

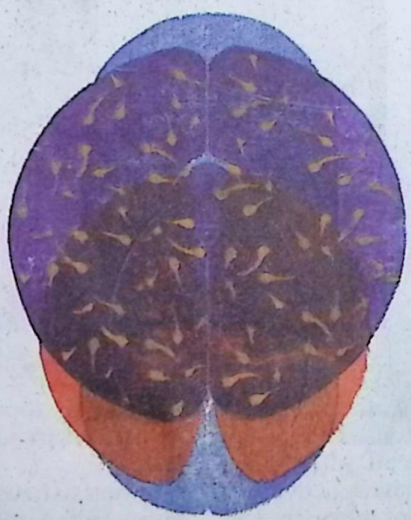
For the Love of Printmaking



FAYZA HAQ

Print making has been the choice of medium for many artists, providing the challenge of carving out images on hard material such as wood or stone, adding colour to create the desired effect on paper. Wakilur Rahman, who was once a student of the painting Department at Dhaka University, is one of the names that keeps coming up when prints are discussed. The precision and sophistication of his work has earned him accolades at home and abroad.

Trained in China Wakil lives in Berlin—but wishes to share his thoughts and imagination with people in his country as well as internationally. In Bonn in 1988, he realised that he wanted to have more activity. It was not enough or easy to have exhibits in Berlin city alone. At that time, says Wakil, the graphic biennale and triennale were very popular. He could roll up his work and send it to other countries.



"In printing you can make as many copies as you like" says Wakil. "One copy I can send to Bangladesh, another to Poland etc. I began graphics as it was something different from what I had already learnt. Secondly, I could distribute the copies at my will. At first I went to the Berlin Art School (Hauchshuler—high school or college). They saw my certificates from Bangladesh and China and said: 'You have nothing new to study'.

That's when he went in for graphics. In China he had seen the tradition of using graphics—even for political propaganda. The Chinese have their traditional water-colour woodcut prints for books and calendar, they use this system informs Wakil.

"In Germany, when I began, I started with lithography. This has a stone on which I work, and then I transfer the drawing into the paper. One has to use a lithography pen, there is Arabic gum then there is the reaction with lithographic ink. Then you wash the drawing. When it is wet you put colour. When this is transferred to the paper, one can make many prints."

"There is also the wood cut – which I proceeded to work on next. Plywood has a flat, easy-to-cut-into surface. You chip away and use colour. Then one gets what one can call "Losing Form": What you add comes in the print. Alography is a form of lithography, which uses an