Ajit Seal Interview conducted on 10.11.2011

Q.1 How Fine Art (Visual Art) came to your mind and joined Govt. College of Art & Crafts in younger days?

A. Since my childhood, I have wholehearted interest in art, and that’s the main reason of joining in Govt. School of Art & Crafts in 1974, Guwahati for pursuing diploma course on art.

Q.2 After completion of diploma in painting at Government College of Art and Crafts, Guwahati, you have joined Garhi Studio New Delhi for study print making instead of Painting? What was the prime reason behind it?

A. After passing from Gauhati Art School I moved to New Delhi for further study. Specifically keen interest in print making made my mind for this discipline. There Bhabesh Sanyal guided me to work in Garhi Studio of Lalit Kala Akademi. I was fortunate enough that I had got basic acquaintance of print making especially lithography and etching from renowned print maker Devraj Dakoji. I worked under him for two years in different processes of Print making.

Q.3 Which instinct of print making attract you to do Master Degree in Print making at Kala Bhavan, Visva- Bharati University, Santiniketan? During that time in Santiniketan, who were among teachers those really inspired you to understand meticulous draught man ship and intuitive presence of mind which is more necessary for print making.
A. Then I thought of pursuing further education in print making and choose Santiniketan as better place of eminent print makers as Shomnath Hore, Sanat Kar and Lalu Prasad Shaw. That’s way I got admission in Post Diploma course in print making at Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan in 1981. Shomnath Hore really inspired and gave me confidence of mastering different technique of print making and making successful impressions.

Q.4 In terms of your image, you have been engaged over the years as studying extensively on various indigenous folk tradition and heritage of rural and medieval Assam and which are reflected in your painting, drawing and print making. Describe your views on those inspiration and process of image making.

A. In santiniketan days I worked lots of figurative compositions along with nature. After joining Guwahati Art College I felt the urge of adding indigenous ideal and formal character in my works. My study of Neo-Vaishnavite architecture and also sculpture in different part of Assam as at Hati Xatra in Suwalkuchi near Guwahati and also Majuli, really help me to adopt those formal elements inherent to my works.

Q.5 How you define print making as discourse of academic study or tool for image making?

A. Print making is a complete discourse of making images, strong interface of art and technology.
Q.6 As a well known print maker and teacher, how you feel in teaching print making among students in terms of both technical and intellectual articulation.

A. Students should know detail acquaintance of various processes along with related aesthetical aspect of image building. They should be totally aware of making good impressions and also various possibilities of various techniques.

Q.7 Describe your views on your recent image in comparison with your previous type.

A. My recent image has been more emphasized on spontaneity, more in space in comparison with previous type. Previous formal elements are very much there, but it has been explored freely in various method of print making.
Amit Mukhopadhay, Interview conducted on 1.12.2013

Q.1 Amit da, please describe your opinion briefly regarding print making scenario in Assam and also whole North Eastern India in the perspective of contemporary print making in India as well as entire world.

A. Print making scenario of North East grew slowly in certain important places, although it has produced some important print makers as Noni Barpujari, Ajit Seal, Dilip Tamuly, Maneswar Brahma, and Thomas Singh. Worth to mention that Guwahati Art College has a great role in the growth and nourishment for aspiring generation of print makers in this region. Though I have to say, nowadays print making is crossing its limit; print makers are not practicing with primary element. As Dilip Tamuly, previously with such brilliant body of black and white lithographs, presently shifting to installation and performance.

Q.2 As my research topic on ‘Impression art and artists: A study on three major print makers of Assam- Noni Borpujari, Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly’, I would like to know your views on their aesthetic sensibilities, technical brilliance and their contribution for the development of responsive ambience regarding print making in entire North East.

A. In my opinion works of Noni Borpujari, Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly are really praiseworthy. As in such earlier dull circumstances of North East they have produced commendable and path breaking works in both technical and aesthetical aspect, it is really admirable. As following
their ideal lots of young print makers has been attained good works from Guwahati Art College, Imphal Art College, Agartala Art College and also different major institution of India in Santiniketan, Baroda etc.

Q.3 What is your impression on ‘New generation’ specifically present print makers of Assam in coming days?

A. The history of modern Indian art is well known to all of us. It is true that there are various views of this history, starting from when the Indian modern art began, was it influenced by the western modernism or did it grow and develop from its own regional/ national sources. In a big country like India with so much diversity in language, culture and identity, it is argued that modernism in Indian art was not a unilinear growth, the typically of a particular region was also an important factor in the growth of modern art. We should not anticipate a sameness of modern Indian art. North East is a unique region where modernism in art developed at a slow pace due to economic and political reasons but it is definitely a different notion altogether compared to what happened to modern art in other regions. That is why comparative art history is an important category to analyse and understand the art of the North East. Assam has been the major centre of art activity in The North East. It has produced some important artists as your mentioning in the Ph. D topic and now New generation, a new set of artists are emerging who are engaged in representing the so far UNREPRESENTED in their art works.
Dilip Tamuly, Interview conducted on 24.11.2011

Q.1 Describe briefly about early years in Assam before moving to Santiniketan to study art. That time you had in touch with doyen of artists as Neelpawan Baruah and also during formative years of Assam Fine Arts Crafts Society in Guwahati. During that period Utpal Baruah was also there?

A. Going to Santiniketan was a very strange story for me. While studying at J. B. College, Jorhat and later at Mariani College, I had a dream of studying fine arts and also architecture as my father was an Engineer that time. But how to go and study fine art I didn’t have any idea. In the Mariani College, people knew me as an artist in the small town as I have been doing paintings and same time musician as I used to play guitar for a local musician group. While I was in Mariani, the Vice Principal of Mariani College was always telling me as you should go to my elder brother Neelpawan Baruah’s place, he is in Guwahati, at Judges Field, and there is a house, where everybody does painting over there. That time my uncle was posted in North Guwahati, at Rajoduar as an Engineer there. I came with a letter from brother of Neelpawan Baruah and then joined the studio there 1976-77 coming to Guwahati. That time Utpal Barua was there, trying to go Santiniketan for studying at Kala Bhavana. Then lots of people were working there, it is very interesting. All the time It became coloristic. Judges field was completely open field. People were coming and going through the field.
People were sitting there, though there is no park as such, something like this only open, from here and there, a common place. All the cow, horse, and dog all other any pet animal they were coming to Judges field.

Q.2 How did you decide and move to Santiniketan, your journey from Judges Field, Guwahati to Santiniketan?

A. I got initial guidance from my Neelpawan Baruah; He advised me given an idea of how to go Santiniketan where the journey has a long route to travel that's an old idea of reaching there. In 1978 I went to Santiniketan in a general train through Bandel and Burdwan and reached there one day later. By that time Utpal Barua was admitted there. In the year 1979 second time I went little earlier and admitted in first position there. But Utpal Barua was there, accommodating me and training me for preparation of admission test. So with his help I am really thankful to him. In second time I got admission in Santiniketan in first position, everybody was quite happy as I am doing quite well in the examination.

Q.3 Tell me your experience during foundation first two years at Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan.

A. First two years of foundation course was very interesting. We had to work in almost all mediums as painting, sculpture, print making and craft/design. That time I was more interested to sculpture and applauded for my good sculptures. Two of my classmates were Assamese girls, Bula Chakraborty, coming from London, Nilakshi Bhattacharjee from Guwahati and also Akhmal Hussain from Silchar.
Q.4 Why you choose print making as discourse for creative expression and in which year?

A. Before that little more interested to sculpture, as actually I was doing good sculptures and always got highest mark. Well, I have always wanted to carve which requires lots of energy. Painting does not demand as much energy as print making. The process of print making automatically seemed an ideal alternative of sculpture. But somehow stone and technology these things started attracting me and also my background as father was an engineer. Technical activities had inspired me a lot. Also I had been thinking about canvas preparation which was little expensive, but in print making buying a paper in one rupee is cheaper thing for me. So taking print, I was working overnight at print making studio, Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan. My woodcut was quite good; people were fond of woodcut all the time.

Q.5 Who was your teacher when you have joined print making department in your 3rd year and which year?

A. My great guru Somnath Hore was there. During 1981 in the 3rd year of my specialization with Bula Chakraborty, we together organized a duo show of print making at State Art Gallery, Guwahati in 1981 which was supposed to be first print making show in Assam. In that year my work was selected at Annual Exhibition of Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta and my work got reviewed at the Newspaper of Calcutta.

Q.6 During pursuing a specialized course as print making at Kala Bhavana, how you used and exploring your medium as tools for creative expression?
A. You know it is very interesting I am telling you basically black and white attract me very much because I have doing sculptures and before sculpture somewhere there is a link I find. Solid black and white of my works are very sculptural and grotesque for me. It is a kind of internal instincts and thrills which are making, experimented as so many new and traditional medium that I have studied and know it.

Then I just start doing lithography, in lithography people usually were asking to go with three or four litho stone in color lithography at that time, I started doing in one single stone, reducing method, first I start reducing method there. Then we learned reverse method there, after doing a black and white drawing on the stone, after first print then making reverse of that work or making negative of that work for another color, but what I have done there , instead of doing reverse I did like all white parts in black first then I filled up with a lacquer solution to get maximum black effect, lacquer having that character that never spread like grease because usually hot temperature of Santiniketan, grease got spread as the reason for possibility of limited prints. So I start like a pre reverse process I invented, I should say, I found out doing things pre reverse. So that pre reverse method start with a black but that black becomes white ultimately when print come out black become white because I fill up with lacquer solution and white part with a very crispy tone of the of the white burin, with these caunti medium or wax medium which is easily goes away with petrol. Then I got solid black and very clear tone and thus I can take maximum prints because never filled up so. I found out these reducing and added pre reverse method.
there. With these methods I was working there in Santiniketan whole day and night even in Bachelor of Fine Arts.

Q.7 Narrate briefly about your work and association with something primitive in expressions which are easily accessible in our native tradition, culture of whole North East?

A. My early inspiration from a book of Verrier Elwin titled ‘The art of Arunachal’, and also I was impressed after travelling all over North East. So I was very much liked and have thinking as everybody using their own style and mostly in place Santiniketan they were following western style and also Bengal School, this school and that school. I was little dogmatic about North East India because I have been moving around in Nagaland and Arunachal here and there all the tribal area before also. So by instinct of an Anthropologist, I saw lots of images there. Those converted images, perhaps click my inner psychosis like my dark side of myself are very much representing those images. So it becomes very easy for me to use like my bright and dark side of myself using those images converting those images through my own idea and technique rather.

Q.8 What is source of inspiration for your work? Do you think your works carry a stamp of Assam?

A. As you know I was born and brought up in Majuli- the centre of Assamese folk art and culture. My maternal uncle’s family introduced me to the rudiments of traditional Bhaona and other folk forms. The masks used for these theatres with religious themes appealed to me
greatly. The images with which I grow up become source of stimulation when I discovered in Santiniketan that graphics is my forte. I was happy that at least I could create something full of energy I found it a beautiful medium to express my inner imbalance, joy, sorrow etc. The forms twist entwine, agonize with an energy I am satisfied to let loose on stone. As for your other question well, that is for the viewers. All good works of art are appreciated all over the world.
Jabeen Rehaman Ghose Dastidar, as Interview on 24.11.2011

Q.1 Your opinion on the modernist art trend in Assam which has been developing since Pre-Independence period in our country.

A. Regarding the modernist trend, not directly about modernist trend I would like to talk about rather contemporary era after the Post-Independence period, because other day my student reminds me that we have Bombay School, Calcutta School, Madras School, Baroda School, why not one here? And I said as because initially at that period perhaps early twentieth century most of the artists whom we called veteran artists, had taken the academic qualification basically from J. J. School of Art, Bombay or majority of them from Calcutta and later from Santiniketan. That is how that kind of trend, artists actually carried into with and one artist came to their homeland, so they carried along stylistic stylization with them and aspect which we have enough at yet. So perhaps that is why and later on each artist with their own individual manner, they never actually form the group or guild rather where did have a common platform, so to say where they could work together. Perhaps that is why did not find or have the specific school or as such, in Assam or Northeast. But nonetheless all these attitude most individualist after that maximum of those artists and they want to popularize the fine arts in the North East but it was more, more progressive, more developed only perhaps from the early eighties
when more and more students started going out of the state and pursuing their higher career in Fine Arts from reputed institute of India basically we can say from Baroda is there and even Santiniketan.

These two different institutions, a very great role to play; Most of the artists were there, even when they came back some became absorbed in institutions, some become freelancers, some were again stayed back in metropolitan for sake of own specific ways of expression but that is how each of their respective institutional basic influences or rather I would say stylistic trend they started working here. With regards to print making actually print making department of Govt. Art College, Guwahati has been doing a lot. Because my associations with the institute as I’m saying so, whenever they have held shows outside state they have always carried very good response, very good feedback and rather not only good response it was some kind of overwhelming response because everybody used to say it would be established artists whoever had been organized those shows, they always commented on that fact these kind of works are not possible for a institute who has so infrastructurally still then not developed or rather print making assets were also not available there, only basic amenities were there in spite of that they have been doing very good and which was perhaps unbelievable to rest of the world.

And for this I would say whole credit definitely goes to Sobha Brahma and more than that perhaps Ajit Seal because this graphic studio could not have been set up without the initiatives of Ajit Seal and Sobha Brahma only initiating as he was principal there to do initial discussions
with government and inspired nonetheless the machine were brought. But the person who with all his physical, mental effort altogether in touch with the proper places of where printing equipment have to be branded and entire thing that we can proudly say that we have considerable amount of litho stone which is very difficult to procure and also we have very good litho press which is still going very fine, we have also etching press, only recently last year I was able to get another litho press but proposed to have more in future. But basic amenities are still very limited.

Yes the work done, Ajit Seal another fact I would like to tell you that more than very hard working print maker he needs to be commended on his initiative of cutting with that Plate Lithography. As because plate lithography method actually has been gone with that offset era long back which has done on the surface of the offset plate along with litho stone.

Q.2 Describe about the initiation of print making at Govt. College of Art & Crafts in Guwahati and its development as most breeding ground of energetic and inspirational future generation from all over of North Eastern India.

A. Joining in 1986 as lecturer although initially Ajit Seal had to be initiated of the department and later turned to be fortunate enough to have the assistance of full time help of the colleague that is Dilip Tamuly who is also alumni of Santiniketan who has returned back from Denmark in the year 1990 and perhaps joined 1991 joined in the department as lecturer in 1991. These two artists, how both of them with their
practicing and acquiring stylistic elements in art inherent lots of their
direct and indirect exposure and finally influences to the students of
first batch of the department as Debajit Sarmah and Sujit Bora. Much
later as I would say Ajit Seal has always very committed hardworking
print maker besides experimenting lithography, Serigraphy, etching,
viscosity was not experimented due to technical constraint he started
off plate lithography.

He also took initiative to work with some of the senior artists of Assam
Sobha Brahma, Neelpawan Baruah as they had become little retired
artists and we wanted them to work again. So Ajit Seal said that this
process said that this process would work on most well, because he
needs to have more prints with them so that is adequate collection.
Thus he collected works of some reputed artists as Sobha Brahma and
Neelpawan Baruah. And also some artists who could not come to the
department directly and but their plates with their work has been
printed and also preserve in the department. And later on that was in
the year 1999and 2000 we have early print making camps here where
most of the artists from Northeastern part of India were exposed
actually what the medium is to be and even the state level bureaucrats
yet not much aware of print making medium is all about, we have to
enlighten them about entire print world scenario and that is how most
of artists from West Bengal and Santiniketan overwhelm and
participate in the camp. That is the very credential moment of that
camp.
Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly with their innovation with their students, has been persistently not only encouraging them to work with various regions of print medium but also gave confidence to them to have their shows outside state New Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay as I told earlier that got those feedback. This is a time we are very unfortunate that is, but then good for Ajit Seal that he is absorbed as faculty in Department of Graphics, Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan.

Q.3 Delineate the method of print making and images of both Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly.

A. Worked as a print maker Ajit Seal loved to work more I would say with reducing method, whenever I went to the department he was always there inspiring and asking me to work, he said that for himself best process would be reducing method, just rolled black on the stone or plate, has been taken different color gradually from that one stone without working with multiple stone. So taking with one single matrix also economized our assets also. Dilip Tamuly was also using same method. That was basically because what to say one have to compromise availability with our materials. Both of these artists I would say actually applauded for their initiative as trying to create within much less possible medium/ material available and same time putting upon class print addition. Dilip Tamuly enhanced, I would say, virile and vibrant person that he is. That is very evident in his work in his work of whatever concept he has versatile in nature occurred during his formative years in Santiniketan, his entire personality as well. People would say about his works some kind primitive accents but that fact of
course his nomadic and expressionistic view and medium where he can best express himself and later of course he has taken up with diverted some of his energy.

Q.4 Explain role of both Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly as teacher and also creating motivation, awareness of our heritage and tradition.

A. Ajit Seal of similarity tried to take up or working with the tradition Satriya or Vaisnavite culture, basically beginning to work with deities and later perhaps visit to Majuli and being touch with Dilip Tamuly who has past resident of that island, he got to be gradually aware of Vaisnavite culture and so many of them we see Vaisnavite head dress which is often reflection in his deities of I would say earlier concept of deities of that is slowly conglomerated with those Vaishnavite element. So also seen in slow conversion in the works of Neelpawan Baruah he was also exposed to Manuscript Painting Tradition that’s how perhaps amalgamated to his work.

Q.5 Jabeen Madam, tell me about your own works, how you developed your working style since your Santiniketan days. You have also affinity towards our tradition also.

A. First of all I have always very taken up natural elements. In my etching I used to do predominantly narrative landscape with certain aura of small, small edges/ detail as Pahari Manuscript Painting. I just try to be scribbled up that evolve kind of detail in my etching as we have some limitation of the medium. And afterwards after visiting Majuli, Vahanal vehicle companion of Vaishnavite theatre those somehow got reflected
in my work. I started working with that Garuda/Lord Vishnu’s Vahana and still doing.

So basically being a person I like to experiment with my works with graphic medium, more than anything else creating of texture which is more important for me, tries to find out useful textures. I like the relief of plate itself, even I am working on lithograph in the process of various overlapping of colors which would give me some kind of textural vibrations and variations in the print those who got as part of I enjoyed. Lately I am little into those preferred aspect of symbolism, besides nature various elements of earth, water and so on unknowingly sometime and later on my focus on eagle itself. I am not persistent print maker due to constraint of anything. So there is a gap of my work and that is why I feel change is happen. The best medium of course most I enjoy is always be print making those and print making aspect when I paint also. The pictures those textured aspect those experimental surface reality, illusion which emerged by human activity somehow knowingly unknowingly they get transferred unless and until I get right kind of pigment I want. May be that is nothing as element, elementally and conceptually perhaps certain symbolic aspect of my painting not only, what I would say, what’s the reflection of print making medium itself.

Q.6 Your views on present scenario of student’s creativity of Govt. Art College, Guwahati.
A. As you know initially when any student and any amateur artists coming to that department, naturally works of Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly influenced lots of students. But that has been not stagnant kind of situation itself. I am very happy of my students much more aware contemporary, modernist trend which is going on globally as Temsu Yanger Longkumar, Lima Amok. One thing I would like to talk of practically or understand of medium that part is completely handled by Ajit Seal but contextual part and for that developed among our students credit entirely goes to Dilip Tamuly because with his own way to keep with his knowledge about the North East region, North Eastern culture, its ethnography, he always encourage/inspire the students to have their own identity in their works, that is how people from Adi artists, artist from Nagaland, Manipur, so all these everybody they stood out as a person from a particular clan.
Prof. Nilmani Phookan, as interview conducted on 15.06.2012

Q.1 Sir as my topic of research is related to Assam, it is necessary to know about Assamese people, language along with numerous other ethnic communities and their languages. Assamese language and culture, a vein, connectivity for whole North East, I would like to know your opinion in this regard in the perspective of both past and present.

A. Assamese language originated from Magadhi Prakrit, a local dialect of Sanskrit, as similar to origin of Bengali and Oriya. Before coming of Aryan people to this part of land, several communities of various beliefs and dialect has been inhabited with peace and harmony. They are mainly Ostrich and Mongoloid origin. Aryan people came to this land with a proper script Brahmi script and knowledge of science as astronomy. Thus Assamese language formulated as fusion with dialects of various ethnic communities. Dr. Upendranath Goswami has been worked in detail on this topic as the mixing and assimilation between Assamese language and dialects of various ethnic communities. In brief formation of Assamese language is non-Aryan origin.

In a lecture delivered in 1933, Dr. Niharranjan Roy pointed out that history of Assam should have studied not only from West origin, but also from East side, from South east origin. It should be studied.
linguistically, economically and culturally. As mighty Brahmaputra, our past heritage art and culture of Assam always inspires us for new creation.

Q.2 Can you tell us about your adoring senior colossal, artist, writer of Assam? What is your thinking of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Madhabdeva?

A. See, I am deeply rooted in my milieu. Do you talk about present poet, writer of Assam? First of all I have to take name of Chandra Kumar Agarwalla. His poetry book Pratima has deeply carved in to my mind, always refresh my memory. Lakhminath Bezbaruah wrote about the book as though Pratima is smaller in pages but it is made of gold. Secondly my favorite writer is Lakhminath Bezbaruah. In his colossal works, small portion of his writings reflect that particular aspect of universality which can always refresh the mind of any creative person. Thirdly I would like to take name of poet Jyotiprasad Agarwalla. Specifically his numerous lyrics are high class poetry. And again Sankaradeva and Madhabdeva, they are most adoring personality among Assamese people and society. Sankaradeva, has multi-facet all around attitude, contributed in Assamese social, cultural life in social reformation, religion, literature, visual art, music, drama etc. During the time of unrest, bad belief and practice till 14th and 15th century Assam Sankaradeva accomplished lightning the tiny lamp of universality and Bhaktism/spirituality for illuminating people of Assam forever. Madabdeva’s great literary work Namghosa is the most profound epic poetry.
Q.3 As my Ph. D topic related to three print makers of Assam on Noni Borpujari, Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly, what is your impression of their works in the perspective of contemporary art of Assam?

A. Among three as frankly speaking, Dilip Tamuly was most gifted and talented with lots of possibilities. Though he himself says about grotesque character of North East about his works, but my opinion it is not reflected in his works. Rather his works are influenced by classical Indian sculpture, Negroid, Rabindranath and formal character of Ramkinker Baij, as similar to celebrated artist Sobha Brahma. His complex human forms are packed up energy within. With lots of studies and experience, Dilip Tamuly has a critical, analytical and gifted mind set to observe, study his surroundings. He explores his creativity various ways which are reflected in his works. Ajit Seal has been working in same direction. But in his recent works he has overcome his stagnant state, explore his mediums more spontaneously. He is among most technically efficient print maker of our country. But technical excellence is not means, but not the end. What he wants to say in his works, what his figures are saying and the way of saying and to whom, these factors are ultimately come as we assessing a work of art. No doubt technical excellence has beauty, but that beauty whether expands the delight and sorrow of different intuition, sensibilities and also how it can be moved it is hard to say. You can't deny it. Obviously technical excellence is part of the creation. Noni Borpujari, perhaps done few number of prints, but his works are fine, excellent. Especially his Scarecrow series and intaglio work Wounded dream of a woman.
are worth to mention. The backgrounds of these works are Assam agitation. His works reflect that unique character, his inherent creation and artist's own originality.
APPENDIX-VI

Noni Borpujari, as Interview on 28.10.2011

Q.1 Sir, first of all please let me know about your early painting images.

A. Basically being a painter, I like to work in Oil and acrylic medium simultaneously, shifted to print making in later period. In my early days during Seventies I used to do mainly figurative and landscape compositions in application of impasto colors with knife and spatula, which was not at all realistic, more expressionistic as a whole. Although later period multiple layers of color has been also used in my acrylic composition.

Q.2 How you had shifted to print making? Tell me your experience at Garhi studio, New Delhi and learning/ experimenting various print making medium?

A. In 1981, I went to Garhi studio, New Delhi and met studio in-charge Devraj. Actually through the initiative of Bhabesh Sanyal I got the place to work in Garhi studio. Then in the beginning it was a big problem for me because without knowing anything about print making I started my print making career there. Then slowly I adopted print making. My favorite process is etching, viscosity and also dry point, did very few lithography. I experimented innovatively as using litho ink in etching plate, which is first of all it was more difficult for me as soluble nature of ink in water, slowly developed a process of creating thin layers of color.
and beautiful textures. So in all my prints you can feel that soft texture as a whole besides other textural feeling.

In the dry point I used needle, small roulette and some time machine tool also and worked lots of prints with roulette. I used 3 or 4 numbers of plates in etching. For wiping the plate purpose some time I do not wipe the whole plate, with a planning to do where to wipe and where not to wipe. I'm not getting larger addition rather, getting only 10 to 12 additions only.

Q.3 Describe your experimentation with viscosity technique as device for creative expression.

A. I started viscosity at Garhi studio blindly as I came to know about the technique of using three rollers. Then have got opportunities to work such world renowned expert of viscosity printing as with Paul Lingren at University of Southern California, Michel Rothenstein in U.S. A. and also with Krishna Reddy for a week. So perhaps I just, that’s why more fascinated with viscosity method which has been my favorite over the years. I have used maximum three rollers in the viscosity images- soft, medium and hard. For viscosity I found studio temperature is very important, also hygienic and dust proof studio environment. And also you have to maintain the equal manual pressure over the roller on account of getting similarity in additions. That is very important during the whole process.
Q.4 Rural milieu and nature of Assam has been repeatedly appearing in your works of art, what's the reason behind it? Also you have done some amazing images on Scarecrow and Bondage.

A. I did actually lots of prints and paintings predominantly on scare crow as political scarecrow, pregnant scare crow, dancing scare crow etc. Scare crow is a simple thing, which we have seen in paddy field, but that impress me very much in reality. So perhaps that's why I have worked for a long time.

Political satire I mean, title of the series is zero gravitation. Everything is floating as if in the air. I just make satire of the persona/politician as if losing his gravity. So different way I am contemplating the whole image.

Q.5 You have rare opportunities of working various print making studios in all over world, which facilities are not available till now. Share your experiences in this regard.

A. During my period of working at Garhi studio during 1982-85, actually in India print making in terms of technological facilities was not so developed, didn't have good material, no paper, no ink, studio facilities not just only, I mean, not very perfect. Then I went to Canada Beb centre. There I have seen very big studio, situated in a very cold, suitable atmosphere for printing as -25° Centigrade in which studio temperature and other condition as hygiene and cleanliness has been properly maintained and that's the reason print quality become so high.
Q.6 Narrate about your journey from your birth place Dergaon, then Nazira, Jorhat, Shillong, Nagaon, Guwahati and how those journeys stimulate your both thought process and works of art.

A. During my stay in Shillong, whole environment, quite different, nice hilly terrain, Khasi native people, free and more western orientation and after all pleasant cultural environment and for that location I just began to draw and paint. After that living at Dergaon and Nazira simultaneously in a surrounding that was closer of nature, paddy field and rural milieu which are perhaps main source of inspiration for working on those thematic connotations.

During 1973 and 1974, after coming to Guwahati, I met several doyen personalities and learned so many things from serious discussion and conversation, initiated artists as Benu Misra and Neelpawan Baruah, though convened Pranab Barua earlier at Nagaon.

Q.7 Describe your intellectual and thought progression during the transitional phase of social, political and economical state during last three decades. Progressive or communist ideologies or happening during sixties and seventies in Assam had any imprint in your psyche.

A. I saw the transition since last eighties in Assam and try to explore each and every moment with my creative medium. During language agitation in Sixties I was a student, but felt that such chaos and dreadful experience and collected some substance for making political images. During Assam Movement I had no active participation but some eerie incidents had been got reflecting in my works time to time. That time I
began my series of work titled ‘Bondage’. Bondage is actually not a self bondage, but someone forcefully prevent the freedom of seeing, listening and also talking, with those moments I try to manifest in that series as subvert that awful time. As that way ‘scare crow’ series had been done simultaneous for almost four to five years at that time.

At that time we were sometimes attracted to some progressive or Communist activities in Guwahati, but sometimes fallen in danger situation also. During that time renowned litterateur Hiren Gohain was physically assaulted in the street. In such a catastrophic situation and since then terrorism has been part of everywhere in Assam during transitional years till today and related to my works also. During those years I made several Paintings and prints but a painting on *Horijon* boy/a sanitary cleaner as worth to mention.

Q.8 During last few years some undesired incidents occurred in Assam as serial bomb-blast in our state Assam, Dhemaji massacre which has been reflected in your works. Describe your present concept and works of art.

A. I did a painting on a dreadful bomb-blast massacre in a Independence day function at Dhemaji in 2006 in which several innocent participating children had been died. In that in a big landscape of reddish sky horizon some odd slippers/shoes scatters over a seen unseen ground image of tricolor national flag. I made few paintings on serial bomb-blast in all over Assam on 30th October, 2007. Before that during 1995 onwards I did a series of paintings on zero-gravitation which is major scientific issue around the globe in recent time. My images are such as
an apple is floating, men are also flying, Gandhi-cap is gliding in the sky, man unable to sit on a chair etc. People accepted and got rare applause those works for its inner thought and complexities.

**Q.9** Presently I am not working in a series due to my bad health and frequent visit to Doctor. Although I am thinking of some images of reflecting inner self as traumatic condition of human being during physically seek, Pathetic condition of a person without the skin, machine attaching somewhere in the body. I am just thinking of a weak, fragile of an anatomical body of self and the other.

**A.** Tell me about using innovation or tools in print making creating extraordinary effect. Do you need for taking freedom in print making in terms of rigorous identical of print? Also how do you feel as you have no formal art education and your feeling about necessity of academic discourse in art?

As without any formal/ academic training of art, whatever medium in painting and print making choosing for a image, I confess rather a feeling of struggle and in the process learn something new and extraordinary. My intention is to work with my images would certainly give me the feeling of achieving something different, unknowingly and spontaneously.

I always feel the necessity of art education. Without having formal art education, I always thinking of learning in the process of image making. At the tenure of working with Paul Lingren in a print making for about one month, I tried to learn systematic process of working of the world.
renowned print maker as he speaks or not. Once I confronted with Krishna Reddy as I was asking in a Lalit Kala Akademi’s question hour as whether your each of prints are 100% similar. He was asking me politely to shut the mouth. Then after the meeting he came to me and inquiring me whether me as a print maker or not. Then he said if you are a print maker why you asking me this particular question. Then I realized that in viscosity technique all prints are not 100% similar in the working condition of studio of our country. If we maintain proper minimum temperature and pressure for viscosity rollers in well equipped studio it can be achieved.

During the time of working with Paul Lingren in America, along with a lecture of Paul Lingren I have to present a demonstration among students in a University without any preparation. I was asking the students to bring their old plates. And with those old plates and also using the technique of those plates I made a multiple color etching along with a image of a scare-crow. Ultimately the presentation has been well appreciated in a short duration of one hour. I have two prints collection of that workshop.

Sometime I have used buffing machine (which is usually used for grinding marble plate) on my intaglio plate for achieving innovative textures especially in copper plate dry point. As working with a machine tool in dry point remaining cutting parts attached with the plate become created excellent textural effect, although utmost careful wiping of the plate would be taken in keeping those fragile attached parts. Roulette is also an excellent tool for intaglio plate for creating nice effect. I have
been experimented several dry point works from tiny small size to 2X3 feet bigger size also.

Q.10 You have worked several human faces extracting inner self as your intaglio image “Dream of a wounded woman”. Describe the entire process in this regard. Have you experimented with Sine Colle technique?

A. I did lot of prints on human faces, experimenting with various printing techniques on particularly human faces. In my work titled ‘Dream of a wounded woman’, I have used several intaglio methods as mezzotint, sugar-leaf and air-bubble aquatint on my copper matrix, in which also I did first open-biting the whole plate. In mezzotint first I have used rocker in some part of the plate for achieving velvety black effect in the print. Almost one month had been taken in making the plate and then making lots number of that particular plate. Predominantly agony and turmoil during Assam agitation of 1980s has been reflected in that works. Another print of a big plate, I used sugar-leaf acquaint and making the plate in some part. Finally in the print those parts had become embossed. In the foreign studio I worked with aquatint of spraying enamel on the plate instead of dusting resin which is usually used in studios of our country.

I have an experience of participation in Sine-colle workshop in Bangalore

Q.11 Color has been played a significant role in your works which is unique in contemporary time, tell me in this regard.
A. In my acquaintance of print making at Garhi studio, New Delhi during first three months I worked in the studio as underground as because everybody had been asking me reasons behind coming to work at Garhi studio particularly without any basic knowledge. I told them that Bhabhesh Sanyal had been insisted me to come and work at Garhi studio, New Delhi after seeing my works mainly paintings and drawings at my native place Guwahati. Then I decided to work in the studio during night hours and day-time I had been observed of way of working of other print making also my great guru/teacher Devraj as sitting in the studio without doing anything. And with the permission of Bartholomoe, Secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi and also declaration from my side as taking responsibility of the studio I had been permitted to work in night hours from 11 P.M to morning 4 A.M along with a night attendant. Taking it as challenge I had done huge number of plates. After three months after seeing my prints although I had been permitted to work in day hour also. During my tenure at Garhi studio I did almost 1000 prints in various techniques of mainly intaglio and lithography method.

I generally love to work in night hours and display my works in artificial light. As especially impact of the color is quite different during night hours then in day light. So color becomes intact and making more impact and multi-layered. In my painting usually I use particular, independent color as less mixing and applying in thin layers of various hues to create a nice multi-layered transparent effect. Which can be seen in my intaglio work titled ‘wounded dream of a woman’ as
reflecting slight blue hues in almost monochrome, black and white intaglio work. As in my 'scare-crow' work in multiple plates intaglio work I have used silver color and also grey German paper. In first plate scare-crow in blue, the second plate scare crow has been done in brown and finally making a texture with silver color. A wonderful effect has been created in the print surface. I try to make vibrant and color freshness in the pictorial surface.

Q.12 Also your pictorial space in your works has been termed as awesome, unbelievable, describe your thinking in this regard.

A. In my works of earlier stage, slightly dramatic affinity or appealing compositions has been created in picture surface as light coming from an exclusive source, tiny human figure, relatively vast blank canvas space, etc. Gradually picture space becomes filled up with images, though I love to work with so much blank space, but empty space looks as balanced all together. In an exhibition, an art critic was chatting with me that your painting is not complete, so much White space? I answered him as I use white as color, color animating. For me color can create sculptural feeling, making ups and down and also coloristic image.
Pranabranjan Roy, as Interview on 17.06.2012

Q.1 Sir, your opinion on Print making scenario in Assam and also North Eastern India in the perspectives of Contemporary Print making in India as well as entire world.

A. Those were history of print making in Eastern India not only in Assam, although print making in the sense of manual print making without use of manual device got started in Eastern India in and around Calcutta in the Eighteenth Century. It is a long history but if you pay your attention on Assam or other seven of Northeastern states and even Bihar and Orissa, the print making activity started actually quite late. Not before the Nineteenth Century actually unless a publication industry gets on swings and with requirement for visuals and fabrics print making does not start. And in the Northeast or other parts of Eastern India like Bihar and Orissa print making as such started very late, because there was no printing, publication industry and when printing and publication industry came around already started, visual and graphical images already started, manual printing had to take the backseat.

Excepting in Patna, that was only because of an early Nineteenth Century Print Maker located there was Charles Doyle and Charles Doyle initiated quite a number of local Patna school painter into lithography. That's how it came up a little earlier. But in other places it
takes a long time, for instance in Assam it’s only through the efforts of Christian Missionaries and with their publication ‘Orunodoi’. Print making got their underway because ‘Orunodoi’ depended mainly on relief printing. So ‘Orunodoi’ did a quite bit of work for popularizing print making. But ‘Orunodoi’ started in mid Nineteenth Century but graphics started coming little later. Anyway it got very good start but unfortunately it did not leave a continuity of practice. So there was a long gap when art activity around painting and sculpture crossed target print making was not even there. And I suppose, it’s due to lack of interest of local publishing and printing industry that it had a release least. Actually problem is that all over the Northeast and states like Bihar and Orissa student have been coming to Calcutta after finishing their student hood, they wouldn’t go back and start anything at their places, when?

As late in the Seventies Benu Misra for instance as artist had a grand start. After student hood based in New Delhi, he went back to Guwahati, got a job, settled down with the job and compare him with his fellow who had graduated with together like Ramachadran and Dharmanarayan Dasgupta, they became very active after their student hood days they go on working, exhibiting painting. But Benu Misra got happy with his job and all about settled down.

Q.2 What is your view about works of Sobha Brahma along with Benu Misra and also Neelpawan Baruah?
A. Sobha Brahma is one person who never give up and also Neelpawan Baruah. They never give up. They continued their effort with great importance. In depth they not only had talent and also hard worker. Actually what happened if you are in a situation where there is an general interest in art activity it can keep on going where that is not only lack but also general appreciation you tend to fall back, unless you have an inner urge to do something. Sobha Brahma had that urge. Neelpawan Baruah had also that urge. Then Benu Misra, to start with, didn’t have lack of talent. And he was no less talent than Sobha Brahma and Neelpawan Baruah. But simply because he didn’t get proper congenial atmosphere that he didn’t continue.

Q.3 As my research topic on three major Print makers of Assam- Noni Borpujari, Ajit Seal and Dilip Tamuly, what are your views on aesthetic sensibilities and also their contribution for the development of Print making scene in entire North East?

A. Ajit Seal is perhaps most technological efficient print maker among the three, and he has command over a wide range of print making medium, he knows intaglio print making, lithography and relief print making. But his technological interest often has overshadowed thematic, subject wise and aesthetic interest, occasionally overshadowed those areas.

There were a younger people like Dilip Tamuly quote. Dilip Tamuly is basically very romantic and emotional kind. But then that leaves an impression of that personality on his work and it is what he is in kept...
his personal imprint whatever print making he has done it reminds natural, almost expressionistic launch on his works.

Noni Borpujari, is technically proficient as well as from the initial step he had try to develop an individual identity. He can be regarded as a very original print maker in that sense. Although Noni knows all most impression taking processes as relief, intaglio and synonym-metric method of print making, but he always has a special interest in intaglio processes mainly etching and even dry point. He really flourishes when he does intaglio process.

Q.4 In terms of works of Ajit Seal, he uses myth kind of thematic images from early Vaishnavite tradition of Assam. How you define the context regarding works of Ajit Seal?

A. This is a very interesting thing. Modern Indian art had always tried to negotiate with tradition of some way or other. That means whatever elements which could be preserved and carried forward to many modern Indian artists do that. Ajit Seal also has that kind of tendency to appropriate some elements especially some formal elements, some compositional elements, some image formation element from the tradition, Assamese tradition of painting. Assamese tradition is rich tradition of Satriya folk relief work especially, and also manuscript painting.

Q.5 But Dilip Tamuly’s work echoes animistic northeast especially wood-carving tradition of Arunachal Pradesh.
A. Dilip Tamuly does not very consciously pick up whatever he sees, it’s totally in memory and it comes out. There is no intellectual process involved in use of linguistic element from tradition.

Q.6 Once Dilip Tamuly comments that he works against lyrical of Bengal School.
A. That is whatever appeals to him he faces, he picks and uses.

Q.7 And also some caricature element in works of Noni Borpujari as Scarecrow series, Bondage series, wounded face of a woman along with some social consciousness.
A. Noni Borpujari has some kind of social comment oven in his work.

Q.8 What is your impression on new generation of Print makers in Assam of coming days?
A. Listen, I haven’t seen much, so I really complements, occasionally seen some works of few artists. For instance Bula Chakraborty’s work, whatever I have seen where the things she did when she was as student or as just passed on. Now to comment on print maker or an artist, just basing on student days work it really will be too much. I really plead my ignorance. I have seen, but I have formed much of an opinion.

Q.9 How you can you define Impression Art?
A. Any print making medium operates in all two different areas; one is matrix making (how we can make the plate) and another is impression
taking. And in both the areas need equal attention to make your print stand up. Three print makers you have chosen is wonderful. Ajit Seal, Dilip Tamuly and Noni Borpujari definitely merit quite a lot, and peculiarly all these three print makers own characteristics features, although they don't have shared much. Therefore your charge is Ok.