IS PRINTMAKING A NEGLLECTED ART FORM IN PAKISTAN

CASE STUDY: MEHER AFROZ

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List of Abbreviations

- IVSAA refers to Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.
- NCA refers to National College of Arts, Lahore.
- KU refers to Karachi University, Karachi.
- MOMA refers to Metropolitan Museum of Arts.
Abstract

Supremacy of other mediums, like painting, sculpture or photography, over printmaking cannot be denied in Pakistan. Printmaking has always been considered a struggling medium, although the history of Printmaking in this region is older than the history of Pakistan itself. The first department of printmaking was introduced in 1940, in Punjab University. Since then, many Art schools have set up printmaking departments and many artists have tried to make printmaking a medium of self-expression. Although we have more printmaking studios today than ever before, but very few printmakers are coming out of these institutions. In the past, Printmaking has not only been neglected in Pakistan but in other countries as well. This dissertation aims to look, briefly, into the history of printmaking all around the world in the past centuries during different art movements. The history of printmaking in Pakistan and the problems faced by printmakers are also analyzed to understand the reason of the slow progress of printmaking in Pakistan. Case study conducted on the artist Meher Afroz, was useful in understanding the struggle of a printmaker in Pakistan.
Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to look into the brief history of printmaking in Pakistan and find out whether printmaking has been neglected as a medium in Pakistan. This analysis is based on the observation of the printmaking departments of three major art institutions of the country: National College of Arts (NCA), Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVSAA), and Karachi University (KU). A case study on the artist Meher Afroz, the senior most printmaker of Pakistan is also carried out. This study was conducted to analyze the journey of a printmaker in Pakistan and the problems she faced in trying to make her mark as a printmaker in the country.

Before analyzing the trend of printmaking in Pakistan, it was important to review the literature written about the history of Printmaking and how this medium has played a role in the art movements, in different centuries. The first chapter of the dissertation provides a review of the literature written on historical background and value of printmaking medium around the world and in Pakistan.

Chapter 2 provides the details of the methodologies used to conduct research for this dissertation. It has information about both the data gathering methodologies and the data analysis methodologies used in this dissertation. It includes the names of the artists interviewed and information about the discussions, which took place with them. It also has the information about the content analysis, which was conducted.
The next chapter contains the graphs of the trends of the printmakers who graduated from NCA, IVSAA, and KU. This chapter provides the information that was collected from the different universities in a visual format, so as to allow a clearer understanding of the trends that have been evident in the past six years.

Chapter 4 is divided into four parts. The first part of this chapter talks about a brief history of printmaking around the world and role of printmaking as an art form, in different centuries. The second part focuses on the history of printmaking in Pakistan and the difficulties this medium has faced since its birth in Pakistan. The next part of this chapter revolves around the case study done on the artist Meher Afroz, primarily to understand how the artist has struggled to make her mark as a printmaker, in Pakistan. This part will also discuss some of her work both as a printmaker and as a painter. The Final part of this chapter will talk about the situation of printmaking in Pakistan. This part also includes the discussion, which took place with the artists who have worked with this medium and their points of view about the growth of this medium in Pakistan. It will also discuss the interest of students in this medium and the condition of the printmaking studios in the institutions mentioned above. This part will help to analyze the future of printmaking in the country.

This dissertation concludes by providing suggestions for the improvement of the printmaking medium in Pakistan, including suggestions from the artists who want this medium to have the same importance as the other mediums in Pakistan and for the development and improvement of printmaking in Pakistan.
Chapter 1

Literature review

The literature review has some of the work written about the problems printmaking medium has faced around the world, these works will outline the context of this dissertation. I will begin with the work of David Landau in 1983.

David Landau (Landau 1983) talks about the idea of a print being ‘original’ or a ‘reproduction’. He talks about the idea of a print being produced after something; hence, it is a reproduction of another artwork. He talks about the early days where prints were always considered a medium to reproduce drawings. Landau’s argument is based on the views of Giorgio Vasari. He discusses how Vasari’s views are important in shaping the ideas of many art historians and artists. Vasari gave importance to painting and sculpture over other mediums of art. Landau outlines that throughout Vasari’s ‘Lives’, he did not give much importance to prints or woodcuts.\(^1\) He mentions that whenever Vasari talked about printmaking he mentioned how the artists used this medium to reproduce their work of art. Landau mentions that Vasari in his writings had talked about many artists who, on the insistence of public, had commissioned people to reproduce their paintings into prints but it turned out to be so unsuccessful that they never tried it again. Landau argues that throughout Vasari’s ‘Lives’ prints were made in connection to the drawings and did not have their own standing in Vasari’s eyes.

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\(^1\) Vasari used his knowledge about the Lives of the most eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects, and combined it in a book form.
According to Vasari, either artists provided their drawings to the engraver or their drawings were so praised that they wanted to get them reproduced as prints. Landau further speaks about the low quality prints being produced in Vasari’s time, which could be the reason of his negativity towards this medium. However, Landau shows his disappointment with art historians who fail to acknowledge the efforts of Rembrandt, Tiepolo, Goya, Picasso, Monet and Munch.

Timothy Van Laar (Van Laar 1980) discusses the concept of editions related to prints. In his paper, he speaks of the increased activity in this medium from 1960. He explains the effect of mass-production, of one piece of art, on the value of that piece of artwork. Van Laar, in his work, mentions the views of Carl Zigrosser that "the miracle of the process is that there are not one but many originals - the incarnation of the democratic ideal". Van Laar further speaks about how more people can own an original print as compared to an artwork, which has only one original. It is also argued in this paper that due to many editions of one print the cost of a print decreases, thus it can be said that because of editions, the monetary value of print decreases.

Van Laar, further talks about the qualities of a print, which are unique from other form of arts. Although, one print has many ‘copies’ but still the texture, line quality and values which can be achieved through engraving or lithography, cannot be achieved through any other medium. He argues about the importance of editions in a medium of printmaking. According to Van Laar, each
print is an integral part of the artwork. He calls it a ‘miracle’ how one image can be viewed in different locations at the same time.

Eileen Gray (MoMA 1980) talks about the works of the artists, in the medium of printmaking, in the last two decades. He starts by describing the work of conceptualists, minimalists and photo realists in engravings and etchings. Gray discusses a book written by Riva Castleman, which answers the questions emerged about printmaking from 1960-80. Gray brings Castleman’s idea forward that after World War II, lithography and woodcut have become preferred mediums for artists, because these processes do not involve a lot of technical knowledge and is relatively easier to work with. In Europe, there were still master lithographers and technical facilities but in America, commercial printing had replaced the hand lithography and very few printers had actually survived until 1980. According to Castleman, ‘If the fifties were a period of discovery, the sixties were one of explosive development’. Because of the pop art movement, the idea of silkscreen on canvases and on different artwork had become very common. Artists in 1960-70 had started solving many of their compositional problems using printing techniques. In Castleman’s views, artists had started believing in the physicality of art pieces and combining different mediums to create one art piece.

Jill Nun (Nun 1986) in his work has highlighted some problems faced by the printmakers and prints, as compared to other mediums. Nun at the start of his work mentions that he wants to understand why printmaking, which has been taught in every college and university of visual studies, has very less importance in comparison to other mediums. According to Nun, the work of printmakers is considered inferior to the works
of sculptors, painters and photographers. He asks why artists have to establish themselves in other disciplines in order to work with the printmaking medium. He gives the reason that probably in the past no major artist was a ‘pure printmaker’ probably that is why printmakers are still considered as ‘minor classes’.

Next, Jill Nun talks about the problems which, in his opinion, printmakers are facing and which decrease the demand of this medium. First problem, in his opinion, is that printmakers have to work with a limited size. Nun mentions that printmakers cannot work with a bigger scale because press and paper do not come in a big size but painters have the opportunity to go as big as they want to. This problem limits the possibilities of a printmaker. The second problem, which he mentions in his paper, is the physical existence of paint and mark on a canvas. Nun argues that while viewers can see the layering on the canvas and stroke of a brush, they do not understand and see the layers in a print. Third problem, which Nun talks about, took place in 1960-70’s; which was giving importance to the subject matter rather than to the technique. Subject matter was given importance in painting and sculpture more than the technique while for printmakers technique was always a priority. Printmaking, in Nun’s opinion, became unusable when younger artists could not express their concerns through the medium of printmaking, because of many technical details. Nun argues that although printmaking started vanishing at one point it never went away completely. In his opinion, work done in printmaking departments, in institutions, was weaker than it was produced in other fine art department. He mentions the views of Anthony Davies, who thinks that situation of printmaking is bad in Britain and Ireland but it is certainly improving in Japan and USA, and it is because of the international biennales-taking place. Nun blames the educational system in Britain and Ireland and he thinks it is because of the poor printmaking departments in the institutions that this medium is not progressing in these countries.


Chapter 2

Methodology

Data gathering methodologies, which were used for this dissertation, include questionnaires, interviews and observations.

To know how many printmakers have come out from the printmaking departments of these three institutions, in the past six years, administrative data was collected from NCA, IVSAA and KU. Karachi University does not have a system of students taking major or minor, in their thesis students can work in any medium they want to work with.

I faced several problems in order to collect this data. I could not contact the administration department of NCA despite many attempts. I mailed Afshar Malik, who is a senior faculty member in printmaking department of NCA, but he did not reply to the mails. Information was then collected from the alumni of NCA, Rabeya Jalil and Hajra Haider.

KU did not have computerized data. Mohammad Shoaib, who works in the administrative department of the visual studies in KU, had the enrollment information in his register but mostly, he relied on his memory about students who drop out from the institute and the number of students graduates every year.

It was relatively easier to collect data from IVSAA but they did not have the complete data either. Missing data was collected from head of printmaking department of IVSAA, Usman Ghouri.
I had originally wanted to collect the past ten year’s data but due to the problems mentioned above I could only collect data of past six years.

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted of the students from National College of Arts, Indus Valley School of Arts and Architecture and Karachi University. These interviews were aimed at collecting information about the printmaking departments from the students and to learn about the problems they face while working in their respective printmaking studios, to ascertain if these problems could be one of the reasons of slow progress in the printmaking medium in Pakistan. They were also conducted to get their point of view about the future of printmaking in the country. Interviews were also conducted from young printmakers, who had recently graduated, and they were asked about what problems they faced as printmakers in Pakistan.

A semi structured interview was also conducted of the artist Meher Afroz who served as a case study of a successful Pakistani printmaker. This interview was conducted to chronicle her journey as a printmaker in Pakistan, the problems she faced in building her own studio and her view of the future of printmaking in the country. She was also asked about the ways in which she thinks artists can contribute towards the development of this medium. Articles and criticisms written about the work of Meher Afroz were also analyzed in order to know about her work, her experience and her journey.

Group discussions were conducted with the following: Usman Ghouri, Head of printmaking department at IVSAA, Rabeya Shoaib, faculty member at IVSAA, Meher Afroz, faculty member at IVSAA, Muhammad Ali Khan, Faculty
member at IVSAA, also took place. They discussed the problems the medium of printmaking is facing today in Pakistan and how printmaking is still behind other mediums in Pakistan. They suggested ways in which artists can contribute to the development of these mediums. From an educator’s point of view, they also discussed the reasons why students are not continuing with this medium after graduation.

Observational studies were conducted to analyze the condition of the printmaking studios in these academic institutions. It also helped to understand the circumstances in which students are working and the facilities that are available in the academic institutions.

Questionnaires were given out to the students to know their problems in printmaking studios and how they think these problems will be solved. These questionnaires also asked for their suggestions, which can be helpful to improve the situation of this medium.

It was important to analyze the content written about the history of printmaking around the world and in Pakistan, in order to understand the situation and problems of the medium. Texts about the role of printmaking in different art movements were also studied. It was important to understand the method of editions (many originals) in printmaking and why other artists believe that this is a technique, which is used for the reproduction of another work (for example; drawing or painting) rather than an original piece of artwork. Texts which include the debate about the originality and reproduction of a print were also studied. Findings of this methodology will be discussed in the following chapters.
Chapter 3

Findings

The graph below shows the trend of the students graduating as printmakers from fine arts department of NCA and IVSAA in past six years.

![Graph showing student graduation trends](image)

Table 1: graph represents students graduating from printmaking departments of NCA and IVSAA

Y- Axis of the multiple bar chart represents the number of students graduating from printmaking department from IVSAA and NCA while, X- Axis represents the year in which they are graduating. In 2004, 2005 and 2009, none of the students graduated from the printmaking department of IVSAA. In the past six years, the maximum number of students graduating from department of printmaking of NCA was nine, which was in 2008; otherwise, the average number of students graduating as printmakers from NCA is five. For example, In 2005
there were thirty five students in Fine Arts department at NCA but only seven students chose printmaking as their major, while in IVSAA there were eight students in Fine Arts department but none of them chose printmaking as their majors.

As visual studies department of KU does not have the system of students specializing in one department, printmakers graduating from their department cannot be identified. Following chapter has further information about the printmaking departments of these institutions and more discussion on this graph as well.
Chapter 4

Discussion

‘Prints are designs, multiplied by pressing blank paper against some kind of a prepared
surface. A print is a work of art of which there are many originals’

(Mayor, 1964)

Brief history of printmaking around the world:

Stone rubbings and woodcuts were the initial techniques, which were
invented in China, after the invention of paper around A.D. 105. Chinese scholars
used this process to keep a record of their script ions.² Although the initial works
in woodcut and stone rubbings indicate almost no artistic sensitivities, they were
important in the development of printmaking in later centuries (Mayor 1964).

Towards the end of 15³ century A.D., a text called ‘Painting Manual of
Mustard Seed Garden’, was produced in China, this was actually the
encyclopedia of painting, to provide instructions to the artist and give them
inspiration. This manual gave inspiration to many Eastern as well as European
artists. It not only provided instructions to painters but to printmakers as well.
Many Japanese artists learned the technique of woodcut from this manual.

In the late 15³ century A.D, Europe saw the birth of the most skillful and
brilliant printmaker, Albrecht Durer. He was a trained goldsmith and got his
recognition as the first great graphic master and an extra ordinary illustrator. He

² Script ion: Rare handwriting, especially a particular style of handwriting such as that of a particular
person or period.
gained his recognition for his detailed wood engravings. His observational skills and devotion to the medium is greatly admired. His work played a very important role in the development of printmaking medium (Jacob 2000).

In the 17th century A.D., a style known as *Ukiyo-e-prints* [pictures of the floating world] emerged. Vibrant colors, compositions with flat shapes and good design sensibilities became the characteristics of *Ukiyo-e-prints* (Lane 1978). This style gave rise to figurative compositions in Japanese art, but in the 19th century, the emphasis on figurative compositions shifted to landscape imagery.

Hokusai and Hiroshige were artists who made their mark in landscape imagery. In 1856, Hokusai’s prints created enthusiasm in Paris and influenced many upcoming artists. His work had a significant influence on many modern artists of Europe. His influence can largely be seen in the work of Edger Degas for example his lithographic representation of women bathing and dressing (Lane 1978).

In the 18th century A.D., Paris became the artistic centre of Europe. Artists from England were still not very comfortable with the medium of printmaking and started reproducing the images of engravings. In this century, Italian artists also began to flourish in the medium of printmaking. Givovanni Battista Tiepolo, Antonio Canale and Givovanni Battista Piranshi got recognition because of their delicate line and detail work (MN artists 2010). Piranshi produced very interesting and complicated architectural compositions and created thousands of prints. His work played a major role in the progress of printmaking all around the world, and gave a perspective to the delicacy of the printmaking medium.
European printmakers played an important role in 20th century art movements as well.³ Artists Henry Matisse, Ambroise Vollard, and Pablo Picasso contributed a lot of work in this century (MOMA 1980). Artists, not necessarily printmakers, produced a lot of good work as printmakers in this century. The work of Marc Chagall is also prominent as a printmaker in this century. After World War II, European and American artists made huge discoveries in this medium. Use of silkscreen in the work of artist became a common feature. Andy Warhol’s use of screen-printing on his canvases is very prominent; many other European artists followed his footsteps and incorporated screen-printing in their works.⁴

The past and the present of printmaking in Pakistan:

History of printmaking in Pakistan is quite brief. Printmaking is still a struggling medium in the country but is making an effort to be accepted in Pakistani art market and gain its rightful place.

Printmaking as a taught medium started in Lahore. Lahore art schools are the oldest institutes of their kind in Lahore. The first department of printmaking was established at Punjab University in 1940, with the efforts of the artist, Anna Molka Ahmed. Initial techniques, which were taught in the department, were lithography and screen-printing. In 1964, Punjab University had its first intaglio press, which helped the upcoming artists to experiment with the intaglio technique and explore new processes (Khan, Printmaking Today).

³ See Note 1
⁴ See Note 2.
National College of Arts is the oldest art institution of the country. Its Department of Printmaking began in 1950’s (Khan, Printmaking Today). This department played a major role in the development of printmaking as a medium in the country. The department was established by Ustaad Lateef, and expanded with the efforts of the artist Nazish Atta Ullah, Afshar Malik and Anwar Saeed, in 1985. Techniques which were initially introduced were lithography, screen-printing, photo etching and relief printing. In 1985, however after seeing the interest of the artists in printmaking, a Brand Press was donated by the American Cultural Center (Khan, Printmaking Today).

Karachi has also played its role in the growth of this medium. The City has two major institutions, Karachi University and Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. The printmaking departments of these institutions try to provide their students with the best facilities and help them learn the techniques. Workshops by international artists have also taken place in these institutions, occasionally. Meher Afroz, Pakistan’s senior most printmaker teaches at IVSAA and her printmaking studio is also in Karachi. There are around ten intaglio presses in Karachi, five of which are in private studios (Khan, Printmaking Today).

Influence of the West, through the workshops, by international artists, has played an important role in increasing printmaking activities in the country. The First workshop was help in 1967 by the American Michael Pounce-Le-Leon. It created great interest among artists like Bashir Mirza, Saeed Akhtar, Shahid Sajjad and Ahmed Khan. In 1986, Bartolomeu conducted another workshop,
which was followed with the workshop by the artist Peter Daglish Re (Khan, Printmaking Today). These workshops still play an important role; in 2010 artists Damon Kowarsky and Michael Kempson conducted workshops in Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, which brought together many artists who wanted to work with this medium but did not have an opportunity and facilities to work with it. Not only did the students of IVSAA participate in this workshop but students from other universities were also invited to attend.\footnote{I attended this workshop in February 2010. For details see Note 3.}

Artists of Karachi have also played an important role in organizing printmaking exhibitions, in the past two years. The most important exhibition was organized by IVSAA gallery in 2009; it was a Box Print exhibition, and was named ‘Different Drummers’. Usman Ghouri, Head of Printmaking Department of IVSAA, curated the show. Artists, not only printmakers, were invited to work with the medium of printmaking. Painters, miniaturists, digital media artists, printmakers, all got together to make this exhibition happen.\footnote{I attended and helped IVSAA gallery during this exhibition.} This exhibition played an important role in the development of printmaking medium in Pakistan. VM gallery, in Karachi, exhibited printmaker Michael Kempson’s work, in 2010, which showed the artists of Karachi how the international artists are progressing in this medium.\footnote{Attended this Exhibition at VM Art gallery.}

**Case study on Meher Afroz:**

Meher Afroz is a senior artist of Pakistan. She has participated in many national and international exhibitions and has won many awards. She is one of the
artists of Pakistan who has worked with the printmaking medium for the longest time and has struggled to set up her own printmaking studio.

Meher Afroz graduated, with Honors, from Government College of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow, India; 1970. She migrated to Pakistan in 1971, with her family, and tried to become a part of Pakistani art world. In 1973, Afroz’s prints made their first appearance in All Pakistan National Exhibition. She surprised the art world with the maturity and sophistication of her work. However, she faced problems in being accepted because of the medium she was working with; Printmaking. Only a few painters like Zahoor ul Iklaq, Naz Ikram ullah and Ahmed Khan, had worked with printmaking before, other artists mostly neglected printmaking as a visual form of expression (Hashmi 1984). Despite the problems, she had to face because of the lack of technical facilities her dedication to the medium helped her make a mark as a printmaker in the Pakistani art world.

Afroz started working as a printmaker when there were almost no technical facilities available to the printmakers in Karachi. After her unsuccessful initial efforts to set up her own printmaking studio, she joined Central Institution of Arts and Crafts. She started using the techniques of block printing, screen printing, stenciling and tie dyeing, in her work. She used printmaking techniques on fabric and created unique table covers, wall hangings and bed covers (Zaman 1980). In 1974, she had her first solo exhibition at Karachi Arts Council, in which she invited the artist Naheed Azfar just because Azfar owned a press but did not have the technical knowledge to use it. After seeing Afroz’s keen interest in printmaking, Azfar invited her to use her press. Afroz saw the opportunity and
produced a lot of work in Naheed Azfar’s studio (Van Der Merwe 1992). She also conducted many workshops and taught many artists about the technicalities of printmaking medium.

The critics always appreciated Meher Afroz’s work and her exhibitions were always satisfactory for art lovers. She always had a remarkable talent to achieve a textural effect and her etchings always reminded the viewer of the rich cultural background she has come from. Since the beginning, her etchings were never considered amateurish or ordinary. When she first came to Pakistan, she was surprised at how everybody could hold his or her solo exhibition without having any talent or skills, while in India, she says, it was considerably difficult to hold a solo show unless an artist proves himself or herself in several group shows (Jami, 1974).

After working with the techniques of printmaking for almost two decades and making her mark as a leading printmaker of Pakistan, Afroz brought her design sensibilities and technical understanding on paper, in the form of pencil drawings. According to Afroz, she wanted to feel the direct creation and thus she started working in graphite, she became fascinated with free-flowing style and monotony of tones (Mirror 1986). In 1987, Afroz displayed a collection of prints and acrylic paintings at Chowkandi Art Gallery. Her paintings are as rich in texture as her prints. Her paintings were as successful as her prints. However, after this exhibition, for three years, she worked only on the paintings and displayed them in 1990. Her paintings had the same design sensibilities as her
prints (Ali 1990). Since then her focus has been not only on printmaking but also on painting as well.

She helped set up the printmaking department in IVSAA, and became a faculty of drawing in IVSAA. She is, until date, part of the IVSAA faculty. Meher Afroz has displayed in many painting exhibitions and won many awards as a painter, but due to her initial success as a printmaker, she is still recognized as Pakistan’s senior most printmaker.

Meher Afroz is concerned about the future of printmaking in Pakistan. According to her, the technical facilities have improved, but demand is also increasing. She says that young students come to me and ask about this medium but due to a lack of facilities, they back out. In Karachi, IVSAA’s printmaking department has maximum facilities but they cannot accommodate everyone. Printmaking requires a lot of dedication and time, artists have to spend their whole lives learning printmaking techniques, but this kind of dedication is lacking in Pakistani artists. When asked about why she thinks there are more printmakers in India and Bangladesh as compared to Pakistan, she said there artists are very dedicated and senior artists truly help youngsters to come up and create opportunities for them. Art in Bangladesh has struggled a lot but they have Biennials every year, there artists have more opportunities. Indian government has a good collection of their artists’ works, as compared to Pakistan. Efforts from our government are minimal. There is no funding from the government and therefore, mediums like printmaking, which requires a lot of funding, suffer.
How can we rectify this situation? In answer to this question she says, established artists need to make serious efforts. Artists who are interested in this medium and want to work with it should make efforts and make things happen for themselves and for others. We need many workshops, they are not only important for the learning but also when artists get together they discuss new ideas, which can be helpful for the development of Art, generally.  

Problems faced by Printmaking in Pakistan:

Although some artists are taking interest in trying to improve the condition of this medium, these efforts are minimal. It is often said that printmaking is still a very new medium in Pakistan but we cannot deny the fact that printmaking department was established in Punjab University in 1940, and relief printing was introduced in 1964. NCA established a printmaking department in 1950’s (Khan, Printmaking Today). My argument over here is that we cannot say that printmaking is a new medium in Pakistan because its history in this region is older than Pakistan’s.

According to the Meher Afroz, this situation is very depressing. Nobody wants to make an effort and people who are making efforts do not have enough facilities and opportunities. Usman Ghouri differs this; in his opinion if somebody is interested in improving the medium and work with it then he can create opportunities for himself and for others as well. He gives the example of an Australian artist Damon Kowarsky, who works in the community press in Australia. While Kowarsky was conducting a workshop in IVSAA, he mentioned

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8 Semi-structured Interview conducted from Meher Afroz, Friday 7th May 2010. See Appendix 3 for details.
that in Australia, there are small community presses because artists cannot afford an individual press. Artists work on their plates at homes and for printing purposes, they come to these presses and do their printing. This way they can interact with other printmakers as well and work as a group. Ghouri argues that if facilities are expensive in Pakistan why don’t four or five artists get together, buy a press, and work as a group. In his opinion, nobody wants to take an initiative; they rely on others to take initiative for them. He gives the example of the Box print exhibition which he conducted in 2009. He says that when I asked artists to contribute in it they did, otherwise they themselves did not make any effort to initiate any printmaking activities.9

Printmaking medium is very rich with technical information. Without full understanding of technical information about this medium, an artist cannot become a complete printmaker. Usman Ghouri agrees with this point and says that in Pakistan, artists do not attach printmaking medium to their lives. He says that it takes a whole life of an artist to understand this medium and become technically sound in it. He gives the example of David B. Smith, a Hawaii-born printmaker who was invited to participate in the box print exhibition ‘Different Drummers’, he says that his print was very technically sound as he had spent all the time since he graduated to understand the technical details of this medium and practice them.10 It is the case with master printmakers as well, like Durer and Rembrandt, they spent their whole lives with this medium and then they were

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9 Group discussion took place in Printmaking department of IVSAA on 7th May 2010. See Appendix 2 for details.
10 Group discussion, 7th May 2010. Appendix 2
called masters of it. One cannot just participate in one or two printmaking exhibitions and become printmakers.\textsuperscript{11}

Rabeya Shoaib, faculty member at IVSAA, says that printmaking is an interesting medium to work but you cannot continue with it unless you are very passionate about it. It requires a lot of physical labor and time. Printmaking processes are very lengthy and requires artists to be completely dedicated to them. Mohammad Ali Khan, who teaches in the graphic design department in IVSAA, says who would want to continue with these lengthy and time-consuming processes when they can do digital printing at a much faster rate and according to him even digital printing is considered a process of printmaking.\textsuperscript{12}

The students highlighted similar problems, when they were asked to discuss the issues related to this medium. The most common problem, which was highlighted by the young printmakers, was that they could not continue working with this medium after graduation due to the expensive nature of this medium. Printmaking needs a proper studio with good ventilation system and the relief press is very expensive, even the plates, offset inks, rollers and good paper cost a lot.\textsuperscript{13}

Department of printmaking in KU was established in 1999, with very few facilities; however its condition, even after ten years of its establishment, has still not improved. Noor-us-Sabah, a fourth year student in KU visual studies department, complained that there are no proper facilities in their printmaking

\textsuperscript{11} Group discussion, 7\textsuperscript{th} May 2010. Appendix 2
\textsuperscript{12} Group discussion, 7\textsuperscript{th} May 2010. Appendix 2
\textsuperscript{13} Group discussions with IVSAA fine arts students and KU fine arts students. Appendix 4
They have a small room with no proper system of ventilation and there is only one press. It gets difficult to work when many students want to print their plates. While working with acids and chemicals it is very important to have a proper system of ventilation. They do not have a different acid room and printing room, which make things more dangerous when many students are working in that area at the same time.

Compared to IVSAA, has a much bigger printmaking studio with proper facilities but unfortunately, very few students take this medium as their way of expression. For the last six years, not more than three students have taken printmaking as their major from Fine Arts department of IVSAA. When students from fine arts department at IVSAA were asked about their issues related to this medium they all had one common issue, they cannot continue working with this medium after graduation because they cannot afford the press. They also said that because there is less awareness about this medium to the students and parents, even if students want to take up the medium they are discouraged by their parents. Technical details and lengthy processes also decrease the number of students taking up this medium. Students also agree that market demand for prints is less than that for miniature painting, painting or photography.

NCA has a much older printmaking department than KU or IVSAA, it has comparatively more facilities, primarily because it is a government institution and

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14 Semi-structured interview conducted from the student at KU, in February 2010. Appendix 4
15 Observational study of KU’s printmaking studio, in February 2010.
16 Analyzed the bar chart (table 1) page 18.
17 Survey through questionnaire, was conducted in March 2010. Appendix 1
it gets funding from government as well.\textsuperscript{18} However, NCA has a much stronger miniature department than printmaking studio and due to the rich tradition of miniature in Lahore more miniaturists come out from NCA as compared to printmakers. In addition, the demand of miniature is also growing these days.\textsuperscript{19} Pakistani buyers would rather buy miniature paintings than prints. Meher Afroz agrees with this and says it is also because of the element of reproduction in Printmaking medium.\textsuperscript{20} Because of the editions of prints, it has more than one original and many people can own one image. Although printmakers coming out of NCA are more in number than IVSAA or KU, rarely any of them continue with this medium after graduation. Hajra Haider, a recent graduate from the printmaking department of NCA says it is because we, young printmakers, do not know where to go for printing our plates. Unless young printmakers start teaching at some institution in their printmaking department, they do not have facilities to continue their work as printmakers.\textsuperscript{21}

In my opinion, the situation is very disappointing, and needs a lot of attention from the established artists and institutions.

\textsuperscript{18} Visited Printmaking department of NCA in 2008 and analyzed their printmaking department and facilities provided to their students.

\textsuperscript{20} Semi-structured Interview was conducted from Meher Afroz, \textsuperscript{7}th May 2010. Appendix 3

\textsuperscript{21} Semi-structured Interview was conducted from Hajra Haider in February 2010.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

After looking into the history of printmaking in Pakistan, I have reached to a conclusion that although printmaking is developing in Pakistan, but the progress is very slow. Since printmaking was started as a taught medium in Pakistan, this medium has faced many problems. The biggest problem printmaking has faced in Pakistan is the lack of awareness about this medium to the art world and artists. Mostly this medium has gained recognition, among the artists, by the workshops conducted by the international artists and because this trend started very late, around 1980’s, this medium was neglected for a long time. Another problem attached to this medium is the expensive nature of it. Artists in Pakistan need a lot of finance to carry forward with this medium after graduating in it. Not only artists, but art institutions also need a lot of funding to improve printmaking departments of their institutions. Printmaking requires a lot of time and dedication from the artists due to the extensive and lengthy technical processes, in my opinion, this is also one of the reasons that very few students take printmaking and continue working with it.

The situation of printmaking can be improved by giving awareness to the public about this medium. This can be done by introducing printmaking medium to the art students at high school level. This will increase their knowledge about this medium and they will be more aware of it while choosing their majors at under graduate level. Summer workshops should also be conducted in Art
institutions where printmaking processes should be taught in detail. As printmaking is not only important for fine artists but also for design students, mandatory courses should be given to them in art institutions. They can only enjoy this medium once they have worked with it and experience it. Exhibitions and print collections of the artists should be displayed more often. Box print exhibition at IVSAA was successful; we need more of this kind of exhibition every year.

Established artists, who are well aware about the importance of printmaking medium, need to make serious efforts for the improvement of this medium in Pakistan. Workshops can be given by Pakistani artists as well, who has worked with printmaking medium, and not only by international artists. Artists should get together and try to establish community press, where not only young prinmakers but established artists can go and work with this medium. Public or community press will also provide awareness to the general public and students who are hesitant to work with this medium, because of its expensive nature, will understand that after they graduate in this medium they will have a press and facilities to work with it.

We have seen in this dissertation that although there has been a progress in this medium but this progress is very slow and mostly, Printmaking has been neglected in Pakistan. In Pakistan we have miniaturists like Irfan Hassan, Mehreen Zuberi and Sumaira Tazeen, and sculptors like Shahid Sajjad, Abdul Jabbar Gul and Adeela Suleman but we do not have any printmakers in this country. Other mediums are progressing and at a much faster rate as compared to
printmaking. It is time that printmaking starts getting the same importance as other mediums in Pakistan and should develop at the same rate as other mediums are developing in the country.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire survey conducted from the IVSAA fine arts students of final year. This questionnaire was made while keeping the fact in mind that only I chose printmaking as a major in fine arts department 2010, while other 17 students either chose miniature or painting. Questions from the questionnaire are as follows:

- Why did you not choose printmaking as a medium to express yourself?
  1. not interested
  2. too much work
  3. faculty not very good
  4. no scope for printmakers in Pakistan
  5. Can’t continue this medium after graduation due to technicalities.

- Do you think buyers are less interested in prints as compared to paintings, miniatures, sculptures or photography?
  1. yes
  2. no

- Do you think demand of printmakers is decreasing every year?
  1. yes
  2. no

- Do you think there’s not much awareness about this medium?
  1. yes
2. no

- In your opinion why students are hesitant to take printmaking as a major and why practicing printmakers are less in number as compared to painters or miniaturists?

- What, in your opinion, can universities do to help printmaking?
Appendix 2

Group discussion with artist Usman Ghouri, Rabeya Jalil, Mohammad Ali Khan, faculty members at IVSAA, took place on 7th May 2010. Raw findings of the discussion is mentioned below

- Question: do you think printmaking has been neglected in Pakistan?
  
  All of them agreed to it

- Why do you think printmaking has been neglected?
  
  Usman Ghouri: no basic efforts from the artists. Not enough resources. Printmaking as a medium is not attached to the life of an artist. Artists spend their whole lives in understanding this medium and gaining full knowledge about it. In Pakistan, artists are not ready to make this effort.

- Do you think it is because they do not enjoy working with this medium?
  
  Usman Ghouri: they enjoy it but they do not make efforts to continue working with it. Sculptors and painters continue but printmakers don’t. I made the effort to initiate box print exhibition and invited artists to contribute in it and they did. But they are not willing to make efforts on their own.

- Why do you this is?
Usman Ghouri: printmaking needs a lot of effort and passion. It needs a lot of time and physical attention. Printmakers have to be present both physically and mentally in their studios.

Rabeya Jalil: It is very true. When I was studying I loved working with printmaking medium but because I was married I could not spent enough time in printmaking studio and that’s why I stopped working with this medium. A lot of Physical labor is required for this medium and usually scares the artists.

Mohammad Ali Khan: it is because of the commercial factors as well. Due to the time consuming processes involved with this medium, artists look for other fast approaches like graphic design etc. commercial factors are attached to the slow progress of this medium.

• How can we improve this medium?

Usman Ghouri: serious efforts and interest is required from the artists. Printmaking should be seen as any other medium. Artists should try to take an initiative instead of relying on others.
Appendix 3

Semi-structured interview was conducted from the artist Meher Afroz on Friday 7th May 2010. Details of this interview are as follows:

- Do you think printmaking is a neglected medium in Pakistan?
  Meher Afroz: certainly, Yes.

- Why do you think is has been neglected?
  Meher Afroz: We can say that it is a new medium in Pakistan and it is still struggling in the country. It practically started in NCA because of the efforts of Nazish atta Ullah, but she herself never practiced this medium.

- What other factors contribute to the slow progress of this medium?
  Meher Afroz: over here discipline is not treated as a discipline. Digital printing has taken the place of long and tedious processes of printmaking. Artists cannot carry it out without proper expertise.

- Do you think buyers are not interested in this medium?
  Meher Afroz: well, you can say that they are very interested. Reason is the reproductive nature of this medium. There are many copies of a print which worry the buyers.

- How has this medium improved?
  Meher Afroz: many international artists have started displaying there work in Pakistan. For example recently, Michael Kempson and Michael Esson’s work was displayed in VM art gallery. Both the
artists conducted workshops at IVSAA which was very useful and helpful. Many artists got together and took interest in these workshops.

- Are we progressing like other countries? Like India or Bangladesh?

Meher Afroz: Indian and Bangladeshi printmakers are very strong; these countries conduct Biennials every year. Their government takes a lot of interest and has a good collection of the work of their artists. We also need exhibitions like these if we want to improve the condition of this medium in our country.
Appendix 4

Discussion conducted with final year student, of KU visual studies department, Nur-us Sabah. Details of the discussion are as follows:

- What do you have to say about your printmaking department?

Nur us Sabah: We do not have enough technical facilities in our printmaking studio. There’s only 1 press, small room without proper ventilation, and lack of space. It gets problematic when a lot of students want to work in this small studio. Very few students work with this medium because of the lack of facilities. Administration is working to improve this medium but progress is very slow.
Notes

1 Movement of pop art introduced the use of incorporating and working with silkscreen in the artwork. Conceptual artists also used the print as their basic way of expression. It was also for the reason that they could multiply their images through this medium at a much faster rate.

2 Andy Warhol used screen in all his works: canvases, sculpture, edition printing.

3. I attended this workshop; workshop was conducted by Damon Kowarsky in February 2010. Students from IVSAA, KU, Karachi School of Arts and Arts Council also attended this workshop.