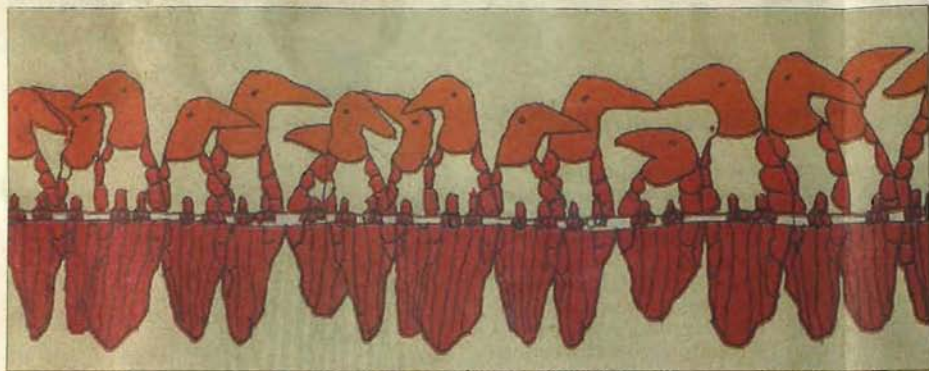


# OUT OF PRINT

An exhibition of 300 works by 100 artists celebrates the genre of printmaking



VANDANA KALRA

IT IS reckoned as one of the most iconic images of the non-violent movement — Mahatma Gandhi walking with his staff, protesting against the British tax on salt. Several reproductions of the Nandalal Bose 1930 linocut have emerged over the years, but now the original is on display. It is aptly exhibited at the entry point of the exhibition “Celebrating Indigenous Printmaking” at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in Delhi.

“This brings out those treasures that have not been savoured for a long time. New Media has, in a way, taken over skilled nuances of the printmaking genre because the kind of experimentation printmaking offers gets neutralised and taken over by the computer, which has accessibility to one and all. It makes the entire possibility of doing a digital print accessible on the one side, but it generalises it on the other,” says director of NGMA Rajeev Lochan, who has led the curatorial team.

The exhibition features over 300 works by over 100 artists. While there are works by veterans Haren Das, Mukul Dey, Ramkinkar Baij and Somnath Hore, there are also dedicated masters of printmaking such as Jyoti Bhatt. Recognition is also given



to Jagmohan Chopra's Group 8 through works of the teacher as well as his students such as Anupam Sud.

If KG Subramanyam places a flower pot near the window pane before his voluptuous protagonist in a lithograph, Jogen Choudhury has his

flower vase full. FN Souza adds colour to flowers in his untitled print on paper. He is not the lone modernist to have experimented with printmaking though. Known as masters of canvas, there are several prints of SH Raza, GR Santosh and MF Husain. A rare work is Raza's 1971 graphic *Bangladesh*, narrating the bloodshed, terror as well as hope. There is a Lochan work too — his 1990 silk screen on paper, *Introspection XXI*, which shows a man gazing into a book, with piles spread across the room and the sun sneaking in through the open door.

The European travellers are given their due in the exhibition, with the likes of Thomas Daniell occupying the walls. But contemporary international printmakers aren't ignored either. So, there is Bulgarian artist Borislav Stoev and German artist Dieter Kraimer and prints created by the American Robert Rauschenberg while in Ahmedabad.

In keeping with the “educational” motive, printmaking tools are showcased in glass cases and varied techniques and history of printmaking are introduced on plaques. It was Bose who first popularised the technique in India, when the young Bengal artist returned from China and Japan in the 1920s with Chinese rubbings and Japanese colour woodcut



prints. They were soon Indianised and went on to become a part of Indian art history.

The exhibition is being held at NGMA, Jaipur House, India Gate. Contact: 23384640

(Clockwise from above) *Dandi March* by Nandalal Bose; *Bangladesh* by SH Raza; *Reves At Reflects no 1* by Sakti Burman; *Birds No 1* by Dhanraj Bhagat