

PRESS NOTE

Galerie 88 presents

Life in Prints: Pinaki Barua

Opening reception on Saturday, 24 November 2018, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Exhibition on view till 29 December 2018

Life in Prints: Pinaki Barua is the first major exhibition of the artist's work. Thirty years of the artist's career is represented in this exhibition with 70 works selected by R. Siva Kumar who has curated this exhibition for Galerie 88.

Pinaki was trained at Santiniketan under Somnath Hore and is one of the finest printmakers of his generation. In his works he carries forward the calibrated technical finesse of his mentor, and exemplifies the high standards of printmaking achieved by artists trained under Somnath Hore at Santiniketan. Pinaki's sensibilities, themes and visual language, however, are very different from his mentor's and his contemporaries. This is reflected in his themes and his visual language.

There are two major thematic focuses in his prints. The first is a subdued dialogue the artist carries on with himself. In these prints he goes over experiences and observations with the visual equivalent of a soft caressing touch. Pinaki is neither loud nor confessional, but reflective and empathetic and so these prints are evocative rather than descriptive or narrative.

His second focus is more social and political. He acquired it after shifting from Santiniketan to Kolkata in the early eighties, and sharpened it through his interactions with fellow members of the Realist group of which he is a founding member. Here too, he is neither loud nor didactic as social and political commentary often tend to become. We might say that his first focus or innate sensibility modulates his social and political responses. It often leads him to soften his righteous anger with ameliorative hope, rather than render it shrill through ideological partisanship.

On the technical side, Pinaki is deeply curious and experiments with different mediums and their possibilities, but his primary medium is etching and he harnesses its full possibilities to add subtlety to his images. He does not merely transcribe an image from paper or mind onto the plate, but builds it up through an elaborate process of plate-making which involves scrapping and reworking, making and erasing, as much as etching and engraving and aquatint. By using them in combination he gives a rare density in his prints.

This process of gradual building-up does not mean conceptual or technical indecision or overt reliance on serendipity; it constitutes a conscious effort at making a deeper impact, it renders the image complex and makes viewing more involved. By building-up he adds multiple nuances to his thoughts or ideas, and encourages the viewers to excavate the image and gain a subtler experience of it.

Besides being a fine printmaker Pinaki is also a sensitive photographer and an involved teacher. He has taught at Rabindra Bharati and Kala Bhavana and has contributed immensely to the mentoring of young printmakers at both these institutions.