like ‘Kettle’, (plate-13) and since the transition from painting to video in the 1990s, he has used video as a tool for material innovation.11

When I talked about his process through which he introduced images leading edge technique. I requested him to elaborate the evolution of his work over the years with the changes in direction, especially his foray into working with video.

Mr. Kaleka in reply elaborated, “Over the years, what has not changed as what I want from my work: there is a process of meaning-making where I arrive at an ‘event’. The ‘event’ is more a psychological state which employs images that have a universal familiarity and tap into our collective sense of memory. In painting the ‘event’ may be created through a configuration of people and objects. The stance of the body, the trajectory of the eye, the texture of surfaces, the vigour or otherwise of the painter’s hand all contribute towards creating what I call an event, the reading of which is not linear and not necessarily temporally or geographically specific but carries the physiological buzz of familiarity or an emotional twinge of recognition. One major visible difference from my early work as a student to now have been the use of color, from a range of greys; I started to push colors to the threshold of garishness. I felt that it was possible to produce a kind of sophisticated kitsch, which is complex and nuanced. Earlier nearly all my works seemed as if it belonged to an ‘enclosed interior’. Those recesses began to slowly open up wider with access to the ‘outer space’ although this ‘enclosed interior’ continues to interest me very much. Over the years, I have been looking at art forms of other cultures and an acquiring a larger visual repertory. I like inventing metaphorical events as well, which are not culturally specific.

I started to think of creating an image combining painting and video in the late eighties, but it’s only in 1998/99 that I made my first video/painting piece. My interest in video arose more from my interest in cinema than from video art. I wanted to see what would happen if I combined the physically painted image and an image made of light. I arrived at a sort of hyper-image which had a quality different from
both painting and the cinematic or video image. This became another tool with which to create ‘event’; for creating meaning and telling stories with.”

After a long discussion, I concluded about him that as a human being he is a kind natured and pretty down to earth. I asked him more about the process of his work (painting as well as video installation). I was quite surprised when he called his assistant to show me his recent works of video-installation on the projector in his studio where he spends most of his time. At the same time, he decided to show such works which he could easily describe and I could easily analyze.

Mr. Kaleka stated, “I can explain it through my painting entitled 'Man Threading A Needle', (plate-14) which is done in 1988/99. This is a painting on the board sized 23.3 X 35.8 inches. The painting shows a “Man threading a needle.” The painting is spot-lit and sits on an easel. As one looks on sees the man suddenly blink or gulp. He occasionally makes a desperate attempt to thread the needle. At various moments he hears the sound of a peacock, a passing train and a police siren, this makes him nervous, his body heaves with heavy breathing. The painting most of the time stays still. This effect is achieved by projecting a video of a man threading the needle on a painting of the man threading a needle. Oil colors give the surface of the painting a palpability, a weight of an object, whereas the videoed image gives it the aura of light and we arrived at a kind of hyper-image.”

My interpretation after seeing this great work ‘Man threading a needle’ (2008) is that in this work he shows a middle-aged man threading a needle. The man is mostly still, intensely focused on the needle, which he occasionally attempts to tread; I also noticed some twitches and jerks in a cycle where the past and the present sun into each other in a phantasmagorical flow. The works were to test the conventional methods of studying art and life. The surprising sensation of the brain shifting gears to accommodate a moving man and then the still painted image is almost palpable when it is looked at in the piece. At one point the painting on canvas that the installation is lit by the projector light alone, evacuated of any video image. In another phase, illusory depth of the painting destroyed by the silhouetted flat shadows on the canvas, which confirm its flatness and establishes the installation as an artifact, a metafiction, before the loop begins again its spell of movement and depth.
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After showing this video installation the artist (Ranbir kaleka) was also interested to show me his next video installation named ‘Fables from the House of Ibaan’, (plate-15) that was also one of the terrific works. His other extraordinary works are ‘Man With Cockerel’ (plate-16), ‘Crossing’ (plate-17), ‘Cobbler’ (plate-18), ‘Reading man’, (plate-19), ‘Cul-de-sac in Taxila’, (plate-20), ‘Conference of Birds and Beasts’, (plate-21), and ‘The Great Topairist's Astonishing Dilemma’ (Plate-22) and many more all of them are most crucial examples of his ingenious skills in the field of art.

The essential focus on Mr. Kaleka’s work is not just on his unique methodology in working with video and painting, but the description of the work, which usually depicts daily issues that occur across India.

His work has been widely exhibited in India and abroad. He organized more than 12 solo shows and participated in more than 24 group shows such as “2012 Volte Gallery & Saffron Art Gallery, Ranbir Kaleka “Fables”, Delhi “2010 Volte Art Gallery, ‘Sweet Unease’, Mumbai” “2009 Bose Pacia Gallery, ‘Reading Man’, New York” and many more. His work continues to be exhibited and collected from India as well as abroad. He is a recipient of the National Award in 1979, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and in 1986 Sanskriti Award, New Delhi, all these shows his recognition at international level.12

Finally, I find in his works an absolute sincerity, a different kind of complete awareness with his creative process and technique. Using imprecise description he speaks to what he describes as ‘impressive themes’ that explore endless subjects like ‘life, death, loss, and aspirations’. He throws full light on a difference between spatiality, temporality, sensation and significance, making us intensely alive to the various reactions of viewers. Mr. Kaleka currently divides his time between London and New Delhi.

ANANDA MOY BENERJI

Ananda Moy Benerji is another artist whose works has inspired me. He was born on 30th June 1959 in Kolkata. He is a well-known printmaker, graphic artist and active member of the Indian printmaker’s guild (IPG). His association and community feelings led him to the founding of the Indian Printmaker s’ Guild in 1990. This group
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was led by artists like Ananda Moy Benerji, Subba Ghosh, Shukla Sawant, Kavita Nayar and so on.

This was my wonderful experience when I interviewed Mr. Ananda Moy Benerji in Garhi studio at Lalit kala academy in New Delhi. I felt excited when I got an appointment with Mr. Benerji and I met him. I was extremely excited to meet such an artistic person.

When I reached his studio I cannot explain how much I was glad to meet him. The most important thing that impressed me was the cleanliness of his studio, I have never seen before this sort of cleanliness, his well-organized way of maintaining things such as his canvases, easels, different medium of color, his printing-press: I was very much impressed by the pleasurable place.

“We used to clean this studio ourselves. We did all sweeping, dusting and cleaning up of cobwebs; it was a work culture and that contributed a lot towards the success of the printmaking department,” says Ananda Moy Benerji.

When, I started a conversation with Mr. Benerji I asked him what really inspired him to take up painting as a profession.

Mr. Benerji said, “Painting or in whole approach—ART was always very close to me. The world of expressiveness in terms of expressions and communications has been my main forte from childhood. It is said that two pillars on which a society must rest— are—values, and communication, and I personally think the theory of art must also rest on—VALUES and COMMUNICATION. From school to college of art with scholarship was a deep dive into the field of expression. The support of my parents, my wife and son maintained that continuity and today, I see myself and realize that yes, it’s my passion, love and profession.”

Initially, he wanted to be a lawyer. He also tried his luck in the NDA. But his father and all his school teachers wanted him to become an artist. Probably, they were blessed with much will power than him. But he doesn’t repeat it now because his growth had been very natural. Actually, most of his school friends also did not know that he wanted to become a lawyer. But now he realizes that his father was probably right. He studied B.F.A in painting College of Arts, New Delhi in 1980 and took M.F.A in graphics from Shantiniketan in 1985. After completing his education, he
went to Camber Well College of arts in London for printmaking under the Charles Wallace India Trust Award.

In between the conversation he offered me a cup of tea and we had enjoyed the black tea and then again we started our conversation in a friendly environment. After that, I questioned him what he thought about digital art form and why he had chosen this arena.

Mr. Benerji said “I work in this area also – it is not only a medium chosen and used by me, I work in many mediums and technique.”

His works are found in various mediums like oil, acrylic, color-pencil, mixed media, pastel, pulp, digital print and serigraphy. He has travelled through various routes and can access various events and therefore, as an artist, he plays a constructive role in society and works his truly represent his social milieu. His works appear to be closely associated with the structure of society and the individual. His early works emphasized the socio-political rules of life and showed an analytical approach towards human beings and their existence in the society.

With respect to the first question, I talked about his work, themes and at that moment, suddenly a new question stuck in my mind what inspired him to adopt the digital process.

In his opinion “Digital Art or essence of digital implication is the latest member in the family of art and expression. The world of digital art is a process and not a technique. Artists do turn this process to technique. My interest in digital world is more technical and from the level of explorations.”

Then quickly, I asked him how he felt in doing digital art work and what software did he use? He said that “Just the way I do a painting the software Photoshop, adobe/coral.”

During the discussion, I asked about the inspirations and significances of work. Mr. Banerji said, “My inspiration is ‘NATURE’ Source of inspiration to me or for me, can be a news headline, or an experience, a poem by Tagore, a piece of lyrics by Gulzar sahib, a story once I read by Garcia Marquez, a scene in the street, a sweet baby’s smile and such many things, but of course which reflects the time and space I live in.”
We had comprehensive discussions, then we started about the traditional and digital art world. First of all he talked about art and lack of originality in art in modern times and then about the acceptance of digital art in the contemporary period.

Mr. Benerji considered, “Art should be pure and original in expression. There are a number of questions being raised in time, whether today’s art is original or not. I believe that nothing is purely pure, and nothing can be purely abstract, like nothing can be purely real and at the same time abstract too. This apprehension is attached with possibilities of expansion of digital advancement too. In today’s world one can get everything on the net and thus get over influenced and at times falls in the world of copying than getting influenced. I do not agree with this in total, this can be partial, but the originality in the world of art lies in the platform of the creator. So if one is original in conceiving the basic idea he can stay original. The other half of the question is each artist’s responsibility.”

An important point came up into the discussion when I told him that several people have raised questions such as ‘Is digital art a real art?’ Or is digital art cheating? What do you think about it?

Mr. Benerji replied, “As I said earlier, if your idea is original, your Art is also original- digital is a process and technique, like other medium – there are so many mediums and techniques in the world of Art in the same manner – this is also one. Once you create a whole thing digitally it can be called original why not? It is like instead of applying brushes, you work with mouse. Instead of using paint you use laser/inkjet inks. In today’s time one can select paper or even cloth/canvas as surface.”

Then, I asked him how, as an artist, he compared to the evolution of traditional art and how would he describe the development of digital (or new media) art.

Mr. Benerji stated, “As compared to the development of traditional art the development of digital art is much faster and hence will take different routes and forms also much faster. That was the era of voyages to different parts of this world, and this is the voyages to different worlds altogether if not to different galaxies.”

During the course of our conversation I also raised a question about his work’s main message and significance entitled ‘His world, her world, entwined.’
Mr. Benerji answered, “My last show was encircled with the thematic representation of his/her world. One can call it man and woman or Purusha and Prakriti. The major concern was the expressive qualities of vertical, horizontal qualities of our society. The living world is represented by these two forms, and give forms of give and take, right and wrong, void and space all entwined and encompassed within his and hers.

First of all – HER world is to bestow a respect to the whole concept – womanhood. The world is never complete without the qualities of women the real Prakriti, (nature) the real sense of growth of our society. The painting depicting her world talks of different emotions of women as a whole.”

I analyzed and found that his works are specific on exploring themes which is a reflection of his personal life and what goes around him. The spinning images in his present works are ‘Performer’ (plate-23), ‘Entwined’ (Plate-24), ‘His/her World’ (plate-25), ‘She’ (Plate-26), let them be political, religious, social or romantic. It is an attempt to explore universal feelings and relations between “MAN TO MAN”.

In these works, the line plays a very important role as well as colors. It moves around the whole space and is like a note of music spreading within the whole space. They expressively divide space and connecting limbs, crawling movements of white pointed lines. Like snake and the moon is, at times, a kind of symbolic interpretations of works. The moon mutely lighting up the environment is a ray of hope, in the whole situation for society, civilization.

He has done several works by using various mediums like oil, acrylic and many more in his countless wonderful works that I have seen in his studio such as “Red Tree” (plate-27), a silk-screen print, and various works in oil and acrylic such as a ‘Journey of Red and Blue Line’ (plate-28), ‘Moonlight Sonata’ (Plate-29) a color pencil drawing ‘Temptation’ (plate-30) and many more.

Visual arts include many art forms such as painting, drawing, sculpture, music, performance art being the most widely recognized. However, with the technological revolution, other art forms have emerged, such as video-installation, digital animation, graphics and so on.
So, what exactly is the relationship between these arts and the new social web? Is social media a viable approach to improve artistic communities?

Mr. Benerji, kindly answered my question as he says, “A good question indeed – Art is the reflection of our society. Only the social, political, religious, geographical, scientific impressions create a strong impetus. The web world has brought all of us so close to each other, and hence all art and cultural activities are also closely knitted. If you see the positive side of the implications the result will always be encouraged. It can certainly develop and create more communications between all forms of artistic happenings.”

He has organized 32 solo and group shows exhibitions of his works, participated in 67 national and international exhibitions and attended more than 16 camps attended of Print Making and graphic prints in India. His works are available with several private and public collectors in India and abroad.13

In 1979-80 he attended Print making camp with Mr. Carol Summers, Chandigarh College of Art, then attended Print Making camp with Mr. Paul Arthur Linghren and Mr. Krishna Redoy at Shantiniketan (West Bengal) at Kala Bhavan – 1983 & 1985, Attended camp on ‘WOODCUT’ organized by I.P.G, Gallery Espace, New Delhi in 1991 and workshop organized by I.P.G. & Chitra Kala Parishad, Banglore in 1999, and many more.

At present he is working as vice principal, Head of the Department (Fine Arts) South Delhi Polytechnic for Women, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi, and regularly practicing / working in Lalit Kala Artist's Studio, New Delhi.14

Recently, he exhibited ‘Graphics, Print’ from Nov 22 to 30 in All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi in 2013. He was all set to delight the art lovers with his range of graphic prints in this exhibition. The artist firmly believes that everything that is around us leaves its print. The artist has made various experiments in his works ranging from techniques to themes.15

Finally, I analyzed about him that as a human being he is adherent person as well as so down to earth. I came to know about his journey. He is an outstanding figure in the Indian art scene and his works occupy a good place in the art world with
great pride. However, he never loses sight of the fact that art has been taking a logical view of the society.

I deeply admire the seriousness with which Mr. Benerji takes the practice of painting and most remarkable thing is that he learns a lot from his students and acknowledges it.

I must also appreciate his sense of color harmony, free flow of his perception and notations of nature. There are various works of Mr. Benerji which were completed in the last few years. He is a recipient of several awards and he is glad with this recognition.

Gogi Saroj Pal

Gogi Saroj Pal is another artist whose works have inspired me. Gogi Saroj Pal is one of the versatile Indian women artists who is very well known for her contemporary Art contribution. She was born in Neoli, Uttar Pradesh in the year 1945.¹⁶

In 1968 she came to Delhi. This young girl wanted to live in this metropolitan city and practice art as a freelance painter and to earn her livelihood. She began to use her own creative visual imagery to express her convictions and concerns of being a woman. She is also committed artist of contemporary art world and achieved good reputation and name in future.¹⁷

I also interviewed Ms. Gogi Saroj Pal. She is one of the interesting and inventive personalities, whom I met her, in her Garhi studio at Lalit kala academy. I was very excited when I got the appointment to meet her and at the same day when I called her, she invited me to her home at East Kailash, New Delhi. When I reached in front of her home I knocked the door. After some moments the door was opened and I was highly surprised to see that Ms. Pal’s husband, a well-known artist Mr. Ved Nayar standing in front of me. I remained speechless to see his greatness. He welcomed me with a sweet smile and served a glass of cold water that was like nectar on that hot day. At that time Ms. Pal was not present there and she was in her Garhi studio due to some urgent work. Mr. Nayar showed me their home and work place and sent me to the Garhi studio with a maid. I found that Mr. Nayar was a quiet person in comparison to his better half.
Then my mind was set for the next destination, where I reached within a few minutes (Garhi studio). When I have reached the gate of her studio and entered with her permission she was sitting in front of a big rectangle table and demonstrating some of her works to some people. Her tools and colors were kept scattered as she was working with them and paintings, sculpture and other materials were also spread in the same manner. She allowed me to sit by her right side.

I introduced myself and started my questions. Firstly, I asked about her life and journey as an artist, so she started with her childhood memories.

Ms. Pal spoke out, “I was interested in this profession at the age of 13 and it became my profession and before that I used to call myself an engineer.”

She added: “Childhood was very rich and I grew up in an environment charged with a revolutionary spirit. Our country had just to gain its freedom. My father Dharam Pal and Uncle Yash Pal were associated with Bhagat Singh and Bharat Naujawan Sabah. My grandmother Prem Devi, who was a school teacher in Lahore in 1901, after the infamous earthquake in Kangra, was an enlightened and aware woman. The spirit was one of changing the old order for something new.

A childhood romance with paintings, a dream to be an artist, a natural delicate sensibility and human warmth, a compulsion to express, a desire to emulate the spirit of freedom of Dharam Pal, my father and Yash Pal, my writer uncle and my reaction to the resistance of parents to allow me to choose painting as a profession. The road to art is a long one and I will not say that I knew there was an artist in me then. But what I do know is that there was in me a strong sense of curiosity. I was an inquisitive and somewhat stubborn child and never at rest until I had found a satisfying answer to my queries.”

She has a diploma in painting from the College of Art in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. Ms. Pal quoted, “I studied for two years at the college of Arts, Vanasthanli, Rajasthan between 1961 and 1962. Then I went to obtain a diploma in painting at the College of Art in Lucknow in 1967. Subsequently, I became a vocational student for postgraduate study in painting at the College of Arts, Delhi. Since 1969, I have been showing regularly and participating in artists' workshops and camps.”
She has experimented installation, painting, sculpture, graphic print, ceramics and photography. She has also edited several books. Her work revolves around the female conditions prevailing in the society.

The iconography of woman is an important aspect of her works and she composes paintings by merging fantasy with the myth which is clearly evident in her work of doe-eyed women riding on animals in different postures and it has considerable impact on the viewers.\(^{19}\)

She started her career as a freelancer, she treated mainly the themes like Mother and Child, Prisoners, Hailey Comet, Visit to a Valley of Flowers, Eternal Bird, Human Landscape, Naika, Dancing Horse, Kinnari, Paper Boats-Vision of Dreams etc. All these titles, of her compositions which she has given to her creative visual expressions converge to ‘Being a Woman' and reflect the unequal relationships which exist in the society.\(^{20}\)

When I met her at Garhi studio, she told me about her ‘Kamadhenu…. A wish fulfilling cow’ (plate-31), solo exhibition of sculptures and digital prints on 27th Feb 2013 at Radhika Art Initiative, Lado Sarai, New Delhi then I visited that place. It was a good experience of mine for me.

As I examined, there were many small sized sculptures and digital prints on canvases in different colors such as red, blue, yellow, pink, viridian-green. Her use of the mythic icon is ingenious, exploring a feminist point of view. ‘Kamadhenu’ (half woman half cow), the legendary wish-fulfilling cow invoked to fulfil all dreams and desires. That role of being gifted and giving others happened to be the ideal role of women, and Kamadhenu became a symbol most appropriate symbol for her.\(^{21}\) Then, I querrated her for how long she started digital artwork.

Ms. Pal said, “Although, my first exhibition was showcased in 2002, I was in this field even before 1997, when the people were not aware of anything about digital art. I used to do web designing, I worked in different mediums such as installation, painting, sculpture, graphic print, ceramics, photography, computer, and writing limited edition books to achieve creativity. Even as a student, I was a rebel and followed my own character…. But I always think in colors and even today the same is true.”
The world of Gogi in her paintings revolves around her and the behaviour pattern of the society. She creates her own actors for performance in her paintings. Sometimes they are really sensitive people carrying the burden of life and harmonizing the joys and sorrows of the world. Sometimes she provides them additional visual symbolism and forms from the treasures of her creative experience, from rituals, myths or religion, and equips them to perform their roles more convincingly in her paintings.

After a long conversation, I asked her about the journey from brush to computers and interest in the field of digital art.

Ms. Pal briefly explained, “I have not formally learnt computer, my husband, an artist (Mr. Ved Nayar) used to do always web designing himself. I started working on Photoshop, one of my nephews was an architect who worked in Photoshop. I started painting whenever I found his computer free. Once he found out about my interest and said that I would not be able to work on the computer. But I was determined that I could do better than him and I was able to do so.”

My next question was what she thinks about the digital art form and the people’s opinion that traditional art is being destroyed by digital art.

The reply according to her was “In today's world, Digital art is not confined to painting; it also includes photography and 3D graphic visual effect. Today many artists are practicing this art form with the use of different mediums and techniques.”

Ms. Pal further said in a few words, “We should not be concerned about the opinions of other people; our thought process should be our own. For me the important thing in establishing works is my own concepts and thoughts that is why I was able to showcase my talent and stand out for myself.”

Ms. Pal has organized 41 solo exhibitions of her works, participated in 35 international exhibitions abroad and more than 100 group exhibitions in India. She was invited to participate in the 5th and 8th Triennale India in 1982 and 1993-94. On both the occasions she contributed her multimedia creativity, utilizing installation as a medium of expression. She also worked in digital prints such as ‘Hat Yogini- series’ (plate-32) ‘Hat Yogini on Tiger Skin series’ (plate-33).
Ms. Pal was given the ‘Sanskriti Award’ in 1980. She was awarded a Jurys’ commendation in the International Biennial of Plastic Arts, Algiers in 1987, National Award in painting by Lalit Kala Academy in 1990 and 12th Cleveland International Drawing Biennial award, UK in 1996.

She worked in the graphic print studio of Lalit Kala Akademi at Garhi, New Delhi from 1977 to 1981, All India Exhibitions of Graphic Art 1979-81; All India Exhibition of Drawing, 1979.  

On the merit of her creative expression through graphic prints, she was invited to participate in the Third World Print Biennial, London, Baghdad (1980), Bedford Print Biennial, U.K. (1982).  

She attempts to leave behind her legacy of images, which are a true reflection of our lives and the consequence that impact humanity. She emphasizes, “I want to evolve and leave behind, creative visual symbols, icons, as a reference of our times, to bridge the gaps in continuity of our cultural identity, for use in the concerns and the epics of our times.”

Ms. Pal explained elaborately that she has observed the world around her and this led her to make an intensive search of the soul, which helped her to enrich in materials to transform them into paintings of elaborate visual effects.

“My life and cultural identity carve the directions of my expression. I continue to create visual symbols and icons that have a direct reference to our times. Thus, started an evolution from one thematic series to another, be it the Anandit Nayika, Kamdhenu, Aag ka Dariya, All the flowers are for you or more recently Nati Binodini. At this state in life, I am more focused. The more you accomplish, the more you want to do. I feel that I made a choice to live an artist's life and I am content for this was the only way of life for me.” Ms. Pal said.

Finally, I analyzed about her that as a person she is a good and hardworking woman. Her work revolves around female conditions which exist in society. I must also appreciate her sense of using mythological themes, which clearly shows her power of depicting thoughts and concepts. She is a recipient of numerous awards and she lives and works in New Delhi currently.
Paramjeet Singh

Mr. Paramjeet Singh is a multi-talented contemporary artist of India. He was born in Jamshedpur in the year 1941. He did a Diploma, from the College of Arts, New Delhi. He has attended many workshops/artists camps on Silk screen and painting. He has contributed works to many social organizations for different social causes. He has participated in various group shows in India as well as abroad, such as Mexico, London, UAE, Berlin, Dubai, Iran, Cairo and Cuba.

He got ‘President of India’s Silver Plaque’ award from All India Fine Art and Crafts Society in New Delhi and National Award of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and eight other prestigious awards. He is an executive member of All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi, Group8 and Delhi Silpi Chakra.

He chooses silk screen printing medium to express his abilities which gave him to display and manipulate purest art forms. This is especially significant because late 60s and 70s marked the beginning of Paramjeet's artistic career. In this period graphic arts such as lithography and etching were carving a niche for themselves.

However, silk screen-printing is still being denied its due place within the displays of contemporary art on the argument that it is commercial and therefore, cannot be equal to original and individual identity. It is used mainly for making posters and book jackets. It is in such atmosphere that Paramjeet Singh stuck to serigraphy and enriched it with certain respectability and consistency as an art form.

However, mountain lines, rising peaks, blossoming flowers, blooming buds and moving clouds are some of the best pictorial elements of Paramjeet Singh's art. To handle this constrained vocabulary work after work, without giving an inclination of fatigue or reiteration is the speciality of his imaginative representation that unify his scenes.

In the past three decades, Mr. Singh's prints have the worth of his expertise most predominantly in two things: one that his work is just to its inventor insofar as it is free from any falsification, duplicity and impersonation. His vision is impressive in its trustworthiness of methodology, treatment and topical decisions. The second angle, which is regularly eclipsed by his powerful control over the medium, is the
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fundamental perspective focused attention around perception and manifestation of an Indian sensibility, communicated through his prints.

Indeed, I might want to contend that the essential talk that exhibit Mr. Singh's work is that of colour. Structure takes after colours amongst the variety of colour tones.

Despite the fact that silk screen can be utilized to make compositions. Paramjeet is intrigued by the immaculateness of colours uncovered by level surfaces. Inside this he can deliver a huge number of shades and degrees of colours. These impacts are delivered through the utilization of various screens with half tone prints, an impact altogether different from the textured result created by a mechanical dot screen. The previous approach nearly approximates the flawlessness of brush strokes. These tonalities give his work both profundities alongside a certain artistic impression.

In many ways he used the technique and crafts serigraphy drawing, lithography, etching and digital prints and melded it with the sensibility of contemporary artistic concerns such as 'Blessings' (Plate-34), 'Golden Bird and Silver Cage', (Plate-35), 'The Touch', (Plate-36), 'Waiting', (Plate-37), 'Through Silver Window', (Plate-38), 'In Dream Land' (Plate-39), and 'With Flower and Mountain', (Plate-40), 'Silent Voices' (Plate-41).

According to Prof. P. N. Mago (Patriot – Nov. 12, 1986) “Mr. Paramjeet Singh, who has exhibited a series of creative silk-screen works on canvas, along with some of his oil paintings at the Delhi Shilpi Chakra Gallery has successfully adapted the technique, for accurately reproducing his unique effects in the silk-screen media.”

I also interviewed Paramjeet Singh in his office at All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, Rafi Marg, New Delhi. At present, he is the executive member of AIFACS.

I got the appointment with Mr. Singh, I reached his office, but had to wait for about an hour because he was busy in a meeting. Afterwards, I met him, and we started conversation on digital art. I asked him as according to some, digital art is not
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an art, it is just a copy of photography and edited by some softwares. I asked what was his opinion.

In this regard, elaborately Mr. Singh answered “When we organized the exhibitions people inquired whether they could send their photographs in digital art exhibition. See, anybody can do photography by camera, cellphone, all that are called digital art. That is why people asked us if they can send their photography in our digital art exhibition.”

Then suddenly he asked me, Do you really think photography is digital art? I gave him my view about it, and said NO! “Photography is not digital art; it is a classification of digital art. So basically, we can see that digital photography is a different thing and digital art is different but digital photography is also included as a classification of digital art.

Now the difference is that, it is a kind of very personal environment and expression by using multiple images, multiple colors or anything which is edited by using digital tools, that some work of art by the very individual cannot be called a pure photograph. So, the whole matter as we analyzed has created a big confusion with many people. Most probably this problem be in front of digital artists who are famous in this field of digital art.” Mr. Singh said

I said, “Sir as artists are practicing by using new digital equipments in the field of digital art it is also affecting the traditional art too.”

Mr. Singh said, “Yes, of course we have to accept this because there is a reason behind acceptance; over the centuries, many conventional mediums were pioneers first times in the history of art such as oil, pastel, and etching. Like in graphics such as lithography and then silk-screen were introduced as a new medium, so it was also accepted gradually by nation as this is also a kind of graphics. Many places people are not aware and do not accept it wholly. Actually, they call it commercial printing, but all over the world, otherwise, it is accepted that it is one of the printmaking techniques. This type of inventions has existed in the past that is why I am giving you some examples of mediums. So, nowadays, photography also comes under the part of fine arts and it is also a work of art. So, my point of view is that as started me earlier, I accepted and we have to accept it. Historically, such movements
have always moved inventions and are also flourishing and we have to accept them. Take an example, when acrylic was invented, people were not aware of it and were doubtful about its contents and utility and always arose a question what is this? So, now with the acceptance of digital art we are organizing exhibitions of digital art. Freely and would take new digital technology seriously in this new art form."

I agreed with Mr. Singh by saying “Sir, as technology played a vital role in our lives and society and is growing faster we should accept it. All the times, according to this environment, we should take technology and digital art seriously.”

Mr. Singh supplemented on my views by saying “Well over the past centuries we are using technology.”

Mr. Singh endorsed it by saying “It has to be taken in all mediums and should be which can be explored and made very strong.”

He told me one remarkable thing about the first exhibition of digital art. He said, “First exhibition of digital art was held in the 1960, at the National art gallery and there was some works and demonstrations were displayed. Basically, participants of this exhibition were all engineers, not the artists and the exhibitions introductory title was ‘A particular kind of industry that can produce art’.”

Finally, as an artist Mr. Paramjeet Singh is a creative and skillful person. I realized and truly appreciated his views during the conversation specially his support to transfer the qualities of digital art from past to contemporary period. I also learnt from him that inventions and developments have been always there and accepted with delight. He also agreed with my opinion that every invention and development took place step by step and has always brought pleasure.

It can be concluded that these contemporary Indian artists are working on this innovative art form in different areas, transformed their creativity and creations by the use of different digital mediums. Contribution of these digital artists is providing a new way to up-rising artists to transform their desired effects to create notable and incredible masterpieces. However, the growth of innovative digital artists will spread the boundaries of art and because of them this novel art form is flourishing and has revitalized itself.
References


