

**JUXTAPOSITION OF FIGURATIVE AND ABSTRACT:  
A STUDY OF DYNAMICS OF HIMMAT SHAH'S ART**

A

Thesis

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**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis entitled “Juxtaposition of Figurative and Abstract: A Study of Dynamics of Himmat Shah’s Art” has been prepared by me under the guidelines of Dr. Abid Hadi. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree of fellowship previously.

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## **CERTIFICATE**

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## ABSTRACT

The study explores the aesthetic sensibilities of Himmat Shah's art by analyzing the development of his artistic vision in the context of Post-Colonial Indian art. This broadly entails the life, training and major projects undertaken by him. His career span protracted from 1950's till date which has juxtaposed the nuances of all modern as well as contemporary practices. Through the analysis of Himmat Shah's art, this research seeks to explore his development in the context of modernity, materiality and individuality which are the key features of his art practice. A thorough study and interpretation of the body of his art reveals the journey of artistic creativity and aesthetic sensibility in his career.

As per the title, "Juxtaposition of Figurative and Abstract: A Study of Dynamics of Himmat Shah's Art", an attempt has been made to evaluate Himmat Shah's body of works. The term juxtaposition indicates the co-existence of Form, Content and Material within a conceptual framework. The title deals with two distinct characteristics 'Figurative' and 'Abstraction' which the researcher finds employed by Himmat Shah, juxtaposed in his body of artwork. The usages of these two components in Himmat Shah's art have resulted from the discussions in the intellectual circle where social thinkers and artists were still debating on the artistic vocabulary for the contemporary Indian art. Shah's practice conforms to the debates on the Indigenous modernism in the quest of Indian identity. The search of this identity helps him to assimilate and reconstruct his figurative art, from all possible sources.

In 1940's, a movement, led by radicals to negate the late medieval tradition of image making, emerged all over India. In negotiating with the demand of imagery, there were many artists who experimented individually in their own way. The import from the tribal and the folk tradition led by the Madras School was started in the 1950's, they preferred more abstract imagery rather than natural presentation. Himmat Shah, against this backdrop, is also concerned about his own artistic imagery. For him, pre-historic art, free from the confines of modern boundaries is more important. Rather than sticking to one particular place he is trying to evolve a vocabulary which appears more universal than being endemic. In a career spanning about fifty years of experimentation, appears to have helped him in combining

‘Figuration’ and ‘Abstraction’, in a perfect harmony. This is his unique & original contribution to Post-Colonial Indian Art.

This study is an Exploratory Research. A qualitative approach is taken to shed light on the personality and creativity of Himmat Shah. It underlines his contribution in the context of Post-Colonial Indian Art. It elaborates upon how he arrived at this stage through his experimentation and his artistic sensibility. The Descriptive Research Method has been used for the interpretation of data and visuals collected from the various sources. This study has some elements of the Historical Research. Therefore, Case study, sample survey, content analysis, self-report, and self-observational methods have been employed. This study is based on Purposive Sampling Technique for the collection of data as a form of focussed group discussion and Semi-Structured Interview. Fifty-seven art practitioners (art educator, curator, art historian, art consultant, art collectors) have been interviewed/ discussed by the researcher to understand the countless dimension of Himmat Shah’s art activism.

The method of content analysis has been employed to interpret the formal development of Himmat Shah’s body of artwork. For this, the theory of ‘Formulism’, Elements and Principles of Art and Design have been explored to study the nuances of his creation. The content analysis is based on the primary and secondary source of data which was found in the form of visual, textual and audio-visual form, have been utilized to narrate the phenomenon realized by the researcher. The Case Study method has been used to explore Himmat Shah’s artistic practice in the domain of Post-Colonial India to examine the method and procedure he has adopted throughout his career. The Self- Observational Method has also been utilized to interpret the structural and formalistic development driven by Himmat Shah throughout his career.

The objective of this study contains the various aspects of Himmat Shah’s creative process which explores the development of his artistic vision and sensibility to discover the trends of modernity, materiality, individuality and nationalism between 1975’s to 2002. By juxtaposing Indian and Non-Indian trends, he has tried to explore above-mentioned phenomenon, formulating his art methodology employing various methods and materials. The artistic vocabulary of Himmat Shah has developed from the Cubist style after a long struggle, witnessing the debate on Indigenous Modernism. His style evidences now a complete fusion; a harmonious

assimilation of artistic styles and techniques. Himmat Shah has explored the prehistoric elements of art to strengthen his vocabulary expressing human feelings and desires.

In the way of searching an appropriate methodology, Himmat Shah has utilized clay as a major medium to express his artistic prowess. He has picked clay as a material from the earth, as a source for sacred and healing powers. The clay has more than three thousand years of history behind it as an art medium. By employing this material, he has tried to make an association with the ancient Lothal; the port of Harappan Civilization, where he was born. He also tried to take inspiration from the bygone civilizations where clay had an important medium. Lothal had a great tradition of the black and red wares pottery as evidenced by the excavations. Incidentally, Himmat Shah has derived his sculptural language from the pottery tradition. He has experimented with clay by using age-old Slip and Slab techniques. He has explored the possibilities of these techniques to achieve the better result, by mixing different types of clay, chemicals and colours in order to get a good impression at the maximum temperature.

This research is focussed on his terracotta sculptures, especially 'Head Series' done during late 1970's to 2002. At this backdrop, the researcher has diagnosed the artistic exploration done by Himmat Shah. By choosing 'Heads' as a metaphor, he tries to relate himself to a theme which does not need any explanation or introduction. It has a great tradition in the art history. Following the rich tradition of human brotherhood, Himmat Shah has treated his body of art (head series) to address the human race cutting across the regional barriers. The human feelings which are common to all clearly reflect his attitude towards human beings. Through this metaphor, he is trying to convey Indian ageless ethos for common people. His creative sign made in clay and other metaphorical elements, free from the confines of time and space, signified through his transformative discourse talks about the materialism and its relation with human life. He wants to put contemporary Indian art at-par with pre-historical tradition which binds people of different continents into a common interest. The investigator has realized in the process of making different types of heads (sculptures), from one or separate moulds in terracotta. The researcher has come across forty-one head sculptures from 'the Head Series' which is dated and can be differentiated easily. In Himmat Shah's concern, human head and skull are just

as a tool for their strong transformative quintessence. He has repeatedly made head throughout his career, by trying different permutation in styles, techniques and their compositional arrangement. The same kind of result was achieved, his favorite hallmark (taken as a totem). This results in making his art more pronounced and expressive. In this study, the researcher has divided his head series works in three different clusters, total eight head sculptures in his first phase (1975-85), eighteen in his second phase (1985-1995) and fifteen in his late phase (1995-2002). There are as many as forty head sculptures which are not yet dated and they have to be classified within these three groups by studying minutely their features. Making 'Heads' was Himmat's obsession in his last stage that dating lost its meaning to him, they have lost identity and local, they are self-personified, self-centered and self-encumbered.

The individual assertion is one of the vital appearances in Himmat Shah's creation and designates the success of his masterful presentation of heads as a significant form. It appears that personal problems led him to arrive at this stage to get identified as 'Heads', totally ageless and awfully hushed. This was a proper theme, with its stylistic features, for imitation, for alteration or for innovation that suited Himmat's personality and capable to disseminate his internal anger, fears and frustration not only to people coming to his studio but to the generations yet to come. Therefore, this study explored the politics of representation and the strategies of Himmat's artistic interventions as well as the reference of wedding culture to both artistic practice and art historical discourse. The investigator has tried to locate these issues in the body of Himmat's works carefully. The researcher has observed that Himmat Shah also struggled and succeeded in finding a suitable modern Indian artistic vocabulary for which he also went to the western masters. Here, the interest and intention were different. With time and experience, he succeeded in arriving at his individual metaphor to communicate his external and internal content, synthesizing various styles and schools but also influencing the contemporary social milieu and art practice.

Keywords:

Modern Indian Art, Terrocatta Head Sculptures, Formative Art Education, Individualistic Style, Primitivism, Universalism.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
PAG	Progressive Artist Group
LKA	Lalit Kala Akademi
NGMA	National Gallery of Modern Art
KNMA	Kiran Nadar Museum of Art
AIFACS	All India Fine Arts and Craft Society
CEPT	Center for Environmental Planning and Technology

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indian art was caught in a dilemma in developing its identity. It was the time when Indian artisans became helpless and worried about their existence. The Mughals who migrated from Persia and settled down in India during the 16<sup>th</sup> century impacted the political system but British East India Company struck at the soul of the social system of the Indian life. They had broken down the entire framework of Indian society. They introduced a new economic and political structure which suited their socio-political interest. They used Indian sub-continent as a colony of the Great Britain and placed their profound modernism on the Indian heart. This development consolidated their strong-hold over the country and ensured their economic and political benefits.

After the hundred years of the Plessey, India witnessed an emergence of Independence struggle against the East India Company. After the four decades of 1857, India had shown a nationalist revival. All aspects of life and knowledge were affected. Through this colonial discrimination, India at first became united into a political mass. This made the educated Indians to accept the western ideologies to lead and to give a democratic and modern direction to the revolution. It is difficult to gauge the political, social and economic growth which Britain enjoyed in a deprived nation like India. Rather we find economic aphasia, socio-cultural backwardness and confused leadership. Both the nations were linked to each other and were partners in a unified world economy, but the results of these were always completely opposite and contradictory.

In the field of Art, that situation had given a fire to bring the Indian modernity into a radical way. All artist groups in India were linked with radical mass movements. It gave the nation to think about the mass and reflected the ambition of the native people. The involvement of art community in 'Quit India Movement' also rendered an atmosphere to throw the Britishers out of the country. Modern Indian art is a kind of resistance to the Western artistic thinking. A thorough analysis of this art pattern reveals its prime characteristics- the amalgamation of Indian thought process

with the western trends & tendencies. The Modern Indian art differed from its ancient counterpart in many respects.

Here the researcher wants to locate the roots on which modernity developed in India. Art is the reflection of the society and it is mirror of its intellectual reach. Modern Indian art deals about contemporary time and our present aspirations. Taking it as an important phenomenon, the researcher wants to see it in its historicity. How it has been practiced and how is being practiced by Indian artists in our time? Himmat Shah is one of the important figures of our contemporary Art world. By employing a figurative art which was unique for his generation, he has created a niche for himself. For his art he has juxtaposed the figure with abstraction in his art works. Allured by his art, the researcher who himself is an art practitioner finds him experimenting throughout his career. There are several issues yet to be explored. The major thrust of the study is to find from his body of art, how he has mirrored the ambitions of Indian people. Does he communicate the socio-political concern of ordinary people through his art?

Modern Indian art assimilates different materials of art practice. It was evolving new methods and methodologies to get it connected with the international art scene. Initially, the Indian art had faced a severe crisis during colonial rule, which ended with the rise of the Bengal School. Colonial mindset was guiding and controlling our art education and thinking process. The academic naturalism which was introduced by the Britishers, was only serving the objective means, but subjectivity was also necessary for art. The whole narrative format of Indian paintings is basically subjective. It shows a significant influence of religion and different socio-economic practices of Indian people. Western methodology which was followed by the modern artists was also supposed to make changes as per the methods and materials of traditional Indian art.

Among modern Indian art practitioners, Himmat Shah was also influenced by modern western masters like Picasso, Paul Klee, Giacometti, Henry Moore and others. He explored his own method and materials to fabricate his art. The time period of Shah as an artist is stretched from 1953 to till this date. Though his journey started from a village, he got exposed to the various art trends. Himmat Shah is one of those who constructed the sensible diffusion of the

'Great' and the 'Little' in his creation. His works ultimately opened up to an aesthetical, noble and personal individual approach. So what methodology he adopted and what material he picked up, his interest was to explore all possibilities. It is also one of the problems which the researcher wants to take up in this research. While segregating Shah's burnt collage works from his entire works, the researcher observes that Shah generally preferred to use pure material like clay, plaster, wood, metal, ink and color in his creation. Why did he prefer to use only pure materials to articulate his art? In which manner Indian and western master inspired him to deal with his style? These are some striking questions in the researcher's mind.

It has been expressed earlier that Himmat Shah had spent his early childhood in a village called '*Lothal*', a major archeological site of Indus Valley Civilization. So in his work there is a powerful affinity between the tribal icons which have held communities together in this peninsula for centuries. He grew up along with them. These powerful images have persisted in his memory and now appear in the guise of his sculpture. Modern Indian art also gets high energy from primitive images and also reflects regional affiliation through sign-symbol and semiotics. So it will be interesting to investigate the reasons why Himmat Shah and his contemporaries adopted primitivism as important weapons to reflect contemporary expressions.

The researcher has been able to predict the development of art scene in the period spanning between 1960 and 1990. This marks a critical juncture in Indian history, when national identity and ethos of Indian culture is thoroughly searched on one side while on the another side dominance of western taste dictated by the market is explored. So how Himmat Shah's art encountered with the society or art market in his art thinking process is also one of the questions for this research. Himmat Shah, joined others artists to use Indian, Western, primitive, folk and tribal ideals for his formalistic vocabulary. The experimentation was done in the form of an artist's group ('Group 1890') which exhibited art works in only one exhibition in 1963. The question of individualism and regionalism become the core issue of post-independence era. The researcher will investigate and identify these problems in the works of Himmat Shah.



## 1.1 BACKGROUND OF MODERN INDIAN ART

The East India Company gained control of the larger part of India after defeating the reigning Mughal viceroy. In less than a century, the grand English colony was transformed into a political area of underprivileged people of South-East Asia. The significant changes took place in art and culture of this area. The opening of British academic art in India changed all aspects from working practice to the relationship between the artists and their patron/s. (Mittar, 2001) It was not sudden, in the period of Jahangir, the Mughal paintings also got influenced by the British art. One of the paintings titled '*Jahangir Preferring a Sufi sheikh to Kings, c. 1620*', painted by Bichitra shows the presence of the Britishers in the court of Jahangir. In another painting by Keshav Das, '*St. Jerome*', 1580-85 clearly shows the fascination of the Mughal art towards British Academic Naturalism.

After the decline of Mughal Empire, the question of existence became the key issue for artists in India. They migrated to several parts of the country for their survival. It was not only the crisis for bread and butter but the prime question was culture and art practice. A significant difference between the Britishers and the Mughals was that the later accepted India as their motherland while the Britishers never accepted India and Indian culture as their own and always tried to force their culture, language and religion on us - to make the things beneficial for themselves.

The birth of Company Art in mid-18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century in India jeopardized Indian traditional art practice completely. In the form of Company Art, they supported an art form that was lifeless as well as rootless in terms of traditional Indian and existing western tendencies. They implemented it to fulfill their needs for illustrating and documenting the Indian life. Instead of developing the significant elements of Indian art form, the British forcefully put into practice their colonialist biased thinking over it. Their policies transformed this art form as a cultural tool for a nation still unable to negotiate modern ethos of the West. When the poetic essence of Indian art declined, India witnessed a nationalist revolution with Bengal School of Art movement by the end of 19th century.

The reason behind it as per Karl Marx's analysis was not so positive. The profound modernism which was coming through colonial rule in India was

jeopardizing socio-economic system. Marx supplies a useful composite summary of the older sociological analysis; he also provides a convenient starting point for measuring the nature, extent and the rate of change produced by colonial rule in India. "England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitutions yet appearing", previous conquerors had affected no more than political change, but England had struck at the heart of the social system of the Indian village.

In this crucial situation when the Britishers were deconstructing every aspect of Indian life for the sake of developing the market economy of England, a counter reaction was obvious. It was a policy to modernize India by constructing bridges, railways and road highways for their benefits. In this dark side of Indian history, the researcher finds a scenario where socio-cultural domain was doctored by the Britishers by raising a social group trained by them to rule over the conquered subjects. They started to criticize every aspect of Indian society. Indian customs were believed to be outdated, barbaric and un-civilized. Indian institutions were tagged as corrupt and were said to be on the verge of their end, Indian philosophy was called narrow and unscientific.

### **1.1.1 The Rise of Nationalist Art**

A widespread independence movement became visible in the Indian society and showing courage to destroy the hegemonic British rule. The Bengal Art School arose as the avant-garde and nationalist movement reacting against the academic art styles previously promoted in India, both by Indian artists such as Raja Ravi Varma and in arts school opened by the Britishers. (fig.1.1) Following the widespread influence of Indian spiritual ideas in the West, the British art teacher Ernest Benfield Havel attempted to reform the teaching methods at the Calcutta School of Art by encouraging students to imitate Mughal miniatures. This caused immense controversy, leading to a strike by students and complaints from the local press, including from nationalists who considered it to be a retrogressive move. As mentioned by Mago (2011) in his book, he writes, as it's known that in government of East India Company, member of legal matters Thomas Babington Macaulay made Educational Policy with an ambition to destroy Indian traditional values. E. B. Havell who earlier was Superintendent in Government Art School, Calcutta, tried re-

establishing the traditional significance of Indian art. In 1808, in an Indian art related article, he wrote that the behavior of Britishers towards the people of their colonies can be directly compared to Julius Caesar's attitude towards Britishers. He also wrote that Britishers were able to influence educated Indians that they do not have a rich, developed and widely practised traditional heritage but his research found that Indian heritage was vivid and richer than the Britishers' expectations.

Havell was the first Englishman who recognized the concept of symbolism in Indian art and supported Abanindranath Tagore, a nephew of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Abanindranath Tagore painted a lot of works influenced by Mughal art, a style that he and Havel believed to have expressiveness of India's distinct spiritual qualities. In this manner, they opposed the "materialism" of the West propounded by the Britishers. *Bharat Mata* (fig. 1.2) is Abanindranath's best-known painting which depicts a young woman with her four arms holding four objects symbolizes the national aspirations. She is perceptible to a Hindu deity.

The Bengal School Movement was an initiation to safeguard the Indian individuality and to reboot its glory, under the aegis of E. B. Havell, A. K. Commarswamy and Abanindranath Tagore. Not only did the school challenge the British cultural views but also strengthened the corrective religious aspects of nationalist revolution. Abanindranath, the painter, became the creator of a new national vocabulary in art. He helped to renew the old narrative art forms and local art aesthetic values. At the national level, the style and concept of Abanindranath Tagore was promoted by the Indian Society of Oriental Art. In the true sense, Abanindranath was the first who tried to open the door for the modern art movement in Bengal. It was his brush, which first gave convincing proof that the Indian artists have their own contribution to make to the world of painting.

Abanindranath Tagore was born in Jorasanko, Calcutta on 7 August 1871. His first formal training in pastel, water color and life study was under the supervision of his private tutor, Signor Gilhardi. He attended the Studio of Charles Palmer, an English Painter, for instructions in oil paintings and portraiture. In 1895 he painted the '*Krishna-Leela*' series, which displayed a unique blend of both the European and Indian styles. E. B. Havell, Principal, Calcutta School of Art, on seeing these paintings, was impressed and so, offered him the post of Vice-Principal of the School.

Under Havell's guidance, he studied Mughal and Rajput styles of painting thoroughly. In the early years of the century, he met Okakura. Okakura taught composition to him by means of simple shapes such as matchsticks, emphasizing the need for organic unity in art. In 1903 Okakura returned to Japan and sent his scholars Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso to Calcutta where they interacted with Abanindranath Tagore.

Abanindra Tagore was one of the strongest pillars who tried to synthesize the cultural roots of Indian sub-continental. He tried to develop a Pan-Asian cultural perspective and art practice. The aim of A. Tagore and his followers was to target the academic art, which was branded as a colonial hybrid style. They wanted to dismiss academic naturalism and bring the past glories assimilating contemporary situation. His close students included Nandalal Bose, Kalipada Ghoshal, Kshitindranath Majumdar, Surendranath Ganguly, Asit Kumar Haldar, Sarada Ukil, Samarendranath Gupta, Mukul Dey, K. Venkatappa and Ranada Ukil. (Day, 2017) Their ambition was to spread nationalist art fever to all over India through their art works.

The followers of Bengal School Movement were able to generate a discourse/parameters for practicing the art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They created a high moral aesthetics and experimented to grow issues of nationality through their creations. So it is rather a difficult task to minimize the stature of the stalwarts of Bengal School like A. Tagore, Nandlal Bose and, Asit Kumar Haldar highlighting a unique style using one's own specific tradition and belief. Some noteworthy organizations claiming their voices emerged in the early decades of the century were: Young Turks (1937), Calcutta Group (1940), Progressive Artists' Group of Bombay (1948), Delhi Shipli Chakra (1949), Bombay Group (1957) and 'Group 1890' in 1960's. The Avant-grade Art Movement of these groups helped other Indian artists to dream in their own way and establish their own groups across the country. The prime thing which happened within these groups was related with the art style where the individualism made its ascendancy over collectivism. So, maximum art groups became defunct within three or four years. The reason behind it was the question of personal interest. Art historian Chaturvedi, M. (2010) sites, "This initial spurt was followed by the pioneering work of Rabindranath Tagore who incorporated experimentation in such a way as to elevate the Indian nationalist art movement to a world vision level altogether. Tagore, a born

innovator and an iconoclast, believed that an artist should not only be aware of tradition and try to assimilate its nuances in his unconscious self, but also practice his art freely to unearth new forms and meanings. Rabindranath Tagore differed again from the mundane mass of art practitioners then, in this he was very much against the nomenclature and labeling system which was prevalent at his time. Tagore's inspiration led to newer horizons being touched and in 1940's the Calcutta Group and the Progressive Artists of Bombay Group deconstructed the style of the Bengal School and created an original style by assimilating ideals of the contemporary art movements of West with that of the peripheral Indian folk art".

R. Tagore tried to counter traditional and colonial cultural practices which were prevailing in India. At that time when depiction of gods, epics, heroes from the unconfirmed history, beautiful women and also the pastoral nature were considered as the form of art, he brought the images of 'common man' in his paintings. (fig.1.3) Common man as a key character in a painting was not surprising; we do not find any reference of god or any known heroes from our immediate or distant history in the paintings of R. Tagore. It was the beginning of modernity in Indian art. He also understood that through the power of common people we could be able to counter the colonial culture. Tagore understood that we should awake our people against imperialist rule and serve the ultimate purpose of art. Tagore witnessed the making of Neo-Indian (Bengal) Art from very close vicinity, but surprisingly, he kept himself away from its influence. He was well acquainted with the works of Abanindranath, Gaganendranath, Nandlal Bose, Asit Kumar Haldar and also that of Jamini Roy but his own concepts about painting were immensely different from all these major artists.

### **1.1.2 A Radical Departure**

One of the weaknesses of Bengal School experiment, which Tagore marked, was its detachment from the nature. Aristotle's theory, 'art imitates nature' is one of the key characteristics of art. The colonialist expansion of art in India deconstructed the basic source of art as nature and established the business vision to imitating nature. He also followed the '*Hegelian*' idea to understand the drama of nature. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), being its main architect, devised the educational formula of art practice at Shantiniketan adhering to the laws of the nature. He talked

about the art manifesting human contact with the nature/environment, while European Art followed different parameters. R. Tagore's initiative was remarkable in the sense that the school realized the inevitability of the departure from the revivalist historicist temperament of Abanindranath.

Modernity in the context of R. Tagore's paintings starts from his very point of disagreement with the established norms of Bengal School of paintings. While being in Japan, Rabindranath Tagore saw the paintings of the Japanese masters. In the course of a letter written to his daughter-in-law in Calcutta, he complained of the inadequacy of the direction in which his nephew Abanindranath Tagore was taking his art. Out of sheer despair he remarked, "I am not a painter, but if I were one I would have shown them what a painting is all about." Having said this, the poet had to wait another three decades before his inherent desire to draw and paint began to be fulfilled almost by chance. (Sen, 1990)

The poets have a purely visual expression, and through these expressions, a poet of R. Tagore's caliber could not try to repeat Bengal School's romantic views but wanted to reflect the face of contemporary India. He was deeply connected with the nationalist art movement along with Neo-Bengali art but he freed himself from this dichotomy. Through the help of his inner-self, he has selected an experimental and undefined way of creation; the way without propaganda. About the methodologies of Tagore's painting, an eminent contemporary painter Sen (1991), relates him from the art of abstract expressionist Paul Klee. He writes that a statement by Paul Klee gives us another view of the process of creation involved in artistic activity: it comes quite close to classical Indian thought. "I place myself at a remote starting point of creation hence I state a prior formula for men, beasts, plants, stones and the elements and for all the whirling forces. In my work, I do not belong to the species, but to a cosmic point of reference." The poet's formulations were also an approximation of these. No wonder then that striking resemblances in many areas of their respective expressions are noticeable, though not in technique or style. This is especially noticeable in the manifestation of their imageries, although the nature of their representation is different. In both cases, do we see the predominance of three distinct categories of imageries such as human faces, or portraits; landscapes or representations of natural objects; mysterious birds and beasts who are not denizens of this world. Both artists

treated the picture surface as two-dimensional, and used line as an important element to delineate forms. An undercurrent of lyricism pervades their expression. Finally, there lies a concealed and half-concealed humor in some of the human representations. Both enjoyed working in the medium of watercolor or colored ink. R. Tagore is one of the vital pathfinders for modern Indian art. His works spread an expressionist way to paint human and animal figures. His technique was not so strong but his visual expression was strong. The development of Neo-Bengali Art is basically aimed to confront western art practices as well as the nationalist school of thinking. They prepared a path for educating people for the sake of Raj.

In researcher's views, Raja Ravi Verma's experimentation with oil medium was right but the idea of propagating was wrong. He could not interact with the social and political scenario of the country which was the need of the hour. The fervor of national freedom had ignited the masses at that time, but Ravi Verma did not give space to develop the nationalist fervor in his art. He had done very popular work at the individual level and so, became very successful in his time. Against this backdrop, R. Tagore, A. Tagore and other artists of the Bengal Art School made great efforts to establish mass driven culture on the center stage.

In 1930's, Amrita Shergill entered into the Indian art scenario. She was one of the important painters who set a significant discourse oriented towards woman life. Her mother was Hungarian and father was an Indian. She spent more time outside India but had strong emotional attachment to India. When she was sixteen, Shergil moved to Europe with her mother to be trained as an artist in Paris. At first, she studied at the Grande Chaumiere under Pierre Vaillant and Lucien Simon and later at École des Beaux-Arts during 1930 to 34. Through these schools, she learned the tradition of post-impressionist masters like Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh. But she was highly inspired by Cezanne and Gauguin. In 1932, she made her first important work, 'Young Girls'. The inspiration and the techniques of western masters were clearly visible in her works. In 1934, she moved to rediscover the rich heritage and the traditions of India. Basically the exploration of Paul Gauguin helped her to search basic source of inspiration and ethnic identity. While in 'Saraya' (Dist. Gorakhpur, India), Shergil wrote to a friend thus: "I can only paint in India.

Europe belongs to Picasso, Matisse and Braque.... India belongs only to me". (Chitrabhanu, 2013)

Amrita Shergill initiated modernism by synthesizing western principles of organized design in composition and Indian purity of colors in her paintings. Her extraordinary command over the medium of oil colors can be seen in her portrayals of the life of women. (fig.1.4) Although she was following the essence of two cultures– the Eastern and the Western, and so, became more capable to explore her artistic career towards modernism. In the short span of seven years (1934-41), she produced nearly 150 paintings which narrate the vision and her association towards indigenous art. For getting an exploration of form and content, she visited important parts of India.

In India, Amrita Shergill visited Bombay, Hyderabad, Ajanta and Ellora and travelled to Kerala to see the murals in Mattancherry and Padmanabhapuram). Amrita's sensibility was charged when she saw the lush, bold and magnificent Indian murals. In a letter, she wrote in January 1937, referring to the paintings at Mattanchery, she says: "I have seldom seen such powerful drawing, it often surpasses Ajanta". She was passionately drawn by the bright colors of the flowers, the chiseled faces of the inhabitants, and the grace of the costumes of the rustic folk whom she encountered during her travels. (Chitrabhanu, 2013)

Amrita Shergill was very logical about her creation; she had also expressed her views on contemporary art and attitudes in a couple of articles that featured in the newspapers of the period. In *The Hindu* (November 1, 1936), she wrote at length about her views on art in the article titled 'Modern Indian Art'. Referring to the Bengal school, she condemned, "The Indian art committed the mistake of feeding almost exclusively on the tradition of mythology and romance..." In the concluding part of the article she wrote, "I am an individualist evolving a new technique that though not necessarily Indian in the traditional sense of the word, will yet be fundamentally Indian in spirit." Through this assertion, she questioned the basic features of Bengali Renaissance.

The first thing was the corrective religious aspects of their paintings. In somehow, the Bengal School experimentation shows a romantic attitude in the area of



religion. They followed myths and narrative literary sources to the present India. But in Shergil's work, the romantic attitude towards religion is not evident. She seemed free from this shackles. Against the religion, she put the angle of humanity, the core idea of modernism. She sympathized with the Indian womenfolk and tried to narrate her painful journey.

Regarding the question of authenticity, the Bengal School had clear ideological lines about their creation. Through the works and writing, they tried to bring the nationalist consciousness to people and it was a group effort. On the other hand, Shergill was fully occupied in individualist practice. She was trying to see the down-trodden but her whole work suggested- it's an outsider's view or a tourist view because it was not reflecting the struggle of mass. But it is also very true that she had identified the existence of Indian woman. It was remarkable and had opened the door to the Indian contemporary women painters to follow the vision of Amrita Shergil.

In between this pre and post- independence era/s, Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) was of the real mentors who, especially realized the dreams of R. Tagore's for bringing art closer to nature and nature closer to art (fig. 1.5). Nandalal's initiative was remarkable in the sense that the school able to depart from the revivalist historicist temperament of Abanindranath and the urgency of the relationship with the local and the immediate - the reflexive nexus in which art and its environment could grow into a mutually enriching relationship. Through his open and remarkable guidance, Ramkinker Baij and BinodBihari Mukharjee were able to open the gate of modernity which was required for Indian art. In this way, particularly in the works of Benodebehari, art was rescued from the hypothetical idealized space and became as empirical experience (fig.1.6). The extensive experimentation of Ramkiner Baij is another aspect of Indian modernism symptomatic of his cubist-expressionist contemporaries in the West. The gulf between individualism and institutions is one of the important aspects of modern art in general, which finds its specific examples in the diverse stands taken up by artists like Nandalal Bose, Binod Bihari Mukherji, and Ramkiner Baij the 'reigning trinity' of Indian modern. In the midst of the demands of '*Shantinikatan*' for a definite collective identity the official national position, Nandalal is often seen with the more individualistic departure from the canons of institution towards future. (Thakkar, 2005)

Another significant aspect that was very crucial in Shantiniketan's perspective was that it had developed very important mentors, individuals as like an institution. These were Ramkinker Baij, Binod Bihari Mukherjee, Somnath Hore, N.S. Bendre, K.G. Subramanian, Sarbari Roy Chaudhary, Sankho Chaudhary, B.S. Kutt, Indropromit Roy, Rinni Dhumal, Nirmalendu Das, Pinakee Barua, Jhanak jhankar Narjari and others. So the root of these mentors starts from Nandalal Bose who had a great tradition of shaping and guiding the pillars of modern Indian art. These mentors had tried to spread a thought process all over India and gave way to sustain and explore the trends of modernity.

One of the most exciting moments for modern art movement in India was the staging of an International Art Exhibition in December 1922 in Calcutta, where the works of some of the very important Bauhaus artists like Paul Klee, Kandinsky, Johannes Itten and others were put up for display. It must have been an overwhelming experience for the Indian artists to see the original works of western modern artists. However, this event added more to the rising crisis between the disconcerting dichotomy between the global and the local. On one hand, the rising national resistance movement was gearing up and on the other, Indian Art was getting more ambitious in realizing global modernism. (Wani, 2013)

### **1.1.3 The Progressive Intervention**

1940s marked a turning point in the Indian attitude to modernism. This decade saw the emergence of artist groups in Calcutta, Chennai (Madras) and Mumbai (Bombay), who doubted the wisdom of striving for an indigenous modernism in order to counter modern Western art. The Calcutta group, the first among them, was founded in 1943. They held that the position of the preceding generation of nationalist artists was revivalist and declared that they believed in an art that is "international and interdependent. (Kumar, 1999)

The motto of this group was to transform art practices and regenerate connection with the world society. The point of view of the group had three major areas such as, they said that famine and world war is man-made and it should not happen again. The man-made famine and the worldwide violence of war were leading to human suffering beyond expectations. It was usual that artists, responding to such

disasters, should have felt pressed to ask themselves "which way?" The question remains what was the option they finally chose. Secondly, they expressed to force out academic idealism and romantic naturalism of the Bengal School from the art practices.

The guiding motto of this group is best expressed in the slogan "Art should be international and inter-dependent". In other words, our art cannot progress or develop if we always look back to our past glories and cling to our old traditions. The vast new world of art, rich and infinitely varied, created by the Masters through all ages, beckons us. From the Egyptian and the Assyrian arts to the works of the Italian, the Dutch, the French masters, the researcher has to study all of them deeply and thence, develop his appreciation for them and take from them, all that we could profitably synthesize with our requirements and traditions.

This was more necessary because our art had stood-still till the seventeenth century. But during the past three hundred years, the world outside India had made vast strides in art by evolving epoch-making discoveries in forms and techniques. It is absolutely necessary for us to bridge this hiatus by taking advantage of these developments in the Western world." Finally, they voiced that art should be international and... "Man is supreme, there is none above him" - this was the guiding slogan when the Calcutta Group was formed in 1943. Those were the dark days for Bengal. Famine and pestilence were then stalking the land. The barbarity and heartlessness all around moved us, a few young artists, deeply began to think, to search our hearts and ask ourselves: '...which way?' (Mallik, 2006)

The Calcutta Group, then, could be seen as an extension and an ongoing part of the above history of formation of artists' collectives. The significant differences however, come about through the historic moment of its inception - the famine of 1942/43, the World War II, the Quit India Movement and the popular upsurge forming the backdrop against which the artists of the Group would like us to view their coming together. The eight participants of the very first exhibition of the Calcutta Group held in 1945 were Prodosh Das Gupta, Kamala Das Gupta, Gopal Ghosh, Paritosh Sen, Nirode Majumder, Subho Tagore, Rathin Maitra and Prankrishna Pal. Then after time to time, other artists enrolled like Gopal Ghosh,

Govardhan and Ramkinkar Baij, Sunil Madhav Sen, Hemanta Misra joined the group in 1952 and 1953 as the final recruits. (Mallik, 2006)

The progressive attitude spread and developed into a progressive writers'/artists' group all over in India. 1940's/50's was also significant for locating the earliest events of modern art activities in Kashmir. Such was the influence of these Groups that even a place like Kashmir, so remote from the Indian metropolis, could feel its force, which inspired the local artists to join the movement. The possible justification for their claim lay in the very ideology of the Progressives, for their uninhibited advocacy of the European examples of modern art, an opening up to a heritage unrestricted by national/ geographic limits. (Mallik, 2006)

K. C. S. Paniker (1911-1977), who led the Progressive Artists Association in Chennai (1944), also took a similar direction, painting broadly humanist and contemporary themes in a Post-Impressionist idiom with an expressionist slant (fig. 1.7). Through a combined exhibition with Calcutta Group in 1945 at Mumbai, a new art group called Progressive Artist Group (PAG) emerged. The Bombay Progressive Group (1947) was the last to be formed but it represented the modernist assertion of this generation at its clearest. This group began with a leftist ideological self-positioning, but the 'progressive' soon came to mean for them a modernist use of formal elements inspired by modern Western art. In the post-Independence scenario, the focus shifted from the collective creative practice to the individually driven urge. Rather than developing an indigenous modernism, they advocated Indian artist to assimilate the language of modern western art with their local environment in order to develop a style of the newly independent nation. As representatives of a newly independent country committed to industrialization and modernization, this appeared to them as the historical need of the hour. (Kumar, 1999)

At the turning point of Indian History in 1947, when India went through the tremendous upheaval of gaining freedom from the British Empire and a torturous partition, unaffected F. N. Souza, a twenty-three-year-old former Communist Party member of a modest origin, along with five other members founded the Progressive Artists group. The five other members were M. F. Hussain, K. H. Ara, H. A. Gade, S. K. Bakre and S. H. Raza. Their manifesto drawn up by Souza, the most articulate and controversial of the group, declared that the world progressive meant to go forward

and that was what they projected to do. They summarily denounced the influences of all modern Indian artists, Rabindranath Tagore as too self-obsessed and introvert Amrita Shergill as a hybrid, Jamini Roy as too unsophisticated and crude and all eminent artists and leading teachers as too sentimental. The group's twentieth century modernism was unapologetically linked to the European contemporaries. Their talent, professionalism and the blazing enthusiasm to their art was first spotted by Mulk Raj Anand, India's foremost art critic and novelist of international acclaim. The Progressive Artists Group exhibited for the first time in 1948, and the exhibition was opened by Mulk Raj Anand who dwelt on the significance of providing a platform for a new, not yet fully formed voice, rather than the content of the show. He indicated that they had much ground to cover and three of them went on to achieve that within a decade of the show. Raza, Souza and Husain emerged as distinguished artists, each of his own evolved style. Raza found his fame in Paris, while Souza shocked London with his compelling work, continuing to defy, taunt and challenge to win praise and success. The third success story was that of the elusive and enigmatic Husain, who stayed in touch with the soil of India to intuitively and spontaneously paint the essence of India (fig.1.8), its countryside and its mythology and continues to do so more than five decades later. The PAG, however, naively failed to understand the anger and disillusionment in the work of European artists resulted by two horrifying world wars. The PAG artists were too free-spirited and self-absorbed, and failed to reflect on the Indian tragedy of 1947, our Partition. The only artists ever to be influenced by it were the well-known Indian Satish Gujaral, Dhanraj Bhagat and a lesser known Pakistani artist Tassadaq Sohail (fig. 1.9). After Souza left for England and Raza for France, PAG, as the group had come to be known, faded out. (Chakraborty, 2008)

By 1950s, Bombay became the Centre of Indian modern art engaging enlightened critics and ambitious patrons. Their rigorous determination to realize the kind of art that was entirely Indian but also modern was backed by the association of the radical novelist Mulk Raj Anand, the influential Chemould Gallery owner Kekoo Gandhi; the three refugees from the Nazi, viz the Expressionist painter Walter Langhammer, who joined as Art Director with *Times of India* in 1938, became their mentor; Emmanuel Schlesinger, who set up a pharmaceutical concern in Bombay,

became their main collector; and Rudy von Leyden, who joined *Times of India* as art critic." (Mittar, 2001)

Most of the Indian artists followed modern western art movements like Cubism, Expressionism, Surrealism etc. but the notable thing was that these art forms were generated during the crisis of two world wars. The question emerged: is it possible to repeat these art forms in India in the same manner? Can we apply as it is the method of art or ideology or materials which they were experimenting? These questions pushed artists to develop their own methods and techniques to enlarge the image of rural India. Mahatma Gandhi always said that the soul of India is not in town but in the villages. Indian masters tried to assimilate the voices of villages. But one threat intercepted in their practice, the question of patron, which was unsolved so they could not work freely and energetically.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the First Prime Minister of Independent India, dreamt of making a secular state, based on economic and social reform, justice for all---- which would offer moral leadership to the Third World. A modernist who favored state intervention in all spheres, symbolized by the Five Year Plans, Nehru played an optimistic part in a national art policy headed by the Lalit Kala Akademi (an officially sponsored nation-wide artists' forum) and the National Gallery of Modern Art in the Capital, Nehru gave a boost to artists by suggesting that one per cent on the cost of a public building should go towards its decoration with murals and sculptures. In India, Lalit Kala Akademi, a Center of Art and Culture, was established in 1954. Another important milestone in the Art Movement in Indian market was the establishment of the National Gallery of Modern Art in the early 1950's which came to be recognized as the top institutions in India for promoting visual art for all shades.

The idea of a National Art Gallery to re-germinate the Indian art and it was first put up in 1949. It was nurtured carefully by the then Prime Minister Sh. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Dr. Maulana Azad, sensitive bureaucrats like Humayun Kabir and an active art community. Vice-president Dr. S. Radhakrishnan formally inaugurated the NGMA in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, artists and art lovers of the city on March 29, 1954. NGMA's inauguration was marked by an exhibition of sculptures. All the prominent sculptors of the time like Debi Prasad Roy Chowdhury, Ramkinkar Baij, Sankho Chaudhuri, Dhanraj Bhagat, Sarbari Roy Chowdhury and

others had participated. The show spoke of the careful preparations made by NGMA's first curator Herman Goetz. A noted German art historian, Goetz had earlier been responsible for setting up the Baroda Museum.

These central government bodies though gave a breathing space to the artists across the country; somehow this did not succeed in establishing a new movement in the field of art and culture. By 1950's, many artists migrated from India to settle down abroad. Artists like F N Souza, Raza, Gaitonde, Natwar Bhavsar and Krishna Reddy were the prominent ones. The other noted ones who returned to India were Ram Kumar, Satish Gujral, Pradosh Das Gupta, Paritosh Sen, K. K. Hebbar, Nirode Majumdar and Akbar Padamsee.

In 1947, the Bombay Progressive Group was formed which was followed by the Delhi Silipi Chakra. This group (consists of B. C. Sanyal, Kanwal Krishna, K. S. Kulkarni, Dhanraj Bhagat, P. N. Mago) recognized that the art of the nation must express the soul of its people and must ally with the process of progress. In terms of marketing, the Delhi Silpi Chakra took up innovative means to market Modern Indian Art. In 1949, the Chakra held its first exhibition at the barracks of the Masonic Lodge at the Janapath which made a great impact on the art scene in the Capital. Since this initial foray, the Chakra held exhibitions and programs and discussions regularly. To propagate contemporary art, Delhi *Silpi Chakra* members organized exhibitions of their works in '*Mohallas*' such as Chandani Chowk, Karol Bagh and the university campus 1949 and 1950. There was a good response from the public. Paintings were sold to the University teachers, doctors, lawyers, writers, actors and musicians. B. C. Sanyal recalls in his article in the catalogue "Delhi Silpi Chakra- The Early Years" that those who could not afford a straight purchase a hire-purchase scheme was also offered. This enlarged the circle of patrons and the *Chakras* vibrancy existed till the mid 1960's to his dismay the researcher, the development between 1950 to 1960 art practices do not show any remarkable and noteworthy development. The art produced in this decade just showed a monotonous and repetitive tendency among art practice.

Regionalism and regional identity became a key factor of the post-Independence Indian Art. In this scenario, the Group that was established by J.Swaminathan in 1890 incorporated the uniqueness and unfathomable zeal in post-independence Indian Art. Group 1890 had its first exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi,

New Delhi in 1963 which unfortunately turned into the last exhibition of the group. Himmat Shah was one of the talented young artists of that group who disproportionately infused different classical and folk medium with several forms. He confirmed the indigenes and modernist aesthetic favored in India at the time (fig. 1.10), an aesthetic against time and history propagated by J. Swaminathan since the inception of ‘the Group 1890’.

Even though Indian artists of 1960s, 70s and 80s were concerned about their Indian identity, ethos of Indian culture on the one side, on the other, they had been greatly influenced by the European masters of the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this backdrop, the researcher has to evaluate and judge the body of art work produced by Himmat Shah.

## 1.2 BORN IN ‘LOTHAL’

Gujarat is an important State of India. Here is situated a place called ‘*Lothal*’ which is an important city and port of Indus Valley Civilization and has been famous for its civilization and culture throughout the world. Himmat Shah, an important Indian Artist, was born on July 22, 1933, in a village *Gundi* near ‘*Lothal*’.

Originally his predecessors resided in Rajasthan, who once reached Kathiawar via Jhalawar. At that time, Kathiawar was an important commercial center. Himmat Shah’s family was basically Marwari (Jain Bania), which had been involved in the business for many generations. His grandfather, Chaturbhai Shah was a big businessman and used to buy and sell grains at large level. His father, Devchand Bhai Shah practiced Ayurveda and his uncle were involved in father's business and was later influenced by the Gandhian thought. Saurashtra, which is surrounded by the Gulf of Kutch in the west, the South Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Khambhat in the South East, is important for both business and culture. An ancient proverb about Saurashtra is famous:

*‘Saurashtra panchratnani nadinariturangama: chaturtha: somnathsch  
panchmum haridarshnam’.*

In this verse, the beautiful rivers of Saurashtra like *Chandrabhaga*, *Bhadravati*, *Prachi-Saraswati*, *Shashimi*, *Vetravati*, *Palashini*, and *Suvarniksika*;



*Ghonga* etc., the beautiful women's, beautiful horses of Arab tribes, the temple of Somnath, and Dwarka of Krishna are described as fossils of Saurashtra in the folk tales, as mentioned in admiration. (Kalra, 2016) The importance of Himmat Shah's growth in this background reveals his relationship with the locale and which is reflected in his art. This is the land that produced the world class silk and cotton textile industry. This thread of Indus culture extends to Mesopotamia and Babylonia.

He was born in a joint family and was the eldest of the siblings. His own family was also big, in which he had two brothers and six sisters. Grandfather used to take good care of farming and business but in later times his interest grew towards the Gandhian Movement. (fig.1.11), Himmat Shah told the researcher that the dacoits had attacked his family and his father was shot too. The house and business of the village were shattered, with the flow of time; they were forced to move to Bhavnagar.

He was open-minded from the time of childhood. In his childhood, he used to spend more time with Potters, Carpenter, *Kastakar* (farmer), *Khedoo* (cattle feeder), *Rabadia* (local singers) etc., to see their craft works and performances. It was fascinating and inspiring to learn and to do the same. He enjoyed more pleasure in living close-to-nature. Whenever he got the opportunity, he would roam around on his horse Suva- Bhagat, while the members of the family wanted him to concentrate on his study and family business. His grandfather was a respected person in the village and also had opened both a school and a library in the village. He had allowed some space and material to him for decoration in the village library. Besides, he started participating in cultural activities, '*Saurashtra's Dandiya*', which is famous all over Gujarat. It was far better than reading and writing, in his view.

One day he left home to find solace in the hills of Junagarh. From there his uncle took him to Bhavnagar and enrolled him into the Bal-Mandir which was associated with the Dakshinamurty institution. At 16, he came in contact with an art teacher, Jagubhai Shah, in 1950-51. Jagubhai Shah learned art from Sir J. J. School of Art, Bombay and was a strong supporter of the Gandhian ideology. This school had become famous not just in Bhavnagar but throughout Gujarat. The aspects of freedom were realized again and one day, in search of his inner-self, Himmat Shah went out again towards *the Girnar Hills*.

### 1.2.1 Formative Phase: A Period of Search and Cognizance

The Hills of Girnar in Junagadh are important for their cultural heritage. This city is situated in the lower part of *Girnar* ranges. These ranges have been influenced by the philosophical currents of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim religion. The magnificent Jain Temple on the peaks of these mountains, the temple of *Ambe Mata*, and the caves related to the Buddha religion, *the Girnar* inscriptions of Ashoka, etc., underline its cultural significance. (Girnar, 2017)

Himmat Shah was delighted to find the coexistence of people with diverse religious and cultural outlook. He greatly appreciated the cultural diversity of *Girnar* and got the energy to organize his art. He kept roaming in these hills, saw many temples, and was motivated by the spiritual feeling of the place. For his creative urge and livelihood, he kept doing drawing and painting. Here, he met a Jain business family who encouraged his artistic skills and enhanced his artistic curiosity. The family honored him and bought some pictures too. These incidents gave him a motivational push and instilled in him a new thought that art was his ultimate goal of his life.

In 1951, Himmat Shah moved from Junagadh to Ahmedabad where he took refuge in his aunt's house. Here he met Rasiklal Parikh and for admission, visited the C. N. College of Art. Parikh was a faculty in C. N. College of Art and the former student of Somalal Shah, and his art had a profound effect of the art of the Bengal School. He saw the work/s of Himmat Shah and was very impressed. He spoke to Mrs. Indumati, the owner of this organization, and got admission in the Diploma. It was also decided to provide him a stipend of Rupees 30 per month.

One day Rasiklal Parikh said that if he gets Diploma of Drawing and Painting from J. J. School of Arts, it would be easier to get a job in the future. In 1953, Himmat Shah joined the course of teacher training in the J.J. School of Arts. For this course only, he had to go to Bombay for taking the examination. After that, R. Parikh insisted him to join a village named *Sardhav* where the post of art teacher was vacant. For the academic year 1954-1955, Himmat Shah stayed at *Sardhav* to paint many portraits and murals.

Professor N.S. Bendre's fame was spreading across the country during those days. In a magazine, N. S. Bendre's interview was published which Himmat Shah had read and got greatly inspired. Thereafter, Himmat Shah felt that he should proceed for further practice in painting. While studying in Ahmedabad, he had heard from Balkrishna Patel, Shanti Dave, Parikh and others about the Fine Art faculty of Baroda. In 1955, he left the school job and came to Baroda to join Professor N.S. Bendre.

N. S. Bendre saw his work and recommended for admission. Himmat Shah joined the Faculty of Fine Arts at M. S. University Baroda in 1955. At that time the teaching department was manned by three senior artist of time named N. S. Bendre, Samkho Chaudhary and K. G. Subramanian. From 1956 to 61, Himmat Shah continued to get the scholarship for advanced study in painting under *Guru-Shishya* tradition. He left the department's regular study and joined N. S. Bendre as full time Assistant.

From 1955 to 61, Himmat Shah stayed in Baroda. In the first few years, he was staying in the *Khadiata Chatrawas* (Hostel). It was especially given to the study of *Khadiata* caste students who paid a very low fee. The students who became friends in this hostel were all *Sourashtrions*. Being senior among them, Jyoti Bhatt was very helpful and kind. After completing MA Fine Arts, he joined as a Lecturer in 1957-58. Naresh Mehta, who was then a teacher of photography at the Faculty of Fine Arts, would be renting the room to Jyoti Bhatt. Jyoti called Himmat Shah and Raghav Kaneria to stay with her.

These *Saurashtra* artists taught *Dandia* dance (a dance style of Gujarat) in Baroda. They were summoned in many institutions where student from different age group were trained *Dandiya* dance by them. Later the women also started joining these classes. Even today, this dance form is very famous in the Faculty of Visual Arts, Baroda and every year students celebrate this festival with full enthusiasm and cultural gaiety. On that occasion, all the new and old students arranged a get-together to celebrate *Nav-Ratri (Dashhra)*. The credit for launching this festival goes to Jyoti Bhatt, under whose leadership Himmat Shah, Raghav Kaneria, Vinod Shah, Viju Shah, Vinod Patel and others helped to cultivate and spread the cultural traits of *Saurashtra* in every corner of Gujrat and Maharashtra. (fig.1.12)

At Baroda, Himmat Shah was acknowledged by Shankho and Ira Chaudhary and so, got support and encouragement. This affection continued even during his stay at Garhi Studio in New Delhi. Shankho took great care of his students and was also interested in other art activities besides visual arts. In 1958-59, a play titled '*Taseer des'* (the Kingdom of Cards), composed and directed by Sankho da, was staged in Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda. It was based on a story written by Rabindranath and was basically a dance drama, in which Himmat Shah played the role of the lead actor. Himmat Shah proved his talent of acting, singing and dancing.

Himmat Shah had closely observed and felt the proficiency of N.S. Bendre, so he also tried to emulate him while using synthetic cubism in his painting (fig.1.13). The inspiration of the British Painter Ben Nicholson is also clearly visible in the paintings of Himmat Shah in this phase. A still life painting that was sent to New Delhi clearly illustrated these import and endorsed the above statement of the researcher. That recognition and acclaim gave a lot of strength and enthusiasm to Himmat Shah.

In 1961, Himmat Shah returned to Ahmedabad from Baroda and started searching work for himself. He did not get the desired job! One day the concept of a burnt paper collage came out in a friend's office by making cigarette holes on the junk papers. He did a lot of paper collages and showed to N. S. Bendre on his return visit. Bendre got very happy and said, 'it is very good but this work is fine for the metropolitan cities, no one understands it here!' (Bharadwaj, 2009)

### **1.2.2 Experimental Phase: Days of Struggle, Passionate Excitability and Furious Intolerance**

In 1962, Himmat Shah came to Delhi with the help of his friend Balakrishna Patel. Himmat Shah met with J. Swaminathan, Ambadas, and Rajesh Mehra and many more in Delhi. At that time, Swaminathan was an editor in Link Magazine. As, Professor Ghulam Mohammed Shaikh said that one or two copies of the link also came into the library of Museum, Baroda and through that we could learn that Jagdish Savamitnathan was a serious journalist. Ambadas who used to work in 'Weavers Center' Delhi lived in Karol Bagh. Himmat Shah stayed with him at his residence.

In the 1930's and 40's, Calcutta was the centre of the activities of modern Indian art, the art activity in 1950's shifted to Bombay and in 1960's it was the turn of Delhi to emerge as a main center of modern art. 'Delhi Shilpi Chakra', 'Seven Painters Group', 'The Unknown Group', 'AIFCS' and, 'Group 1890', called art groups took their roots here. Critic Vinod Bharadwaj wrote that 'Jagdish Swaminathan was involved with the activities of 'The Unknown Group' and used to attend meetings but he did not formally join that group. Swaminathan was also doing art work until that time and was trying to participate in exhibitions of 'The Unknown Group', some of his group's associates also protested against Swaminathan. (Bharadwaj, 2011)

Probably this may have been the reason that J. Swaminathan started the hypothesis of a new group which started appearing in existence when Himmat Shah had shifted to Delhi. He was welcomed in Delhi with full pomp and care. The activities of 'Group 1890' started accelerating. On 25-26 August 1962, the first formal meeting of the establishment of this group took place at Jyoti Pandya's house in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, and this group was named 'Group 1890' at the number of this house. Most of the members of this group were from the Baroda School. The members who joined it officially included Jeram Patel, Raghav Kaneria, Himmat Shah, Rajesh Mehra, Ambadas, Gulam Mohammad Sheikh, Jyoti Bhatt, Balkrishna Patel, Jagdish Swaminathan and others exhibited their skill, capacity, and originality in their highly individualistic and variegated works in the wider arena of Indian art (fig. 1.14). The aim of the group was to give birth to the indigenous visual language of art in Contemporary environment and context. The exhibition of this group was held in 1963 at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Mexican Ambassador Octavio Paz wrote a catalog of the Exhibition. With this exhibition and his meeting with Swaminathan took a great leaf in his career. He has remained indebted to these two incidents to help him launch his artistic career on the national map of modern art.

### 1.2.3 Violent Exuberance and Zeal for Success

On being asked after spending some years with Bendre and Chaudhary at Baroda, why he had preferred Delhi to Bombay when all artists were camping in economic capital of India. To this, he replied just for curiosity. The researcher has come across evidences that all his close friends were settled in Delhi. Without a proper degree and a sound financial position, he arrived at the National Capital with a great hope. He had no idea how he would manage, but pushed by an unbridled fire, he gambled with his life. It is also true that he had speculated perhaps that the next center of art activity would be Delhi. No doubt, with time, he was proved to be right.

In 1962, Himmat Shah was again conferred with the National Award by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, at that time he was staying with Ambadas in Karol Bagh. Ambadas is considered to be the first generation artist in abstract painting in India. While living with Ambadas, he started erotic series drawing on paper. In his routine life after Ambadas left for his office at the weavers' center, Himmat Shah proffered to go on a tour on historic sites of Delhi. The groups of stroller littering these sites pained Himmat Shah a lot. He was disturbed to see them making some vulgar drawings on the wall. At the tomb of Humayun, he felt the truth of the life which was never experienced by him, so, perhaps it was the major difference between his Gujarati and native culture of Delhi. He also witnessed romantic couples engaged in different poses and states of mind. The site galvanized him to make sketches and drawings for these couples out of admiration. His Series of Erotic drawings were inspired here only. In 1964, the exhibition of drawing made in the erotic series of Himmat Shah (fig. 1.15), in the Triveni Kala Sangam found all visitors and art lovers, stunned! J. Swaminathan retorted, "The gentle magician unloaded clothes to prove one thing like we are all barely inside. When you are feeling like a cupcake, you see the laughing face of Himmat Shah - your reputation is damaging". (Bharadwaj, 2011)

The 1960s was very successful for Himmat Shah. His paintings were selected for display at National Exhibition by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. He got the Gold Medal awarded by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art in 1960, in 1962, the Bombay Art Society, Bombay also was rewarded him.

Between 1962 and 68, many times his works were invited and displayed in the group exhibition by Progressive Painters from Ahmedabad. Himmat Shah's work had included in an exhibition sent by the Government of India to London titled 'Indian Painting Today', in 1965. In 1964, Sridharni Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam and in 1966, Gallery Chemould Art Center New Delhi had organized a solo exhibition of his works. Apart from this, Himmat Shah participated in many group exhibitions in many cities like Calcutta, Delhi, Mumbai, Jammu and other places.

After the erotic exhibition of 1964, Swaminathan and Octavio Paz became good friends with Himmat Shah, as; both were greatly impressed by his burnt paper collage and erotic series drawing as both of them found identical spirit reverberating within them. Mr. Paz, along with Swaminathan, also used to meet Himmat Shah in Barasati located in Karol Bagh, as art critic Bharadwaj, Vinod (2009) wrote, "...the rainy season of Karol Bagh, when Octavio Paz, Mexican poet, diplomat and Nobel Laureate came to see his work. He sat for three hours and continued to smoke cigarettes. Mr. Paz was very impressed with the work of him and, they were collages of burned paper". (Bharadwaj, 2011)

#### **1.2.4 The First International Exposure: Europe Tour (1966-67)**

Because of Shah's talent, Paz recommended his name for the cultural scholarship provided by Government of India in terms of studying French Modernism. In 1966-67, Himmat Shah visited France, where he did two important things. One was studying printmaking at the studio 'Atelier 17' under the guidance of Stanley William Hayter and Krishna Reddy, and secondly he visited museums and several art galleries. Himmat Shah had to face the crisis of language in France, therefore, he chose those museums for his studies, where he came to face the art works of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henry Matisse, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian, Amedeo Modigliani, Giorgio Morandi, Carl Andre, Ben Nicholson, Alexander Calder, Constantin Brancusi, Henry Moore, Alberto Giacometti, Isamu Noguchi and other artists of Europe. He also studied African art and Cycladic Art with minute and deft observation. Apart from this, he also studied French modern pottery, visited sites of specific sculpture and confronted modernist buildings as well. While returning, he visited London (England) from France in 1967 and returned to Ahmedabad from there. In London, he met with his Sculptor friend Raghav Kaneria and also observed

the art tradition of the Great Britain. It is a phenomenal trend that was practised at the studio of 'Atelier 17' that demonstrated the prowess in the arena of modern Indian Art. Incidentally, Himmat Shah made his mark too.

### **1.2.5 Architectural Mural in Ahmadabad**

While returning, he avoided landing at New Delhi but preferred to settle at Ahmadabad as age was catching up. He started planning his life with a new beginning from a new perspective. He also taught for some period as the Faculty of Architecture at CEPT University, Ahmedabad and he used to take classes of Design. The painter-sculptor, Piraji Sagara was also working there since 1963 and remained associated with the same till death. In 1970-71, Krishna Chatpar also joined the Faculty of Architecture and used to take a class of Design and basic 3D modeling. He and Piraji were close friends. Architect Hasmukh Patel was a lecturer at this College and was a good friend of Himmat Shah. At that time, the building of the Saint Xavier's School, Ahmadabad, was being constructed by Hasmukh Patel and had left three walls for the mural. The commission to decorate these three walls was given to Himmat Shah. (fig.1.16, 1.17)

Himmat thus came to stand in the Indian art not only vis-à-vis his sculptor colleagues but also the painter - turned-muralists like K.G. Subramanian, Satish Gujral, and M.F. Hussain who continued to rely on the pictorial in his mid-60s Terracotta and mosaic tile murals. Himmat went ahead to handle the sculptural vocabulary of geometrical abstraction on a monumental scale and, then, when he returned to 'painting', he made densely tactile relief using plaster, tar, cloth, enamel paint, silver foil, what-not reliefs those were 'walls' (like village walls that he had joined hands to plaster and decorate as a child / and like materially replete modernist walls of contemporary European painters, he had begun to admire in the 1960s).

For Himmat Shah this commission turned out to be the biggest achievement of his sagging career. During his stay at Ahmadabad, he was visited by his close friend Jyoti Bhatt, Vinod Shah and Raghav Kaneria from Baroda and J Swaminathan from Delhi with his family. Working for this commission, he needed some experts. With his grit and determination, he trained a team of about 20 people who were capable of



working architectural murals. Unfortunately, Himmat Shah did not receive any architectural project; so, that trained team got dismembered ultimately.

Recalling this mural, Sculptor Rajendra Tikku said that "till this date in India, no one has tried mural in such manner. It is outstanding and out of the box in the context of form, content, and material. This was a successful achievement of Indian modern art which was realized by Himmat Shah". Himmat Shah got such a big achievement in this way. During that, he had developed a team of about 20 people who had expertise in building mural in geometrical shapes but no such work could be found and finally team got scattered.

When Himmat Shah was in the way of making wall mural, side by side he was working on silver painting series (fig. 1.18). This silver painting series had elements of both two dimension and three dimensions, which we can consider as the phase of transition between paintings to sculpture. After completion of architectural mural, he failed to get another lucrative commission at Ahmadabad, and so, he reverted to Delhi once again.

#### **1.2.6 Delhi Calling: Transition from 2 Dimensions to 3 Dimensions**

After the commissioned work dried-up, Himmat Shah did not have any other option but to visit Delhi. J. Swaminathana was there to welcome him and at that time he was staying at South X. Himmat Shah stayed there for two years without any personal problem. For the project funded by the Nehru Fellowship, Swaminithan was helped by Himmat Shah in various disciplines. This fellowship was meant for a year (1971).

In 1973, Himmat Shah got a part time job as an Art Trainer in Max Mueller Bhawan, New Delhi. Here, for the evening art classes, he gave valuable advice on art and its intrinsic values to the students. For this reason, he got an opportunity to exhibit one man show in Max Mueller Bhawan, New Delhi. Writing a review on this exhibition, the critic Bartholomew, R. (1973) in *The Times of India* (March 28.1973), he introduced his reader the versatile quality of Himmat Shah. In 1974, he had done one man show in Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) New Delhi. Here he sold four molds made for the Ahmedabad mural to NGMA, New Delhi. With this money, he

took a 'Barsati' for rent in the Greater Kailash colony of Karol Bagh and started living there independently.

Here, he came to think of making sculptures with clay and he started making head with a mixture of ordinary mud and china clay. The sculpture created at that time is not available for the reference of further research. According to Himmat Shah, they all got spoiled in the rain and he did not have any photographs to showcase their presence. In Kailash Colony, Himmat Shah came in contact with poet/journalist/critic Prayag Shukla and Vinod Bhardwaj who lived in the same Colony. The researcher has been informed by several sources that Himmat Shah did drawings regularly and started making sculptures in mid-1970. Himmat and Prayag Shukla were good friends. Meanwhile P. Shukla has written several catalogs and reported many of his exhibitions in Delhi.

### **1.2.7 Mature Phase: A Period of Great Ups and Horrifying Down**

The 1970s also remained favorable to his creative talent but the economic crisis was becoming horrifying. He did not like to do the job, and in the art market there was hardly any demand for his work. He was finding very difficult to sustain his life and manage monthly rental bill. In this anxiety, he often started to get sick and once he got very ill, but he never lost his zeal nor his creative impulse. In this condition, his friend, the famous photographer Raghu Rai and poet Kamlesh helped him in every possible manner.

In 1970, he participated in 'the printmaking workshop' organized by Smithsonian Institute, U.S.I.S., and New Delhi. In 1971, he had a one man show in Konark Art Gallery. He participated in first inaugural exhibition of *Trinale* and, in 1975 Biennale, which happened in Middelheim and Antwerp; art works of Himmat were included. In 1977, he has displayed one man in Madhya Pradesh Kala Parishad Gallery, Bhopal. In 1977, critic Geeta Kapoor organized a group show titled 'Pictorial Space' in Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, Himmat was the part of this exhibition and in 1978 a Prints Exhibition was held by the *Garhi* Studio Lalit Kala Academy, in which his works were displayed.

By the way, the transformation of Himmat Shah was completed from 2 Dimension to 3 Dimension. In 1979 Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi, he

showcased his first one man show of his sculpture. This was a historic show written by critic Bharadwaj, V. (2009), he says, "In an exhibition of Dhummimal Art Gallery in 1979, the sculpture of 'a raised hand', made by Himmat Shah, stood apart. It was a very long hand. Is it (the hand) calling for a help from the deep water? Or is it counting our presence? How emotional feelings are expressed through this hidden message conveyed through gesticulations?" (fig.1.19)

It was built in a plaster (POP) medium, which was about 6 feet high. Sculptor Rajendra Tikku said that "This work of Himmat Bhai was very lively. In it, the concept of life form is visible how he searches shapes from within life. He revitalizes the images from nature or society and showcases its uniqueness which we are not able to see with our naked eyes. This effort separates him from other contemporary Indian artists". (Singh, 2016) On this sculpture, Himmat Shah recalls that "in his childhood, he used to play with friends in the village pond. There was a well in between the pond. When the water of the pond got reduced, the children used to bathe in that well. I enjoyed the activities of sitting on the edge of the well. This lifted hand was inspired from the incident I witnessed in my village. I noticed that when the children came up from the bottom, then the hands and head quickly went upwards. It would be different every time and it increased the enthusiasm of after finding me on the edge of the well. On the soil of a drought-filled pond, insects-crawling, taking various shapes of soil, all I have given in my art".

Himmat Shah's work was displayed in 1979 by the Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi, which appeared in the Silver Jubilee Exhibition of Sculpture in Delhi and Bombay. This decade was not like that of the 60s, but his work was appreciated at the national and international level. That decade saw him an established sculptor.

In 1975, the construction of *Garhi* Studio, New Delhi, was started which was completed in 1976, its name was 'Kala Kutir'. At this time, Professor Sankho Chaudhary was the secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and whose tireless hard work brought this Studio into existence. (Chaudhary, 2017) In the inaugural workshop of the Studio, Himmat Shah was also invited to participate in it. The then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi inaugurated the Studio and dedicated it to the artist's community of India.

During this inaugural workshop, he had made a head sculpture with china clay. This workshop was important in many ways. Himmat Shah came to meet artist P. R. Daroj, who worked in pottery and ceramic and came to join the workshop from Assam, helped him very much in art making exercise in sculpture. In the meantime, this studio proved to be his meditation place and he got financial independence partially. J. Swaminathan, who had already got the studio, asked Himmat to work in the studio offered to him. Himmat Shah readily accepted. Later in the beginning of 1980's when Swaminathan was busy in Bharat Bhavan Bhopal's activities, he handed full studio to Himmat Shah for practicing art. In 1981-82, Himmat Shah received the scholarships of *Garhi* Studios by Lalit Kala Academy, this was studio no 2 (fig. 1.20). In the conversation with Ira Chaudhary, when the researcher asked her about Himmat Shah, she was forthright in admitting her admiration for him, "He is my son". (Singh, 2016)

### **1.2.8 Garhi Studio: As a Bohemian**

Himmat Shah at last found a place where he could work independently and without any anxiety. This would not have been possible at any rented studio or a house. At that time, the atmosphere of the studio was very quiet and in another studio Shankhon Chowdhury, Ira Chaudhuri, Krishna Khanna, Ghulam Rasool Santosh, Mrinalni Mukherjee, Umesh Verma, Manjit Baba etc. worked. Later Paramjit Singh, Arpana Kaur, Latika Kutt, Devaraj, Dattatraya Apte, Subodh Gupta, Kalicharan Gupta, P. Daroj, Surinder Chadha, K. S. Kulkarni were allotted the space in the *Garhi* Studio. In this tradition later on Ved Nayar, Gogi Saroj Pal, Pramalya Singh, Jayant Gajera, Devidas Khatri, Asurvedh, Suresh Kumar, Kumud Mohinder, Meenakshi Rajendra, Bhola Kumar, Rajesh Srivastava, Manish Badhoria, Arun Pandit, Raj Kumar Pawar, Annu Ratta, MukulPawar etc. who have been part of this studio and doing their work in the arena of Modern Indian Art. (Kalra, 2016)

Himmat Shah adopted the clay as a medium for his sculptures. A medium that is quiet fragile element and hence has no commercial value, but he preferred it for various reasons. He did not abandon this medium as it was capable to provide him a special status. He was a true practitioner like a monk, who has tried to learn the feel of soil; understand its nature and learn how to live with it. He has listened to the heartbeat of the soil to identify its temperament and plasticity, in order to judge the

richness and hidden potentials of the soil. He experimented to see the impact of temperature on the different kind of soil. He saw what kind of color come out when we bring oxide colors and many chemicals into our use on the clay surface during firing. He also experimented on silver or gold foil on the surface of terracotta to get a significant impression. The ordeals and success of trials for his art came closer to indigenous pottery traditions. He kept the soil preserved for years to use it for his sculpture. He concluded that no one else had repeated till date in Indian modern sculpture. Mahendru, H. (1994) an art critic, has written essays on Himmat Shah, mentions his inclination towards clay. Quoting the artist, she says, "The last ten years Shah has been trying to establish clay, which has a history of three thousand years as a creative medium. Shah says that I want to make a demarcation line- if a marble man says this cannot be done in marble, but only in terracotta, then only will I be able to claim that terracotta is my medium". 1980s turned out to be a good period for Himmat Shah and his work was appreciated and was bought by the art lovers. This decade his work was included in the group exhibition at the Visual Arts Center Ahmedabad. In 1982, his work was sent to London for the Festival of Indian Exhibitions. In the same year, Roopankar Museum, Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal staged an exhibition of his work. He also showcased his one man show of drawing in Garhi Studio in 1982. In 1983-85, he was given the Fellowship for Outstanding Artists scholarship by the Govt. of India. In 1988, he received the Honor of the *Sahitya Kala Parishad*, New Delhi. His work was included in the 'Timeless Art' exhibition organized by the Times of India Group, Mumbai in 1989. All these activities kept the artist within Himmat Shah alive and motivated.

E. Alkazi is a renowned personality in the world of Visual Arts and Theatre in Delhi. His gallery 'Art Heritage' provided the platform to many artists who could demonstrate their talent in the field of art and culture. He gave the platform to Himmat Shah to demonstrate his skill. In the 1980s, E. Alkazi organized his one man shows to showcase his artistic creation. In those exhibitions, he found preference to his terracotta's work (fig. 1.21). For this exhibition, the poet and critic Shukla, P. (2006) wrote that "This exhibition of Himmat Shah was opened in the Shreedharni Art Gallery (Triveni Kala Sangam New Delhi) sponsored by the Art Heritage Gallery. Alkazi Sahab himself took care of the display of artifacts with great interest, he thought about the illuminating light on every sculpture, so that every art works could

perform properly. The dramatic element of the works of Himmat Shah came out of it. He was very supportive of the work of Himmat Shah.

Prayag Shukla, while describing that exhibition, wrote that "It was as if anybody entering in the gallery, they assume a garden; a garden of sculpture. Wooden peels were kept on 'faces' in different forms and in the queue. Somehow the sculptures were of all terracotta's, which were fired in the furnace. They really seemed fresh burnt red. The colors of the baked clay were glowing. Some sculptures were covered with gold foils. It was a sculptural garden of the artist Himmat Shah (born 1933), who has been meditating on clay for the last thirty-fourty years.

E. Alkazi provided him the platform of Art Heritage and also helped him financially from time to time (fig. 1.22). That cooperation continued and in 2000 and 2002, he made two more important shows of Himmat Shah. Those exhibitions played an important role in establishing Himmat Shah's terracotta sculptures in the main stream Indian art market.

In the 1990's, Himmat Shah received some of the awards but unlike the 1960's, the intervening periods looked like a little blurry while his work was smoothly moving in the right direction towards its maturity. Himmat Shah repeatedly blamed our Indian modern art and art market for its dirty politics and practices. He was quiet skeptical of the deliberate neglect despite his work and talent. In 1994-96, Govt. of India honored Emeritus Fellowship for his special contribution to Literature and Plastic Arts. In 1996, he had been honored by the AIFACS Award, New Delhi, for his special contribution to the art. Apart from this, his work was sent to various international exhibitions by the Government of India for his work. In 1996 'Roopankar' Contemporary Indian Art-A Collection Festival of Indian Art, Moscow his work was sent and in 1997, 'Yellow Deity': Contemporary Indian Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Ludwig Museum, Budapest, 'Rediscovering the Roots' Contemporary Indian Art, Museo de la Nacion, Lima, Peru and Ninth Triennale-India Seven Artists from the Collection of National Art Gallery (NGMA), New Delhi his work was exhibited.

Apart from this, he staged one man shows in Sakshi Art Gallery Mumbai and, Shahjahan Gallery New Delhi in 1997. His work was included in the group exhibition

at galleries like Rabindra Bhawan, Lalit Kala Akademi, Center of Contemporary Art, I'm Gallery, Art Inc., New Delhi. 1992-94 Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai had been consistently including his work in their group exhibitions.

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for Indian art is considered to be the best for art boom. At that time, an organization named Saffron Art was founded on the international level. This institution focused its attention on selling Indian art at the international level, promising results started coming.

Himmat Shah started thinking about his art and its salability. He decided to start making metal sculpture because of the demand of the market. The sculptor Vipul collaborated to bring Himmat Shah's thinking to the ground reality. Vipul worked with Art Scholarship at *Garhi* Studios and he was a good friend of Himmat Shah. He advised Himmat Shah to shift his base to Jaipur for the production of metal Sculpture. Thomas John Kovoov, a friend of Vipul, had established a foundry 'Studio Sukriti'. Himmat Shah sold the whole studio works of terracotta sculpture produced in *Garhi* studio in 2000 to DAG, Delhi Art gallery only for a meagre 15 Lakh rupees. This action is known as studio sale. He paid the lenders from the money he received and proceeded for Jaipur.

Thomas John Kovoov provided him with a small space in his foundry to begin working, and also helped him to hire a room for living. In the meantime, his material was still in *Garhi*. He was seen travelling regularly and repeatedly between Jaipur and Delhi to nullify the mounting pressure to vacate the *Garhi* Studio. By this time, he had been quite unhealthy and had enough pain in his knees, because of which, he had to walk using a stick. Despite being ill, Himmat Shah did not give up and he cast his sculptures in metal.

In 2003, he sold his art works to an unknown art collector of Mumbai in his first metal sculpture of Rupees 3 lakh. Thereafter, the demand for his metal sculpture increased in the art market. The Saffron Art auction house sold his work till the highest peak of Rupees 69 lakhs. DAG had also included his work in all exhibitions of Manifestations Series, and in 2016, this gallery held a special exhibition of artists of 'Group 1890' which also highlighted the work of Himmat Shah.

In 2003, Himmat Shah was conferred upon 'Kalidas Samman' for his priceless contribution in visual arts by the Madhya Pradesh Government. This award transmitted tremendous energy within Himmat Shah and his reputation rose to a higher level of modern Indian art. Himmat Shah left the Garhi studio. He was felicitated by the Garhi Studio in the 2004 (fig.1.23). On first March 2004 in the presence of art critics like G. Kapur, P. Shukla and R. Karode, the significance, his loyalty towards his art and practice and the time pasted at Garhi studio by Himmat Shah was discussed in quite detail. A renowned photographer who was also invited on this occasion recalled the comments of K. Khanna for his studio. The same studio after Himmat Shah vacated it 'Magician Cave' of Krishna Khanna was reduced to a common man's studio. (Fig. 1.24)

In 2005, Himmat Shah's one-man show "Excavations: Evocations, a terracotta sculpture by Himmat Shah opened on Ananta Art Gallery by the personal contribution of gallery owner Mrs. Mamta Singhania. This was one of the most successful exhibitions of Himmat Shah till date. This exhibition of the terracotta sculptures was entirely made by keeping the concept of 'found object' centered at the center. This show was curated by Karode, Roobina (2005). She wrote the catalog of this show. She wrote, "Encounter with the array of metaphoric objects in terracotta, are at once strange and familiar both in the memory and imagination. They carry further the memory of retrieved fragments as though from the site of an excavation, (the artist was born close to the pre-historic site of Lothal in Gujrat) or later, the experience of the nomad, who with minimum possessions, wanders the Land, looking for signs of solace, sustenance, and ecstasy.

In the year 2004, with the support of Mamta Singhania, Himmat Shah bought a house in Vrindavan Colony, Jaipur. He said, "I did not even dream that I would have a roof owned by me". Then he bought another house for his sculpture studio. This year (2016-17) can be considered the most successful year for his art life. This year, the popularity of his art practice in Indian art scenario reached its crescendo. In 2016 his retrospective show 'Hammer on Squire' held at KNMA, New Delhi. In this exhibition (fig.1.25), more than 300 artworks had been exhibited representing 50 years of artistic life. His art work was taken seriously by the art world. In the same year, he was honored with the life time achievement award by the



'Legends of India', the institution of State Govt. of Delhi (fig.1.26) for his contributions to visual arts, he was also honored by the Department of Youth and Culture of Bihar Government. In 2017, he was honored by India Today Group, New Delhi for his best solo show of the year.

For the last two decades, Himmat has been living in Jaipur. At 84, he is still active as an artist. Now that the body does not match his enthusiasm his ambition to become a leader of modern Indian art is still rankling in his head. A spirit and unbridled fire that ferried him from *Lothal* to Delhi in the 1960's is still very active. His desire to shine as the biggest and brightest star in the sky of Indian art is motivating. He is on the way of competing with his best contemporaries. He is ready for extreme explorations for which he was best known in *Garhi Studio* (fig. 1.27).

When he left home at the age of 10, he was all alone and empty-handed, but today, while he has everything, he is still alone. Perhaps this vacuum is his inner strength. A verse of Saint Kabir, which is very close to Himmat Shah's philosophy of life, is, "Leaving to look at everyone, learning to look at yourself/ It's possible all is wrong, just you are right...", defines his persona. (Jeet, 2012) (Jeet, 2012)

### **1.3 A REVIEW OF THE LITRATURE**

Review of literature is the starting hierarchy of any research through which the available evidence on the detailed history of the subject is possible. This study introduces us to the objective reasons of the subject matter. They also let us see which aspects have been discussed at least or not, and which dimensions have to be researched. The researcher has realized that the art of Himmat Shah should be seen in the broader perspectives of modern art. Therefore, in the Review of Literature, the aspects of Indian art have also discussed in historical context; the birth of modern Indian art. In these references, the published articles by art critics, artists, journalists and those who is associated with them, the researcher has tried to keep those interpretations for this research and broader study.

The art of India is a vital cultural expression of India. It is intertwined with assertions of nationalism, the equation of modernization and westernization, and a desire to preserve the cultural heritage of India in the backdrop of colonial cultural intervention. Indeed, nationalism and nationalist art is represented by the Bengal

School to bring cultural consciousness in all Indians. But one problem they could not resolve was the contradiction between the modern sense of alienation and the cultural cohesion expected of a nation engaged in an anti-colonial struggle.

The cultural crisis pushed all artists and thinkers of that time to identify the sources which provide sufficient imageries and practices to resolve the socio-cultural alienation and encounter colonial legacy. It is visible that the intelligentsia of India has devised the metaphor of 'Indigenous modernism' in 1960's and later 'Primitivism' as a cultural discourse of progressive India. Primitivism was the global phenomenon of 20<sup>th</sup> century which was based on non-western sources, helped Indian artists to search their roots. In this context artist Himmat Shah has tried to excavate his ancient connections to incorporate the debates of Indigenous Modernism and Primitivism.

### **1.3.1 Ancient History: Lothal and His Childhood**

Himmat Shah is a well-known modernist sculptor of India who was born in '*Lothal*' in July 1933. Lothal was the important part of Harappa Civilization. Since the discovery of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in 1921-22, the Indus valley has been known to be the cradle of one of the earliest Civilizations of the world. The renowned excavation 1953-54 by the Rao, S. R. (1979) confirmed that Rangpur was the true Harappa settlement. At the same time, it raised some new problem necessitating a village to village survey of *Saurashtra* which culminated the discovery of more than forty Harappan sites, the chief among them being Lothal. Now it is the part of Gujarat State in India. (Rao, 1979)

Lothal occupies an important place in the study of pottery and ceramic art of the Indian sub-continent in the protohistoric period as it has forged new links with the post-Harappan chalcolithic culture by evolving a new ceramic ware from the degenerate Harappan wares as in Rangpur. The pottery and ceramic wares of Lothal can be broadly divided into two groups namely, the Harappan Wares and the Associate Wares, the former comprising the Red Wares, the Buff-slipped wares, the Buff Wares, the green wares and the gray wares, all of which are sturdy and made of fine clay. Both in form and surface-treatment they are indent with the red and grey wares of Indus valley. Lothal also provide the missing links between Chalcolithic

cultures of central India and the Deccan on the one hand and the Harappa culture on the other in the form of the black-and-red wares which occurs in small quantities in all the phase of occupation.

Another important contribution of Lothal is that is developed a new style of painting known for its realism and grace uninhibited by the conventionalism of the Harappan style which also flourished side by side. As a provincial variant the new style enriched the Harappan Culture in its mature phase. This phase indicates the rich tradition of pottery and ceramic which emphasize the technical as well as aesthetical evolution of the time and people. It is evident that clay has been used via different methods and techniques to deliver various forms. The Slip, Slab, Throwing, Modeling, Wash and Kilns etc. method has been used to shape a pottery and after that the several firing processes to get different type of surface and color. It has been well decorated from geometrical and semi-naturalistic pattern. (Rao, 1985)

Since late 1970's, Himmat Shah has started making sculptures from clay, ceramic and plaster. He has generated his sculpture from pottery tradition by utilizing Slip, Slab and Throwing techniques. In order to make experimentation, he has developed these techniques while working with terracotta and ceramics according to time and situation. Here, the love, admiration and inspiration about Lothal is clearly evident in his terracotta's sculpture, especially in his 'Heads' which featured as archaeological excavations of pottery. His sculpture in terracotta returned to these pristine forms of ancient jars from 2000 BC, sometimes with pitted surfaces of holes, sometimes introducing ancient hieroglyphs. He also introduced masks in terracotta inspired from tribal masks. Every piece is original and unique, unlike the ancient remains. Pandey, A. (2008) said in an interesting twist of fate, "Himmat Shah was born in Lothal, one of the richest artifacts yielding sites of the Harappan civilization. Over the time, his work has grown to include diverse aspects of materiality and clay became the important medium of his career, helped him to bring out maximum possible expression in his sculptures". (Pandey, 2008)

Himmat shah always remembers his childhood memory of Lothal, how he spent his time in the surroundings of Lothal. Karode, R. (1998) writes that Shah explains about the "*gaon ka talaab*" he frequented as a young boy growing up in Lothal, who was afraid of water, would sit on the edge and watch his friends swim,

their heads first disappear then re-emerging from beneath the surface. ‘... The head seen above water, without the body was hypnotic in its elusive presence, ‘...Himmat Shah also spoke of the ‘*keede makode*’ he used to see insects crawling over the dried up lake beds. It was the scrawl they left behind that fascinated him as they dug through the caked earth to enter its ensuing fertile entrails. This memorized pattern was what he replicated across the surface of numerous terracotta works, endowing them with a cartographic lexicon. (Bhardwaj, 2011)

What was among the world’s most ancient and vigorous civilization? Observing with great curiosity, the aesthetic lives of the people whose ancestors had once been a part of glorious society. Himmat Shah had inherited all that Lothal could offer him. (Chishti, 1966) In an interview with the researcher Himmat Shah says, “His grandfather, a Marwari Jain, migrated from a place called Jhalawar in Rajasthan to Lothal in Gujarat. He had married a Gujarati woman and settled down.” (Singh, 2015) His grandfather was a *nagar seth* in the village of Lothal, the site of the major archeological excavation. In fact, the site virtually overlapped with their lands. Himmat was in and out of school- once he ran away from home to search his inner self in the mountains of Girnar. (Kapur, 2000) The attachment and detachment from one space to another, is one of the important features of Himmat’s search which helped him to identify the appropriate metaphor for the mindset and practices of the people.

In 1980’s, he spent six months in the *Thar* Desert of Rajasthan and created several site specific sculptures to utilize waste wood logs. During this travel, he came in touch with folk and tribal art of Rajasthan. He says, “He made his first ceramic piece at *Thar* Desert and that piece acted as a catalyst in making me create one ceramic work after another.” (Tankha, 2016) It is evident that the search of appropriate language kept him at the forefront of several cultures and civilizations in order to build a perfect vocabulary for his creation.

### **1.3.2 Lothal to Ahmadabad and Baroda**

In his early childhood, Himmat Shah moved to Bhavnagar as a young boy and studied at Gharshala (Bal-Mandir), a school affiliated to Dakshinamurti, the intellectual and cultural center of the nationalist renaissance in Gujarat. At Gharshala,

Himmat found his initiation into a practice through the artist-educator Jagubhai Shah even before joining the C. N. College of Art Ahmadabad, J. J. School of Art in Bombay, and then moving on to Baroda on a government cultural scholarship from 1956 to 1960. (Singh, 2015)

The 1950's and 60's saw the development of a rich and varied Indian modern through the assimilation of the successive vocabularies of the modernist movements of Europe and America into regional perceptions and ontology. This was particularly fostered by the founding of regional centers of art headed by artists with articulate ideologies. The Baroda School of Art and the Madras College of Art are two such schools. The art division of the M.S. University of Baroda, initiated by the lyrical Bengal school derived modernism of the artist N.S. Bendre (1910-90), the sculptor Sankho Chaudhary (1916-2006) and K. G. Subramanian (1924-2016), developed an exciting artistic and art critical voice in the 60s, which veered away from internationalism and abstraction to figuration and regionalism. (Debashish, 2005)

This school has produced many successful art practitioners such as Bhupen Khakkar (1934-2003) Gulam Mohammed Sheikh (b. 1937), Geeta Kapur (b.1943). G. R. Santosh (1929-97), Jyoti Bhatt (b. 1934), Ratan Parimoo (b. 1936), Nagji Patel (b. 1937), Himmat Shah (b. 1933), Mrinalini Mukherjee (b. 1949), Adi Davierwala (1922-1975), Pилоo Pochkhanawala (1923-1986), RaghavKanerla (1936), Latika Katt (b. 1953), Dhruva Mistry (b. 1957) G. Ravinder Reddy (b. 1956), Balbir Singh Katt (b. 1939) and others. These students have shown their mettle in the modern Indian Art during 1960's, 70's and 80's.

Himmat Shah is one of them who have shown a strong ambition to incorporate Indigenous modernism as a language of expression. In an interview to the researcher, Naina Dalal told, "The attitude of Himmat Shah was not as like a normal student. He was the favorite student of Bendre and appeared very much mature. He always preferred to paint the big size of paintings with different types of tools, techniques and colors." Vinod Shah said that he believed in painting as a free soul without any boundaries." (Singh, 2015). That was the time when his practice was based on synthetic cubism and further moved towards minimalism. It is observed that the 1960's and 80's, dominated by the western modernist movement like Cubism,

Expressionism and Surrealism etc, profoundly inspired the Indian moderns and this phenomenon is also evident in Himmat Shah's creations.

In 1961, Himmat Shah left Baroda for Ahmadabad. There, he was searching an appropriate job to continue his creative desire. It was the time when he was struggling for the question of his existence! During his stay in Ahmadabad, he developed the technique of the "singed paper" as he sat idle in an office waiting for a friend to arrive. All he needed was a cigarette and a paper; the pale brown marks of the burnt paper pleased him. For his art, Shah took inspiration from everything and anything around him. Simply, just like burnt paper collage, he never knew that those patterns will become works of art. Here the materiality of paper is appearing as a monolith sensual form in contrast to the irregular charred contrasts. (Arora, 2016) in this concern D' Mello, (2016) says, "At times suggestive of sculptural volume and monumental scale, these intimate compositions are among his early modernist formulations to arrive at pure form layering, superimposing burnt paper, and juxtaposing it with pieces of colored paper." His burnt paper collages are the finest examples of how a treatment can lead to creating a piece of art. Perhaps it offers an insight into his disinterest in the conventional styles of modern art-making.

### **1.3.3 Himmat Shah in Delhi**

It was July 1962, when Himmat Shah reached at Delhi with empty pocket by the help of artist friend Balkrishn Patel. He was welcomed by J. Swaminathan and Amabadas, later on he became the core member of 'the Group 1890'. The members of the group were Jeram Patel, Raghav Kaneria, Himmat Shah, Rajesh Mehra, Ambadas, Gulam Mohammad Sheikh, Jyoti Bhatt, Balkrishn Patel, Jagdish Swaminathan, and others. This group was organized by the painter, thinker J. Swaminathan.

Bordewekar, S. (2011) writes that "At that time, the basic nature of the Indian art was not very different from that of the European art but the group has projected the idea of Indigenous Modernism. The 'Group 1890' had its first exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi, in 1963 which unfortunately also happened to be its last. But the exhibition had a promissory note underlying its outer failure: it succeeded to project some talented young artist who later came to prominence and has been dominating the Indian art scenario ever since". In this concern, Sen (2016)

questioned, why did this movement of pioneers, so important in its time, faded out? The artists found support in the writings of art critic Richard Bartholomew who noted this movement was against 'isms'. They lost out to posterity because they were individuals who went their own way, searching new, elemental and raw expression. As expressed by Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh, they believed essentially in "the primacy of the creative impulse over forces of rationalism". This group has advocated the importance of individual assertion as a key of artistic expression.

The late 19th Century, in the writing of the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, who reacted against the systematic and rational character of Hegel's philosophy and instead insisted on the distinctiveness of personal situation. This was the rise of individualism and so, it created an atmosphere to triumph the aspects of freedom in any possible manner. Read, Herbert saw the essence of individual independence in tribal people and said, "I believe, art is essentially individualistic in its origins that the work of the individual artist comes into existence before it is adopted as a social symbol or as part of a communal system of symbolic signs". It has been witnessed that individualistic thinking occupied as the core component of Post-War art and it had been strongly evident in Indian art after 1950's.

During 1966-67, Himmat Shah visited France through the cultural scholarship provided by Govt. of India. He was able to see the master works of Western Art Movements and interacted with several artists. He became assured that individual impulse and its conversion into art is one of the basic phenomena of his art practices. He has strongly adopted this aspect to reflect his inner self. Bhumika, P. (2016) writes that Himmat Shah is "free-spirited". He didn't like academic constraints and his art took him places, quite literally. He truly imbibed the Bohemian spirit. Despite living like a nomad, he truly gathered and took from all places whatever he could absorb in his art. During the Ahmadabad Mural and Silver Painting Series, Himmat Shah fully adopted and practised the theory of natural freedom where the role of sensory perception, particularly vision, in the thought processes of individual is rarely significant.

In this regard Lalit Kala Studio of Garhi, New Delhi, became the mediation place for Himmat Shah's creativity. In 1975, Himmat Shah participated in a ceramic camp at *Garhi* Studio. He said that "Two years later I was allotted space there. Since

my financial condition was bleak it was a heavenly invitation. With the peaceful environment, *Garhi* studio was just the right place I was looking for. I worked there almost for 25 years, gave my best years. And *Garhi* also gave me a chance to experiment with clay and develop a unique vocabulary in terracotta". (Tankha, 2016) In an interesting experience Karode, R. (1998) writes, "A dusty smell prevails as one walks into the present studio, stepping on the remnants of fallen plaster, clay and wax that cake the floor. His studio has the character of a museum or storehouse of objects and materials (bags of clay and plaster, bottles of resin, wax, acid, and polish, stone boulders and pebbles, a bunch of plaster molds) but functions more like a laboratory where he tests out new ideas and devices new equipment to smoothen his artistic operation. I am particularly fascinated by the six large boxes of tools that resemble ones used by blacksmith, dentist, or surgeons, and are used by him to treat, shape and mark-make on clay. His involvement with the process is totally for his creativity extends from making to tool making as well".

Painter Khanna, K (1980) remembers, "His studio is a storehouse of objects, he has picked up and which outgrow their use and found their way to junkyard and the rubbish heap." Himmat Shah spent more than two decades in *Garhi* Studio where he experimented on his ideas vigorously. The modernist mindset helped him to experiment materials and forms in a free manner. The *Garhi* Studio is actually, the phase of consolidation over a medium and form. The studio has provided his requirements that were space and atmosphere and he was able to experiment his famous terracotta sculptures. These sculptures become iconic creation in the context of contemporary Indian Art. Here, his ideas branch out in different ways that were based on Individual assertion and experimentation, the core philosophy for his creations.

The significant element about a number of Indian artists from a rural background is that, as first generation urban dwellers, they make an astonishing evolution to a modernist vocabulary. They transpose the village economy of objects their simultaneous spare and decorative aesthetics into modernist formalism. In the carryover from the village to the town and city, the everyday objects of use, the humblest objects with sacred and profane values obtain a new content and status. Vice-versa, it is visible that the modernist forms have acquired unique iconography



for the cultural encounter. In this context, Himmat Shah always pin-pointed that he sang and danced and relished festivities from childhood indulged by his grandmother, he compulsively made objects of play in his home and courtyard. One might ask in the case of a natural artist like Himmat Shah; at which point does the universal language of significant forms gifted by the automatic magic of the primordial hand become an authorial impress, the artist's scripture? The modernist aestheticism reveals in the making of something out of nothing, Himmat for his part valorizes what he sounds and manifests regarding beauty '*Main Saundarya ko Keval Abhivyakt Karta Hun*'. He offers a semi-mystical rendering of the creative act found in oriental aesthetics and referenced by the modernist who sees the artist as a force of nature... it's free spirit.

Himmat Shah always said that "I like everything natural". But perhaps more than that, Shah is out to highlight the beauty of terracotta as a natural act of clay. Ratnottama, S. (2000) indicates in this concern that Himmat Shah always manifested his individual affirmation, she says, "According to the artist, art has always been his inner necessity and cannot be served by any external function". (Jayaraman, 2016) Himmat says, human experience is relevant to art and art is about the relationship, making connection and communication. What we perceive first comes to us in visible form. For the artist too, the outward comes to him only through his perception. For him, drawing makes a reciprocal relationship between the outer presence and the mind's inner elevation, blending the subject and object. The artistic creation is a natural process for human being which manifests that an individual is extremely important for production of art work. Singh, S. S. (1982) has written one of his exhibition catalogs, he says, 'Himmat Shah believes that the artist is an enigma, a person whose work is only successful, if it is the product of total "Samadhi", i.e. complete concentration. The artist is a Brahma, his purpose is to search for new and yet newer form of creations'.

Himmat Shah does not proceed from any given notion of space and time. Here is a kind of excavation of an archaeologist, there is a feeling of celestial movement, and here is gripping against inhuman constraints, a striving for life and human dignity, a yearning for freedom, here is the courage of a diver and his findings "a constant creative search". (Shukla, 1990) "Shah is never predictable, and deeply

ironic in the manner in which he uses his sculptures to interpret the complex contemporary visual field," as Critic Sinha, G. (2007) once wrote about his work. (Bhuyan, 2016) Himmat Shah's work does not appear to judge the human condition. Instead, it appears to present its existential state, through terms that defy simple definition'. If one stands back to take a telescopic view of his body of work, it would probably fall in the areas of an enigma, domestically and sheer whim. His mind is very delicate and sensitive; it can't accept any kind of dominance. Karode, R. (1998) writes that "Floating in timelessness, his little fragile world can easily be disrupted by an outsider's intrusion. Living within this subjective mood, he drives to mold his vision into his work." She again explores his attitude and writes, "I like my solitude, sugarless tea, and daydreams," says Shah casually, finishing a smile, but I realize that it is extremely important to understand the working of Himmat's mind, which reveals his attitude to both his life and his art. He makes strong demands for himself. There is a need of constant self-examination. He is often preoccupied as if listening to his own inner voice---- a quietness that has distanced him from the world.

Aesthetics is the only concern of the artist who doesn't believe in psychology, political ideology or even social concern – least of all, the market. Art, as far as Himmat Shah is concerned, must serve only one purpose: to elevate you, lift you about the ground, with a sense of joy. 'Creative act' he insists, is the result of physical labor, not of mind". (Sengupta, 2000) When Himmat Shah says "I make art when I'm in no mind," then the Dadaist philosophy of 'Anti Art 'or negating mainstream philosophy is strategically propagated by him. He again propagates that none of his works are inspired by anything; "I did what I felt like". (Pattnaik, 2016)

The philosophy of negation is visible in Himmat Shah's art and on the basis of that he tries to forget the romantic association of making the Indian nation. He tries to search and create his own belief of thinking and recreating art. Himmat Shah is such a person who wants to create a world of his own around him and peacefully stay there. That's why he says, "My work is the only world I know and it is the only world I can live in. (Popli, 2016)

Sometimes he argues and quotes the words of Pablo Picasso; "When I was the child, I wanted to draw like an adult, when I become an adult, I always wanted to draw like a child." So he doesn't believe the role of the mind in creation but the act of

body like the child is very important for humans. He says, "I want to perform as a child to create art forms with my hands. Where there are no dialectics- no paradoxes only form that you can consider as a soul. There is no such division between form and content, only realizations!" (Shukla, 2004)

A very long time ago, Aristotle had justly observed that art remained ahead of its theories. The creator is intuitive; the work comes spontaneously from his hands according to his own rules. All sciences, all research, all perceptions cannot replace the naive certainty of the artist. For Himmat Shah, there is no deterministic equation to art; cause and effect relationship are not so easy to detect here. Here, the realization of an individual is significant in all means. For searching new, elemental and raw expression with a Bohemian spirit, Himmat Shah's practices narrate a constant creative search which is based on the primacy of the creative impulse over the forces of rationalism, where child-like play is extremely important, evolving philosophy- art is the result of physical labor, not of mind, indicates an enigmatic world where he lives in.

#### **1.3.4 Experimentation in Form, Content and Material**

After visiting several libraries, gallery and web-portals, it seems that Himmat Shah was studied and interpreted by a very few art critics and historians. During and after his retrospective show 'Hammer on Squire' in KNMA, New Delhi, some of the young art critics, journalists, bloggers etc. have shown an interest in throwing some light on his oeuvre and his art career. Though it is repetitive, yet it opens up an arena of discussion on artist Himmat Shah's contribution in the backdrop of Post-Independence Indian Art. An eminent art critic Kapoor, G. (2000) has focused on a wider argument of Himmat Shah's Works. In an article in Art News Magazine of India in 2002, she writes, "Modernist aesthetics has produced many avatars of the early twentieth-century idea of 'significant forms.' The ideas flourished on account of the ideological claim of universality by the moderns; on account of the more conducive claim for a universal language of forms to which artists happily subscribes. What is privileged in the modernist vision is a transformation of material into form via a process of metaphorical condensation, therefore, the insistence on the materiality of the transformational process itself rather than on the consequent (cultural) meaning".

In the theory of 'Formalism' propounded by Clive Bell (1914) in the backdrop of Modern Western Art, he argued, "The starting point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion. The objects that provoke this emotion, we call it work of art. . . . This emotion is called the aesthetic emotion; and if we can discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be the central problem of aesthetics. We shall have discovered the essential quality in a work of art, the quality that distinguishes works of art from all other classes of objects". For Bell, C. (1914) the quality that distinguishes a work of art is a significant form. To emphasize this narration, he himself question and answer, "What quality is shared by all objects that provoke our aesthetic emotions? What quality is common to Sta. Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero Della Francesca, and Cezanne? Only one answer seems possible-significant form".

Being a formalist, Himmat Shah has used the arguments of 'Significant Form' which helps him to improvise and experiment his ideas into art form. Kapoor, G. (2000) identifies and opens-up the journey of Himmat Shah and pin-points his transformation into a modernist creator who started in 1950's till date and, has moved from village to metropolitan city like New Delhi and abroad also. So his journey consolidates and juxtaposes human conditions in various ways that can be witnessed in the form of drawings, paintings, collage, mural, and sculptures. It seems that his working methodology was not lenient and single-faced but has multiple devises due to his enormous involvement in practising art. Pandey, A. (2008) writes, Shah demonstrates an exceptional ability to see possibilities in unusual forms and is immensely ironic in his own representations of the world as he watched it. He has received rave reviews for his rendering of the inputs he gathers from the complex and multi-layered visual field that human beings are surrounded by'. These surroundings helped Himmat Shah to reflect the metaphorical elements, through the process of his work; fragments of civilization, the trace of the human hand, cycles of possession and dispossession of objects meant for use and pleasure. It is, therefore, worth traversing from the metaphor to metonymy and the aesthetics of the displaced part.

In this concern, Kazmi, N. (2004) has elaborated on Kapoor's version, she writes, "The nucleus of Shah's artistry is not his esoteric, but his unique style to decipher the maiden beauty from a common day to day object. By choosing primitive art as his weapon to express a thought, he does not confine his art to some specific genre or period; rather it imbibes the quality of post- modern pastiche". She again writes, "We cannot divide Himmat's art form into form and content. In his context both are identical. He presents himself as an avant-garde and can't pull-down in any category. He continuously tries to enforce himself as a radical inventor, who is not following anybody to justify his uniqueness". To adopt the aspects of individualistic assertion, Himmat Shah has exposed the theory of significant form in his own manner which enables him to perform as true inventor towards modernism to post-modernism.

His painter colleagues Khanna, K. (2007) writes that Himmat Shah is a self-reliant practitioner and always tried to build up an appropriate methodology to invent a body of art. He also pinpoints Himmat Shah's free-spirited notion of thinking and exploring the methods of art. He writes that Himmat's is open sensibly and alert to the mystery that surrounds all things. Nothing is trivial, nothing is junk. His studio is a storehouse of objects, he has picked up and which outgrow their use and found their way to the junkyard and the rubbish heap. Old bottle, beats of metal, knives of all sorts, wires, ropes, pots and pans, all resuscitated and gave a new status coexisting happily with clay, plaster, pigments, chemicals, Head at various stages in the making. All includes him, covered with a fine white dust. It is more like a magician's cave than a conventional studio. There's an air of expectancy, of something in the making, something about to be, and surely all the things which have been made were events in the silent concert of seemingly inconsequential things converted by the alchemy of his love. This alchemy released a restless energy.

From 1980's to 2002, the *Garhi Studio* became his cave; a lab for unlimited experimentation. He stayed there for more than two decades which enabled him to make a constant creative search to find-out the possibility of a material; he is well known for his clay sculptures. What was there...? This studio came in existence in 1976 when Sankho Chaudhary was the President of LKA, New Delhi. The studios serve professional artists and are maintained by the Lalit Kala Akademi. Prominent

sculptor Kumud Mohinder says, “Rural charm of Garhi encourages creativity. The complex provides a peaceful and green space where artists could work in liberty and give shape to their creativity. A sculptor needs a large space and to get such a space in Delhi is difficult. (Mojarto, 2016) Himmat Shah has also realized it which provided him a breathing space to experiment with full of joy. He has risked much more by using a medium which is exhaustible and a technique which demands sensitive and careful handling. By remaining true to his commitment to an art that ignores the strategies of the art market & the materialism of the art industry and being confined to his studio *Garhi*, he appears like a figure of adolescent unease, but, listening to him, one begins to discern the depth of the truth he utters. Shah remains a committed professional, true to his tools and occupational skills, maniacally obsessed with every detail that concerns his technique, which he has developed and individualized to an extreme degree, along with aesthetic concepts and ideas that flow from his creative being. (Kazmi, 2004)

In the catalog of his Exhibition, Shukla, P. (1989-90) has written that ...” Here is a kind of excavation of an archaeologist, there is a feeling of celestial movement, and here is gripping against inhuman constraints. Striving of the life and human dignity, yearning for freedom, here is the courage of a diver and his findings are a constant creative search”.

This methodological and ideological development pushed him to transform his language from painting to sculpture. Though Shah is seen primarily as a sculptor, his initial training as a painter cannot be overlooked. Interestingly, in some of his works, the researcher deciphers his attempt to amalgamate the three- dimensional with the two- dimensional, creating in the process unique artworks. His sculpture foregrounds the question of rural visual culture coalescing, or being brought to coalesce, with the modern urban preoccupations of design and art. (Sheikh, 1996) Himmat Shah's work combines the abstraction with the local vernacular anecdotes, observations, and materials, most times transforming everyday objects into meditative icons with a variety of actions performed on and with them. His early drawings, sculptures, and reliefs incorporate a dense clustering of simple geometric forms and mythic and archaic symbols within their surfaces. His art presents a coming together of cultures, artistic traditions, and contemporary life. In his creations, one will witness cones,

spheres, mounds of various kinds and sizes, ant hills, bee hives, the eye of the mountain, temples, and flags, cylinders, birds, real and imaginary animal forms and so on. (Pattnaik, 2016)

Sinha, G. (2007) narrates in her book that Himmat Shah's leading experiments are not restricted to scale; they also permeate his understanding of historical time and space. If Himmat engages the remnants of the past with the palpable present, he also encourages and coaxes out other narratives from the detritus of the earth's surface. Understanding of Himmat Shah is rooted in tradition as well as western innovation. One of the important Delhi based young art critic and curators has written in his blog 'By All Means Necessary', he has pinpointed the association of Himmat Shah with global art practices. He says, 'Himmat Shah's oeuvre, however, does not start or end with Heads'. Taking inspiration from the post-Rodin modernist sculptors like Brancusi, Tatlin, Epstein and many other minimalist sculptors, he has improvised his body of art works. (Johny, 2016)

Kocchar, R. (2016) has written that, Himmat, as a true modernist, has followed the steps of Picasso who has been inspired by the tribal sculptures. Perhaps the Indian artists might not have felt the same need to drink from the same source as Picasso had done, but he definitely has taken a lot of inspiration from the 'heads' that Picasso had done especially in his paintings. Himmat Shah's fabulous terracotta heads, intimidating in size, resplendent with texture are equally evocative of modernism and ancient Indian monolithic traditions. Some have an element of shock, like one head that has a slit on its back, out of which gapes blood-like red paint. So in Himmat Shah's concern, methodology is multilayered, multiphased and multicultural. His vision is wide and eye-witnessed which suited him to develop a unique language of art which has a universal appeal. 'Heads' in his context is an representative imagery which is available in every-where in his creation, the researcher has observed this element both at the face value and the content value which is directly referenced with the Cubism and the Pre-historic African mask and head sculptures. In this context, his deep association with J. Swaminathan is a key point where both are fascinated to rediscovering the 'primitivism' in *adivasi* or tribal art.

Sinha, G. (2007) in her book 'An Unreasoned Act of Being; a Sculpture by Himmat Shah', has written about the vision and working method of Himmat Shah,

particularly on head series, she said that Himmat Shah's suit of large heads comes at the apex of his investigation of the human condition. There is nothing in the Indian sculptural tradition that leads to the making of the head as a discrete sculptural form. But there is a residual broken bust; ancient contemplative Buddha's that line whole floors of India. In this figuration, the head/face gains as a conceptual whole from a superimposition of body parts. As the artist Khanna, K. aptly puts, "The heads is in so many shapes and colors, silently converse both among themselves, and with us. If you stay with them long enough, you might easily be switching roles. You the observer can become the observed in their mute presence". (Shilpa, 2016)

Sengupta, R. (2000) has, in one of her Articles, raised a question as to why else would a sculptor go out to collect marble slabs of every hue and then use them only as pedestal? A piece of clay twisted in the shape of a handle stands on a granite slab, "defining space." An assortment of miniature bottle's stand on a white marble slab; a terracotta head stands on another. The red earth branches out of pink marble, to symbolize we are at the intersection of two centuries. "All these years behind us have only been the ground work: the golden age lies ahead, for us to achieve," Shah seemed to be saying. Himmat Shah always held, "Each medium has its own nature. I have worked with mud, plaster, and bronze whatever I could afford at a given point in my life. You can endow beauty and joy on any material as long as you allow your imagination and your creativity to express the sheer joy of life and living. "Creativity cannot be taught; it is not a skill that can be cultivated. Art appreciation cannot be taught. It is something that emerges from within our self. And I use the word self in a metaphysical sense which is a sum total of experiences-personal, historical and cultural". (Mukherjee, 2015) Himmat says, "I was impressed by means of ready-made objects; they seem to have their personal sculptural qualities. I used to buy as many as possible and maintain them. Some of them used to get rejected by way of my eyes and get thrown away at the same time as those I preferred, I made molds in plaster and slip cast them in clay and after firing them, originated their shape having an extraordinary kind of magic with the transform in the material. The composition of those commonplace items formed the basis of many sculptures. (Singh, 2015)



#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study explores the visual sensibilities of Modern Indian Art. For the researcher, the post-independence Indian art is the narration of individual assertion and identity of Indian mass. It reflects with the help of tools and techniques of the West and the confluence of the peripheral Indian tradition. Himmat Shah is one of the modernists who explore the identity with juxtaposing both; the indigenous tradition and the western experimentation.

This study explores the body of work of Himmat Shah by analyzing the development of his artistic appreciation in the context of Post-Independence Indian art. This broadly entails the life, training and major projects undertaken by him. His career stretched from 1950's till date which has juxtaposed the nuances of modern as well as post-modern art practices. Through the analysis of the art, this research explores the development of his artistic practice in the context of modernity, materiality, nationality and individuality which is the key features of his practice. A thorough study and interpretation of his body of art reveals the journey of his artistic thinking process and aesthetic sensibility in his career.

The period stretching from 1960 to 1970's is the most crucial phase of Indian contemporary art which was seeking an identity of its own in the art scenario. Though there was a strong need for an Indian identity, most of the artists were inspired by the western masters for the convenience. Hence, the overall approach to art became confusing, the content became wider and the visual language became experimental. The Indian artists who were following the path of 19<sup>th</sup> and early half of 20<sup>th</sup> century art movements of Europe could not think and achieve beyond. That has changed later in 1990's with the emerging new generation, economic globalization where information and communication technology reduced the world as a global village.

Himmat Shah, being one of the stalwarts of this transitional period, whose career span between 1950 and till now, a period of search and uncertainty, filled up a lacuna in the sculptural language of Indian art. The thorough and extensive study of his works not only signifies the development of visual forms of artistic expression as a metaphor, but also emphasizes the time and mindset of the people of the

corresponding period. Being a practitioner artist and an art teacher, the researcher will attempt to notice the impact of Himmat Shah's work on the artists of his time.

#### **1.4.1 Why Himmat Shah?**

After Independence Indian leadership at the Centre had decided to have a fresh look at the grassroots in the sphere of the human life of its citizens. Under the Colonial rule almost every core of our society was affected and needed revolutionary steps to rejuvenate the social fabric. Art needed boost for new generation hence required a dynamic policy for cultural affairs under which several colleges were opened and new art curriculum was devised for the young students entering in these colleges. Besides Baroda, Chandigarh and Jaipur are other centres where such colleges were opened with new look art education and disciplined teachers with international exposure.

Baroda school of Fine arts started functioning around 1951 and Jyoti Bhai Bhatt belonged to the first batch of the department. When Himmat Shah joined in 1955 Jyoti Bhai was one of his teachers. Baroda gave a platform where students were encouraged to participate in commissioned works undertaken by senior artists. In college premises as well as outside the University campus the students were asked to give helping hands to their teachers. The students were also encouraged to share their works in national exhibitions, workshops and symposiums. This practice was unique to give a boost to the career of fresh learners in this field. Himmat Shah also utilized this opportunity along with senior as well as his contemporary students who wanted to put India on the national as well as International Art map with their art works. In short this batch was aware of art styles prevalent in our country, indigenous as well as borrowed from the West. These artists were destined to work out on an art language which was acceptable to the masses as well as media which blindly followed the norms set by western oriented interests. Along with others, Himmat Shah had also to start his career from this tight vestige of art making and its practical expression.

Himmat Shah unlike his contemporary did not prefer to join any art college as a teacher on a regular base. He was not prepared to follow any rule or any condition set forth on art production and its expression. He felt like a free bird and wanted to choose his subject and language that suited him rather than the curriculum set by

colleges and art market. He worked independently away from all issues and styles that were practiced by his contemporary artists. Knowing all the trends and techniques he developed his own set of stylistic and technical rules camping in Garhi studio away from the public glare. He experimented and innovated new ways and means to evolve his own art language from every medium though clay was his favourite as it helped him to derive pleasure and satisfaction while working. He did not want himself to be captive of national ethos and traditional taboos and developed his art language from the tribal and folk art of bygone cultures. Rather than being an artist of a particular nation his thrust was to reach at the international art scene from the vintage point of art medium, style and formal structure which was beyond national barriers and periods. It was more humane and global. To attract the interest of this researcher Himmat Shah was seen disliking political philosophies, ideologies, regional issues and different religious flavours. Even human suffering and social causes have no interest for him. Isolating all these propagandas he has struck to his main goal for which he has been selected for close scrutiny. This researcher has been tempted to take up his research project on his vast body of work of art which is uniquely fresh and of international flavour.

In the researcher perception, the personal approach of Himmat Shah towards his art is to reflect his creative power decoding his inner psyche. The language utilized by him has more affinity with the bygone cultures. The tribal art, African and Greek modes are used by him for his inspirations which have International reputed artists like Brancusi, Giacometti, Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso and Henry Moore. Each one has taken these models according to their taste and temperament. Himmat Shah uses these models as metaphor to reflect his Psychological and creative impulse without compromising his individual touch and unique philosophic outlook!

## **1.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

The title of this study is “Juxtaposition of Figurative and Abstract: A Study of Dynamics of Himmat Shah’s Art”. It deals with two distinct characteristics ‘Figurative’ and ‘Abstract’ which the researcher finds employed by Himmat Shah, juxtaposed in his body of art works. The usages of these two components in Himmat’s art resulted from the intellectual circle where social thinkers and artists of that period debated upon the artistic vocabulary for Modern Indian art. A career spanning about

fifty years of his experimentation, appears to help him in combining 'Figuration' and 'Abstraction', in a perfect harmony. This is his personal contribution to the Modern Indian art.

**Figurative** - A term used to describe art which is based on the figure, usually in realistic or semi-realistic terms; also loosely used to describe an artist who paints or sculpts representationally, as opposed to painting or sculpting in an abstract or non-objective manner.

**Abstract/Abstraction-** Abstract means the modification of a natural form by simplification or distortion. Abstraction is the category of such modified images which form and colour are stressed at the expense, or in the absence of, a representational image, also known as non-objective art.

**Juxtaposition-** It is an act of placing visual forms close together or side by side called Juxtaposition. In visual arts, it is also called as co-existence of Form, Content and Material within a conceptual frame.

**Visual Arts-** The arts created primarily for visual perception. Visual arts are considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic purposes and judged for their beauty and meaningfulness, specifically, painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, graphics, and architecture.

**Dynamics-** The pattern or history of growth, change, and development in any concerned field; the motivating or driving forces, physical or moral is called dynamics.

**Aesthetic Sensibility-** Aesthetics is fundamentally a theory of sensible experience and it raises challenging questions about the experience of appreciation. The sensibility provokes us to identify and illuminate the perceptual experiences that these new applications evoke and considering the range of social, environmental and day to day changes which help an artist or sensible human being to develop an aesthetic sensibility.

**Modernity-** 'The Modern' was constantly shifting within the landscape of art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, to be modern could mean a radical

approach to the formal qualities of the artistic medium and the creation of new visual languages through which to assess modernity, or it might refer to the new subjects for art that registered the alienating and exhilarating experiences of mechanized, industrialized, and urbanized life. With the publication of psychologist Sigmund Freud's, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) and the popularization of the idea of a subconscious mind, many artists began exploring dreams, symbolism, and personal iconography as avenues for the depiction of their subjective experiences with the expressive use of color, non-traditional materials, and new techniques and mediums. One of these was photography, whose invention in the 1830s introduced a new method for depicting and reinterpreting the world. The modernity in visual art is a ripe for avant-garde intervention by the artists to take their work in new, unexpected, and "modern" directions.

**Materiality-** It has reappeared as a highly contested topic in the recent art which possessed by something that has a place in the physical world. All things around us have some degree of "materiality", as the physical world is composed of matter. Modernist art practices and criticism tended to privilege form over matter—considering material as the essential basis of medium specificity—and technically based approaches in art reinforced connoisseurship through the science of artistic materials. Materiality helps an artist to create a new meaning and new explanation with artistic exploration.

**Individuality-** Art is the record of human existence which is based on group or individual assertion. During the World War I and II the relevance of individual identity in art has been disregarded. But the avant-garde attitude of artists and the scientific innovation of 19th and 20th has opened up the new arena to the survival of an art and powerfully expressed the universal concern of our time. The individual expression becomes the key factor to create art with a specific stylistic device which should be based on the individual thinking.

**Nationality-** The status of belonging to a particular nation by birth or naturalization; identification as to national origin. The national understanding of a people creates a nationalist a fever which means an identity with the nation and its society. In the Indian context, it doesn't mean to Hindu, Muslim and others but is meant for every people who are the part of Independent India.

**Synthesis-** The combination of components or elements to form a connected whole is synthesis. In visual art, the synthesis combines the mixture of all elements, principles of art and material which finally create a body of art with significant formal appreciation.

**Creative Process-** The brain works through connections of neural pathways. Our experience through senses creates another avenue to develop networks in our body to create new pathways. Those networks continuously become active, they create a type of “memory” And these memories are formed for many- many things; including things we don’t consciously acknowledge. The creative process is intended towards addressing the problem and solving it utilizing conscious and subconscious mind. During the process, the mind synthesized natural pathways, created pathways, day to day experiences with the physical world, rational and logical thinking process. The whole experiences create the path of the creative process.

## **1.6 OBJECTIVES**

1. To explore the development of aesthetic sensibility of Himmat Shah’s art in the context of Post-Colonial Indian Art.
2. To discover the trends of modernity, materiality, individuality and nationalism in Himmat Shah’s art (1975’s to 2002’s).
3. To trace the development of creative process and physical extension of material employed by Himmat Shah.
4. To trace the synthesis of Indian and Non-Indian trends in Himmat Shah’s art.

## **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the main characteristics of Post-Independence Art of India? How Himmat Shah explored the sensibility of the era in his body of art work? What are the core components which indicate that his practice and association to the era are committed to uplifting the artistic sensibility of this era? What are issues the he has identified and executed to transmit the identity of Post-Independence era?
2. How will we define modern Indian art? What are the yardsticks to explore the terms like modernity, nationalism, materiality and individuality in the context of Himmat Shah’s art?

3. How does an artist select the medium for his subject matter? What are the factors which compel him to select his medium? What are the forces which push him to identify the appropriate medium for his selected subject matter? How, in this backdrop you look at Himmat Shah and his body of art? What are the appropriate reasons that made Himmat Shah skip the 2 dimensionality for the 3 dimensionality? Do you think that clay as an appropriate medium has given upper-hand to Himmat shah in shaping his career?

4. How does the vocabulary of Himmat Shah arrive at this stage? Do you think his fusion or inter-connection of different artistic sources indicates his maturity? During the 1950's to 1970's when Indian artist was gripped by the western masters and art movement, how Himmat was encountered it and in which manner he has taken inspiration from them? How pre-historical models drive his creative process and how far has he achieved? Do you think from all these experiments; he has achieved something positive?

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study explores the creativity of Himmat Shah in the arena of Post-Colonial Art of India. In his extended career, he has juxtaposed the variation of ideals, materials and techniques. He crafted his artistic sensibility through his individualistic assertion which reflects in his Drawings, Burnt Paper Collage, Erotic Drawing Series, Silver Painting Series, Ahmadabad Murals, Metal Sculptures, Terracotta sculptures based on Found Objects and Terracotta Heads. The major thrust of the researcher was on the terracotta Heads.

This identity provides the researcher a diverse arena to analyse the artistic exploration of Himmat Shah's practices. The 'Head', in terracotta is the iconic creation of his career which juxtaposed the complete phenomenon of his practice. It is a kind of metaphor which provides the researcher with the complete range of his creativity. The researcher has chosen his terracotta's 'Head' sculpture, done by him during 1975 to 2002.

It is witnessed that post-modern art in the West has revolved around individual experimentation. The majority of the popular masters from the Europe established themselves as an individual by assimilating new sources in their art practices. Quite

independently, they have formulated their working methodology by discovering content, style and materials to give them new meaning and substance to their art. Himmat Shah has also followed this practice and explored his thinking and methodology by his down to earth practical and self-governing assertion.

Himmat Shah is an immaculate draughtsman and the making of his composition is a perfect delight to watch. His lines speak and at times shake the onlooker out of the trivialities of worldly passions and emotions. Similarly, his mural, silver paintings and sculptures are exclusively enigmatic, full of their inner meaning/s. Due to his continuous work; he travels from drawing to painting, painting to sculpture and sculpture to drawing. It is a phenomenal practice which Himmat devolved in the course of time as a method of working.

When Himmat Shah was in the formative phase, searching for a visual vocabulary, the impact of Impressionism, Cubism, Expressionism, Abstract Art and others were noticed influencing the art producing community in the Post-Independent India. At such times, Himmat Shah became the core member of 'Group 1890'. The purpose behind this establishment was to come out of the shadow of the West. It was visible that every artist tried to approach art independently for his creative expression. These explorations are revealed in the arts of Himmat Shah. There are some salient features which are as follows:

- a) It has been concluded that Himmat Shah, throughout his career, has devoted to his personal involvement and honesty for his art. This has resulted in developing his creative impulse.
- b) Being born and spending childhood at Lothal, he remained in touch with the cultural background of the bygone generations and civilizations. This is seen being reflected in his terracotta sculpture.
- c) His contemporary art critics have spoken in great details about his non-attachment with time and cultural angle of the society. Himmat Shah always worked by listening to his inner voice rather than depending on outer references.
- d) The forceful assertion of the present critics and social thinkers is that Himmat Shah is always aware and alert of the use of medium and evolving of the art language. In this light some people refer to him as a modern artist.



- e) Almost all art critics are of the view that Himmat Shah is greatly inspired by modern western artists like Picasso, Brancusi, Paul Klee, Giacometti and others who are greatly inspired by primitive art. Rather than viewing for inspiration, Himmat Shah has gone to the basics.
- f) It is deduced that his body of art works cannot be compared with any of his contemporary artists.
- g) He has lived like a Bohemian who gave more importance to Mother Nature and spontaneous life style. His artistic creation reflects simplicity and freshness to the core.
- h) He cannot be inspired and affected by any religious, political and social equation. Though after independence, we witnessed so many religious riots, regionalism and caste-ridden disturbances but Himmat Shah is unaffected by these factors and has given more importance to internationalism in his art.
- i) His created terracotta sculptures have remained unexplored; just mere references have been given by some art historians. The spiritual content of his terracotta sculpture has also been taken up by some scholars.

In a nutshell, the sculptural art of Himmat Shah has so many possibilities to be explored and the researcher wants to concentrate on his 'Head Series' of terracotta. The major thrust would be to highlight the basic motive behind their creation. Is there any social and political connection interwoven behind the equation? These issues have remained untouched by art historians and social thinkers.

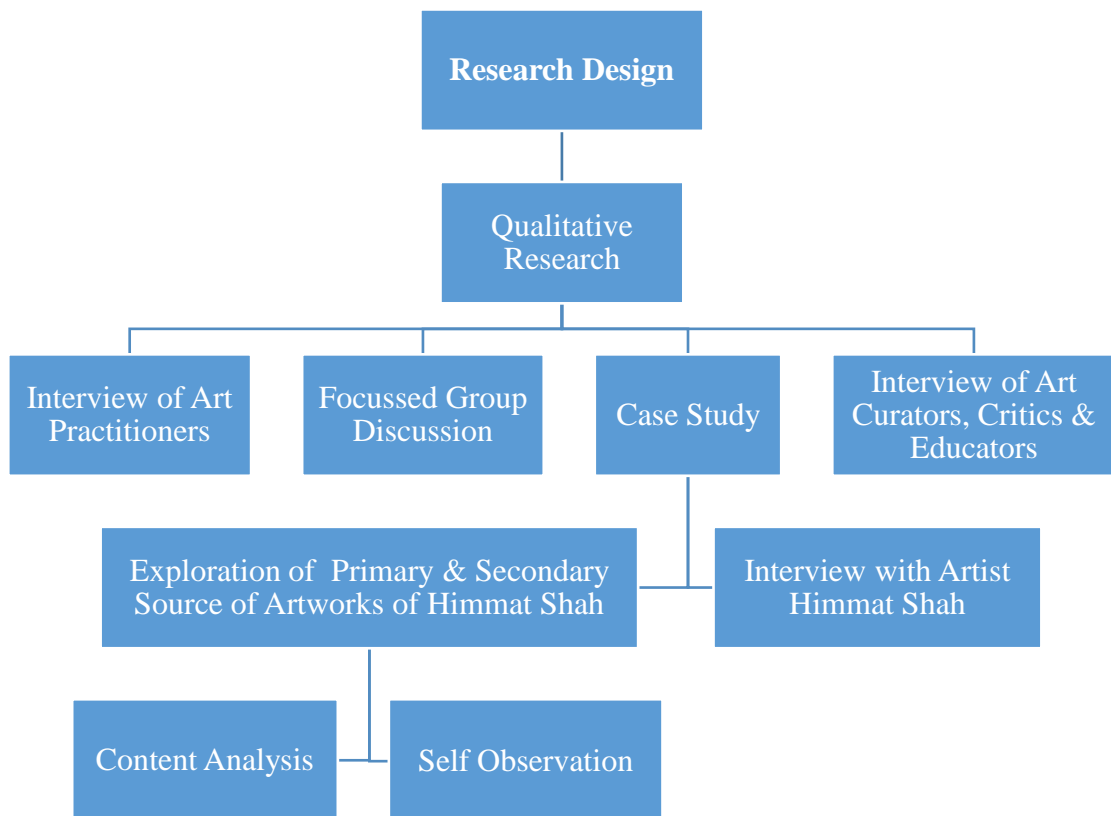
## **CHAPTER II**

### **METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

The development of any object or creature is based on time, society and circumstances. Research plays an important role in understanding this development and moving towards interpreting phenomenon in the right direction. The research tools which the researcher uses to solve the problem are called Research Methodology. Through these elements of research, the researcher creates a structure through which he tries to go at the root of the problem. He describes the situation of the problem and also highlights its possibilities. Therefore, Method and Procedure is a very important process of research through which investigator sheds light on the functioning of its research.

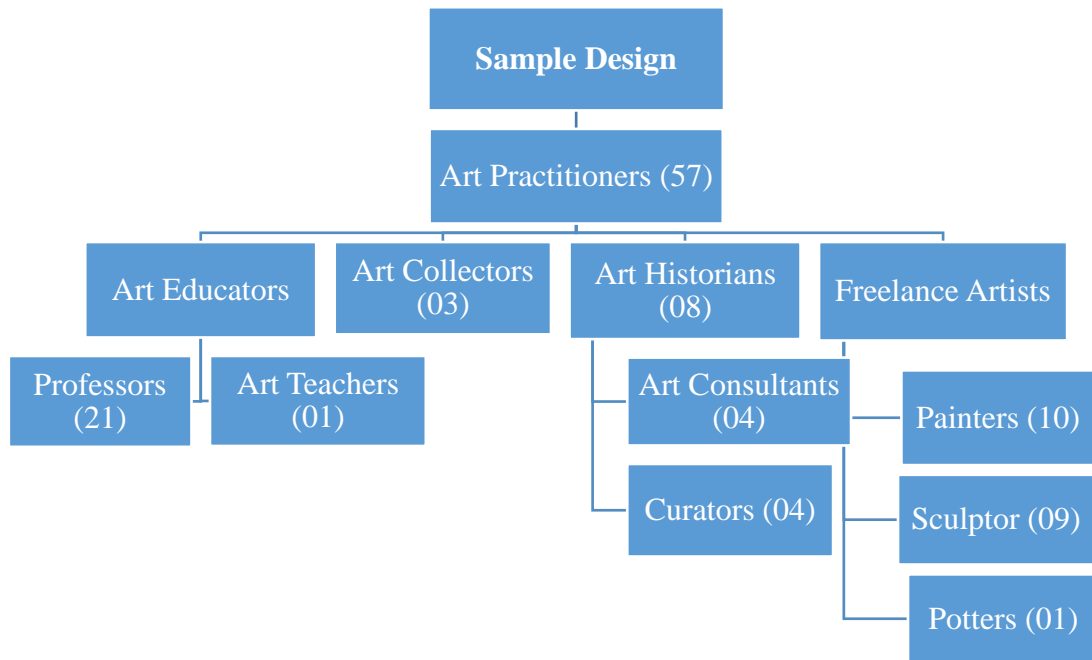
#### **2.1 RESEARCH METHOD**

This research throws a flood-light on the personality and creativity of an important Indian contemporary sculptor and painter named Himmat Shah. It underlines his contribution in the context of Post-Colonial Indian Art and also underscores the importance of various stages of Modern Indian Art development. Simultaneously, it also underlines the creative competition of Himmat Shah from contemporary artists. Due to these elements, this study investigates and describes the creation of living values in Himmat Shah's body of art. In the eyes of the researcher, this is a Descriptive Research and marks a Qualitative Research in the broader context. Being a Qualitative Research in the researcher's view, it explains and explores the research properties or situations. It focuses on the relationship between the event and its effect and also stresses on personal experiences for analysis. Qualitative research exposes the dimensions of subjectivity and objectivity on both sides of the research. This method of research is related to the analysis of the cause and the interpretation of the objective position. In view of all the elements of this research, the Descriptive Research Method has been used for the interpretation of data. This research also includes the design of Exploratory Research and some elements of Historical Research. Therefore, Case study, Sample survey, Content Analysis and Self-observation methods have been used here.



## 2.2 SAMPLE

Research is to determine a group of people or objects that can be studied scientifically. But the study of all the available people or objects is not possible, therefore the researcher selects some individuals/objects according to the nature of their research, which represents the entire population, they are called samples. On the basis of the researcher's view, the sample is the basic unit on which the process of research progresses. This research acknowledges 57 art practitioners, who were selected for data collection. For this, the researcher has used the purposive sampling technique.



## 2.3 TOOLS AND SOURCES OF DATA

Research methodology is an important part of any research to investigate and explore the characteristics of the problem. The methodology is the executive party that provides the appropriate tools to solve the purposes of the research. After the composition of the related hypothesis in the problem of research, it requires the necessary and rational data to be tested. The research tools help the researcher to find-out appropriate data and these data throw full light on the problem of research. The research tools also help the researcher to understand the characteristics of the problem and guide him to make a strategy to solve the problem. When the researcher goes to the field for collecting the data, then he finds two types of data which the researcher calls primary and secondary sources of data. Tools and sources of data are very important to solve the problem of research. In this research, the researcher has used different types of elements which are as follows:

1. Interview Schedule for Art Practitioner
2. Questionnaire for Art Critics, Curators, Art Consultant and Art Educators
3. Observation Schedule and Recording of Focused Group Discussion
4. Interview Schedule for Legendary Artist Himmat Shah
5. Primary and Secondary Sources of Data

### 2.3.1 Interview Schedule for Art Practitioner

The researcher has selected such questions for this interview that relate to the field of general studies of artists. In this segment, questions were raised in the historical context of the art and life of Himmat Shah. The researcher has tried to know their artistic and socio-political contribution to society of the participant artists. The full questionnaire is a part of the appendix but some of the sample questions are given below:

1. How was the modern art born in India? How did it develop during pre and post-Independence era?

Ans.....

2. How do you see the art of Himmat Shah in the context of Modern Indian art?

Ans.....

3. How do you see the expansion of form and content in the art of Himmat Shah?

Ans.....

### 2.3.2 The Interview for Art Critics, Curators, and Educators

The researcher has tried to understand the art of Himmat Shah in the global and the national contexts. Here various types of questions have been made to understand the art of Himmat Shah. The language of his art, its historicity, and its personal and social contexts in making art are some of the important aspects of them. The researcher wants to understand his art in various contexts through the following questions. The full questionnaire is the part of the appendix but some of the sample questions are given below:

1. What are the positive and negative aspects of the Bengal Renaissance in India? To what extent did it help in the development of modernism in the country?

Ans.....

2. What is the significance of personal consciousness and group consciousness in the art and how both of them have influenced the development of the language of art?

3. Ans.....

### **2.3.3 The Observation Schedule and Recording of Focused Group**

The first observation schedule of the focused group on the research by the researcher was completed at the house of Sh. Vikash Kumar (Sr. Assistant Director FICCI (Art and Cultural Dept. New Delhi and Former Curator, NGMA New Delhi), in which 7 members participated. These members included art curator, art consultant, art educator and freelance art practitioner. In a discussion of about one and a half hour, these people expressed their views on various questions and introduced their experiences to the investigator.

The second observation of the focused group was done in the studio of Sh. Basu Biswas (Associate Professor, Apeejay College of Fine Arts, Jalandhar) at Virsa Vihar, Jalandhar. It was attended by 10 members, which included art educators and art critics. In this discussion, about two hours, these people expressed their views on the art of Himmat Shah from various perspectives and make aware to the investigator.

### **2.3.4 Interview Schedule for Legendary Artist Himmat Shah**

The researcher has drafted the following questions to understand the evolution of life and creation of legendary artist Himmat Shah. Historical perspective has been taken into account in the formulation of questions. The investigator has also tried to understand the gradual development of life and their artistic vision. The full questionnaire is the part of appendix but some of the sample questions are given below:

1. It is believed that your work has a great impact on childhood memories. Where were you born and what having you experienced there?

Ans.....

2. You left home during childhood. What was your age at that time would you have been at that time and why did you leave the house?

Ans.....

3. How long did you study at the Bal-Mandir (Dakshinamurty Institute) and how did artist Jagubhai Shah meet you? How did you get the education from them?

Ans.....

4. When did you join C. N. College of Arts and how was your experience?

Ans.....

### **2.3.5 Description of Primary and Secondary Sources**

After the identification of the problem of the research, it requires the essential and rational data to be tested. These data are found in the form of primary and secondary sources. A primary source provides direct or firsthand evidence about an event, object, person, or work of art. Primary sources include historical and legal documents, eyewitness accounts, and results of experiments, statistical data, autobiography, audio and video recordings, speeches, and art objects. Interviews, surveys, fieldwork, and Internet communications via email, blogs and newsgroups are also primary sources. In the natural and social sciences, primary sources are often empirical studies- research where an experiment was performed or a direct observation was made. But the secondary sources describe, discuss, interpret, comment upon, analyze, evaluate, summarize, and process primary sources. Secondary source materials can be articles in newspapers or popular magazines, book or movie reviews, or articles found in scholarly journals that discuss or evaluate someone else's original research.

In this study, the researcher has made direct observation and documentation of Himmat Shah's artworks in his retrospective exhibition which was held in KNMA, New Delhi in 2016. During his exhibition, the researcher had a direct conversation with artist related to his life and art. The nature of such figures is direct and fundamental. It is directly related to the problem of research and is considered to be the primary basis for research. This is the primary source in the researcher's view. In the process of research, there are some such statistics, which are not direct, but are compiled or collected by another person or organization. The nature of the person, agency, and organization related to it may be government, semi-government or non-governmental. Such figures can be in the form of reports or books or folklore/folk songs by researchers and scientists. In this research, the researcher has compiled the

books written on Himmat Shah, research papers, catalogs, news reports, blogs, articles, and images etc. in the context of the life and creation of artist Himmat Shah. In the researcher's view, it is the secondary source.

## **2.4 PROCEDURE**

Research is a rational and logical process. It accepts the problem as a perception but introduces to the objective aspect as a conclusion. It puts enough light on the strategy to diagnose a problem or phenomenon. In this process, the researcher has to face various types of problems. This problem itself literally encourages working in a systematic manner, separated from the generalization process. The researcher has felt all these aspects and coordinated them in this research.

The most important aspect of this research in the eyes of the researcher is artist Himmat Shah, through whom primary and secondary sources of data have been collected. The researcher has tried to meet him repeatedly so that he can assimilate the relationship between his life and his art. In this process, the researcher has given a living relationship with them in some context, so that the relation between the researcher and him can be established and he can freely make his views known. In this context, the searcher has taken too much care of his personal interest.

Another important aspect of this research is to identify and interview contemporary artists, critics, curators, art consultants and art teachers and contact them so that the various aspects of Himmat Shah's art and life can be understood. For this purpose, the researcher had prepared a list of such people who could elaborate about Himmat Shah. They have been contacted and repeatedly requested to interview him and have been interviewed by the time received. Before the interview, the questions were drafted by email or phone, the context has also been introduced in which the things are to be discussed. Some interviews have also been seen in which sharing of visual data related to Himmat Shah has to be shared so that interviews are pre-eminent. After this interview is possible. The researcher has visited Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Delhi, Chandigarh, Noida, Jaipur, Jalandhar and Phagwara for the interview.

The researcher has collected material from the Library of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi for the collection of secondary data. For the study, Xerox and scanning, he



had to seek the permission from the Librarian and to compile all the rules they made for the collection of data. The researcher has also collected data from NGMA, New Delhi and Library of College of Art and Craft, Chandigarh and a Library of Lovely Professional University. In this segment, the researcher has collected data from the library and archive of the Faculty of Visual Arts, M. S. University, Vadodara. There was a need to seek permission from the Department Head Dr. Jairam Pandwal, in advance, for the study and collection of data. For this, the researcher first contacted him telephonically and later met him.

The researcher has collected most of the primary and secondary data from KNMA, New Delhi. Permission was received from the Chief Curator for documentation here. Here the researcher worked out for several days in Himmat Shah's retrospective exhibition "Hammer on Squire" to study the primary data, documentaries, and audience gestures. Here too, the researcher got the opportunity to meet and talk to Himmat Shah several times in which he stood the various dimension of his creation, narrated by Himmat Shah in front of his art-work. It was an enlightening experience for the researcher for his references and attributes.

The researcher has also contacted Art Heritage Gallery, New Delhi, for the collection of primary and secondary data. For this, the researcher went directly to Delhi and contacted the Gallery and requested them for the data. Gallery suggested keeping in touch through email. After a long waiting, the exhibition catalogue of Himmat Shah and an article written by Prayag Shukla had been provided by the gallery. A lot of follow-ups required to collect the data from the gallery.

The researcher went to Jaipur and even visited Himmat Shah's studio, the researcher requested him several times. After this, he got the opportunity to sit in his studio and look at the process of work. In their collaboration, the opportunity to do an overview of their metal casting in the studio/foundry was availed of. His caster explained to the researcher about the whole process of his work from Mr. Rajkumar Pandit.

#### **2.4.1 Focused Group**

The researcher tried the study of the focused group in Noida and Jalandhar. Most of the artists associated with Delhi live in this region. It was possible with the

support of Dr. Vikash Kumar (Sr. Asst. Director, Art and Cultural Dept. FICCI New Delhi and Former Curator, NGMA New Delhi) in Noida. This study was also possible by the researcher in Jalandhar, visiting the art educator community several times, and after being taken followed-up by phone as well. Thus, the process of research has broadened the scope of the researcher and sharpened its unrivaled potential. There were seven members who participated in Noida and ten members participated in Jalandhar in the focused group discussion.

## **2.5 ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES**

Analysis techniques are of great importance for research. This helps the researcher in bringing out research findings. In this study, the researcher has pursued the survey through purposive sampling techniques. The researcher has selected several art practitioners, who have been associated with the life and creation of Himmat Shah to collect an appropriate sample. After that the semi-structured interview process pursued by the researcher to interviewed them. Artist Himmat Shah, who is the subject of this research, has also been interviewed many times to collect primary and secondary data in terms of his life and creation. Through this, the researcher tried to understand the contradiction of the problem and put the truth in front of society.

The researcher has also used the content analysis technique in this research, through which Himmat Shah's art and his time period are classified in different categories and his artworks are interpreted according to the classification in the context of form, content, material and stylistic device. Here, the investigator investigated the facts according to the objectives of the research. In the process of content analysis, the theories of 'Elements and Principles of Art' and 'Formalism' were used for the formal analysis of the art works of Himmat Shah to study the roots of visual language employed by him. The researcher has also used the case study technique to understand the aspects of cause and creation in Himmat Shah's art. Under this, the researcher has collected primary and secondary sources of data and tried to outline his development in the historical context also in which the researcher has enabled to render his biography.

Since the researcher himself is an artist who has been practicing Art and Teaching for many years, for the last five to six years, the researcher is deeply

associated with the problem, which has been acknowledged through discussions, debates, interviews, focus group discussions and studies of various kinds of literature. Therefore, the researcher has explored the Self-Observational Method to interpret the nuances of this research. The researcher has put more weightage on the primary data, provided by the artist Himmat Shah himself to narrate his artistic journey in the broader context of human existence which is surrounded by the cultures and the civilizations.

### **CHAPTER III**

## **AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY AND VISUAL EXPLORATION: HIMMAT SHAH'S ART**

Creating an art is always a great experience. It is a phenomenal experience; a gratification of the sense. When a person moves to create something, his sensibility guides him to make a recognizable path of expression. 'Sensibility', the term refers to the ability to respond to or be affected by something (aesthetic and emotional issue). The sensibility of an artist enables him to make a perceptual awareness that is developed, guided and focused towards Mother Nature and his living society. It requires the perceptual knowledge and skills that all creative people are continually enhancing and developing their ability by their day to day experiences and exposure. This illuminates the arts of the past as well as the contemporary time, and it recognizes the aesthetic value of the corresponding time and society as an often hidden feature of all experience. In every culture, the arts have been the primary medium for promoting physical and spiritual awareness and consider changes in artistic style, the emergence of new cultural movements, and even entire historical periods in the arts as fundamentally change in the 'sensibility'. Sensibility is the key factor which helps an artist to see and reflect the live phenomenon of the society. All of these actions display an attention and delight in features and qualities transcend in aesthetic sensibilities, such as the tactile appeal of surfaces; the attraction of pattern, tonal improvisation of a form, regularity, and coloration. These characteristics often join with signs of care, precision, and formal coherence that are sometimes related to practical or functional requirements. The senses are multiply involved and are distributed non-exclusively throughout all human activities. Aesthetic sensibility develops and uses this capacity at the deliberate center of conscious experience and looking at culture change more broadly.

The sensibility of an artist creates the appreciative experience of existing surroundings by raising challenging questions about human experience of appreciation. These experiences expand in various dimensions of sensibility and branched in various ways. Perceptual acuteness/Perceptual discrimination/ Focus/ Emotional sensitivity/ Perceptual engagement are the important aspects of sensibility which encompasses sensory awareness that exhibits sharp, focused attention on all

perceptual aspects of an aesthetic situation. These are the various conditions of aesthetic appreciation. Appreciation is not a cognitive act but often involves embodied meaning. Meanings that are bound up in perception, meanings that are experienced, do not replace perception but may reinforce and enhance it as 'aesthetic sensibilities'. The creative output of an average artist revolves around his sensibility and artistic training. He looks at the surrounding nature and tries to relate himself to the total picture of the physical space existing around him. The philosophical outlook of an artist, his grooming and his relations with his contemporaries play a very important role in shaping his career. This feedback gives a rough framework within which that artist is evaluated and studied. His creative process is judged from the material and medium- he is using, the technology- he is following and the aesthetic sense- he is attempting to reflect through his body of art.

Himmat Shah in this context is a unique person. His sensibility is based on a strong individualistic approach while his thinking is the backbone of his creation. His approach of creating an art revolve around with three important aspects. The first, his sensibility is surrounded by nature; a huge arena of human learning from the spontaneous act. He basically follows the raw energy of nature as an enigmatic act. It is important in Himmat Shah's concern that he is a 'son of the soil' and his learning is based on the visual records created by the human being; his continuous travel from centuries and civilizations, cultures through visual records. Secondly the researcher deduces that Himmat Shah's artistic sensibility is more concerned with the Baroda school. His sensibility is guided by N. S. Bendre, Sankho Chaudhary and K. G. Subramanian; his teachers who influenced him in his formative stage.

For the third point, this researcher finds Himmat's reflective index sharpened by J. Swaminathan, after he joined group 1890 at the initiation of Delhi based thinker. In Himmat Shah's sensibility concern, Swaminathan is a true mentor who makes this young artist aware of continuous debate of Indigenous Modern imagery and the aesthetics of the tribal art. After a long artistic discourse, Himmat's artistic sensibility is found focused on 'self' and it is an optimistic way to get an opportunity as per his individual need. Himmat Shah always says, "My work is the only world I know and it is the only world I can live in". (Polpil, 2016) These words indicate his sensibility is more concerned with self and his art is the reflective index of his mind.

He never thinks about a single medium until he is sure of his ability; he never misses the minute detail while working on a subject till he is fully convinced. It is clear from his statement when he says, “Looking at a seed can you imagine the entire tree. One who can imagine the tree looking at its seed and the seed looking at the tree is a reflection of a true artistic vision”. (Singh, 2015) It reflects how this person makes a statement about his artistic thinking process. For him, it is a continuous process to discover something from an interesting object. A medium preferred by an artist according to Himmat Shah offers many possibilities and before getting the soft touch of a sensible person, it is a lifeless entity. The moment object feels the deft handling from a trained person, the hidden spirit arrested in its physical limits gets revealed. It is a life-long process.

### **3.1 Art as a Reflective Index of Human Perception**

The creative outpour of a sensitive person who looks and records images through his eyes by observing nature, occurs when his association with nature is protracted. Transmitted message gets blended with his human feelings. From the vast extensions of feelings, his presence is reflected by his outpour, his creative prowess. In order to bring a work of art, the researcher concludes that the artist’s mind plays a major role in the second part. In this, for the first step his mind works as a catalyst in developing his creative language through his technical energy, competence and efficacy.

A masterpiece is not produced in conformity, peace, and isolation. For a good art and a mature art movement, one needs pain, confusion, chaos, anarchy and social disorder. An artist needs motivation through his hardship and personal discomfort, constraints and economical loss. Himmat does not make art works for a common man. He just reflects what he has seen through his vision. This process may take a spur of the moment or several years. The hold over his medium has come from his long association. Hence he is an ascetic type of artist driven by his rich inner elevation. To make a work of art for Himmat is an act of love making of visual forms. That is why the researcher finds Himmat’s physical presence in his art work with this personal awareness. That makes him see the visual activity from his naive art- images.

Himmat Shah gets art from his act of creation. Himmat gets his dominance over his medium and technique of handling clay from his spiritual quest. This

involvement finds him working out a full play of artistic accomplishment through his terracotta's. This sculptural form is unique which he has put before us. For his admirer, he confesses honestly that he is not aware of any artistic movement neither he adheres to a contemporary philosophical outlook. Neither is Himmat Shah affected by any social upheaval nor by any socio-political ideology. It depends on the intelligence of the onlooker while evaluating him. This investigator finds a stage which adjust Himmat Shah among modernist and post-modernist art classification. The investigator finds that Himmat Shah is countering his contemporaries for their drawings and art making. For his reaction, you are free to make any logical statement as he is not bothered at all. For him, form and content are interrelated, totally amalgamated, transfused and synthesized. For him, the life sap, the breathing spirit pulsating within the form and the physical confines do not have any conflict. The tension and problem lie with the eyes of people who are not trained to see the fine chemistry working in and around his works of art. This kind of realization, a lofty experience is aimed at by Himmat Shah through his body of art.

There is hardly any role for the material selected. He uses his hands on a medium after getting used to its physical and integral parts. Nothing but Space what he is aiming at. The form carries its potentials as well as its limitations. They reveal all that is possible as well as hide some properties and their extensions. For this, the process of creation takes him to initiate a discourse which would be animated from within. Himmat Shah works out a form through his inner content (*Antar Vastu*). From his hand's art form reflects (*Udghatit*) inaugurated three-dimensional property on the naïve medium. Here he loves to explore the possible extensions of the medium and its textural possibilities. Through them, he intends to reveal different modes of human expressions. To get connected with the life and various realities inherent, Himmat brings his form spontaneously by his internalized age old cultural norms and modern needs. His creation reveals sensible feelings after a deep rooted rational thinking. He is supported by his strong reasoning capacity and extensive introspection. For the researcher, a long wait unveils Himmat, his quest for life on the flat surface.

His sculptural forms have been manifested with a life which is self-controlled and driven by their own aesthetic language. For them, there is no dividing line to classify among 'beautiful' and 'ugly'. They exist in their own world. Through his specific abstract distorted form, one notices radiation of warmth and humanity of the

superficial life. Abstract forms have the potentials to show the vastness of their domain expressing its unique enhancement and omnipotent physicality. They are beyond the concept of age and time. They are enigmatic... “I observe nature in its different forms and in its different expressions and... I am lost in wonder and beauty. Have you noticed that when a bird flies and spreads its wings as it picks up speed, it grows in size? And, thus, a small bird becomes big. As the bird spreads his wings and glides, tilted at various angles, hidden feathers, and hues, unknown is exposed, as if the bird has changed his cloth, his skin. I have watched it, marveled at the beauty of its changing form, power, and grace. And the concept of different angles I have applied to the kiln and angled its fires such that they have produced new and mysterious colors which I myself have never imagined. The human being is an enigma”. (Sinha, 2007)

For his homogeneity and relativity within his medium, Himmat has developed his own schematic planning. He starts from the basics. Getting all the information, the researcher finds Himmat various aspects of medium and their limitations checking which are found inherent. He arrives at certain deduction after spending quality time with it. “A piece of art is created because you allow it to happen, it cannot be forced – ‘I’ am not creating, it is my hands that are creating, for when they have clay beneath them, ‘I’ am lost.” (Sinha, 2007)

To elucidate his point regarding his creative process, Himmat finds no one inspiring him or capable of guiding his quest. He does not like crowds around him. He is happy with himself that is why we see he never got married. He is guided by his own judgment and pure instincts. “I make art when I am in no mind. I did what I felt like” (Pattnaik, 2016) an honest and matter of fact submission. Bold and radical quip. This is aptly demonstrated by his selection of used materials from the road sides, or garbage or purchased from the Sunday market. His idea of choosing these useless and discarded objects reveals his thinking process, his bent of mind. His thrust was never to throw something if it had served its utility. For him, there was nothing around to be classified as waste and useless. This has remained the single-minded pursuit of his life.

Looking at his abstractions, it has been noticed by the investigator that he has no competitor in India. He is called ‘Bohemian’, rightly so. From the countless art



works that he has produced in his career spanning six decades passing through different cities, you are amazed to see a versatile quality. From his canvas, his drawings, his burnt paper collages, bronze sculptures, terracotta cast objects and iconic heads the researcher finds him showing intense internal connects and understanding of materials. It is also noticed that artist is not allowing onlookers to have a free discourse with the work, a kind of suspense uncertainty and doubtfulness challenges his rhythmic expectations. “Shah is never predictable and deeply ironic in the manner in which he uses his sculptures to interpret the complex contemporary visual field”. (Bhuvan, 2016)

From his formative stage at Baroda and early years of Delhi, after having a look at his exhibited art works in mid-60's, Bartholomew had called this unpredictability as a process of deliberate attempt to ‘shock and shun’ his audience. This celebrated art critic qualified Shah’s artistic predisposition as the consequence of his ‘interest in the Gothic underworld of the subconscious. (Bartholomeo, 1964). Himmat’s forms appear to shake and stir our several compressed memories of bygone years. This usage of stashed information from the subconscious mind is deliberate. He projects familiar shadows over certain unknown ghost like ‘fiend’ in order to create awareness by relating his obscure and mysterious life with us.

Himmat Shah brings out gems from the discarded and condemned stray objects as the final results are valuable fruits of long research. He tries and aims at establishing a direct relation between useful and useless, old and new, explicitly and implicitly. In order to get a fine chemistry between two worlds, he slips back to his shell severing links with open world. Perhaps he is trying to make sure that art and its aesthetics are not guided by generally accepted formal arrangements or by its constituents employed for their making. For Himmat Shah, it is permeable around our surrounding and to get it and have a feel of it you require sensitive eye and equally recipient mind.

Through his meticulously worked out creative process, Himmat provides us a unique individuality and he is fully aware of his responsibility to guide modern techniques and trends through his sensibilities. With his closer examination, the researcher realizes that his modernity is not superficial and unrealistic. Nothing is out of tune from their time of execution. “Creativity is something that is hidden. There

has to be a strong urge within you to create. That strong urge will let your craft develop. There are many crafts that already exist. But, to express my experiences, I have to find my own craft, art cannot be expressed. I will always remain in search of my own craft” a candid statement by a radical thinker. (Singh, 2016)

His works whether it is figurative or abstract, as categorized by Prayag Shukla; a well-known art critic and poet from Delhi who was very close to Himmat who also wrote his catalogs for exhibitions in Delhi, retain certain individualistic current. For this researcher, it is difficult to divide his work into above-suggested groups. They have their own grammar and unique totality. His sculptures and their pedestals have their own chemistry. Nothing is unrelated, alien, irrelevant and inconsequential; beyond generally accepted parameters his works are prismatic and multi-dimensional. They develop beyond our consciousness. From the reach of our common understanding regarding scale, balance, relation, and optical spatial adjustment, away from academic and totemic approaches, he has arrived at a new idiom and language.

Himmat has remained a free bird; he never had a permanent friend. The list of his adversaries has multiplied as the time and location changed. He has faced economic constraints throughout his life till he decided to migrate to Jaipur in 2002. Several benevolent art buyers, art lover friends, and distant relations had offered him good private jobs but not to compromise with any one, he decided to remain aloof. He has remained a free thinker rather than joining any group or ‘ism’. True to his feelings, his tools, occupational skill, maniacally driven obsession for minute detail work, he will be remembered for his love for skillful thinking and minute planning, concludes the researcher. He bathes his works of art with aesthetic flavor designed and idealized by him whether you like or despise. Though he was a trained painter, his love for sculpture cannot be ignored. For the researcher, he is complete a Bohemian; never bothered by any sound logic. Since 1980’s, he is extensively using clay and plaster as his medium for expression that is abhorred by the Indian consummative society of the day, neither liked by the capitalist business policies of the government. “The nucleus of Shah’s artistry is not his exoteric, but his unique style to decipher the maiden beauty from a common day to day object. By choosing primitive art as his weapon to express a thought, he does not confine

his art to some specific genre or period; rather it imbibes the quality of post-modern pastiche". (Kazmi, 2004)

### **3.1.1 Baroda School: A Base for Experimentations**

The credit goes to Sankho Choudhary who in mid-50's started his teaching spree from here. Soon after Mahendra Pandya, Girish Bhatt, Nagji Patel, Raghav Kaneria, Krishna Chhatpar, Balbir Singh Katt, and others followed him in their pursuits to give more variety and substance to the sculptural art. From this collage, in Independent India, a serious attempt was made by some individuals in order to find an artistic movement by transforming creative local thoughts into formal settings which are borrowed from the west. This art movement was initiated to work out 'Indianness' from the fusion of several currents, where every participant was to play his part independently as a rebellion. The collective output from this school demonstrates each member's preoccupation with patriotism and resultant usage of Indian local living models and Indian ethos.

Why Baroda...? Like Bombay, it was a major center of commerce populated by a large chunk of non-resident Indians who had a close relation with the west. The Royal family was determined to open a university where the medium of instruction was English and all subjects were to be imparted for the youngsters who wanted to get international exposure. The opening of Fine Arts College in 1955 was a step in this direction to bring a new dawn of artistic activity in Gujarat as well as western India. Nobody knew that this college will be deciding the future course of Indian art from its first batch. The rise of middle class and nouveau riche had influenced several other factors which allowed Baroda to take the central pivotal seat in guiding the future course of Indian Arts.

As Western masters like Moore and Brancusi, emphasized as Shankho Choudhary advised his students, for the basics, returning to their fundamentals and traditional roots, the fresh seeds were sowed in almost every discipline of the creative arts. We cannot deny that the regional differences while shaping the future representational artistic strategies have played a crucial role and numerous schools of artistic subjectivity were to paint 'art' as a catalyst, quite differently, a tool for social change. Pivotal to the investigator is to trace, in theory, and practice, how academic art in Baroda has modeled and shaped certain thoughts and artistic interventions

paradigmatically while others were allowed to totter in the ashes of apathy, oversight, pessimism, and dishonor.

At Baroda, with N. S. Bendre and K. G. Subramanyan, Sankho Choudhary paved the way for some innovations by not just guiding his students but actively participating in group shows in metropolitan cities in solo as well as group exhibitions. A good encouraging atmosphere was set in motion to promote new thoughts and styles. All participants in this race wanted to start for new experiments in order to find a language for their artistic communication. The period stretching from 1950's to 60's was full of expectations and each one was aware of cultural differences in Indian society. The question of national identity was being faced and confronted differently. In this case, each artist was fighting the battle from the point of marginality, still not sure of a direction to move. Against colonialism, the resistance was propelled by the unified force of national ethos but after independence, it lost its focus, shine, and intensity. The changing role of culture - meaning, concerns, and its implications and benefits are the pivotal issues still to be explored in the backdrop of the art produce in the above mentioned period.

Within our country, our collective culture forced many debates and discourses throughout sixth and seventh decades of the last century. Several philosophies, ideologies and thinking processes are detected by the researcher in it which resulted in affecting the artistic engagements. The period starting from late 1950's was full of chaos and resultantly one notices crisis galore, where artist cut off from cultural roots, was struggling to interpolate himself with the international art scene. The questions of authenticity, personal identity, and national character were confronting and antagonizing the artists of all age and region. The school of Baroda was to take the pivotal lead for the generation appraisal thereafter. It also became clear that for an Indian artist, if he/she has to make a serious attempt to link himself/herself with the international realm he/she has to discard completely India's nationalistic feelings and linkages. The researcher finds that every artist was using his practice by shifting margins of artistic expressions both within and without India. For the researcher, this distortion employed by artists in Baroda and other places in their engagements, faced acute series of implicit and explicit entanglements. The school was to lay the foundation for new experiments for post-colonial artistic autonomy.

The majority of the students of Baroda were Gujarati from the first batch while the teaching staff was not local with pan Indian outlook. With Pan-Indian outlook, in this school, we find artists ignoring and rejecting regional expressions and adopting western models in order to arrive at more acceptable trans-national artistic language. Here researcher's attempt is to highlight the general picture of Baroda art practices as an oeuvre, while looking at the progress of this school and its members, individually; in front of the creative engagements of Himmat Shah. The research method is intellectual, exploratory, biographical, historical and analytical in the Foucaultian sense, in that it investigates the boundaries of the Baroda oeuvre by individualizing the various discursive clusters/formations and the artistic expressions as they occurred during this phase. The researcher's emphasis will be on dealing with the specificities, new interventions, and various 'irruptions', experiments with their varying degree of success, highlighting this critical time frame showing productive moments of conciliations and contradictions. The sites of this research are centered on individual art practitioner and their discursive output while crisscrossing these terrains. The researcher wants to arrive at a more comprehensive and dynamic reading of Baroda School as well as modern art of India soon after independence.

To begin with, the researcher has not found any material/written documents attributed to Professor N.S. Bendre but two of his colleagues Sankho Choudhary and Subramanian wrote several articles in various forms in which they attacked western ideas as well as art styles. At least from 1959 Sankho Choudhary and Subramanian were writing regularly in national and international magazines. Their provocative articles raising tangible concerns about modern artistic trends of Europe tested the validity and utility of them in the Asian milieu. In one of the article, as told to me by my teacher/ Art historian Ratan Parimoo and Himmat Shah, Sankho ridicules the dominance of abstract expressions which to his mind was similar to the monopoly of Brahmins over the sacred texts of Hindu/Buddhist philosophy. He asserted that western art trends do not create an artistic Spirit (Esperanto) in India but rather prohibits understanding through the deployment of a specialized lexicon predicted on narrow historical and cultural antecedents. In the same article, he had questioned the umbilical relationship between artist and a gallery system.

However, for him, there was a chance of subversive opportunity within this myopic arrangement. For him, the gap between western and Indian artistic expression

was not a burden but rather a boon. This has been reported to the researcher that out of fifteen artists getting international scholarship, first five or six were from Baroda, who went to Europe and U.S.A. (Parimoo, Shiekh, Bhatt, Himmat, Kaneria...before 66.) The productive possibilities within cultural differences between West and India became the topic of K. G. Subramanian when he echoed the statement of Shankho Choudhary regarding international trends and their closed system of knowledge and the usage of visual elements within Indian Territory.(Fig. No. 3.12) “Now that the old regional barriers have been crushed and the world shrunk into a ‘global village’, this competition is brisker... world’s greatest art fairs the main problem of today’s artist is to keep shouting till he get a hearing. His next problem is to put his neighbor into the shadow by eye catching, ear catching or mind messaging gimmick or commission professionals to erect glittering verbal arcades to his works”, wrote K. G. Subramanian.

The asymmetrical relationship between Indian artist and a western artist was known to K.G. Subramanian when he sympathized with the Indian artist for his complex environ in the modern times. In this backdrop, the strategy worked out a change in artist’s theoretical framework, in the course of time, gets prime importance when he cautions his student through his discourses searching desperately an image for their composition. “The artist’s struggle for the image is initially this struggle for identity..., this struggle to get, if we may say so, a cosmographic foothold, to get a synoptic vision of himself in his experimental environment”, he philosophized before his students.

From the large output of artistic engagements, kept in the archive, the researcher comes to a fair conclusion that the search for the unencumbered artistic expression was not bothering Indian artist only but the meaning of that creative expression was also to be sorted out. A common artist was to relate his image with the local social environment by drawing a comprehensive vocabulary, easily understood by the masses. Hence a strong desire to develop a valid image was behind developing and evolving a new terrain of aesthetical philosophy in the 1960’s and 70’s. Lots of undercurrents were working at the same place in all over India but at Baroda, artists were quite focused and better prepared. Here, we find artists helped by their teachers with theory and practical, realizing their responsibilities to come out with a synthetic hybrid language by precipitating both Indian and western modernism. Subramanian

had advocated for extra sensory awareness in the approach of his students. This awareness was to ensure a well-delineated space of selfhood, enough to fix somebody's cultural location and personal identity within it. The struggle for individual identity requires his personal involvement at various level according to K. G. Subramanian as he puts forward "...this gives him meaning and identity; this gives him the right to language, and engenders a valid image".

While realizing, after Independence, the move towards industrialization and modernization, India didn't require reliance on the old form of artistic norms, the native village life, folk and tribal, and the mythical inspirations as a resource of aesthetic engagements, every artist vociferously questioned the growing demand for distant motifs. In Baroda, the appropriation of old Indian style and idiom was found to be problematic by the students of the first batch. K. G. Subramanian said, "The Bengal School masters created an artificial milieu and where they depicted village life they approached reality to some degree. But they romanticized it likewise painting a world of sweetness, song, love, and devotion but suppressing all its less pleasant aspects, all its bitter struggle for survival except where this could be exploited for sentimental appeal."

Against his own preaching, he started using oil colors in the mid-50's which not only echoes Picasso's work of the 20's and early 30's in which figure and ground appear moving endlessly but also influences of Henry Matisse while adjusting negative positive spaces are noticed in his paper cutouts of 40's. (Fig. No. 3.13) as well as his 'Mother & Child' where neither you see Indian locale while in the case of later, one notices picture plane broken by hard confident lines which threaten the physical unity and interrelation of both figures. This was his own experimentation, a moment of dynamic visual interplay, that he abandoned later, this style, for a time being. His later work 'Man with a Fruit Cart' done in the late 50's shows a theme selected from the urban environment here space is used by successive sharp cuts invested with both energy and expression. At that time, Bendre, who was the Head of Painting Department, was very open in trying western styles especially Cubism and desperately wanted to use the synthesis of Indian and Western styles. His Festive Mood done in the late 50's showed three women seated in front of the onlooker. Like much of his drawings during this time, this subject is decidedly Indian by origin; however, the appropriation of western idioms may have diluted its brilliance of using

the source of light and undulating colored planes. His later work 'The Thorn' (Fig. No. 3.14) reveals a mechanically worked out synthesis of Indian motif with the redundant cubist offshoot. Jaya Appasamy was among several writers who even criticized Bendre for using western idioms without proper theoretical grounding while working towards a visual language. The combined efforts of these seniors led Indian art to a phase of 'dangerous domain of decorative'.

In comparison with Bendre and Subramanian, Sankho Choudhary was a sculptor by choice. He worked on metal as well with wood and stone. He was greatly influenced by Brancusi and Moore. For him, a new definition of the new sculpture was devised by the European masters by giving more weight to the material, three-dimensional palpability and the activation of the spatial arrangement through linear/colorful planes, through a juxtaposition of the solids and voids, and playfulness of light and shade. The sculptural object had assumed a centerstage, as an organism in its own right, showing its own reality and presence without being a substitute to any entity. These qualities are noticed by this researcher in Sancho Choudhary's wood/stone carving as well as his works in metal. The way he has used his simplification of form and space, the use of delicate line and finally spatial treatment in the forms of convex and concave planes, the researcher finds influences of the Cubist idiom in great detail without any compromise. These features are seldom seen in Dhanraj Bhagat's works, famous for its lyrical treatment in his sculptural.

Being a student of Ram Kinker Baij, Sankho C. joined Bendre in 1949 to open Sculpture Department in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Baroda. Raghav Kaneria and Girish Bhatt are his favorite students. His metal sheets, being a pioneer in this medium, show us little bit tinge of constructivism and abstraction in its stylistic arrangement. His colored drawings are also known to have existed and appreciated by the onlookers. His one of such drawings done in 1950 'Untitled' shows his heavy dependence of Cubistic engagements, a juxtaposition of angular planes, simplified figurative work and non-resident linearity all relate his work with European models especially Istvan Beothy (artist) whom Sankho met in Paris. In search of a non-academic genre, he did not shy as he went to almost all idioms see his '*Sringara*', the figure of a Woman done in 1949. (Fig. No. 3.12)



Another artist of great merit of Baroda school in Sculpture Department is none other than Mahendra Pandya. His earlier wood carving done in the late 50's is remarkable for its suppleness while working on human skin at least how an artist has tried to delineate subtle indentures and bulging surfaces by highlighting linear arrangement and contrast between light and darkness.(Fig. No. 3.15) His wood works in this period are not affected by Cubism in direct intervention but his treatment of human body by distortion and elongation of body parts, with varying shapes, sizes and surfaces do link him to western artistic movements. His sculptural forms are simply done with a particular single one dominant view, the human figure appears two dimensional and frontal rather than three dimensional conceived in a round. The image in his early works appears other worldly, with an aura of mystery, gaze penetrating the onlooker directly. His use of colors and blow flame was to give him new look for his image and composition in totality.

In short, for this researcher, the art scenario in Baroda and Gujarat from where Himmat Shah drew his inspiration was itself in dilemma, quandary and anarchy. Teachers, as well as students, were unable to face the situation. The expectations of artists to evolve a language to meet their aspirations in order to strike a balance with international art and its corresponding aesthetic sensibility was yet to get a perfect match. All over the country, experiments were being conducted but everybody knew the outcome was not optimistic. The trials and explorations needed conducive environ as well as equally talented and committed people to sustain the inner urge to make adjustments with the flow of the tide. For the need of the hour, artists were to search a vocabulary, as the time warranted, by mixing what they had and what they had not. A synthesis was required from the western industrialized and local colonized society, to march forward in order to satiate their quest for their identity and self-respect. From the backdrop of post colonialism, for pure adventure to get a respectability among celebrated artists, laborious attempts were made in every corner of the country but the tools employed, unproductive, unfit and incompetent failed to bring adequate dividend. The utter frustration was seen manifested in Indian intelligentsia that the literary scholars' ridiculed Indian entry in the First Triennial of International Art in 1968 sponsored by the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. There was a timely rejoinder from Mulk Raj Anand. "There has been a breakdown of communication between the artist (visual) and the general public." In a previous issue of Lalit Kala Contemporary,

Jaya Appasamy had warned her readers that ‘many people are confused and puzzled by the art of modern painters...’ as artists were unable to strike a balance between modernity and tradition. For the ‘Triennale’, at the Lalit Kala Akademi; Roger Fry as his key note address had ridiculed the majority of the artwork, selected by the jury comprising teachers and artists from Bengal and Baroda.

Himmat, after clearing his basics from Baroda Fine Arts College in 1961, did some burnt paper collages (Fig. No. 3.16, 3.17) that nobody could out rightly reject his artwork. From here, he reached Delhi where he did some drawings on sexual fantasies (Fig. No. 3.1, 3.2) by shocking his audience. Then the visit to Europe opened new vistas for him not only for the selection of subject matter and the technique used, but also he found some solutions to match his frustration for a new language for his art. Soon after reaching Ahmedabad, he had to exhibit his technical virtuosity and the excellent selection of subject matter. The investigator can prove that he did not fail in this adventure also. During his stay in Ahmedabad, he also did a sizeable amount of work for Silver foiled compositions. (Fig. No. 3.5, 3.6), nobody before him had tried this material, technique and the subject matter that Himmat Shah went on to explore and succeeded in creating a stir in the art circles of the country.

Baroda School is very important art centre because here we find artists and teachers seriously working together and arranging exhibitions together. Here, for the first time, education was given in far advanced curricula and the students were encouraged to deal with their subject, form, and technique creatively. The students were guided to see differently and work freely. Here we see that students were not burdened by the constraints of academism. This school is also important because here only we find students getting all kind of technical advance training, that sculpture art became more prominent, at least with Sankho Choudhary, it got freedom of free expression. Quite late in comparison to Painting, as a discipline, a sculptor was showing his work as an individual creation embracing autonomous principles.

The researcher finds the students of modern India conceive of the sculpture as a three--dimensional mass occupying a space and expects a response to its volume and shape, color and texture, feel and presence. Modern sculpture has progressed towards a pure statement of feeling and content contained or embodied in forms. Today sculpture uses a wide range of new materials and is free from reference and

also asserts its own validity. Himmat's sculptures of heads and busts that he was forced to make in 1970 is of quintessential presence. May be his lack of a proper studio and shortage of monetary source that it was clay that was chosen by him to express his feelings and expressions boldly and freely, without any fear and skepticism.

From 1980 onwards, Himmat Shah isolated in his Room No. 2 (studio) at Garhi Studio under the protection of Sankho Chaudhary and Jagdish Swaminathan started his career with the clay. Along with the 'Found Object, Himmat Shah felt the need to bring a new object, a new theme, which had a long tradition behind it, to give a new twist to his artistic career. 'Head series', it was his obsession since his early days of tutelage under Bendre and Sankho Da at Baroda school. The researcher has referenced that he had seen a book in the possession of his teacher regarding 'Benin Art', sculpture art of head being employed by the African people for their social practices. They were used as symbolic tools to express the ritualistic meanings for the society since time immemorial. The formal simplicity, colorful rendition, sharply delineated facial features and love for minute details were some interesting features which drew Himmat's attention. The timely visit to Paris and London and exposure to the African art through exhibitions in the museums opened his eyes. Fully aware of Cubist engagements and its impact on Contemporary Indian art, his mind was attracted by the main source rather than the European experiments. (Fig. 3.18, 3.19) for the first time in life, he realized the richness in form, simplicity, boldness, technical virtuosity, expressivity and sheer originality of human heads used as votive objects. Since his childhood, after Lothal was excavated by the archeologists, Himmat Shah was aware of numerous such votive figures unearthed from the debris of many centuries. He was also aware of the several centuries old Buddha's and *Tiranthkaras* adorning the museums and some images of *Shivalingham*. Not knowing what other artists grasped, Himmat understood the inventions of the African people fully and confidently, as an ideal generalized type to be used throughout his life thereafter. The investigator is quite sure that Himmat Shah with this experiment has been able to repeat the quintessence of the African masks and heads without compromising his integrity and degrading the aesthetic beauty of African Art of the pre-historic time. Himmat used this medium for his later compositions by altering and stamping his own distinctive characteristic. He would have been challenging the classical perfection

attained by the age old craft of African people. Acknowledging his own cultural inheritance, he has tried to demonstrate his superiority and mastery not by challenging but by offering due respect, not by altering but by adhering to his principle.

Yet, from the perspective of the researcher, it appears that a base for a strong artistic intervention was being prepared. Perhaps he himself was not aware of it. After Independence, with the modern industrialization and resultant rise of urbanism and the nouveau-riche class in India, the culture of English speaking upper class and new democratic system of governance-things were changing very fast. Development was taking place at varying rates at different places and new centers for power sharing were emerging and artistic practice was also taking a leaf from this backdrop. Artist, like every citizen, was aware of self-knowledge, self-respect and individual freedom and the sky was the limit. Art, like all cultural products, reflects the socio-political scenario of the period in which it is created. This art practice should be studied by linking their immediate environment as well as the personality of its maker. The achievement should be linked with the change and difference.

Art, in the post-Independence period, in India, became a commodity and it was conceived and executed by keeping the taste of the market. Besides, every artist needed something for his survival. The Nehru Government was committed to safeguarding the interest of the modern artist. The institutes like Lalit Kala Akademi and N.G.M.A, New Delhi were established by 1953 and several artists were sent to Europe and the United States, with the scholarship for further exposure. Net result was shocking as the artists in India, a large country with diverse people and interests were unable to confront the situation effectively. The initiative taken by the Government was found to be inadequate. Every artist was targeting the market to sustain his career without carrying for the proper national art language and corresponding negative art philosophy.

### **3.1.2 Primitive Dynamisms of Unconscious Wishes: Indian Modern Art**

Baroda has a glorious tradition of art and culture. It had patronage provided to several artists and artisans. In 1881, the famous contemporary Indian Painter Raja Ravi Varma was invited to the princely state of Baroda by the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III. Raja Ravi Varma was treated with great respect by the Gaekwad court. Besides commissioned portraits of Maharaja Gaekwad III, he produced several other

fine canvases during his stay. Before independence, Bhavnagar was the most important place to promote fine arts activity. Besides Somalal Shah, Jagubhai Shah was the most important figure who was patronized by the king of Bhavnagar. For the first time in independent India, a program of study was introduced to offer UG/Diploma, PG/Post-Diploma Courses. Art was envisaged as an integral part of life for the local citizens. The emphasis was laid on individuality through knowledge of Indian and Western traditions. The Faculty has promoted the several students on the national and international level.

In 1962 another level of discussion started in the arena of Baroda school. The point of discussion was around the contribution of PAG and the Bengal School and a quest for the search of Indigenous modernism. The discussion was initiated by J Swaminathan and Group 1890 came into existence in 1962. It was 'officially' formed when several artists met in Bhavnagar (Gujarat) on August 25-26, 1962, at the home of Jayant and Jyoti Pandya. The Group was a collective contribution of artists like Ambadas, Jeram Patel, Jyoti Bhatt, Raghav Kaneria, Balkrishna Patel, Gulam Mohammad Sheikh, Reddappa Naidu, S G Nikam, Rajesh Mehra, Himmat Shah and Eric Bowen and was led by J Swaminathan.

The Group's manifesto was adopted on July 19, 1963. It encountered the significance of vis-a-vis the Bombay Progressives: "From its early beginnings in the vulgar naturalism of Raja Ravi Varma and the pastoral idealism of the Bengal School, down through the hybrid mannerisms resulting from the imposition of concepts evolved by successive movements in modern European art on classical, miniature and folk styles to the flight into 'abstraction' in the name of cosmopolitanism, tortured alternately by memories of a glorious past born out of a sense of futility in the face of a dynamic present and the urge to catch up with the times so as to merit recognition, modern Indian art by and large has been inhibited by the self-defeating purposiveness of its attempts at establishing an identity."<sup>1</sup> The manifesto reveals the deep anguish and frustration about the then accepted practices of art-making felt by a section of the young Indian artist community of the late 1950s-early 1960s, and their fervent desire to forge a native but contemporary language of art. Though the manifesto does not explicitly nail the Bombay Progressive artists, one can easily deduce who they meant when the description read 'hybrid mannerisms resulting from the imposition of concepts evolved by successive movements in modern European art'. It is also

obvious that the Group was unequivocally rejecting current art practices of Indian artists, having analyzed astutely where these were coming from.

The manifesto 'Surrounded by Infinity' defines the Group's own understanding of the creative process as different from the work of art that generates as its result. They write, "To us, the creative act is an experience in itself, appropriated by us and therefore bearing no relation to the work of art, which creates its own field of experience, as the experience of copulation is not the same as that of the offspring." The work of art, then, stands strong and steadily alone, isolated from any props that the artist might want to provide it with. This could be interpreted as the crux of the manifesto; it is a truly amazing articulation. Moreover, Group 1890 was perhaps the first serious effort of contemporary Indian artists as a group to question, understand and formulate their own theory regarding art creation. Most significantly, it did not advocate any specific mode or the manner in art. This made it different from other art movements where the focus was predominantly on advocating a style/manner in art-making. But the Group has advocated the experience and expression are more important in art creation as art is always an enigmatic act of conscious and subconscious mind. In his essay 'Art and Adivasi', Swaminathan, J. (1992) writes, "I believe, it is essentially individualistic in its origins that the work of the individual artist comes into existence before it is adopted as a social symbol or as part of a communal system of symbolic signs. In other words, I believe that art exists before religious art, or art qualified in any other way, exists". (Swaminathan, 1992) Himmat Shah is one of the core members of the Group 1890 and from the days of its inception, he was the part and parcel of the group. When the researcher asked the Himmat Shah, his single answer was that we were trying to create an art which could be the base of our experience...what we saw around us. "Art should be explored in the current Indian context, it should not be borrowed from somewhere and not guided by some set of rules and appreciation. Basically, the group was encountering the Brahminical visual tradition with the weapon of human freedom. They do not wish to create a story or interpret a situation or to make a statement. They are trying to search a visual language which helps them to explore their painterly and aesthetics experience" Himmat Shah added candidly. His sensibility really advocates the core idea of the group. It seems that his sensibility is surrounded by the infinity. For his concern

adaptation of an adequate medium via and exploration of his inner self via continuous experimentation is always on the high priority.

### **3.1.3 Artist as an Ascetic: First Step of Artistic Sensibility**

For Himmat Shah, an artist is destined to pick a road through his artistic sensibility, choosing an adequate form in his selected medium. He is guided by his creative impulses and trained hands. This combination liberates his artistic form from the clutches of the lifeless confines of the medium. Resultantly, we find artist bringing back that object to ‘the Mother Nature connected by an unseen life sap’. A quote by Kafka inspires Himmat Shah. “An art flies around the truth but with the determination not to get burnt by it. Its skill consists of finding a place in the void where the ray of life focuses most powerfully without knowing beforehand the location of the light source itself”. (Shukla, 2004)

The thinking process of Himmat Shah is not a pre-planned exercise. It comes out suddenly when creative person is in slumber, lost in his shell, completely cut off from his surroundings. “I make art when I am in no mind... I am not bound in any direction...looking for any particular ‘expression’. I am not interested in ‘expression’ as some kind of signature tune. What I am interested in is using technique as a handmaiden for achieving a higher consciousness”. (Singh, 2005)

In Himmat Shah’s view, artistic success of an artist depends on how he brings out the hidden thing while being in complete concentration, ‘*Samadhi*’. The lifeless object is made to breathe from the confines of the unexposed. For him, artist is an enigma and ‘Brahma unto himself’. “And like *Brahma*, his purpose is to search for new and yet newer forms of creation”. (Singh, 2005). For Himmat Shah, an artist starts from the very basics, taught by nature and which dwells in our consciousness whether we are aware or ignorant. The creative process is exhilarating and enjoyable as it has several mysterious, obscure, ambiguous and unintelligible elements imbued within it. Each step and each moment passed under its spell thrills but epistemologically permeate beyond the words of spoken language. He believes that art producing line of action is nothing but an ‘unreasoned act of being’ and has to be experienced and cherished. For him, an artist has to work like an ascetic lost in his deep meditation and his sensible playfulness should be enigmatic, difficult to access and apprehend verbally. The creative boldness and daring resoluteness of a sensible

person, his training in the art field and his inspirations from his surrounding living world all work in very spontaneous manner. This relationship cannot be comprehended and explained in any spoken language. According to Himmat Shah, ‘art has always been his inner necessity and the pleasure that he gets from it. It is difficult to arrive at this pleasure by any other physical activity...’. It is a direct product of various multifaceted and multi-dimensional cross-currents of all physical and internal permutations and combinations, hidden shocks and struggles, when a life form is born. On his own artistic graph Himmat Shah finds himself being taught by his surrounding the ‘Mother Nature’. This is a significant factor for every artist in his formative and determining groundwork. He says, “Once I began the search, I kept learning. Today also, I feel that so long as one keeps searching, one lives. The moment one stops searching, one ceases to grow and that stage is what I call death.” (Singh, 2015)

In his creative journey he has worked in various mediums sometimes forced by his circumstances and other times by accident as he started burnt papers and unpremeditatedly when he started his head studies. He has never started before taking the various aspects, entire range of potentials and limitations, required as well as the technical factors of the medium in use. In fact, for Himmat Shah this research continues in various directions. “Each medium has its own nature. I have worked with mud, plaster and metal (bronze) whatever I could afford at a given point in my life. You can endow beauty and joy on any material as long as you allow your imagination and your creativity to express the sheer joy of life and living”. (Sinha, 2007)

Almost all born genius have agreed and stressed that creativity is not a chemically transmitted recipe which could be given or say administered to anybody. This gifted instinct enhances and accentuates the artistic faculty of Homo sapiens. Himmat Shah feels that this cannot be taught in art colleges. He says “It is not a skill that can be cultivated. Art appreciation cannot be taught. It is something that emerges from within the self. And I use the word ‘self’ in metaphysical sense which is a sum total of experiences...personal, historical and cultural”. (Mukherjee, 2015) Even speaking on behalf of onlooker he tells us that art appreciation also cannot be cultivated mechanically. Every human being is not an avid art lover. His sensibility is limited. He may not react the way artist wants him fail another works, a common man way to apprehend intrinsic values inherent in art work. Hence to stand before an art



work for some time with curiosity and appreciate the work aesthetically is not an easy task. (Singh, 2015)

### **3.1.4 Artist Individualism: Second Step of Artistic Sensibility**

Art comprises of many elements which are visually reflected by an artist and comprehended by an avid enthusiast. You see lines; colors with various tones, grades and intensities, shapes of different sizes and various types of spatial arrangements of forms. You have various kinds of scale used by artists and various types of balancing parameters employed by an artist. The gamut that he transmits through his trained hands is comprehended by all the way he intends on the flat surface of the medium selected. Artist's emotive faculty guides him to deal specifically with different elements with varying tools and techniques. For wood, his approach would be different and on clay his handling would be specific. Each artist finds himself reducing the nature surrounding him in the terms of lines and formal arrangements. This is one part of his creative process where his eye sight condenses, incorporates, extricates and intelligibly grasps in his mind. This is in-take process of the artist. Here certain visuals are selected and randomly stored in his memory. Himmat Shah sees around absent mindedly with ethereal vagueness to record the essential visuals juxtaposed around him and, in this process his mind has very limited role to play. Himmat Shah strongly advocates shunning individual interference in comprehending nature that engulfs him from all sides. "An artist sees lines and forms in the rocks of a cave. These become a part of his art. The person, who has not seen a bird fly cannot think of an aero plane. You have to see something to create art. You should see without using your mind. Just look, do not think about it. You (have to) forget yourself, and completely become what you see. There is such splendor in the Rising Sun. If you see that and convey that...through art, then you are an artist". (Kapadia, 2014)

An artist, Himmat Shah thinks sometimes comprehending an inactive, inanimate and lifeless object thrown and discarded by human being or over-potent nature, is allured and attracted by its physical beauty or its normal appearance. He takes them seriously in one moment to lose the interest in the next. The spiritual quality hidden in their outer surface has the potential to get liberated even after several decades. "I was impressed by ready-made objects. They seem to have their

own sculptural qualities. I used to buy as many as possible and keep them. Some of them used to get rejected by my eyes and thrown away while those I liked, I made moulds in plaster and slip cast them in clay and after firing those found their form having a different kind of magic with the change in material. The composition of these commonly found objects formed the basis of many sculpture". (Singh, 2015)

For the next step of art making where mind and hand are going to work at the same time some formal structures get concrete shape on a two dimensional surface. This is the second part of the art producing transaction where his mind directly works as a main force. Here certain aspects are highlighted depending on the sensibility of the artist concerned. Some aspects will be subdued and others sidelined. It becomes a creative part because artist here has all power in his hand, he creates without any fear and flavor. His trained hands give shapes from his mind directly transmitting formal arrangements stored in his memory as a tool to reflect aesthetically. All human senses, his experience, his training part, and of course inherent creative impulse amalgamate to render artistic rendition on flat surface. "Actually, eyes and other senses are reflective whereas you can only 'see' when the third eye opens. You are a prisoner in the cage of your body but when consciousness looks, it transcends the cage and your energy such a crescendo as if you are part of the whole universe. At this time, you feel like a God..." (Singh, 2015)

To bring more light to this mode of rendering the researcher looks closely at all aspects of the individualistic approach of a creative person. First of all, he has to establish a close intimacy with the concerned artist. Then the researcher has to know how the artist's first part is being done i.e. how he comprehends nature by distilling essence of it. The researcher should take artist, his vision, his experience and human psychology into his consideration while standing in front of finished art work displayed in public glare. "In our appreciation of (art as a finished product), the creative process or the conditions under which the artist created it are rarely made known. It would not be incorrect to say that decisions regarding the selection of the material, the dimensions of the art work and the medium through which it will be realized are not entirely determined by the conceptual paradigm but also by the location of its execution". (Karode, 1988)

Even for such storing methodical strategy and resulted distorted reflection by every artist, Himmat Shah has very philosophical message for all students and art lovers. The conceptualistic faculty of an artist which may transmit a distorted, unrealistic, strangulated and abbreviated form for the onlooker to comprehend human pain, suffering, tensions, knocks of past setback and footsteps of unseen anxieties of present and future. The spatial extensions of the medium bind all these individualistic currents to reflect the true personality and maturity of the creator. "These forms may appear ghost like, enigmatic to some onlookers they flash human pains, sufferings and noises of the unseen, memories of the past, anxieties of present and future. They create their own space generating echoes of human feelings. '*Jaaki Rahi Bhavna Jaisi-Prabhu Murat Dekhi Tin Taisi*' one feels human emotive stages through art works as he himself goes through in real life". (Shukla, 2000). The total impact after looking at the art work in the mind of onlooker reflects how spontaneously this artist used his technical and artistic prowess. For Himmat Shah, art is to raise your knowledge. To elevate and raise human being to another level of understanding, to fill you with joy and happiness never seen or heard before. "Creative act is the result of the human labor not of mind". (Sengupta, 2000) Though this statement may appear impractical, absurd, unreasonable and vague to some people, but it reflects how this artist views his approach to his creative execution and practice.

Himmat's way of rendering his subjects is very simple and direct. By his own standard, there is nothing exceptional hidden in it. For the artist, Himmat finds that political ideology, social concerns, and religious flavor have no meaning, no bearing on his outlook. Himmat's art work has no impact on the researcher. His art has new freshness and uniqueness. The basic character of Himmat's material is clearly revealed by his presentation as one can find in the lyrical sensuality of a poet. Himmat Shah activates his medium by highlighting life sap breathing in the stone. "Language is useless, we cannot express in language, therefore make art. The writer will only create a wall (unlike artists working in Visual arts) between the art and you. His oversimplified statement, "I thought, let me make a head with lines" and the rationale used in his Head Series makes me wonder how unrealistic and superficial one can be.

In a nutshell, the researcher deduced that Himmat's life from the very beginning was full of twists and turns. A lot of difficulties were faced by him since his early days. During and after the study of fine arts his sensibility is transformed

into aesthetic sensibility which helped him to create a body of artwork. But after the association with J Swaminathan and Group 1890, his artistic sensibilities focused on a particular way. In the researcher perception, it covers and discriminates the arena of cultures and civilizations, from conscious to the subconscious level to search for an appropriate language of visual creation. Group 1890 and its motto is a guiding point of his artistic sensibility.

### **3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CREATIVE PROCESS OF HIMMAT SHAH'S ART**

In 1956, at Baroda Fine Arts College, in the earliest batch, he started learning the basics from Professor N. S. Bendre who was a modernist painter and knew many techniques of western paintings. Abstraction mode was liked by all youngsters, even their teachers. Not only Baroda but also Calcutta and Bombay witnessed new crop of art students preferring French and British art and prostrated of eulogized greatly modern masters of Europe.

With Himmat, though he had learned the basic tricks of a potter in *Saurashtra*, we find some students joining Professor Bendre and Shankho Chaudhary who were painters at Baroda Fine Arts college in early 1950's. He learned the basics of modern art especially Cubism with all of its hues from his teachers. His major thrust was to learn the technical side of every medium with maniacally driven obsession. From Baroda, after spending about five to six years without any degree or diploma, he travelled to Delhi, Paris, and London. Wherever he went, his zeal for learning did not lessen with age. The exposure, the researcher thinks, invigorated the new heights of curiosity in him. At Ahmedabad, after his first sojourn, he experimented with every medium that was thrown at him. He started making use of pen and Crow quill for his drawings, burnt paper collage, Silver foil paintings, Clay, Cement, Ceramics, metal and Used objects. The murals at Ahmedabad signaled the arrival of a Maestro and a new dawn for Indian Art. No one before Himmat had conceptualized and executed such project on architecture with this vocabulary and technique as used by this artist, certainly was an eye opener for the artists of his age in India. His bold erotic drawings shocked the public and stirred the nest of his contemporaries. Burnt paper collage, as the artist recalls, had left Sankho da speechless and Professor Bendre wondering for several hours, leading to patting his back. His well-crafted heads, shapeless skulls

with different colors, tones, and shades had become the center of attraction for art practitioner and lovers. People and social thinkers were trying to bring his art closer to Lothal excavation and 'Linga' worship. The relation was accidental or deliberate; people were just making all kind of statements. For him, artist's work was to release the captive spirit, confined in the material by using his gifted imagination. Every scale and balancing pattern dictates the shape of image conceived by the creator and transmitted from his subconscious level. The onlooker devours and gobbles up the meticulously planned process of art making for cherishing.

After arriving in Delhi at the instance of Bendre, he had to face the hardships of all kinds though people like Ambadas, Shanti Dave, and J. Swaminathan were there to support him. Prayag Shukla, Vinod Bhardwaj, and J. Swaminathan were those people who started visiting his studio at the *Barsati* provided by Ambadas at Karol Bagh. The researcher was informed by the artist himself that all artists' fraternity was pitted against him. It was finally the support of Sankhu da especially Ira Choudhary (wife of Sanko Da) who offered him food. Whenever he was forced by his fate, he continued his journey from trash to maniacally driven sensibility. Ebrahim Alkajiis also said to have financed several of his exhibitions and art projects. For his future pursuits, he purchased several bags of clay from the New Delhi Railway station to stash at his Studio in Karol Bagh and Garhi later. This was objected by several people from his Studios as well as outsiders. From time to time, he was defended by R. Kaneria, Shanti Dave and of course the Choudharies.

After getting the bags of clay inside his studio, the researcher found him treating them for many years, kneading it regularly for hours in rain or under the open sky in dry spells. Kneading them again after it got soaked completely and let it get dry in order to soak again for softening. Repeating the process several days and years produced fine residual clay devoid of all impurities and contaminations. Sometimes he would dilute the clay by churning the mud like 'Lassi' before sieving it through the doubled fine muslin to get the finest clay, his new medium. This was no doubt a new experiment for Indian sculptors. Nobody before him has done this for making terracotta, though the slip technique has been used before. Each work bearing his name shows an individuality created out of a new method, a new technique and has its own significance. If one side you have geometrical abstraction the researcher finds different shades of objective fantasy, yet, on another side seeping through his body of

art works. “His works are thought’s diction, free from any control by reason and independent of any moral or aesthetic preoccupation”. (Sinha, 2007)

It is now crystal-clear that Himmat Shah selected materials and mediums for basically two factors, money and lack of the proper studio. He told that at Karol Bagh as well as at Garhi, major chunks of drawings and clay figures were destroyed by heavy rains and other calamities. Some of his semi-finished works were either destroyed or stolen by unknown people with bad intentions and he had no options. He was short of funds and lacked support to buy a good space for a safe studio. Despite this handicap, he was not short of creative ideas, his bold and unconventional methods to get the proper results. He has shown great potentials of spending hours ideally sitting before his medium exploring his imagination, visionary idealism, and fanciful romanticism. The way he has treated clay for his sculptural forms, gives a glimpse into his insight to the researcher as to how did he abhor the Indian contemporary academic and conventional way of art making. With every art work, he has specific aesthetics. For Himmat Shah, the medium selected by him itself directs with its awesome power to take on the material without making a drawing for the art work. The image would arrive automatically during the long interaction and personal introspection; an intuitional unveiling in a long discourse on the matter. Many of his sculptures and terracotta show us his direct relationship with his medium rather than any external force which crystallizes his inner thoughts and inward going trajectory.

While talking about his art extensively during the last visit by the researcher to his studio in Jaipur, he categorically informed that Painting and sculpture for him cannot be separated from his creative world. Himmat Shah is not aware what he will do first when he enters his studio as he finds a ball of clay kneaded put on a mat and a fresh canvass on a stand challenging and inviting him to have a personal negotiation. He is guided by his instincts and he follows the command honestly, closer to his heart and central to his creative process. His earlier drawings done before reaching Delhi in early 1960’s are no more available, but for him, they were more powerful and artistically potent.

Himmat Shah keeps a close watch on his collected objects and tries to make relation with them. Sometimes this relation becomes operational in a spur of the moment while for other objects it takes decades. This relationship is decided by his

holistic vision, not by his choice. Nothing is forced from outside. His remarkable imaginative power helps him to understand the optical and latent behavior, textural qualities and sensual appealing of a selected medium. In the end, to give a major shock to his art lovers, he brings out a new methodology and corresponding artistic creativity, for Himmat Shah his approach is different for every work, never tried before. His philosophical outlook is very simple and medium related, innovative and reformed. As he is never allured by any religious, social or political ideology, hence the majority of his works are devoid of titles and overt messages. The researcher has to toil and make a relationship with his works and repeatedly ask his view.

From his art works, it is an amazing experience one gets while noticing how tactfully the artist has amalgamated three dimensionalities with the flatness of the matter. It is Himmat Shah's mastery which makes his sculptures and paintings as autonomous bodies. They exist in their own world as free entities without time element percolated through them. From a close angle, their world appears full of diverse and texturally rich dexterity. Physical and closely felt visual references are fused into one entity with spontaneity and dynamism. Himmat's drawings, be it monochrome or many colored or mix media, they exist independently in their own world. The researcher was told by the artist himself recently that his drawings done before leaving Baroda were more forceful and dynamic. There were violence and peace, high and low, sorrow and joy all human feelings existing side by side. None of them is availed for the scrutiny. Either sold cheaply or stolen or destroyed by the time factor, faint memories still rock and kindle his mind. In the free time, Himmat Shah continued this practice even after reaching Delhi.

At Karol Bagh, in the studio provided by Ambalal, he had all the time and facilities to continue his practice of drawing with everything possible, uninterruptedly, as several factors combined. One of them was his age. At 30, he was passing through a difficult time. With heartbroken and poverty-driven Gujarat having no one to sympathize in a place dominated by Pakistani migrants, he had no other means but to give a strong message through his drawings as he could not afford another medium to express his outcry and pent-up emotions vigorously. His daily visits to the Humayun Tomb from Karol Bagh for sketching in his early days of 1962-63 resulted in making some very interesting compositions. He was inspired by the love making couples in every nook and corner and the monochrome erotic drawings on the walls and interiors

of the tomb by some mentally perturbed & sick people. These drawings highlighting his self-deprecating tendency for declining the marriage proposal and the strongest admonition for irresponsible, rowdy, wicked, evil-minded vagabonds were made to shock the people who thronged to see his exhibition in Delhi. Majority of them was outraged and the situation was tense and volatile. There was a strong fear of reprisal from the district authorities, his works were about to get confiscated and exhibition censored. In London, next year, when George Butcher went to exhibit his selected new Art of India out of that big size drawing 'Man's Fate' by Himmat Shah was about to face censorship problem. (Fig. 7) It was a fiercely erotic drawing showing men fornicating in a very violent action. His true creative power was felt through these drawings for at-least an Art Historian like Prof. Ratan Parimoo, though several of his contemporaries were shocked and some surprised. His maturity is summed up, "Using a simple medium of ink with jagged and crisscross lines intensified by tones, he has created images of tremendous violence. The heads, disfigured and deformed, almost looking like terrifying monsters leave a disturbing impact on the observer. In them, he seems to play with his sub-conscious reflecting his personal conflicts and inner torments. These images are remarkably close to Picasso's work of the Guernica's phase and... even those of Jean Dubuffet. But that does not mean Himmat is a Pastiche. One who can pin images of such power cannot be phony. They can come naturally to an artist who has it in him. He seems to get them instinctively."(Parimoo, 1975)

The maturity of Himmat Shah's drawings is best summed up by J. Swaminathan, one of his most trusted friends, who remained by his side for many years and who himself was a good writer who shows his close affinity with Himmat, by writing for his drawings, "The creatures frantically engaged in the compulsive act of sex are bereft of all humanity; allowing primeval slime, they have grown into grotesque monsters whose sole preoccupation is the procreation of a species condemned to extinctions". (Sinha, 2007)

Before reaching Dehli, Himmat Shah had met Bendre at Baroda who introduced several shades of modern art through his lectures and his art works. He preferred to select national capital as his final abode where he met several people who helped him to get in touch with western ideas and arts. The timely scholarship provided by French Government brought him directly to the contemporary art scene



in the west. He met several artists and builders and learnt how they plan and work by visiting their sites and studios. As he admits, he was prompted to think about different mediums and techniques differently according to his taste and needs. It struck him to employ new mediums for his art works. On his return, he demonstrated his prowess in the murals of Ahmedabad. Here his main thrust was to try new possibilities of geometrical formal arrangements and amazing textural designs. This is the finest example of his deliberate attempt to try unconventional styles and techniques.

To elucidate, the researcher finds Himmat Shah uses pale brown burnt holes on papers for his compositions. It is the design of holes in different sizes and in different spatial order which surprises onlookers. The technique of 'singed paper' that he used was never tried by any Indian artist of his age. The softness and fragility of Paper, the total material quality, is treated as a one-piece sculptural form in relation with irregular charred holes, challenging and supplementing. (Singh, 2015)

### **3.2.1 The Physical Extension of Himmat Shah's Art: His Method and Material**

Though he had shown his deep interest in clay even during his adolescent age at Lothal, and soon after his French and Ahmedabad murals, by early days of 1970's Himmat Shah had started playing with clay regularly and started making free standing sculptures in his studio at Garhi. From his early works, it is noticed that his sculptures are dictated by artist's serious and long discourse with the medium and his thinking for the sculptural form. They are free from all kind of human reasoning capacity and set of moral conduct. Himmat Shah is not bothered about any creative theory of academic interest. For his sculptures, he has devised his aesthetic quality which is not tested before, never heard before thoroughly internally related, focused to dwell within and abide by Law of continuance in the void. That is why people feel insecure before his body of art and find all kind of conventional rules and scale being mocked regularly. "If one stands back to take a telescopic view of his sculptures it would probably fall in the areas of enigma domesticity and sheer whim". (Sinha, 2007)

After his European sojourn where he was troubled by his linguistic limitations and inhibitions he went ahead to study best works of contemporary masters of France and other places by visiting their studios and museums. It was here that he saw Rousseau and his way of looking at nature around. The way Western Masters were using the human scale for their composition opened his eye sight. He knew that for his

sculptural form he had to invent the language as well as its grammar for better communication with the masses. Knowing fully that artist has to free the spirit of the material, he needed new imagery with its schematic preoccupations. He, himself, has reiterated that his clay work and terracotta help him to search new dimensions of material substance and more dynamics of textural quality. The life as the artist wants to portray with all its realities is presented through them keeping in mind moral, ethical and cultural values of Indian society.

The investigator has seen how Himmat Shah begins his dialogue with his selected medium. He faces it for several hours, days and months without doing much just watching and introspecting, keeping the discourse internally one sided, unidirectional. The result manifested through the medium is the product of intense and prolonged struggle. To the dismay of the researcher, the onlooker is shocked to see his starting and finished art process without making any free hand drawing for his composition. He knows that clay has the potentials that no other medium can show. "With clay, I get enormous satisfaction which no other medium can offer. The clay has the power to break the attachment of interior and exterior of the substance as well as the human mind. Working with it, is the response of the artist changes instantly. You watch how innocent children play in it; they come near it to get entrenched completely. By becoming one with it they fear to lose their natural relativity and consanguinity. Each time children's vision and relations change repeatedly as they go near it. He says, "O yes, I do not like to work in one medium only. It was never in my habit, but with clay... how many shapes does it take? You start working with it; it thrills you, it plays with your emotions. It interrogates, instigates and awakens you. It churns you from within..." (Singh, 2015)

The researcher concludes from his study that his drawings were quite provocative and erotic in taste but his sculptures are not at all erotic rather introvert declarations of the artist. Though in certain cases he seems inspired by Picasso but see, unlike French master his sculptures lack this sensuous feeling. Some of his sculptures show us his inspirations from Swiss master, Giacometti when the outer line of Himmat's bodies, as well as the very volume of his sculptures, turn very lean thin and rugged. A close watch reveals how their approach and result differ. His first sculptures soon after his visit to France and Ahmedabad are free standing in terracotta and stoneware flags with a totemic feel along with clusters of forms that questioned

life between ancient and contemporary settlement. His main thrust is to create ‘an echo of what’, as Prayag Shukla has been quoted, ‘our village, our ancestral homes, and our racial memory’. (Sinha, 2007)

The second category in which he has worked with tremendous zeal is his stray found objects, chosen, collected and dumped in his studio at Garhi. Their selection was made as they appeared to possess certain invisible but potent enigmatic power felt in votive objects. Though found across the road discarded, in the dustbin after use, market and store left uncared they displayed for Himmat a quality of anachronism, timelessness within them entrapped. This palpable sense of anxiety coaxed him to bring these objects back in life by treating with clay either by slip or slab technique. The form was worked out the way artist negotiated with many aspects, related with the object as well as with his own thinking process. His objective and end result is guided by ethos and remnants of the long past that Himmat visualizes. “If he engages the remnants of the past with the palpable present, he also engages and coaxes out other narration from the detritus of the earth’s surface”. (Sinha, 2007)

There is no denying that his process has some spiritual content and philosophical preoccupations. Himmat Shah wants to see these objects get new meaning and acceptance in the world of mankind. With some layer of clay poured through the holes generated by the artist himself the nature and character of the object are changed and transformed. An object is deliberately transformed with a new holistic and otherworldly presence. “...this process (of highlighting the transformative view of material) also endorses his practice of using material not as an object but as extensions of the self that accrue and dwell in his living space before they mutate into other forms.” (Sinha, 2007)

This peculiar juxtaposition of the physically present object and some vague, philosophic content should be studied carefully. For the researcher, it is one of the positive quintessence of Himmat’s creative and artistic processes. “It must be ever borne in the mind that Shah always works with the metaphorical; he introduces, through the process of his work, fragments of civilization, the trace of the human mind and cycle of possession and dispossession of objects meant for utility and pleasure”. (Kapoor, 2000)

A large number of terracotta works made during the late 80's and 90's is entitled. They are sensuous, other worldly belonging to a bygone civilization, inspired by a philosophy no more in use now. They remind you of Picasso's inspirations but in different context showing affinity with the excavated objects from the site of Lothal, pillars, totems, small figurines, seals, and potsherds. Some other works hold within their holy embrace small found objects glazed in gold silver and other colors. They are deliberately transformed to look like seeds of a new crop, new vegetation about to erupt and mutate in our time. This may, for some, show and reflect artist's frustration of being deliberately ignored by and isolated from the society, his banishment being mimicked through these experiments "...terracotta objects pass into history, many do not bear the imprint of the artist, and all speak of the early wonder of man mimicking the nature. It is entirely possible that Himmat's response to clay which needs the other elements of water & fire (to gain from) is at the level of the philosophical as much as of the material". (Sinha, 2007)

Further no matter what value they accrue socially in the present time, material and sculptural form, through the transformative hands of the artist, there is a noticeable magical renewal. "Himmat engages with form rather than value, association rather than an object, leading the viewer into a literally expansive view. Again by combining gold (and other metallic) foil with baked terra cotta, he expands the way in which material is interpreted and received". (Sinha, 2007) To endorse this point, I remember a statement given by a well-wisher of Himmat Shah in Delhi that in the end, each work shows 'its own magic and enchantment'. (Shukla, 1989-90)

### **3.2.2 Heads: A Metaphor**

For his thorough research, the investigator has taken up 'the Head Series' of Himmat Shah. It is done precisely for two main reasons. The first reason, they are made of clay and the second reason is having a long consistent experimentation. It is the hallmark of Himmat's creative prowess. It has occupied his mind from the very beginning. The exact beginning of this series takes us to the earlier years of the 70's though he is known to have drawn sketches for human heads. With his age, as time rolled by, the investigator has seen that he has employed many mediums but clay was his most favored intermediary and conductive tool in order to tackle his creative quintessence. It was easier for him to use it the way he wanted, for its rich potentials.

It was a unidirectional communication between artist and medium which Himmat wanted; it was made possible by its spontaneity and fertile resoluteness. He made heads of different shapes and colors. Some of them are eyeless and hairless, a mere representation as a skull, devoid of all kind of life. While others show good crop of hair erupting from the soft layer of skin. He has conceived of and worked out heads in all possible textures, one sculptor could dream off. The researcher has smooth heads, some showing little wrinkles and others showing strong leathery outlook. Was Himmat Shah trying to find the extensions of his emotive state of his self?

Designed to look like human skulls, these totemic objects, definitely inspired by the French Cubist Art Movement where artists were inspired by the African art, follow a long tradition of mankind to make skulls as a votive object. The African tribal cultural signs and symbols attracted European artists of the first decade of this century for symbolic richness and colorful formal presentation. In other words, non-representational forms were given a representational character, by transforming a kind of visual appearance by merely an abstract idea. To this, Himmat Shah picked up these skulls and other heads carrying scratches and wrinkles made directly on the wet clay. This was a new experiment from the hands of Himmat Shah, an inspired test and a frantic attempt to align self with the bygone civilization for the investigator.

Himmat arranged his first solo show of sculptures in 1979 at Dhoomimal Art Center, New Delhi and Krishan Khanna was invited to introduce and write some words of encouragement. They were close friends if not intimate ones. They had their studios adjacent to each other at 'Garhi Studio'. Aware of each other's temperament, they exchanged their philosophic and creative thoughts and views, off and on. According to Himmat, they were aware of their artistic activities. Khanna was quite happy to see him being invited and his late works. "I was given an opportunity this morning to see your new work much of it executed in a workshop in London. I did not expect to see the great difference between what I had known and what stood before me". (Khanna, 2007)

In the early years soon after independence, Indian Artists visiting Europe and United states were seen getting influenced by the modern artists and art trends. They were drawn to the open and positive attitudes of western artists. They were, from their side, definitely aware of the confusing stage of Indian art scene. In search of modern

idiom, a new artistic language, technique and a quest for respectability for an artist in the transitional Indian society, young artists were quizzing, investigating and exploring all other possibilities. This fire could be felt everywhere; the first decade was certainly a decade of great hope. The modernity for this generation of the artist was nothing but complete departure from the traditional past of India. Except some individuals, a majority of artists were looking at the contemporary west for a ready-made answer for their queries. In this context, I suppose Khanna was surprised to see Himmat Shah at his best, in his unique style. He was anticipating Himmat to change his style, his form and his outlook on the life. "I had feared that like so many others you might be swept away by the fashionable winds. I was delighted to see that have not forsaken your vision. Vision is a small word used indiscriminately nowadays. At its lowest, it is some form of ego-centralism (egoism?) While at its broadest, it is the percolation of a whole culture through the artist who acts as a receptacle". (Khanna, 2007)

With a long association with this artist, the researcher has come to this conclusion that the majority of his heads results from his long research on human conditions. From the same mold, he has brought out several images with new experiment either with new colors or change in the form & structure. This association with the Head sculptures is totally unprecedented. Knowing fully that in our country such practice was never tried before but this image could transmit human emotions better than other images, what was Himmat required doing with these images. The researcher has felt that he kept on exploring by this idiom, the texture and the color of the head sculpture? This was a unique experiment that he attempted fully conscious of his requirement. "Himmat's suite of large heads comes at the apex of his investigation of the human condition. There is nothing in the Indian sculpture tradition that leads to the making of the 'Head' as a discrete sculptural form". (Khanna, 2007)

The researcher has been referenced that the tradition of using human skull or head is practised in the area stretching from the Egypt and the Central Asia from the time immemorial. The researcher is amazed to see the repeated uses of these images by the corresponding societies. Himmat Shah is not bothered about others but he knows what he is up to. He has seen numerous images of Buddha and Jain *Trithankara's* in Indian temples and museums, looking at the devotees in stillness in fixed gaze. He is also aware of numerous images of *Shiva Lingas* appearing at several

sites in India. He is aware of their iconography and their position, value accrued by masses/devotees. Himmat Shah wants to use human heads for communicating and transmitting the hopelessness, human pain, fear of being all alone in this world, some deliberately attempted conceptual thoughts, through his transformative handling “...ancient contemplative Buddha’s,...studies in stillness, long after the Buddha’s presence had been eroded from the land of his birth, or else the ‘*Mukha-Linghas*’ which combines the ithyphallic *lingam* of Shiva with his face, creating a palimpsest of concepts - material icons. In this figuration, the Head/Face gains as a conceptual whole from a superimposition of body parts.” (Sinha, 2007)

### **3.2.3 Himmat as a Technician: An Avid Modernist**

Himmat Shah is very articulate, focused, and down to earth besides being practical. Himmat Shah is aware as to what exactly he wants to achieve. It is reflected from his words, ‘I am not interested in ‘expression’ as some kind of signature tune. What I am interested in is in using a technique as a handmaiden for achieving a higher consciousness. For his working procedure, he starts with the clay which satisfies him completely, with its purity and sophistication. Then he starts for the next step, for the formation of plaster mold for his head. A thin but long piece of x-ray film applied from the side to the clay piece in solid form in order to get adequate height and breadth in two pieces. It is called separator. This separator helps the artist to get plaster mold safely and conveniently. To get the quick and best sculpture, Himmat Shah, allows it to get dry under the Sun. He waits for the sculpture to get dry. He keeps on checking the hardness of the plaster mold and its color. Once it is dried completely, Himmat places it on his rotator, for his convenience iron rotator is used, though wooden are also used by potters. Both the pieces of the mold are tied with each other to ensure it leak proof. Through slip technique extra fine kneaded clay diluted with water is stirred in a mixer. It is then poured by the artist from below the mold. In order to get the desired thickness, the artist allows the extra clay to pass out by turning it to its normal position. Resultantly, he gets a thin layer of clay for his sculpture. For the desired thickness of his sculpture, he applies the clay from below by slab technique manually, by his hands. To get different shapes from the same mold, Himmat is known to have changed the time meant for getting it dried under the Sun. For the final sculpture, it is advised by Himmat Shah to see the plaster cast absorbing the extra water of the clay poured inside it. The researcher saw him opening both the

pieces of the plaster mold to get the sculpture in the dried condition. In this step, Himmat experiments many times. For the deformed heads, he opened the mold early when it was not fully dry; in semi-solid condition. His experiments with the pieces of cloth and gunny bag for the outer surface are also noticed. Once his sculpture gets dry, it is ready for baking in the furnace by fixing a thermometer on the top.

It is suggested to the investigator that it is possible to get different tones of the same color if you change the temperature. For further results, he fires from the different angles and at different intensities. Generally, potters use the temperature around 500-600 degrees for local clay but for fine china clay, you have a choice to go above 1000 degrees. Himmat has used quite high temperatures for his head series ranging between 500-1200 degrees of centigrade. It was aimed to get more possibilities of color changes by controlled heat and cooling. In some cases, Himmat is said to have put fired sculpture to stand under the Sun and rain for several months for getting a warm and natural look. In some cases, the excessive exposure under the Sun absorbs various tones and shades. In some cases, the researcher has noticed that Himmat Shah has used linseed oil to provide more hardness to his heads by immersing them in oil for several days and months. At other places, he has applied metallic foils like gold and silver for special effects. It may be in order to provide a spirituality and timelessness. They are treated to look like ageless remains of the deities of the bygone civilizations.

Himmat has tried almost all the tricks a sculptor could dream off while working on clay. While adopting human 'Head' as a metaphor to express his emotions, he might have been inspired by Picasso and Braque, two Cubists who had studied Paul Cezanne closely before getting inspirations from the tribal art of Africa. They were aware of their own cultural milieu while the purity and richness of tribal art brought them to take their art to new horizons. Resultantly, we see European masters showing this synthesis getting their works show a new vocabulary and formal structure and western art getting a new impetus. In the case of Himmat Shah, the researcher sees him getting human head and skull just as a tool for its strong transformative quintessence. While employing human head, he had different goals and objectives, so he used it quietly in a different context. The same kind of result was achieved, his favorite hallmark (taken as a totem), made his art more pronounced and famous. He was committed to marrying these forms with a spirit of ageless and



vitality unconstrained. They appear other-worldly with contours rugged and presented differently each time. The facial features are used minimally, in abstract form, sticking /confining to the basics. More emphasis is laid on the symbolic content rather than the detail work so dots and small lines are abundantly employed. They appear as if grown with this artist as Khanna sums up nicely. “There is a powerful affinity between the tribal icons which have held communities together in our country for centuries. You grew up amongst them and these powerful images have persisted in your memory and now appear in the guise of your sculptures”. (Khanna, 2007)

To some, they may appear as an art object by their expressivity and latent vitality. Himmat was perhaps more interested in providing them enigmatic power, loathed with another worldly reference. All these years, he was trying to convey/objectify his utter frustration and melancholy through them. Did he succeed in his pursuits? “They are not fragile and emit an aura to keep evil at bay. This is not idle arty talk because even in an age of reason there is a deep seated notion that there are forces beyond our comprehensions and control which need to be placated. These images are therefore not to be seen as objects to grace a drawing room but as votive offerings occupying sacred space”. (Khanna, 2007)

Highlighting these heads, Himmat Shah has used some straight- lined element in colors to stir the stillness of the head. This is the well-thought concept for lending more dimensions to his creativity as well as expressivity. To see him exhibiting so many sculptures before him lead to Khanna being left dumbstruck. And the line disturbing the surface of his heads or adding some beauty in them surprised all. “I am entranced by the linear element which you have introduced on some of your sculptured heads. It is not a superscription but seems directed by the formation of the sculpture giving direction to the eyes which behold it”. (Khanna, 2007)

Some people have tried to connect this linear element to Himmat’s earlier life and his *Saurashtrian* milieu. The researcher wanted to know the reaction of several people, artists, and art teachers. The researcher drew the attention of the artist but the answer remained unsatisfactory to the researcher. Though the investigator would like to quote Sinha, when she gives her own opinion candidly to this problem, as she put it, “In the surface of his form...its strong linear pictorial/pictogram style, and the exposed stitched embroidery of its woman folk. These striated marks appear like a

domestic activity as much as a cartographic plotting of vast journeys across the surface of the earth". (Sinha, 2007)

Non-committal to various comments offered by people of varying temperament, on the repeated requests of the researcher, Himmat offered his views that he was not bothered what other people think about him and his work. For him, anything done on the surface of his all sculptures is a deep thought, with the conscious mind, without bringing time and any external deviation, into the play of form and inner thoughts. So, nothing is superficial in his sculptural works. Line and their different patterns are designed when an artist has taken the sculpture out from the sets of molds in a semi-solid state. In the first stage, we see him using the lines caused by the excessive slip casting emerging out from the gaps of molds for the sake of its natural beauty. He deliberately allows this strong protruding mass to highlight an uneven pattern from side to side. This is not what he had aimed at when he began working on his sculpture but was fully aware that something else is going to happen from his selected procedure. Others might have gone to rub it off, but for Himmat Shah, it is a part of his form, adding a beauty of its own. In later stages, he has used a different set of lines created by different tools on the surface of his sculptures besides retaining cleaving central line. Such lines are imitating the marks of worms and insects creeping/crawling on the semi-dried beds of tanks and ponds that Himmat Shah might have remembered. In one particular head, the researcher notices a set of lines haphazardly intersecting the length and breadth of it without any reference and formal symmetry. Lines to the investigator's mind play a decisive role in Himmat's sculptural form; they do not just add visual beauty but tactically communicate several undisclosed elements of the indigenous references. For the researcher, this Head series with all its variations is the finest example of mean that transforms Himmat's spiritual and sensual feelings through his magical hands driving us in the deep groove of quietude and isolation. (Fig. No. 3.8) this is echoed by his words when I pressed him further on this issue. "I have lived my whole life working. I do not know how to behave in the world outside. I used to live, eat and cook alone. I became a recluse in Garhi". (Arjun, 2015)

In discussion with Himmat Shah, it is generally felt by the researcher that his sincerity towards his art is of unquestionable integrity. He has never cared for any 'ism', neither any school, nor any god father. Till recently, he never considered

money as an important factor for his career, he never compromised on his principles and ideals. After choosing plaster and clay as his main media to tackle his inner urge, in order to create something new knowing fully that the public, as well as the art market, is heavily tilted towards painting and mix-media. “The nucleus of Shah’s artistry is not his exoteric, but his unique style to decipher the maiden beauty from a common day to day object”. (Kazmi, 2004)

In the formation of his head series sculpture, he has revisited his early life spent in *Saurashtra*. In his isolation in Delhi and later at Garhi when everybody was asking for his blood, he went to the primitive world of the bygone civilization for his inspirations. These heads and other sculptural forms take us to our ancient past where the researcher finds the interconnection of people cutting across many continents. It is not about one nation and one group but humanity at large. His creative sign is meant for universal brotherhood and message for all; free from the confines of time and space, signified through his transformative discourse. He has shown through his body of art works, three characteristics viz.: Dislike for any diabolical conventionalism/ Revolt against academic and generally accepted compositional superstructure/ Love for multilayered changes.

He can be seen as an ascetic who does not follow any kind of social groups like regional, linguistic, religious and political affiliation, never sought any favorable assistance by joining some buyers or dealers and joining forces on economic considerations. Except for few artists, he did not have any friend circle, isolated and condemned in Garhi Studio; at Ahmadabad, Baroda and Jaipur, he remained recluse all his life. The investigator has noted that in the absence of historical movement leading towards a well drafted, fully debated and accepted general idea towards a contemporary concept or ideology in sculpture, through a systematic persuasion or evolution as one can see in the case of the west, the scene in India is naturally mixed, varied and chaotic. It is also noticed by the researcher that the changes in the art scene in all, spheres like form, a concept as well as a technical process was largely individualized. In fact, in India neither had a person of international stature guide a historical art movement nor did any artist of that vision to inspire movement and style.

In his making of heads, busts, and skulls, Himmat wanted to revolutionize the art scene in India. For this, he was prepared to go to any distance, at any cost. Once arrived after studying almost every internationally celebrated artist of Europe to work out a vocabulary by churning the East and the West thinking-process and art trends by experimenting and exploring the atavistic shadows of past surprised many when appeared from the detritus of the studio number two of Garhi, in the form of totems with magical powers, more accurately, as Sheikh, N. (1996) describes, ‘the projective voluptuousness of the image’. That was the signal post describing the arrival of a new station, new turning point, form perceived by this artist erupting the barren land, merging head, a pillar, and the phallus into one, “The sculptural art of the young nation gaining face, meaning, and vitality of its own, not in its definition but in the process of arriving at a ‘significant form’”. (Bell, 1914)

### **3.3 ANALYTICAL STUDY OF HEAD-SERIES OF HIMMAT SHAH**

Besides, we have to keep in mind the role played by the power of aristocratic social order in politics and administration, black Macaulian tribe, the omnipotence of the nexus of press and art galleries is very important for the modern Indian art after 1960’s. Resultantly, as a formative principle of modern Indian art, individual and collective expression of this period emerged which confused the successive generations. This researcher recalls how Indian entries of First ‘Triennale’ and later in the 70’s best speakers on Contemporary Indian art had articulated the scenario. How the debates on the artistic output were initiated and what were the issues raised, this researcher keeps in mind while looking at the art product of this period. Standard bearing scholars and academicians posted arguments for a new aesthetic that was required for the under privileged public allying with the social reform and cultural up-gradation.

In this backdrop, the researcher has tried to diagnose the artistic practice carried by Himmat Shah as a modern artist. By choosing head as a metaphor, he tries to relate himself to a theme which does not need any explanation and introduction. It has a great tradition in art history. Himmat wants to put Indian modern art at par with pre-historical tradition which bound people of different continents with a common interest. Here, the investigator has seen him in the process of making different types of heads, from one or separate molds in terracotta. The researcher has come across

41 Heads of head series which are dated and can be differentiated easily. In this study, the researcher has divided his head series works in three different clusters. Total eight in his first phase (Initial phase from 1975-85), eighteen in his second phase (Middle Phase from 1985-1995) and fifteen in his late phase (Late Phase 1995-2002). For the convenience, the researcher has selected only those Head sculptures which are properly dated rest there are several others which have omitted for the study. Making 'Heads' became Himmat's obsession in his last stage that dating has lost its meaning, they have lost their identity and locale. They are self- personified, self-centered and self-encumbered for human beings.

This individuality for Himmat Shah, in his last lap, has taken him to new heights. For the researcher, it indicates the success of his masterful presentation of heads as a significant form. It is difficult to ascertain whether this step was initiated by this artist on his own or he was guided by someone very close to him. It appears that personal problems led him to arrive at this stage to get identified as 'Heads'. This was a proper theme, with its stylistic features, for imitation, for alteration or for innovation that suited Himmat's personality and capable to disseminate his internal anger, fears, and frustration not only to people coming to his studio but to the generations yet to come. Here the theory of yesteryears, tradition of many hundreds of centuries and generations cutting across continents is deliberately universalized and humanized.

### **3.3.1 Initial Phase (1975-85)**

Here the researcher has as many as eight 'models', different heads that Himmat Shah internalized through an act of representation, converting it into what can be regarded as a motif or sculptural theme. First, (Fig no. 3.20) representation is the earliest form that the investigator has traced though it is not available physically. It was painted in white color, life sized, closely shut lips, elongated but simplified nose reminding cubist characteristic and eyes represented by two circular holes, showing ageless energy, drilling their intensity into the onlooker's self. Interestingly, here artist has tilted the head and covering it with an empty bag of jute so that he would get textural impressions on the sculpture before getting properly dried and fired. A novel idea to provide it a different kind of personal expression; a search of the new identity. It was dated to 1977, while another, (Fig. no.3.21), again from a

single mold, dated to 1978-79, now in the collection of the Mukesh Ambani in 1999, mixed colored, maroon, brown, orange and golden, face within a face, fully textured with gunny bags impressions. Here, eyes are represented by two protruding balls jutting out, a new experiment by pricking the outer coffin, heavy lips and chopping the tip of the nose. More thrust is given to the play of light and shade, another Cubist characteristic. Here another feature is added in form of a circular double layered pedestal, to denote feminine quality the outer face shows, holes in the nose on the both sides.

A new experiment with the eye balls is seen in (Fig. no.3.23), one is bigger in size. Two drawing pins adorning the nose indicate a feminine character, totally black colored in this head sculpture, the researcher finds for lips another experiment is done, by attaching clay pieces by slab technique later while taking the sculpture out from the mold before getting properly dried. Here the neck is elongated compared to earlier sculptures. In this head, we see frontal A showing more percentage of sand. Another experiment is borrower while an artist is giving a frontal representation to his motif. (Fig.no. 3.24), the motif appears three piece sculptures, in the first, the front face is taken out from the mold, then a flat piece covering the headdress and in the third the pedestal is added. A different kind of experiment is seen in the eyes, nose and the neck without any sign of tears. For the first time, we encounter artist using slab and slip technique side by side in this sculpture. It was done in late 1979 and in reddish brown color. The pricing on the face indicating symptoms of chicken pox and heavy textured headdress with heavy straight lines inscribed by the tools are the new addition to his motifs. Similarly, like previous sculpture, it does not have any additional color, but by exposing to the sun directly different color tones are achieved after firing.

In one of his head, the investigator sees that Himmat Shah in Fig. no. 3.25, this sculpture last time giving importance to the nose and highlighting its elongation by giving support with the help of colored stripes covering entire length and breadth of the sculpture. Perhaps colors were applied later after firing process. Later in another (Fig. no.3.26), ceramics was added with clay to get special effects on the cheeks and chin besides adding two circles representing eyes on the forehead, sensuous protruding female lips, small naturalistic looking nose and strand of hair all make it naturalistic while the facial features lost their relevance in (Fig.no.3.27) just irregular

marks with some nails and prominent strong dividing line where frontal and back have lost their divide. In this phase, the researcher finds some trace of Cubist import presents in his 'Heads'.

### **3.3.2 Second Phase (1985-95)**

The elongation of a nose is discarded, the subtler and suppleness on the cheeks and the use of lines on the face with the help of tools are new features added to the sculpture. Here, for more clarity, Himmat Shah has gone to the African art of making 'Heads' (Fig. No. 3.28 and 3.29). The physiognomy is directly taken from African arts of Benin and very little from Europe is seen. This marks the beginning of the second phase where the investigator finds him depending on the basics of the tribal art. In this phase, he finds several pieces around his studio scattered forcing him to bring them together playfully (Fig. No. 3.30) where outer shell is a broken piece of a terracotta mould that he might have used earlier and several other terracotta pieces and objects added in the middle to suggest human face and whole process of making this 'Heads' is spontaneous. He was fully conscious of every step whatever he was taking. He has all the time in the world to make adjustments that is how he reacted when the investigator confronted.

An old mold is also used several times for his new experiments. The researcher has four picture plates from different sculptures (Fig. No. 3.31), where eyes are suggested by two small holes. The nose, lips, and eyebrows are added to semi-dried sculpture taken out from the mold while small pieces are added for special effects in a dried condition in order to get artificial cracks before putting them for firing. Two cut marks by blade are used one each at the nose and lower lips, to suggest the pitiable condition of a tribal who has lost his self-respect and right to protest. The outer skin of the terracotta shows artificially cracks caused by excessive heat applied to the sculpture while firing. The researcher is informed by Himmat Shah that he preferred heat beyond 900 degrees. These experiments dating back in pre-historic time used by the potters in order to get such cracks. The Same mold was used again to get new sculpture with a variation (Fig. No.3.32). Here on the edge dividing head and forehead, a thin clay strip was added by slab technique before merging it completely, and brown color was applied later, nose cut remained the same but the cut on the lower lip was shifted to the extreme left. The eye socket had no suggestion of

eye balls but the tingling of the tears dropping downwards diagonally (comparison with Picasso). Here his personal problems are being highlighted.

Around 1990's, Himmat Shah was desperate to work out new possibilities as the career was not growing according to his expectations. Perhaps frustrated of being found at the receiving end, he began liking minimalism on his body of work. May be, (Fig. No. 3.33) a new experiment where the head does not have a suggestion for facial details. Dotted holes in the back of the head in a line with the help of iron nail and the entire structure is covered with numerous lines while on the forehead, encircled in a big circle we have three small holes, suggesting '*Trinetra*'. The sculpture taken out from the mold has been smoothed with a cotton cloth, as investigator doesn't see its connecting line. Another experiment (Fig. no. 3.34) is done with entire body covered with a shawl like heavy drapery attached to the body through slab technique after taking sculpture from the mold with cut marks suggesting poor women looking through the fog in the Winter or a desperate beggar waiting for a alms giving donor. Eyes are given more importance with two popping out balls with small deep looking holes and a pressed nose but no suggestion of the mouth and the ears. The black sculpture is affixed on a round pedestal with a frontal prominence shows a deliberate interplay of light and shade. Two other experiments are seen in (Fig. No. 3.35 and 3.36), where there is no hint of human anatomy or physiognomic detail just holes, that too uneven and without any systematic pattern. According to Himmat Shah, these sculptures are the direct product of broken head pieces and show his desire to find the impact of excessive heat on the clay. The researcher has seen cracks on the upper thin skin of the sculpture and the patches of faintness of the terracotta color, covering the entire body. That these sculptures are suggestive of his meticulous planning and painstaking involvement is clearly visible. These experiments were the groundworks for the later 'Heads'. The impact of excessive heat on the sculpture needed some adjustments with the composition of the clay, some Chinese and local substances were added to see the formalization withstand the fire up to 1200 degree centigrade. A sculpture (Fig.no.3.37) shows clay cracking up vertically and horizontally. This 'Head' is taken out from the earlier mold, two different sculptures are the byproduct of this mold (Fig.no.3.37 and 3.38). The facial details are minimally suggested but Himmat Shah has used other methods to make his sculptures look like holy objects, infested with all power is, omnipotent and benevolent.



A new experiment is tried in early 90's (Fig.no. 3.39 and 3.40). These sculptures are cast in the same mold. Later one relates him with earlier experiments of (Fig. No. 3.37 and 3.38) as the surface is allowed to get cracked as excessive heat is given but in the former, both can be easily dated to early years of 90's. The sculpture in (Fig. no.3.39) is painted with golden color after the firing process after rubbing off all the cracks but allowing a deliberate crack on the top of the skull to the right side. It appears to have been caused by a sharp knife before fire. Here for the first time, the investigator referenced that Himmat Shah deliberately using the left over excessive clay jutting out from the two pieces of the mold. A line is dividing the head in two pieces. The suggestion of the nose starts from the upper forehead and linking to the chin. (Fig. no. 3.42) is a frontal detail of (Fig.no.3.40). The last sculpture of this period, definitely done around 1995, suggests golden paint adorning the head. The suggestion of elongated nose starting from the forehead down to the mouth which is this by a very thin line and eyes are suggested by a thin circular line without any suggestion of any hole which was a favorite feature of Himmat's physiognomy in earlier 'Heads'. In this phase, very little from the western elements are noticed by the researcher but the major share is imported from the African prototype.

### **3.3.3 The Final Phase (1995-2002)**

For this researcher, Himmat Shah has now opened the transcendental possibilities in his body of work. During these days, he was feeling restless and tense. His problems had started multiplying there. The researcher is aware that by 2002, he was made to shift his base as his major work was purchased by Delhi Art Gallery in 2000 and he had decided to shift to Jaipur. His interest in terracotta sculpture had waned a bit and he wanted to try his hand in metal casting. The money was not a big issue. Artist like Vipul Kumar who was his old associate from Garhi and Thomas John Kavour, who were students of Balbir Singh Katt (BHU, Varanasi), supported him with their foundries and studios in order to carry out his creative process in Rajasthan. Once the packing from Garhi studio started, in 2004, he was already in the safe hands and Jaipur was set to welcome him.

Himmat is being termed as a Modernist as his career is placed in a grid which has modernism on one side and indigenous on the other. Someone very close to him has seen tribal elements encroaching in his work of later phase. Himmat Shah was

quite serious when he reacted to these comments, as, for him, a sculpture was his tool and weapons (medium) and abhorred diabolical conventionalism of every kind. He has never considered his teachers like Sankho Chaudhary and N. S. Bendre seriously while shaping his artistic career after leaving Gujarat so whatever he was taught at Baroda was reflected differently in different context. He has remained open to every idea that suited his demand of the moment, always versatile, flexible and consciously alert!

In this phase, the researcher observed that he has preceded his sculptural language into a new direction and to a new height, very consciously and strategically. Here he is deliberately and cogitatively using all means to reflect expressions through his works while using the method of reduction and abbreviation principle that he had borrowed from the African tribal art directly. Here the expression is quite sublime and controlled not spontaneous as seen in his second phase. Here every detail is meticulously calculated and guided by Himmat's imagination, intellectual issues, and aesthetic desires. Every sculpture passes through several stages of planning and execution. Here all academic sculptural formulae have been challenged regarding terracotta art.

In the initial stage, he has continued with earlier experiments (Fig.no.3.42) elucidate the finding of the researcher point. Here Himmat has continued his previous minimized style by sticking to basics suggestions as far as facial details are concerned. A long nose dominates the sculpture, no suggestion of mouth and ears, a big and several small holes indicating eyes sockets provide supernatural quality to it, artist perhaps indicating his helplessness at being deaf and dumb and through numerous eyes penetrating and questioning everybody. (Fig. no.3.43) For the researcher, the picture representing is another sculpture from the earlier mold but treated differently as the entire body is replete with lines drawn by tools of dress makers, Fig. no. 3.44 is another detail of those deliberate marks done by Himmat. Fig.no. 3.45. The researcher has referenced that Himmat Shah was doing a different kind of experiment during those days. Here the same mold is used for as many as five times new experiments are done with new effects. With different colors and material added to the clay and different layers for slip technique and high temperature in order to get cracks and deliberate spot like designs all are tried. Out of these five, four do

not have any suggestion for a nose and other features. The texture is shown highly volatile, temporal, husked and short lived.

In this Sculpture (Fig.no.3.46), Himmat Shah gives a shock to this investigator a spiritual suggestion with equally sized eyes and five small negative holes dropping from the top hole to the base of the forehead, completing the '*Trinetra*' design. The suggestion of nose and lips comes back along with dotted lines all over. A new addition comes in the form of white dry paint strokes that links it with African masks. Figure No. 3.47 showing two 'Heads' from the same mold with a new color-scheme added to provide a mystic look. A simple suggestion of nose and chin and grill created by numerous irregular lines gives it a spiritual look. With Figure No. 3.48, Himmat arrives at a new stage where he has no suggestion for physiognomy. The entire sculpture is full of cracks caused by high temperature, no color; no suggestion of any facial detail, deliberately caused cut marks everywhere, dotted lines intersecting the sculpture providing a mystic look. Another experiment from the same mold Fig.no.3.49, which we discussed above in fig no. 3.48, we find Himmat using China clay with white natural color in very thin layer unevenly poured into the mold and allowed to pass over the slip technique from the hole in order to get patches of China clay. The texture is highly volatile and temporal. Another sample from the same molding, no. 3.50, where same technique is not used instead of china clay local clay is added with China as well as some chemicals to get crack surfaces in his sculptures. The new suggestion of gunny bag on the surface is added.

With fig. no. 3.5 1, Himmat arrives at a new experiment. Here he is taking African motifs deliberately see even next Fig. No. 3.52 all his previous experiments are used here. Both these sculptures are cast from the same mold. Here the researcher does not find the stiffness and solidity of the African model. With fig.no.3.53, 3.54 and 3.55 all in terracotta, Himmat Shah arrives at another stage where we find Himmat Shah is using different colors as well as details to his sculptures. The treatment of facial detail is different in the entire three Heads'. This is again a direct lift from an African model. With fig.no.3.56, we find that he is using a big circular space in the middle, rough texture carrying a mark of the spillover of clay from both the pieces of mold, no suggestion of any facial detail. (Fig.no. 3.57), Himmat taking his sculptural art to the new direction where a head is extracted from the mold and details are provided with slab technique. More geometrical shapes are used as if

architectural elements are suggested, the joining line of both pieces of molds are highlighted with some sensuous holes, rough surface and no facial detail all are his earlier features but now monumental and geometrical angular parts are tried, perhaps designed from the African model directly. See Fig.no.3.58, which is another detail of the earlier figure discussed above, (Fig. No. 3.57). In this segment, the researcher has found that Himmat has taken an African mask and sculptures to arrive at his own personal creative level by developing a new language capable to convey his personal feelings.

### **3.4 SYNTHESIS OF INDIAN AND NON-INDIAN TRENDS: MODERN ART**

In fact, 1970s was a period of great awakening for our country. In every walk of life, people started feeling suffocation as their aspirations failed to meet the desired results. The society saw a mobility of all sections, the demand of more people to join the main stream grew many folds and it created mayhem everywhere. The fruits of democracy did not reach the majority living in the depths of the despair. The resultant confusion is aptly demonstrated by the bulk of cultural output of the seventies.

Modern art in the European context, to this researcher, appears, directly associated with the social and economic development. One cannot ignore the breaking up of the all-powerful dictatorial regimes and give way to the people elected governments. The masses were largely aware of their objectives and means to achieve them. The Industrial revolution and boom in higher studies were resulted out of the recent achievements in the science and technological discoveries. The European society was ready to absorb, assimilate and harmonize with the changes caused by the circumstances which were basically led by their own intellectual efforts. New ideas and ferments once absorbed and domesticated, were used to give a new twist to the smooth flow of their social life, to give more solid base and intensity for the next stage.

India did not find this kind of intellectual scene conducive. We had a large unprivileged, uneducated and traditionally driven society. After Independence, the industrial and educational developments were borrowed from the western models rather than developed from our local needs and means. These developments appeared to be imposed on us whether we liked or not. Without any breathing space, we were made to adopt them as we had failed to bring a perfect harmony with the prevailing

situation. This socio-cultural contradiction is reflected in the art activity of our country when several different currents appear working at the same time. The elements of eastern, traditional and western taste cutting across their historicity are mutating without any harmony. The artist as well as the receptacle public, in the Post-Colonial phase, appeared largely unobservant, apathetic and indifferent to the situation. In certain cases, the whole process was found to be confusing and long suffering.

Aware of this dilemma, the Indian government had hosted an art fair by inviting entries from the artists of several countries so that local people may learn something from their works and words. In the First Triennial, which was held in 1968, several artists and theoreticians were invited to address the prevailing situation of the art activity in India. Roger Fry was one of them who spoke on the occasion.

The scene was found disconcerted, debatable and disorderly, as the majority of artists cutting across their geographical and linguistic barriers were found grappling with the formalistic problems for their art works. Some radically opposing the Bengali School of native and tribal taste were seen using western idiom without proper understanding the basic potentials and meanings of the imported ingredients. They were found unable to relate western formal structures to the prevailing Indian sociological situation. First, it was the turn of Anand, M.R. and Jayaappa, Swami and then several others who lamented the pathetic art scene in India. The major concern for Indian modern theoreticians was to see a perfect fusion between the borrower and the decadent receptacle which was totally missing. The haphazard coupling, though tried deliberately, shows paucity and inferior shabbiness while adopting stylistic and structural elements without harmonizing.

In fact, India does not have any historic art movement of recent time leading towards a contemporary concept or ideology, through a systematic persuasion or evolution as in the modern West. More or less two hundred years India has been ruled by the Britishers. It is always propagated by them that they are culturally more advanced than others. But it is true that Great Britain was backward in all three visual art form; painting, architecture and sculpture. The history of English art is full of surprise. During the modern ages the quality of visual art has been very low and the output of provincial rendering of continental styles. More often continental ideas have

been used by English artists...occasionally, though very rarely, England is to be found in the van of the new movement. Roger Fry was able to create a stir by organizing post-impressionist exhibition in London (1910 and 1912) of artist who were being superseded in Paris. After some decade later the name of Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Francis Bacon, Ben Nicholson and Reg Butler have been much publicized. However, the world centers of current art were New York and Paris, and London has been of almost no significance for many decades. As we have noted elsewhere, the situation of English art imposed a double backwardness upon India whose artists were deprived of the stimulus of the most advance bourgeois art experiments. It was not till the middle 50's that Indian artists were able to establish intellectual links with center outside Landon, since when the Avant- grade movement has sent down a few roots in the Indian bohemia.

It is really a surprising question for the researcher when the visual practice of the West was searching the alternative way, recognizing and analyzing the visual resources of the East for his creation, the Indian modern art practitioners were looking for the West for a visual formula. Henry Moore was one of the most dominating sculptor whose formal appreciation and perception impressed Indian sculptors to work accordingly. This mindset and dominance of the West is a core reality for post-colonial Indian art scene and it is strongly visible to 1970's.

The term synthesis is a combination of components or elements to form a connected whole. The synthesis of intellect and emotion combines the synthesis of viewpoints and realizations to represent an ideology. In Indian art, context synthesis means a juxtaposition of dominant civilization and an obedient civilization; a guidance of Big brother to the younger brother. This dominance has been discriminated by artist Himmat Shah whose vision of visual making is based on his life experience. In his creation synthesis means, the combination of visual elements realizing by him; a core individualistic perception and interpretation of visual forms. The literary, intellectual and academic interface is completely negated by him. Here the synthesis means the reorganization of a self, the realization of a self and exploration of an individual with the significant material is the single goal of an artist via travelling the East and the West.

The researcher has concluded that art activity in any medium reflects the emotive stage of the artist who works within his anxieties and aspirations while facing challenges before him, sociologically. It is a kind of synthesis of a form, content and material in higher level. It has been scrutinized how an artist is reacting formalistically to his social surrounding. The investigator had to find the way by which an artist develops his style, in the course of time, from the known paths to the new adventures by revolting and revolutionizing while finding a balance between new and old. The manner in which he picks or develops elements or says signs having some signified message and meaning, generally understood by the society to which he belongs, brings him to the intellectual level where he directly communicates with his audience. It is the endeavor of this researcher to find, here, how different Indian artists in post-colonial phase have reacted to the social issues synthesizing through their adopted medium, form and stylistic pattern. How have they addressed and synthesize modernity through their works and how far they have been successful in their pursuits?

### **3.4.1 Comparative Study of Himmat Shah: Sociological Factors and Formalist Structures**

Soon after First World War, Coomaraswamy, A. K. and Kramrisch, S. appeared on the scene of Indian art and Indian artists, under thin spell, started looking at indigenous art in a fresh light in the context of the traditional art movement and its position in the frame of the international art scene. In the first development, it was noticed by the investigator that the artist was to find his own position in the society. He was supposed to find conducive market for his artworks. His earlier patrons, for his livelihood, from temples and courts were no more available to cater to his requirements. The educational model as well as the printing media had shaped a new society, cut off from its roots, and grappling to find its identity in the contemporary world. The artist was to find a new language replete with artistic features acceptable to his audience whose taste was yet to get confirmed. Everything related to traditional values had to be replaced like celebrated Indian social reformers of the time, who devised their philosophic outlook to modernize their concepts for their followers by discarding worn out practices in the light of the changes felt in the modern western society. The modern artist, in this context, was facing multifaceted problems. He was to choose from given different media, techniques, artistic styles, formal superstructure

etc., to come in terms with the local needs, his own aspirations and market expectations.

In order to come to terms with this search and exploration, every individual was compelled to seek his answers from every source, every corner and every person from all over this continent. Against the revivalist, the researcher finds that the artists revolting against nationalist movement were also against the radical thinking and art trends. In other terms, the researcher finds that the atmosphere was quite confusing.

After 1940, the center for art activity shifted to other places Bombay. Lahore and Madras were among those centers where Art Colleges had started teaching and training young artists. Incidentally, a majority of the teachers in these colleges were product of the Shantiniketan. Due to the strong waves of western influences, the teaching methods were replete with heavy stress on technical virtuosity, skill, and craftsmanship. Though Sculpture was given second place to the Painting as a discipline, the early style of sculpture was very realistic showing a strong adherence to the academic style but in the 40's and the 50's, Madras School, under the influence of K. C. S. Panikker who was a painter basically and his colleague S. Dhanapal, seeds for Sculptural Art Movement were sowed. The strength of Sculptors in India was growing and they were making 'creative' sculptures for their own sake against the previous strong obsession of 'commissioned works'. Except for Ramkinker Baij, nobody could strike a balance between strong currents of western influences and indigenous artistic features. Though in Bombay, N. G. Pansare in the late 40's had tried to make some attempts for 'creative sculptures', his career, as a professional sculptor, showed his inclination to break free from all constraints and work freely; to be creative within the scope of commercial projects. His reliefs show western influences especially of the Egyptian models, as he tried the frontal style, for his humans, hugely academic, for their simplicity and grandeur; they relate to the architecture, with a secondary role, positive impact of sun light is allowed to enhance its charm. Rest all big names of this period were unable to break their clutches from the outside interventions completely and their attempts to find their own language were individualized. The developments that happened during this transitional phase, in form of image making, concept building, and an individual working procedure, were exceptional and praise worthy.



Ramkinker Baijwas joined by sculptors like, Prodosh Dasgupta, Dhanraj Bhagat, Sankhu Choudhary, Amarnath Sehgal, Chintamani Kar, Karmakar V.P., B. S. Katt and Deviprasad Roy Choudhary etc. who paved the way for the more individualized style of quite realistic sculpture. The researcher is talking about the phase of the 40's and the 50's when everybody among these sculptors was engaged in experimenting with more progressive attitude. This was a period when the investigator noticed Indian sculptures, some experiments from these artists, taking them away from earlier realistic academic discourse. This trend leads us to branch out this mode of art into two distinct sets. One group was inspired by the degenerated style inherited from earlier academic and decadent realistic approach while the second group was 'Creative'; free to adjust with the demand of the situation. In a lighter vein, a scholar has lamented at the situation in which he finds artist/sculptor of this era, where 'creative' sculpture had no buyer and no sympathizer beside his handicap of being a modern, for not succeeding in his commissioned works to implement his 'creativity'. (Parimoo, 1975)

Ram Kinker Baij was truly the first sculptor of 1940's, who produced several sculptures for the sake of art and society. Fresh, buoyant and individual; overcoming earlier limitations, rigidity, and conventions of academic training, highlighting the realism practiced by all sculptors of previous decades, his works spoke for his love for experimentation at every stage (Fig. No. 3.9), the medium of liquid cement and his handling, all draw the investigator's attention to his influence from Rodin and his student Bordello. Though he worked with local subjects and environ, completely Indian life, his sculptures were made to look like a part of the outdoor landscape as many modern western sculptors were conceiving of. He was at the threshold of the history, dividing this local experimentation and the whirlwind of western influences.

Dhanraj Bhagat, a product of Mayo College, Lahore, is termed as the third pioneer of Indian sculpture after Independence. The investigator is informed that he started wood carvings around 1950's, highlighting simplicity and naiveté of African Art. Under this influence, he developed a distortion and stylization in his form, where the figure is elongated and joints deliberately turned to curves, in order to get an 'organic' form. (Fig. No. 3.10) "It may be called a lyrical stylization which is free and flowing and the total sculptural object is conceived in terms of linear silhouettes instead of the emphasis on three dimensionalities despite its volume. Ideas of

‘rhythm’ and ‘growth also contribute to such lyrical stylization because of which he could be regarded to be the first Indian sculptor to work on the basis of definite ‘ideas’.

From 1955, the sculptural activity reached to other centers like Baroda and Madras. Sankho Choudhary, Adi Davierwala, Jitendra Kumar and Pilloo Pochkhanawala started experiments by maintaining the solid character of their wooden block. They all were the woodcarvers. All preferred large blocks of wood for their composition. The stress was laid on providing graceful curvilinear three dimensionalities. All of them were profusely influenced by the works of Henry Moore though aware of all latest trends in the West. A new definition of sculpture as an art form was provided by them, the main tenets of which are, loyalty to the material, more stress for three dimensionalities and activating of space by arranging positives and negatives, solids and voids; lighted and darkened. By his surface treatment by concave and convex planes angular juxtapositions of lines, Sankho Chaudhary introduced new possibilities to sculptural form to Indian art.

Davierwala and Pochkhanawala are two Bombay based sculptors, inspired by the British masters, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Their works reflect new ideology and style quite opposite to the contemporary sculptors belonging to different centers and generations. The wood carving of the former is quite different to Sankho da and his geometric and heaviness stands very pronounced while his metal casting and welded sculptures have more dynamic and majestic quality when you see sudden protruding of lines into space. His use of scale gives his sculptures a monumentality never seen before in India. Later, it was the abstraction which guided him more than anybody else. Pochkhanawala has just experimented with different techniques, approaches, and media without thinking about any other issue. B.Vithal is another sculptor who experimented in the same way without bringing any philosophical touch in his sculptures.

Following this, the researcher interacts with another sculptor named Amarnath Sehgal who has big reputation. He is also from Delhi and has been a great experimentalist with the metal for his art form. His sculpture can be termed as expressionist. Since 50’s, he has been doing sculptures on social themes and one cannot deny his liking for Alberto Giacometti, the way Swiss designs his grouping of

the figures, but in the different context. His elongated and stylized figures are akin to Dhanraj Bhagat. (Fig. No. 3.11)

The researcher has noticed that sculptural art making witnessed two major trends in 1960's. In The first, we see figurative as well as the abstract language based formalized formula while in the second, the local indigenous pricing based on sources derived from local tribal, folk while regional features replete with techniques, materials, themes, and meanings connected from the art production. The researcher can summarize that sculptors in a majority, from art schools as well as their teachers with their blind support base, art dealers as well as promoters, journalists writing in newspapers were trying to deal with the formal language in their own way, differently! The difference was not according to the regional base, but from person to person, the western influence was decoded differently by an individual artist. Sometimes this stylization appeared like colored design pattern done by women folk for their handmade embroidery. This was the dominant School of Indian modern art. For their formal problem, they had sought the help of the western artists without realizing their value and position in the total picture of the Global art practices.

The second School in search of 'Indianness' initiated by Abanindernath and his terra cotta disciple Nandlal Bose in Shanti Niketan, lost its shine as time rolled around. At the advent of 1950's, it went into the background as the revivalists who had lost the rhythm became decadent, devoid of fresh ideas, became repetitive, retrograded; demoralized, stagnant and withered. The teachers and seniors who were to guide their students and sympathizers in order to popularize and rejuvenate their school of thought went into oblivion and obscurity. The damage was there for all of us to see except Madras School, under S. Dhanapal, an indigenous sculptural movement from the mid 50's started grooming, he was very much influenced by K.C. S. Panikker and continued his pursuits in search of 'Indianness'. Through his terra cotta and sculptures, he has guided his students like Kanai Kunhiraman and P.V. Janaki Ram, C. Dakishnamurty in trying different formulae to popularize their movement. They are determined to carry frontality, linearity, iconicity along with local techniques, form, and meanings. The premises of this school looked meaningful, forceful and indigenously potent and it is being followed by sculptors of different regions since the 80's. If not completely Cubism at least they are trying their level best to arrive at an artistic language which is needed at this juncture to put them on the

national scene in front of an academic and western model which was being legitimized and forcibly sanctified.

### **3.4.2 Himmat and His Indian Contemporaries: A Clash of Artistic Sensibilities**

The researcher wants to draw attention to have a look at the murals done by Satish Gujral and N. G. Pansare who were contemporaries of Himmat Shah (Fig. no. 3.61 and 3.62) although there is a fair amount of influence from the Mexican mural art in Gujral's works of this time this picture does not show any such relationship. We see a deliberate use of simplification of the human form as well as distortion in the naturalistic presentation. In the case of Pansare, we see modeling tried, naturalism used and human form elongated and made part of the architectural scheme. To counter these artists, Himmat never attempts to relate his art to Indian roots. In fact, he studies the terra cotta requirements of the architecture, a school a design has been created in order to satisfy the needs and nature of the building. No attempt is made to narrate any story or concept but to project form in terms of the light and shade. The thrust is to arrive at unbridled energy. Gujral has used low relief while others have gone for high relief. The geometrical abstraction has a long association with African art, he may have used some elements from there but here the symbols are purely mathematical and deliberately used, the researcher finds cones, triangles, circles of low and high relief, signs of addition, multiplication and others. Unlike Gujral, he has used very few colors but has achieved to have a complete expression through his murals. Interestingly, he may have some similarities with minimalists from the United States but his compositions at Ahmedabad have their own significance and even the molds created for these murals are not less than a work of art.

K.G. Subramanian is a pioneer of Indian narrative art. In his murals from the earliest examples, one finds a direct influence of the Bengal School, especially the touch of Binod Bihari Mukherjee and folk art of Bengal. One can trace indigenous tradition in his murals but the modernist trend of synthetic cubism cannot be ignored. Not only does K.G. Subramanian employ over simplification and decorative pattern but extensively uses figurative tradition decked with different emotive state and facial expressions in order to express the content of his compositions. The facial distortion is a discernible feature of the cubism along with lines and dots; Mani da maintains two

dimensionalities of his works through them. By employing the thick outline, he follows the tradition of the Jain miniature paintings (Fig.no.3.63).

Himmat Shah is basically a painter but he tries to arrive at a three-dimensional stage in creating his terracotta relief. Though both these artists use slab technique boldly but treat their modeling individually. Himmat, instead of folkish content, prefers the tribal art of yesteryears for his inspiration but never attempts to show a narrative pattern. Himmat prefers the minimalist tradition of tribal people by giving more weight to the symbolic meaning even rendering dot pattern on the heads. Himmat also uses figurative simplification and facial distortion which he might have seen in the early Jain and Sultanate miniature paintings. The prominent facial contours with quite heavy and bold line done by Himmat do not appear decorative and cubistic.

C. Dakshinamurty is a well-known celebrated sculptor of the Madras school, the especially Modern Movement initiated by Panikkar and Dhanpal. In his later works, one can see a strong impact of primitivism which was a strong movement of the south India in the late 60's and 70's. You have a simplification and distortion of a human form in Dakshinamurty, by using elongated nose and neck he has given the impression of pre historic feelings. He has used mouth and eyes represented as if he is rendering coffee beans. The rough surface is retained to provide agelessness beauty of the sculpture while as the researcher sees in the Fig.no.3.64, uses distortion, simplification and design pattern quite differently. No doubt, he is inspired by the tribal art but does not go for excessive emotive content though takes enough pleasure from his act of creation. He distorts the different features of the face by keeping in mind the real anatomical form in his head just concentrating on a fixed pattern of design. While Dakshinamurty is an expressionist at least while treating his form, Himmat appears to this researcher to be a more Surrealist sculptor.

Both K. S. Kulkarni and Himmat Shah are basically painters and both were working in the Garhi Studio, hence quite familiar with each other's works. One finds semblance in their works. Kulkarni had been greatly influenced by the Cubist art. Fig.no.3.65, both seem inspired by the tribal art while creating their works. Both have used over simplification, by delineating nose with a line. Kulkarni uses open-mouthed empty-eyed sockets suggesting a life after death. Here Himmat uses African tribal

concept to highlight the form by sticking to his core concept where a facial form is secondary while the meaning and feelings are a final product. This way of representation of a face within a face is a metaphor. Both the sculptures have a mystical quality of their own but are very expressive. With their treatment, both these artists take their art to a different zone though cubist suggestion can be overlooked as both of them have tried to connect their art with the African prototype. To some extent, both of them try to strive for three dimensionalities along with symbolic meanings, reserved for the people of yesteryears by restricting their imagery contents minimally.

Fig.no.3.66 takes us to the new level of understanding. Here the researcher wants to discuss one work of Ram Kinker Baij and compare it with Himmat Shah's work. In nut shell, the investigator finds both of them having Cubist influence but Ramkinker Baij must have finished his piece in 1940's while Himmat has done his head in 1990's. The former master has made a portrait of Rabindranath Tagore by discarding naturalism which was a routine practice but opting for symbolic imagery. The form has been the highly stylized formula under the spell of Cubism rather than simplifying mode. To make his work of art more stylized, Baij has gone for multi-layered space development where available space has also been distorted. A long nose has been created/designed in order to bring both the eyes in a perfect lyrical harmony, i.e. more careful planning has been done to create a new space order. This type of space formation develops under the influence of Cubist formula. Himmat left the Cubist formula far behind and went to simplify the form by taking a long nose, distorted face and an elongated neck make this sculpture stand apart. Himmat has spent a long time and interest in shaping these eyes. By working out a composition, Himmat has stayed away from every kind of naturalism and emotive elements.

In the treatment of form, Ram Kinker Baij treats texture as well as line very intelligently, but in this picture, excessive lines are employed which even does not harmonize with the form arrived at. In contrast to this factor, Himmat's line and texture is used in the Cubist trend while rendering a spatial form. He never goes for the decorative end but employs sudden cuts and deliberate deep lines.

Somnath Hore, who started making sculptures in 1980's, was primarily a print maker. In his sculptures, this researcher finds excessive use of simplicity as well as

distortion. It appears to this researcher that Hore was inspired by Expressionism, the German Art Movement. It appears that Hore was compelled to use tribal elements in order to get away from naturalism, which was a prime condition for arriving at the expressionistic result. While touching the emotive chord of tribal culture, Hore makes a childlike form using slab technique. He is deeply affected by the Bengal famine and resultantly, deliberately destroyed the form supplements his emotions. His form which shows the marks of sudden forceful strokes and cuts, burns and smoke, help him to arrive at a stage where this researcher sees a taste of lost value (See pic.no.7). Himmat, in comparison to Hore, uses the slip as well as slab technique in order to arrive at a simplified as well as distorted form. Both these masters use their form to get the feel of the lost value or expression. Both break the form deliberately after creating it in order to get different results. (Fig.no.3.67). Hore wants emotive elements to infest his sculpture while Himmat is thrilled to find the wreckage playing with light and shade to create a feeling of mystifying and enigma. Hore never attempts to show a texture on the surface of his sculpture while Himmat travels with dots, holes as well as lines to create a feeling of agelessness and complete tranquility.

In the early works of Dhanraj Bhagat, Cubism has played a crucial role. He has made several sculptures on the theme of partition as he had seen the biggest human holocaust. The pain and feeling of despair are beautifully expressed by an elongated neck, dropping eyes, heavy lips and a prominent nose, elements; he seems to have borrowed from El Greco, Bernini, and tribal art. He treats the surface of his sculpture by modeling and creating a rough texture to express a feeling of deep sorrow and forced tranquility. See the Fig.no.3.68, where Himmat Shah uses a rough Post-Colonial suggesting a formula of Cubism, but this sculpture is directly related to the rich collection of a Cycladic ancient culture of the third millennium. Here the textural feeling and structure are directly borrowed from the pre historic treasure of Europe. To provide more pent-up emotions and arrested expressions, he deliberately distorts the form by sudden cuts and breaks. The elongated neck appears as if architecturally built on a pedestal. The simplification is again borrowed from the African models as you see the rendering of the nose and the lips. All these attempts make Himmat arrive at a stage where his Heads are not just human anatomical part/s but more than that. In comparison to the sculpture of Bhagat, Himmat attempts to

concentrate on the textural quality of the sculpture and takes the human naturalistic reality to the other worldly abstraction.

In the treatment of a female head, the researcher has two different experiments done at the same time Fig.No.3.69. Both these artists are trying to make female Heads by their own sculptural form. Sarbari Roy Chaudhary is seen here giving too much importance to the over simplification. Here more thrust is given to the elongated neck and geometrical head. This researcher finds some closeness to the Cubist thinking as he treats his sculptures by simplifying and distortion. After this in his later works, this researcher finds him going to the primitive culture for inspirations.

On the other hand, this researcher finds Himmat is using Cubist formula but the form structure is basically borrowed from the African Songye Wood Masks (Kifwebe). To create his head in the last years of the last century, he uses abstraction more forcefully and reduces the human anatomy to mere geometrical and architectural form. By simplifying the form, he uses deliberately multilayered slab technique. That is the difference between Sarbari and Himmat when they treat the texture of their sculpture. Sarbari uses very smooth surface while Himmat opts for different layers of slab technique to suggest a primitive culture and linking his art to the tradition of the bygone years where modern boundaries have no relevance.

The bygone cultures are one of the most important resources of postmodern art. The artist of this phase is more conscious to search their own root and inspirations. Artists were trying to create a new interface where the aim was focused to search the possibility of an individual self. The exploration of an individual, realization of an individual is significant. In this context, Balbir Singh Katt is one of the prominent names in Indian sculptor who is known for his larger than life stone sculpture. He is the student of Ramkinker Bajj and the part of the rich tradition of Shantiniketan and Baroda School. In 1999, Katt left his home for a walk and never returned. At the time, he was Professor of Sculpture, and the Faculty of Fine Arts Dean at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India. From his sculptures it is empty clear that it is a kind of his personal assertion or aggression, he always tries to manipulate with the stone; a stone which will be larger than life. He was radical in his approach to living either life or doing his sculptures. In Himmat Shah's concern the both are contemporary and inspired by Isamu Noguchi; a Japanese American sculptor.



Noguchi was socially and artistically connected to Abstract Expressionism, as evident not only in his large-scale works evoking abstracted forms but also in his friendships with Arshile Gorky and Willem de Kooning. Yet, his sculpture retained a distinct sensibility in its use of natural materials and its distinct blend of Surrealist and Japanese influence. Noguchi wanted to call attention to the dichotomies inherent in much of his work: he merged geometric and organic forms, found value in both positive and negative space, and created works that challenged the boundaries of design and art. He also integrated the materials and art forms of both his Japanese and American heritages into his innovative creations.

Himmat Shah and Balbir Singh Katt takes inspiration from Noguchi and formulate their artistic sensibilities with modern design juxtaposing geometrical and organic forms. As Noguchi, these artists also showing more interest to play with organic and raw things and direct association with form and materials. They became interested in the idea of leaving the marks of his tools on his sculpture to signify an ongoing connection between sculptor and material. This bohemian attitude is more relevant in Himmat Shah's concern. But both the sculptor tried to create an individual interface to create their aesthetics ideas in sculptural medium. Both the artists are more associated with the East and West.

The art and culture have always a global association. Even when the civilizations are busy with their glorious wars, cultures are engaged to create a new culture, busy to create new possibilities for humans. Thomas, M. E. (2002) in this concern, he says that “the 1950s to 70s were dominated by non-figurative art, a global phenomenon. The backdrop to it was the politics of the Cold War; the ‘Free world’ artists identified with formalism and abstraction; while narrative art was dismissed as being comparable to the Socialist Realism of the USSR.” This thought process is also evident in Indian art during 1970's. The abstraction and minimalist practice are visible in some pioneer artist of India. Nagji Patel is one of the important sculptors who are known for his polished and textured surface and a singular, simple motifs, imbuing his stone sculpture with an erotic grace. During 1960's and 1970's he is an important formalist sculptor whose thinking and working methodology or interface is simple and direct. The technique of part-polished, part-rough surface of stone was partially inspired by sculptures of Badami and Mahabalipuram where projected portions like shoulder, nose, breast, forehead, knee, toe had all become polished and blackened. As

sculptor felt that an innate sense of touch had made people touch these sculptures for thousands of years, and made them smooth in parts. Nagji Patel brings this element in his work with a view to arousing a sense of touch and he discovered the depth and projections. His sculptures provoke the natural elements like flowers, leaves, animals, birds etc in his sculptures which enables him to make a natural attention that become erotic and sensuous and sometimes it sparks with playfulness. But his more attention to creating a sculpture to explore touch and feel sensibility. In comparison to Nagji Patel, Himmat's works are minimalist but the methodology of creating a sculpture is based on a live experience and experimentation with the material. Both the artists are adopting the formalist practice and showing their keen interest to create a form which is significant for an individual self. But due to long travel in different material and medium Himmat Shah become capable to create a spiritual identity of a material in relation to form. His sculptural forms are not only a form but it expresses an enigmatic existence with the aspects of timelessness.

So far so good, the researcher has discussed Indian counterparts of Himmat Shah who have shown some closeness and affinity with him. This researcher has gone to look into the basic properties of the sculptors to differentiate differences and their corresponding compatibilities. The endeavor of this researcher was to highlight the discernible change in the outlook of some prominent artists while looking at their inspirational sources. How they have selected their structural and contextual elements while arriving at their individual creative language was one of the main issues that have been dealt here.

### **3.4.3 Western Influences: Covert Adaptation and Experimentation**

The researcher wants to look at some celebrated European masters whose affinity with Indian sculptors especially with Himmat Shah has been recorded. Here, the thrust would be to find what are the issues and features which have been shared and how far this fusion has harmonized in the Indian context.

Constantin Brancusi, a Roman sculptor was a helping hand of French sculptor Augusto Rodin but when he built his own studio, he preferred going to the native sculptures of Romania. The second thing was related to his medium that he changed. Brancusi wanted a medium where it was possible to have more involvement of his hands. In Fig.no.3.70, it is seen that Brancusi has used simplification and distortion of

human anatomical form while going to the non-western sources rather than the trend which he saw in France. While executing his surface of his forms, not in metal casting, he takes abstraction to the higher level. The result finds Brancusi arriving at a stage where the importance of texture has multiplied to manifolds and the concept of beauty permeates internally as well as externally. In comparison to this, Himmat, working on the same subject, 'Torso', takes the non-western source for his inspiration. He also prefers abstraction but in his own way. Here, it is aimed to have a lesser impact of naturalism while giving more thrust to freedom while handling the surface and its distortion for a poetic sophistication. Himmat wants to develop this sculpture as a metaphor by bringing holes and dots chosen from the African tribal arts. The disturbance on the surface of the sculpture and the special effects of the color are some means that activates the texture of Himmat's sculpture. In the researcher's perception, both these artists are presenting their enigmatic thinking in their works of art under the spell of the Cycladic culture.

Fig.no.3.71 shows Brancusi through simplification is trying to change the concept of beauty. This is his style where elongated neck, long nose and simplified rendering of eyes all based on a free lyrical form, while creating the head, Brancusi prefers round ball without any suggestion of hair on the surface but his surface retains unnatural smoothness. Himmat, for his sculpture, gives more thrust on simplification. For his handling of space, like Brancusi, he prefers a very smooth lyrical line merging with the form. Himmat's color and texture activates the surface of the form. In this sculpture, the researcher finds the culmination of stylization of the form. The metaphor has arrived at its mature stage. Here it seems that Himmat has achieved his iconic and enigmatic imagery which dwells on the Indian folk as well as a tribal tradition of the prehistoric period. For both these artists, the choice of the medium/material is very significant for their content, style, emotive element and formal structure and experiment justifies selection made. In Fig.no.3.72, both these artists have arrived at a similar stage where form has lost its subjective content. By discarding western and academic formal approaches, both have gone to experiment with tribal art for inspiration. With this, they have got a wide range of scope for their experiments, for the natural beauty has transformed itself wood carvings archaic transcendental beauty. Himmat has experimented with color patterns which bring basic and universal phenomena to the fore. For both the artists, concentration is more

important rather than physical appearance so they have got rid of facial elements another element which they have borrowed from the African tribal art. Amedeo Modigliani was influenced by the Baule Tribal Art when he moved to France. Like his paintings, sculptures show us elongation of eyes and nose. The researcher noticed that Modigliani employs simple lines and simplification to arrive at highly stylized facial type Fig. no.3.73.

He has deliberately distorted his facial type to bring an element of eternity to his sculpture. He prefers stone for his sculptures. Himmat, working in different mediums, uses simplification in his own way and terms, along with a highly stylized elongated face decked with a plethora of lines, lines with the help of holes and dots, intercepted by cuts and breaks. He takes his freedom to create eyes, nose, and mouth without caring for any symmetry. The facial treatment takes him closer to the tribal art of India and Africa. The usage of small seven dots near left eye suggests the pattern followed by our tribal who love tattoo marks on their body. Then the suggestion of small dots, eleven in number, just below the mouth going downwards is again an Indian tribal element. Both these artists love to present their ladies with their headdress and top knots differently according to their respective customs. In Himmat's sculpture, the researcher finds a childlike treatment and courage, an ability to travel fearlessly in observing and executing, for Himmat, is an inborn quality which is not seen in Modigliani.

Pablo Picasso has experimented within the purview of Cubism in many things. One of them is to illustrate the despair of a woman through his drawing and paintings. See Fig.no.3.74, a woman weeping in the utter tragic situation. He demonstrated his talent by delineating the line suggesting the flow of tears. The pattern of lines is lyrical as well as geometrical. The form has been distorted to arrive at a multi layered distortion. The rendering of the mouth, chin, and eyes is guided by his aim to get maximum expressive and emotive suggestion. This execution is a prime property of Picasso's work within the purview of Cubism. In comparison, Himmat dislikes melodramatic exuberance. He does not need human eyes to show human pain and anger, just a simple suggestion is enough. The cracks in the structure of the sculptures are capable of delivering and transmitting the traumatic state of tribal people and their practical down-to-earth lives and hardships. His big head is full of several untold stories of pent up anger and a long neck is suggestive of love for self-respect. For this

form, Himmat has taken some clues from the 'Nok' tribal art. Excessive use of cuts and cracks, untidy splits and fissures, ruptured nose and breached lips all suggest the story which you have to read rather than to cherish while listening. Both artists have gone for expressive quality in very simplified form but within their own sociological thinking process/e. Himmat has excessively used slab technique for his end product.

To surprise a few, Henry Moore has lots of shock for the artists belonging to the third world nations like India. He has influenced every sculptor; Himmat Shah is not an exception. The kind of experiments he has done; nobody can go near to the standard he has set for the fraternity. The archaic imagery Fig.no.3.75, that one can imagine, is superbly achieved by Moore by distorting the form as well as a surface of this sculpture. The pattern of lines is quite graceless and disturbed but still capable of conveying the human sentiments, language, on the other hand. Himmat Shah appears to have retained the rough texture and used the minimalist suggestion for rendering the nose and the mouth. The work of Himmat has been inspired by the rich tradition of Cycladic culture where geometrical patterns are freely used. To bathe it with an arrested energy, very controlled line work is used. The kind of texture Himmat has used here is capable of reflecting the concept of beauty. The imagery is due to its surface and anatomical rendering giving the researcher a Surrealist feel besides reminding of the affinity with the primitive identity. Fig.no.3.76, reminds this researcher of the closeness of Moore with Gaudier Brzeska and primitive art and it happened around 1920's. His affinity with the early Columbian and the Mexican art cannot be denied. It has also been noticed that Moore gives more importance to the female body in his art. In his stone as well as metal sculptures, the feeling of monumentality is clearly noticed. In this sculpture, he has employed plaster because the kind of result that he had aimed was not feasible with another medium. Though everything has been rendered with simplicity, all facial features are present which are needed to make a 'Head' complete. The use of lines determines the bold iconic feel which is the hallmark of Moore. He wants to break the naturalistic look from the eyes and models the face to provide flatness. The face as well as the skull, carries numerous tidy lines which breaks the symmetry of the structure and suggests a Surrealist feeling. Himmat is, however, more inspired by the African masks. He has used over simplification to arrive at this imagery. The researcher notices the intention of the artist when he is aiming to bring the desired expression on his sculpture, to

break the monotony of the naturalism, he drills two holes for eyes as well as suggesting minimalistic... all mouth, nose and chin. The skull is full of small holes which provide a primitive and an abstract feel to this head. The tranquility of an ascetic, the spiritual equipoise which we Indian can understand can be achieved by a mature mind and tribal activism.

To cap it up all, the researcher could not find better example Fig.no.3.77, where Himmat is at his best. He is influenced by the rich tradition of Cycladic sculptures for this metal sculpture. For this, he uses simplicity as well as Minimalistic vocabulary. The researcher is amazed to see the enigmatic content of this work. The Cycladic islands of the Aegean were first inhabited by the voyagers from the Asia Minor around the Third millennium. The prosperity of these islands is reflected by the rich tradition of their art works done in various mediums and that too at large scale. The enigmatic and minimalistic feeling of Cycladic sculptures is retained by Himmat Shah, though his metaphor is capable of delivering the untold story of a tribal ascetic lost in his deep slumber.

While discussing the growth and significance of Himmat Shah, Professor Shivaji Panikker had raised three issues-- politics of representation, and the strategies of Himmat's artistic interventions as well as the exposure of wedding culture to both artistic practice and art historical discourse. In the above analysis, the investigator has tried to see these issues in the body of Himmat's works carefully. The researcher has observed that Himmat Shah also struggled in the initial stage like all other Indian artists in finding a suitable modern Indian artistic vocabulary for which, he also went to the western masters but with time and experience, he succeeded in arriving at his individual metaphor to communicate his external and internal content. With time, the investigator has noticed that Himmat not only had arrived at pinnacle of his career by synthesizing various styles and schools but also influenced the contemporary social milieu and art practice. This research has made it possible by the best methodological model based on the art exploratory discourse; by comparing and analyzing different variants openly, logically and methodically.

## CHAPTER IV

### MODERNITY, INDIVIDUALITY, NATIONALISM AND MATERIALITY IN HIMMAT SHAH'S ART

Man is a social animal and lives in a group at a particular place with distinct traits, cultural ethos and institutions. His living whole way of life is manifested by his social processes, social institutions, organizational setup and means of cultural reproductions, to name a few other interests and factors. Human life is never found static for a long period man keeps on changing and it is manifested in his cultural output and traits. A Child is born and is tutored by his surrounding including his parents, relations and neighbors the basics, fundamentals developed and followed by their group, norms which found acceptance largely among them. With time this child interacts with more people and expands his knowledge and his language, arts and other cultural forms reflect the distinct change. In fact, this cultural development is the unique feature of mankind and unavoidable. Two or more discernible stages of evolution can be made out with a data prepared from the close study of the traits of cultural forms. The chart prepared from the older generation will give us their 'antiquity', their previously defined and accepted norms, their legacy from the past traditional stuff while the chart from the younger generations will give us the majority of new, novel ideas and norms, elements borrowed and invented by the younger generation. This transformation, a continuous unilinear process is very necessary for every human group for its survival irrespective of its immediate results and repercussions. Later stage is generally referred to as a modern stage and the cultural output developed under its spell connotes Modernity.

Modernity can be defined as a state of mind and status connecting to the new and the contemporary, rejecting the old. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: the word modern was first recorded in 1585 in the sense 'of present or recent times'. In Latin, modernus is derived from modo, meaning 'just now'. The English word modern was not originally concerned with anything that could later be considered old-fashioned. Obviously, modernity often is used to reject old-fashioned ideas and traditions. In the cultural and social contexts, modernity is also interlinked with the values of equality, freedom, feminism and democracy. It is generally assumed that the modernity in 19th and 20th century

unleashed the power of scientific and industrial progress, which led to social equality, freedom of the downtrodden sections of the society and empowerment of women. Modernity is also thought of as increasing the role of rationality in the public sphere and reducing the role of religion. (Jain, 2014)

The common usage of the term modernity means anything which is 'current or contemporary. But this envisages a very narrow meaning of the concept and does not convey the proper meaning of modernity as it has been used and explained by social scientists. The qualitative meaning of the concept modernity is a particular outlook or perspective of mind and a system of particular ideas and values that have gradually evolved in the course of social development. In social sciences, this may have different connotations, but the researcher will use it as a field of research ensembled as a set of particular sociocultural norms, human attitude and social practices that arose in the colonial period of Indian sub-continent. It may include the wide range of interrelated processes and cultural phenomena with reference to subjective and existential experiences of the local conditions they have produced and their strong impact on our day to day life, institutions, socio-economic and political vision. For the investigator, it refers to a period marked by rejection and revolt against age-old tradition, rationalization, and professionalism from feudalism to capitalism, urbanization, secularization and Industrialization. The researcher has used this term to see the works of art done in India after World War I for independence but laying more thrust on highlighting the activity of art producing persons and qualified artists soon after Independence. For a concrete and comprehensive data, later output is compared with the art produced and body of work done before the Bengal School got established.

In Visual Art, modernity is a kind of a search of universal language, but in Indian art, in some context, it is a new way of expressing anti-colonial resistance and anti-traditional cultural hegemony. On December 23rd, 1922, with the help of Rabindranath Tagore, an Exhibition of Bauhaus Artists was held in Oriental Society of Indian Art (ISOA), Calcutta. It was a significant event where the work of Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and others members of the Bauhaus in Weimer and alongside the avant-garde works of Nationalist Indian artists of Bengal School were exhibited. It was a landmark exhibition which sparked off the aspects of modernism as a search of a universal visual language with global recognition. This vibe has created a notion in



Indian artists that the idea of nationalism should have a wider context, it should not be linked only with anti-colonial arguments. With other radical artist groups, the Calcutta Group has revealed against the existing visual practice and propagated that ‘Art should be international and inter-dependent’. In other words, our art cannot progress or develop if we always look back to our past glories and cling to our old traditions at all cost. The vast new world of art, rich and infinitely varied, created by Masters the world over in all ages, beckons us. From Egyptian and Assyrian arts to the works of Italian, Dutch, French masters — we have to study all of them deeply, develop our appreciation for them and take from them all that we could profitably, synthesizing with our requirements and traditions. This is all the more necessary because our art has stood still since the seventeenth century. But during the past three hundred years, the world outside India has made vast strides in art, has evolved epoch-making discoveries in forms and techniques. Finally, the group argued 'Man is supreme, there is none above him' – which was the guiding slogan when the Calcutta Group was formed in 1943. (Gupta, Pal, Mitra, 1943)

Those were dark days for Bengal. Famine and pestilence were then stalking the land. The barbarity and heartlessness all around deeply moved us, and few young artists. We began to think, to search our hearts and ask ourselves: “...which way?” The question which was in front of the group and forcing them to search for an adequate visual language that had an appropriate tool for powerful communication with people. The generation of an adequate visual language was in the debate till 1970's. But what was the reason the artists were seeking for an appropriate visual language? There are so many reasons but the most important was addressing the human issue with multiple perspective. Artists wanted to make a wide arena of experimentation with the social and individual responsibilities. But in the course of time, (Calcutta Group to PAG) the responsibilities of social and cultural reforms in Indian society became secondary and the expectations of an individual become primary for the artist's group. In this context, the question of existence and the search for a new patronage was very crucial and significant. The agenda of modernization in Indian art was not in the debate of anti-colonization or nationalization or westernization but it was an individual assertion in the form of a group for the existence with the support of new global art market.

#### 4.1 MODERNITY IN HIMMAT SHAH'S ART

Modernity in Himmat Shah's concern is a phenomenon of a modern man who does not belong to any political or economic system but he has a psychonormative approach to see the world with an individual eye. In this manner, modernity refers to a mode of individual functioning or a set of dispositions to act in the ways that 'better' fit him for life in a modern society. And it emphasizes technical skills, capabilities and a spirit of creativity as core elements of modernity which enable the individual to take up several roles in modern polity, society and culture. They consider modernity to be an accompaniment of science which leads to an unprecedented increase in man's knowledge thereby enabling him to control his environment both natural and human. From a normative view point, modernity is conceived of as composed of a set of norms or values which are considered to be relatively independent of individual motivations or consciousness that imbibing certain values like universalism, humanism, individualism, liberalism, secularism, etc., as an integral part of modernity.

These all modern values are evident in Himmat Shah's Art. This is the kind of background which provided him to do more and more experimentation. Experimentations are one of the key factors which enable him to be a 'Modern Man' and work in the positive direction for the search of an adequate visual language. Experimentations are a kind of a modern tradition in visual art in which artist's focus is on the three major things...Form, Content and Material. How an individual artist perceives these three major components in his artistic innovation to create a visual language? Himmat Shah focuses on it via experimenting his core ideas since last fifty years. The juxtaposition of these three things pushed him in the arena of formalism. He is a formalist and during the experimentation, his notion of articulating elements and principles of art is in a professional way. This notion is strongly evident in his 'Burnt Paper Collage' series (fig. 3.16). This series was created during 1960's. The motivation for creating this series was to achieve the formal association of the content, form and material. It was also a determination to gain a universal visual language to get local as well as international recognition. The interface of this visual language is referenced with Minimalism; an American Postmodern phenomenon. The decade of 1950's to 80's has witnessed the visual politics of USA and USSR between Narrative Art vs. Abstraction and Minimalism. Himmat Shah has preferred to adopt

the aspects of minimalism and abstraction in his burnt paper collage (fig. 3.17). It is a kind of divergent thinking and experimentation in several contexts. Himmat Shah has taken a high risk to break the tradition of modern experimentation. He has introduced a new medium to create a vibe in front of modern Indian innovators. This experimentation has also created a secular motivation for creating a new pictorial visual language which is not referenced with any ethnic group, caste, region or religion. So modernity, in his concern to be evident as an avant-garde ambition is in visual experimentation towards obtaining secular identity.

Other significant point in his creation in the context of his modernity is his unique sensibility towards experimentation in Indian modern artists whose vision was limited on creating a global visual language. This sensibility was imbibed by Himmat Shah from the Baroda School. During 1950's to 70's, this school was curious to adapt and learn modern Western visual innovation especially Cubism. Later on, the school moves to search an Indigenous modernist visual language and promoted narrative visual language but the debate of Westernization vs. Sanskritization is not over till now. However, during this debate and discussion, Himmat Shah got inspired to adopt the interface of formalism for his experimentation. After that, he had left the idea of narrative art and focused on elements and principles of art. It has affirmed him as a modern innovator whose core of the heart is fixed for prioritizing design innovation in visual art. Moving towards this approach, he has experimented image or object to get pure representational form and create an imagery; a formalist look for the basic elements and judges a painting's value based on the artist's ability to achieve a cohesive balance in the composition. Philosopher Plato has argued "Theory of Forms" based on the idea of Eidos, roughly translated to mean "stature" or "appearance." Plato applied the term broadly in his various dialogues to suggest a rudimentary universal language. Every earthly object, he posited, whether tangible (like a chair) or abstract (like human virtue), shared one aspect: they all had a form. (Wolf. 2018)

But during the modern art movements, an issue emerged that human perception is not fixed in a single direction which has sparked off the following questions: how can the world appear to be both permanent and changing? If the world we perceive through the senses seems to be always changing and the world that we perceive through the mind seems to be permanent and unchanging, then which of these perceptions is more real, and how can we explain the existence of both? In

Himmat Shah's concern, both the reality is the part of expressing himself. For this, he has addressed the aspects of sensibility with the living perception of nature. He always tries to act as nature; a raw energy with a spontaneous act. Spontaneity is one of the important parts of his creation where the reasons have no means, it actually acts of human hand or act of a physical body. After that, he applies his conscious to create some design pattern to deal with the problem of space in his composition. Ahmadabad Mural, Silver Paintings and Head Series of terracotta sculpture have been evident within this phenomenon. Design innovation is one of the important parts of his creation where he employed several marks or signs to deal with the space but it isn't an ethnic meaning. It is just a mark and it helps him to create a vibration of the space. In this perspective, texture is another important aspect of his sensory perception as he juxtaposes it on the surface of his composition to evident his conscious and unconscious self. This formalistic practice helps him to be a true modern who promotes the fundamentals of arts with the complete dynamism.

Secondly, the sensibility of experimentation was expanded by Himmat Shah with the mentoring of painter thinker J. Swaminathan and Ambadas when he became a part of Delhi and 'the Group 1890'. He had realized that the statement is not important in artwork but the expression of feelings is the ultimate goal of an artist and Democracy has given space to him for experimenting those feelings with full vigor. The other point which he has realized that Indians should not over emphasise their past glories or older perception or so called nationalist fever. It is necessary for every human being who believes in creativity may come forward to represent Indian cultural co-existence with full potency into contemporary situation. In the Researcher's perception, this core idea has liberated him to execute his experimentation with all possible manners. So the liberation of ideas and its execution into a significant perspective is the core of heart in Himmat Shah's creation.

The term 'Liberation' has a wide meaning, it is the action of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression; release. It is a notion towards liberating or being liberated from the past phobia. The post-colonial Indian art is also a kind of a process of liberation in some context against feudal and anti-colonial legacy. After the independence of India, the aspects of liberation have been transformed in different ways. It was a severe crisis to build a new nation according to people's perception and expectation. It was a giant task in front of Indian government

and intelligence. Himmat Shah accept this challenge to develop a new visual language juxtaposing contemporary situation where creation is a kind of individual assertion or the highest peak of human consciousness. He promotes it as a core component of his artistic experimentation for liberating the mind and body from the existing surrounding. In this context his process of thinking, practising and creating a body of art works is a phenomenon to create a self-realization, self-commitment and self-exploration. For him, it is a single pathway developed by him to deal the content, form and material in his creation.

Himmat Shah believes that human being is an enigma, and what he creates should also be all enigma. Mystery should be everywhere – like the bird that slowly spreads its wings, revealing hidden colours as it does so...especially so in art forms. A piece of art is created because you allow it to happen, it cannot be forced. “I” am not creating, it is my hands that are creating, for when they have clay beneath them, “I” am lost. Next day, when I look at the creation, I wonder whether it was really I who had done it, for I had been totally lost as my hands had been shaping the clay. This state of creation I consider the best form of expression or ‘*Abhivyakti*’ arising out of the deepest devotion or ‘*Sadhna*’ (Mahendroo, H. 1994). So his art works liberate the viewer's perception and provide space to dream their experience into own standpoint. His Ahmadabad Mural, Silver Painting and Heads in terracotta is the best example for it. The common in all these experiments that it creates a new arena decrementing tradition visual practice in post- colonial Indian art. It also emphasizes the aspects of materiality which is a new trend in art practice. Material has its own significance, connections, characteristics to deal pictorial surface meaningful. It is also evident in his that he emphasizes childhood memories to create a kind of freedom to liberate the visual content in his composition. For him, art is a tool of self-realization, liberation of his inner-self is his single point goal which actually provided him an individualist approach to create art works. Individual assertion is one another tool for liberating himself. So modernity in Himmat Shah's concern is a revolt against existing traditional norms. Talking about Himmat Shah's persona, the curator, Karode, (2017) elaborates, “If there is an Indian artist who possesses the free-spiritedness of the Bohemian and has embraced the emancipatory disposition of art, it has to be Himmat Shah”.

## 4.2 INDIVIDUALISM: A PHENOMENON

Suppose a kid sitting in a house all alone is scribbling some lines on the wall. He keeps drawing it for a while and then looks for mother, he is hungry. And then he moves to another wall. After sometime, he requests for another pencil, as this one isn't working. After getting a new pencil he proceeds with double speed. Mother asks him to stop doing it, father scolds him but he keeps doing it. Perhaps he is structuring himself. Probably this is the structural habit of human. A kid struggles on two levels, first the genetic level and second on what he gets to learn in the world. He cries for both. We want to stop it as it is and he who wants to experience the collective freedom of human development. House in a form of an institution gives him all the things that he wants and in return applies some law on him. Rather a man's freedom is above those laws, rules are meant for man, man is not meant for rules. In this way individuality is an age-old phenomenon in art and society which provides a natural freedom to think over anything... how a human being encounters day to day life and how he reacts over it? It is the journey of human self-exploration through several cultures and civilizations.

As Herbert Read says about tribal art: "I believe, it is essentially individualistic in its origins that the work of the individual artist comes into existence before it is adopted as a social symbol or as part of a communal system of symbolic signs. In other words, I believe that art exists before religious art, or art qualified in any other way, exists. Of course, it becomes immensely difficult to distinguish individual quality in a work of art from its social or religious content. This difficulty increases as society becomes more complex and the individual gets merged into society and has to take his part in the communal activity of creation. But, basically, I think this is psychologically sound. Basically, the work of art is an individual creation and only afterwards thrown into a communal pool, as it was. That of course, would explain the individual variation which seem to puzzle some anthropologists, individual variations that you find in tribal symbols. I think that these are due to variations of personality or temperament in the individual making the work of art .... Therefore, I want to maintain that the aesthetic quality in primitive art in general is the same as the aesthetic quality in any other form of art..." So idea of individualism differs from society to society and also person to person.

Confucius has expressed about the belief of a person and said: usually a person is surrounded with religion, rules and morality in any civilized society. (Streep. (1995) This belief system changed in modern society, now a person becomes free to have an opinion and to vote and express on social platform. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, De Tocqueville forwarded the idea of individualism had been ahead of individual. Its meaning was religion and freedom of justice from the government. (Dewy, 1930) Individualism makes the individual its focus and so starts with the fundamental premise that the human individual is of primary importance in the struggle for liberation. Classical liberalism, existentialism, and anarchism are examples of movements that take the human individual as a central unit of analysis. (Brown, 1993) Individualism thus involves "the right of the individual to freedom and self-realization". (Meiksins. 1972)

Here is the most important question...those who defend modernism claim that art need not serve any purpose but should create its own reality. The composer Arnold Schoenberg went so far as to declare that nothing done for a purpose could be art. Abstract art brought into being not only a new aesthetic style, but also a change of understanding regarding the very *raison d'être* of art itself. For the committed modernist, the self-sufficiency of art is its salvation. Aesthetic experience is an end in itself, worth having on its own account. The only way for art to preserve its truth is by maintaining its distance from the social world- by staying pure. (Gablik)

Himmat Shah follows this tradition of discriminating formal social structure and traditional visual culture. For him, individualism or individuality of an artist is the core of any creation. His personal perception of this universe is significant for the social or aesthetic development of human civilization. In the researcher's investigation, three things which are very important in his artistic exploration in the context of individuality. The first is his attitude as a 'Bohemian'. His mindset is very subjective to adopt a subject matter for his innovation. Secondly his artistic investigation and exploration via method and material creates a bridge between modernisms to post-modernism. Spending more and more time with specific material for a phase is a substantial characteristic of his creation. Focusing directly on goal is the third thing which seems a free zone; from the debate of time and space, region and religion, social and personal responsibility, political and non-political and the authority to the local. These three things required a critical examination to address and

open up his artistic vision in the domain of individualism and it is a most important part of modern life and thinking. In Himmat Shah's concern, individuality is the leading priority for his existence.

#### **4.2.1 Art Breaks Up from Past Legacy with Professional and Scientific Approach**

Every child is born with certain specific and distinct qualities and things differ from one case to others. Father may not show the same characteristics that his offspring may inherit or develop through their association with companions and other sources. These qualities help sociologists to distinguish one living person from his group and his family. Our habits, taste and emotional feelings are only on certain traits by which we can be separated among people close to us. The Researcher has used this term to see how artists differ from one to another while looking at the aggregate of qualities of different artists in India and Europe.

The characteristics and personal inherent feelings dwelling in us distinguish one person from others both living as well as the dead. This differentiation helps us in making an example of individuality of that person in question. In this light, this researcher looks at the working pattern and body of artistic output produced after independence. It is his serious endeavor to classify artists and their works according to their choice of theme, the material used and style used for their output. The technician advantage is another factor which has been greatly used by our contemporary artists and from this angle, this researcher is trying to evaluate Himmat Shah comparing him to his seniors and contemporaries in India as well as Europe. Modern art in India shows us breaking up from our long tradition of hybrid art style the convergence of many tastes and modes. Here Indian artists in the majority, after freedom from colonial legacy are deliberately trying to create a niche for themselves by using models from the East as well as the West for their inspirations. Whether they have succeeded in getting freedom from the western clutches or their struggle is going on is a matter of another serious deliberation. Himmat Shah and his philosophic outlook have been matched with his body of artworks and comparisons are made with the works of other artists of his age and period. His individual approach in selecting a subject, a medium, his technical virtuosity and his artistic goal have been minutely studied from his selected available works completed in his entire career spanning five decades.



#### **4.2.2 Individualism in Himmat Shah's Art**

A real performer is one who can examine his feelings without any hang-ups and express it gracefully through his work. Himmat Shah is one of them whose work, spanned over five decades, proves his modernist approach towards art and his exploration of the various ways of presenting the echoes of life. He doesn't rely on external inspirations, as he believes, "Creative work is not a production of the mind. It is the creative act of a body. It is an unknown and unconscious thing that is ultimately achieved... a moment that cannot be explained". (Mehamdabadwala. 2013) From this, he has to establish that creation or creative expressions are the act of human body and it is spontaneous and enigmatic. So he adopts the act of nature as a major subject matter. Through this, he has to address the spontaneous act of Mother Nature. It is one of the broadest sources of inspiration for Himmat Shah's creation. During this, he adopts the idea of significant form and manipulates the pictorial surface with the fundamentals of arts in his own way. Here he utilizes his inner-self as a major force of inspiration to create a sculpture/ drawing/ painting. He generally utilizes the concept of Abstraction or Minimalism to create a composition and try to address the global mass. One of the significant points in his every creation is that he always tries to create an artwork which has a global association with form, content and material. In this way, he is very conscious to propagate a subject matter through his stylistic appreciation and presentation. As an individual he has worked with a way, searching new, elemental and raw expression and he believed the primacy of a creative impulse to adopt a subject matter.

Himmat Shah is one of the Indian legendary artists whose career span is spread-out in five decades (1950's till date). And the adaptation of subject matter varies from time to time for his creation. It is a kind of a journey to search appropriate subject matter to express his existence in front of the social forces. In 1990's when he was studying in Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda (MS University) he came to know the Western Art innovation. It has created a huge impact on post-colonial Indian Art. They have implemented those innovations with the cultural legacy of India. Experimentation with space and material was the fascination of the era. Later it is vivid with the idea of Indigenous modernism. Now it has focused towards exploring social, cultural and political identity during 1960's to 70's. During this decade and debate, Himmat Shah was the part of 'Group 1890'. The group was as expressed by

Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh, they believed essentially in “the primacy of the creative impulse over forces of rationalism”. (Sen, 2016)

Secondly, J. Swaminathan was the leader of this group whose ideas were perhaps ahead of his times in India in many things, but mostly in his rediscovery of the ‘primitive’ in Adivasi or tribal art. This two-component (creative impulses and tribal art) is the key feature of Himmat Shah’s creativity; it’s a kind of expansion of a raw energy (fig. 3.7). On the basis of this, he always tried to adopt a subject matter for his creation. The ‘Erotic Series’ Drawing, ‘Head Series’ terracotta sculpture and Found Object terracotta sculpture is the best example of this attitude. When the researcher asked Professor Raghav Kaneria (Sculptor, M S University Baroda) about Himmat Shah’s adaptation of a subject, he said “it is a very individualistic way of thinking. He generally crosses the idea of anyone even some time his closed one and chooses very different from existing practice, *Himmat Shah ko jo karna hai woh wahi karega*”. It is kind of a very subjective and individualistic way of appreciation and it has a wide search across the universe. The researcher has referenced that Himmat Shah’s adaptation of subject has an interchange from East and West, from bygone to post-modern.

The second thing which is very important in Himmat Shah’s individuality, is his creative process of articulating physical body of an art form. He is one of them who have referenced the debate of modernism in a different manner. Modernism in India is an assertion against colonial legacy and feudalism. It is also a revolution against traditionalism in the backdrop of creating a new nation which is essentially motivated towards democracy and modernism. In 1940’s, ‘the Calcutta Group’ sought for internationalism and said: “Man is supreme, there is none above him”. It was a fundamental argument behind the modern Indian art during 1940’s to 1960’s. But it is evident that post-colonial Indian art was not able to make an identity till 1970’s. By the end of the Sixties, India was playing an increasingly active international role among politically non-aligned countries that resisted the pull of both the US and the USSR. It was at this time that a government-funded initiative was set up under the stewardship of writer and connoisseur Mulk Raj Anand: Triennale India. Here, the best of contemporary Indian art would be hung alongside the best of the West. The first edition came out in Delhi in 1968, with letters of support from such figures as the

British intellectual John Berger. (Chatterjee. 2016) This exhibition stressed on the message that the Indian artists were dominated by Western-isms and innovators. So the debate prevailed among scholars and academicians who have posted arguments for a new aesthetic that was required for the underprivileged public allying with the social reform and cultural up-gradation. From this backdrop, the investigator has tried to identify the creative practice carried on by Himmat Shah as a modern artist and a true individual.

In the late 1970's Himat Shah has become the part of 'Kala Kutir' Garhi Studio where he has tried to meditate clay. He has experimented 'Found Object' and 'Head Series' sculptures (fig. 3.27) through age-old slip and slab technique. Through this experimentation, he tried to answer those debates which were prevailed after first 'Triennale Art Exhibition' in India. It was the quest for the true Indian art and tried to focus on individual assertion in-front of global art market. From this intervention Himmat Shah has run great risks. He has risked much more by using a medium which is exhaustible and a technique which demands sensitive and careful handling. By remaining true to his commitment to an art that ignores the strategies of the art market & the materialism of the art industry, adopting clay as a major medium he has symbolized his association with the earthy surface, a connection to the rich heritage tradition of clay pottery and clay as a source for sacred and healing powers of human emotion/expressions. He has signified Head as a metaphor and tried to relate himself to a theme which does not need any clarification and introduction. It has an enormous practice in art history. From this, Himmat Shah has been creating an interface to put Indian modern art at par with the pre-historical tradition which bounds people of different continents in a common interest.

Himmat Shah adopted this medium when he was at the age of forty-two and continued it till 2002's. It was more than twenty years of continuous efforts and an involvement with a material. It shows a possessive involvement and an existentialist approach which actually made him realize to live with an age-old material. He experimented head sculptures in Garhi Studio, Delhi. It was really a meditation place for him. When the researcher asked him about Garhi he said, "those were very hard days for me and my economic situation was also bleak, so Garhi was a delightful invitation for me. With the peaceful surroundings, Garhi studio was just the right place I was looking for". Here he has referenced clay as a medium by various means;

a live process which enabled him to see, realize, reference and finally experiment. The Garhi Studio was actually, the phase of consolidation over a medium and form. These Head sculptures become iconic creation in the context of post-colonial Indian Art. 'Heads' became Himmat's obsession in his last stage that dating has lost its meaning, they have lost their identity and locale. They are self- personified, self-centered and self-encumbered for human beings.

This individuality for Himmat Shah, in his last lap, has become the main concern. For the investigator, it indicates the long-suffering journey of his skilful presentation of heads as a significant form. It is difficult to ascertain whether this step was initiated by this artist on his own or guided by someone very close to him. It appears that personal problems led him to arrive at this stage to get identified as 'Heads', tears ageless and awfully hushed. This was a proper theme, with its stylistic features, for imitation, for alteration or for innovation that suited Himmat's personality and was also capable of delineating his internal anger, fears, and frustration not only to the people coming to his studio but also to the generations yet to come. Here the theory of yesteryears, tradition of hundreds of centuries and generations cutting across continents is deliberately universalized and humanized. Individualism as a phenomenon prevailed in his art with broader argument; an innovation by free soul, a continuous self-examination and a liberty to express the self with full determination.

Determination is one of the important aspects of Himmat Shah's life and profession which remarked his self-confidence over the medium employed by him. When the researcher asked Jyoti Bhatt (a well-known Printmaker, Photographer and Professor from Baroda India), she said "searching of different types of materials and practice with them, it is a most important goal of Himmat Shah's sensibility. We can say it is a kind of single-phased goal adopted by him from the beginning of his artistic career". Material sensibility or aspects of materiality is a core issue in his artistic invention. He always visits Sunday market to search different type of material for his innovation and craft work. In this regards, an interesting experience Karode, R. (1998) writes, "A dusty smell prevails as one walks into the present studio, stepping on the remnants of fallen plaster, clay and wax that cake the floor. His studio has the character of a museum or storehouse of objects and materials (bags of clay and

plaster, bottles of resin, wax, acid, and polish, stone boulders and pebbles, a bunch of plaster molds) but functions more like a laboratory where he tests out new ideas & devices and new equipments to smoothen his artistic operation. I am particularly fascinated by the six large boxes of tools that resemble ones used by blacksmith, dentist, or surgeons, and are used by him to treat, shape and mark-make on clay. His involvement with the process totally for his creativity extends from making to tool making as well". So the search of the appropriate material is one of the important goals in his innovation.

Himmat Shah is an important formalist artist in Modern Indian Art. His working methodology is very innovative and experimental. His perception of a visual and strategy of practising form, content and material is unique and individualistic. In this context, Karode, R. (1998) writes that "Floating in timelessness, his little fragile world can easily be disrupted by an outsider's intrusion. Living within this subjective mood, he drives to mold his vision into his work." She again explores his attitude and writes, "I like my solitude, sugarless tea, and daydreams," says Shah casually, finishing a smile, but I realize that it is extremely important to understand the working methodology of Himmat's mind, which reveals his attitude to both his life and his art. He makes strong demands for himself. There is a need of constant self-examination. He is often preoccupied as if listening to his own inner voice- a quietness that has distanced him from the world. This is the third important thing which shows his existential approach to live as an artist in this universe. From last fifty years, he has been actively participating in art field as an artist. He could not assume himself as an art teacher. Though that time teaching was one of the best possible options to sustain life but he could not adopt it as a tool to live his life. He has perceived this and lives his life only as an artist. There is no another goal, but his be-all and end-all is to survive as an artist/creator. In his self-deprecating way, the artist dismisses the idea of teaching the youth. "Creativity cannot be taught; it is not a skill that can be cultivated. Art is something that emerges from within". (Singh A, 2017) For him, human being is an enigma, and what he creates should also be all enigmas. Mystery should be everywhere – like the bird that slowly spreads its wings, revealing hidden colors as it does so especially in art forms. A piece of an art is created because you allow it to happen, it cannot be forced. Here a kind of idealism is evidenced in his life and creation which depict his individualistic approach and existential mindset. As the

Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who argued that mankind was defined by universal qualities. Mankind's essence, in other words, is everywhere the same, and essence precedes his existence in the world, which is contingent on external factors such as history and environment. This theme later played an important role in Existentialism. (Wolf,) Here is a kind of perception which always sought by Himmat Shah that is maintaining the importance of the individual, and his or her duty to determine the meaning of life. In an interesting discussion with Himmat Shah with the investigator in his exhibition “Hammer on the Square” in 2016, the title of the retrospective, at the KNMA Museum in Delhi, Shah says: “When a man’s mind gets blocked it is necessary to use the hammer. He says, ‘*Jaago logon Jaago*’. It is a kind of ‘living value’; a vision to sustain in the society with a significant goal and an important individual.

#### **4.3 NATIONALISM: AN UNSETTLED STORY**

Nationalism is defined as being devoted to your country, or the feeling that nations should act independently instead of working together. Nationalism has been a recurring facet of civilizations since ancient times, though the modern sense of national political autonomy and self-determination was formalized in the late 18th century. (Kohn, 1944) The political development of nationalism and the push for popular sovereignty culminated with the ethnic/national revolutions of Europe. During the 19th century, nationalism became one of the most significant political and social forces in history. Nationalism is further oriented towards developing and maintaining a national identity based on shared characteristics such as culture, language, race, religion, political goals or a belief in a common ancestry. Nationalism, therefore, seeks to preserve the nation's culture. It often also involves a sense of pride in the nation's achievements and is closely linked to the concept of patriotism. In some cases, nationalism is also referred to the belief that a nation should be able to control the government and all means of production.

For India, it is more than a rise of political and social consciousness. It was the question of human liberation, an existence of the identity strengths of cultural and religious co-existence and sovereignty as an independent nation India. So nationalism in India has several meanings but it has a single meaning which was then in the colonial period, fighting against British imperialism. Due to this, the people of Indian

sub-continent came closer and stood for the single interest that was Freedom from British Rule. India came closer and united as a political mass and it had been manifested by several means and medium. During the first freedom fight in 1985, India had shown its zeal to incorporate and struggle against British rule. So nationalism in India incorporated then the socio-political and cultural change and a rise of a human consciousness for equality. In that way, a feeling for a nation generated and manifested in several ways but in totality, it was the rise of a political consciousness which was motivated towards human freedom from feudal and imperialist dominance.

In Indian visual art, this is clearly manifested by the Bengal School of Art. The theoretician of this movement was E. B. Havell, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Sister Nivedita, Stella Kremrish, Abanindranath Tagore and other prominent cultural figures of the early twentieth century. The discourse was surrounding the emergence of pre-modern Indian Art as a nationalist intervention in art and culture which was motivated towards search for an identity with the acknowledgement and cognitions of glorious past. The reason behind it was the complete negation of Indian art and culture. During the annual meeting of the Royal Society of Arts in 1910, Sir George Birdwood, the Champion of Indian Industrial Arts, triggered a controversy that was to consolidate a completely new frame for understanding Indian Art. Declaring that there was no "fine art" in India, he dismissed the 'higher' artistic value of a particular Javanese bronze Buddha sculpture that was introduced into the discussion. (Smith. 1911) After that, several incidents re-established the British cultural dominance over the Indian life and belief system. The rise of nationalism in the pre and post-Independence Era in Indian art was the revivalist discourse of building a nation which has been turned towards full freedom from colonial as well as feudal legacy.

Later on, the discourse of nationalism has developed in several means and it acquired a religious and regional identity, in some context, a representation of a class. The rise of 'Swadesi Movement' has been notified as the rise of Hindu Nationalism. In this context Mittar, P. (2001) writes, "the Swadesi ideology of art, a reflection of militant Hindu nationalism, tended to privilege Hindu culture as the kernel of the Indian nation, thereby disinheriting other communities. Such developments created a feeling of unease among the Muslims. Abdul Rahman Chughtai (1897-1975), an outstanding Muslim painter from Lahore, represented the awakening of Muslim

political and cultural identity in Indian partly in response to Hindu cultural nationalism”. (Mittar. 2011)

In the pre and post-Independence era, a very relevant debate prevailed in the society and arts that were Hindu Nationalism vs. Progressive Nationalism. Due to this, Indian art has evidenced the rise of progressives in Indian art. It was supported by the Communist Party of India (CPI) and its Cultural Wing ‘IPTA’. During 1940’s, due to the Bengal Famine, World Wars, ‘Quit India Movement’ this discourse became more relevant for Indian people. It was also a debate between ‘Idealism vs. Realism’, ‘Sanskritization vs. Modernization’. The idealist or revivalist school encountered the modernist and sought ‘style and stylistic sequences’ are the accident, not the essence of art, a product of ‘human idiosyncrasy. (Coomaraswamy. 1989) It was actually the negation of formalist approach of art and its single phased association to Hindu idealist art. It reflects that the quotation above suggested by the idealist scholar’s focus of interest was not individual artworks at all but generic or ideal types – like the Nataraja type, the Buddha type or the Rajpoot painting style type. Given this approach, it is not surprising that Ananda Coomaraswamy was impatient with the formal attributes that marked individual artworks as both unique and part of a larger sequence. But due to global appreciation, Indian art during 1940’s to 1960’s was exposed to international innovation in visual art and it was the extremely individualistic assertion of human existence. So this phenomenon has been referenced and evidenced in the work of modern Indian artists. Even though several artist group formed during the above- mentioned decades but more-or-less modern Indian art was an avant-garde intervention to express human beliefs and desires. So in the debate of Hindu Nationalism vs. Progressive Nationalism, the aspects of an individual could not be resolved and it still exists somewhere, which is an unsettling story.

#### **4.3.1 Idea of Nationalism in Himmat Shah’s Art**

Himmat Shah has witnessed the debates of Nationalism during the study in Baroda. It becomes more significant and wider when he got associated with ‘Group 1890’. This Group has sought after the identity of an individual within the frame of Indian Nation. The first exhibition of this group was held in 1963 in New Delhi and it was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Catalogue of this Exhibition ‘Surrounded by Infinity’ was written by Nobel Laureate Octavia



Paz. The aesthetic impact made by 'Group 1890 in their "Primitivism" use of materials has an appreciation of Indigenous folk and tribal tradition. It is on the level of the Group's ideology that they have been recognized as historically significant; paradoxically, in the words of Octavio Paz, their ideology consists of "the deliberate absence of any ideological meaning." (Luis, S. 2016) So in the context of Nationalism, the group widely falls in the arena of Progressive Nationalism. They were searching for the different progressive and modernist point of view against the existing progressive artist group's practices. They openly sought against Westernization and Sanskritization in Indian art. They rejected the romantic idealism of Bengal School of Art and also rejected the existing practice which was dominated by Westernisms. When the researcher asked about the role of PAG (Progressive Artist Group Mumbai) in the context of 'Group 1890', he said that we are seeing the experimentation of the PAG with the great expectation but could not get enough amount of resource and energy. So we have created a new group to promote our creative impulses in a certain way. (Singh, A. 2015)

Himmat Shah was part and parcel of this debate and the group which was committed to the search of Indigenous modernism. Modernization of Indian nation was the main agenda of Progressive Nationalism. In this context, the core philosophy promoted by the Indian Nation during 1960's was to create a secular society/country. A country where everyone will be free for his expression and there will be no boundary of caste, class, region and religion. There was an ambition of making newly born Indian nation with progressive nationalist ideas. Himmat Shah has been incorporating this notion into his art practice. This is a search of new visual language against the backdrop of revivalist/traditional visual practices. The search for his visual language can be divided into two parts; cognition of visual art fundamentals and search for his own Indigenous and primitive connection.

During 1960's, Himmat Shah had adopted the nuances of formalism to formulate his body of artwork. It was the complete departure from traditional and revivalist visual practice. It was also an avant-garde step to explore modern visual thinking with the global association. It is visible in his Burnt Paper Collage Series, Erotic Series and Ahmadabad Mural. It shows his visual understanding and practices towards formalism where adaptation of a form is very significant. Through these initiations, he has to focus on space generation, textural appreciation, understanding

different types of line and patterns of forms produced in his composition. There is neither a dominance of story nor so-called religious spirituality. So the art of Himmat Shah creating a progressive output to generate new visual language and his notion is matched with progressive nationalist thinking. But in the post-1970's, his art practice became consolidated in a significant way. He adopted clay as a main medium of expression and started thinking about the role of clay in art making. Thanks to this, he got exposed to cultures and civilization where clay had different means and meaning as a medium of creating artworks. Shah has remembered 'Lothal' (a Harappan Port City) where he was born and had spent his childhood. So he has realized his artistic innovation at a different level. He has also realized that western artistic innovation is shifting on non-western sources with post-modern ideas where 'Local is global' was a phenomenal change visible at international level. The post-modernism has changed the ideas of formalist practices and set a notion that only men are artistic genius, it has rejected the discourse of race and low/ high art. Postmodernism overturned the idea that there was one inherent meaning to a work of art or that this meaning was determined by the artist at the time of creation. And this meaning has no relation with authenticity or originality. It has an idea of appropriation to get the significant meaning. It has an initiation to search for new material and ready-made material. So Himmat Shah has adopted this thinking process to juxtapose the human existence in his own manner. His Head Series and Found Object sculptures are the evidence of this thinking process. It is a journey from ancient to contemporary World. It has a juxtaposition of diverse images, surfaces and forms which creates wide meaning and association with multiple societies. The arguments and debates of 'Group 1890' become the core of these experiments and it has been truthfully manifested/executed by Himmat Shah. The notion was to create art behind the agenda of Indigenous Modernism. It was the call of the day as the Indian Progressive groups were debating on the idea of authenticity via focusing on folk and tribal culture. Idea of modernization shifted from the western resources to the indigenous resources and individual became important as a creator. So the idea of progressive nationalism became wider and created a widespread meaning for the nation.

#### 4.4 MATERIALITY IN HIMMAT SHAH'S ART: A LIVE PHENOMENON

Materiality is a post-modern discourse. Human-being realizes/recognizes this world by its physical/material presence. Scientific innovations have deconstructed the atom and discovered that it is made of the subatomic protons, neutrons, and electrons. These subatomic particles are built from quarks, some of the most elementary particles that the current Standard Model of physics demonstrates. Karl Marx has given a significant notion with the cognition of science and culture, provided a rational viewpoint; where material came to embrace extended meanings as an irreducible component of what shapes the phenomenal world not just with an element of a physical object. By defining the arts as a product of a material he has broadened the meaning of material in the significant direction. Here the material carries a comprehensive meaning yet as the most fundamental structure of the phenomenal world which is based on structures and superstructures. At this world eye-view perspective, art belongs to the micro human cells which essentially built from the matter. Marx's further revelation concerning the relationship between art as a form of production and commodity production, in general, opens the sequential questions of the value of art as commodities and the fetishism of commodities. The technical development of printing has questioned the making process of a picture and value of an artwork. Artists of modern age started thinking about the material of artwork which should have essentially a significant meaning and has a different mode of production. This mode of production created a radical departure by the art practitioner to adopt a specific material-centric identity. Clement Greenberg, as an art critic, made an enormous effort to redefine the value of the work of art. He says, "It is by virtue of its medium that each art is unique and strictly itself.... For the visual arts the medium is discovered to be physical; hence pure painting and pure sculpture seek above all else to affect the spectator physically." (Greenberg. 196) In this way, the formalist practices of modern era developed in a specific way; constructing the visual tradition with the perspective of an individual. Here the artist emphasizes the significance of physicality in visual arts. One cannot ignore his defense of the avant-garde art that was undergoing the tendency to reveal the "materiality" of pictorial space through the use of incongruous materials for differentiating the surface. So materiality is defined as the quality or character of being material or composed of matter that makes some impact on the material world by existing.

Following on the patches of Post-Modern theoretical discourse which acknowledges the relative nature of truth, materiality provides a theoretical approach that is time and situation-based. It is a means for understanding the wide scope of contemporary art practice/production in the digital age; the age which has radically changed the communication system through technological advancement. So as an aesthetic concept, materialism has evolved as a logical thinking process out of formalism's interest in the purely visual aspects of art practice and it has focused on structuralism's interest; addressing context and communication. Materiality in works of art extends beyond the simple fact of the physical matter. It broadly encompasses all relevant information related to the work's physical existence; the work's production date and provenance, its history and condition, the artist's personal history as it pertains to the origin of the work and the work's place in the canon of art history as the important factors for aesthetic experience. The artwork's physicality, those aspects that can be sensed and verified by viewers, is the first consideration; physicality impacts content, subsequently, meaning. So materiality helps the art practitioner to bridge their knowledge through material intervention in art and transcend their imagination/experiences with the aesthetic experience of material. The aesthetic experience is evoked first through art's physical components, and then through an intellectual engagement with materiality in the broader sense. Through these adaptations, artists have addressed contemporary issues on more logical ground with rational viewpoints.

In Post-Colonial Indian art, the necessity of material was realized during 1960's, when a new slogan 'Indigenous Modernism ' was crafted by the radicals; a kind of detachment from progressives. The main motto was to search for a new and authentic Indian visual language at the backdrop of the contemporary situation. It was an assertion against the narrative visual practices and an initiation of adopting new subject matter, material and a mode of production which should have the ability to express individual experience more scientifically. In this regards, Himmat Shah is one of those who focused on the aspects of materiality during 1960's to 70's and experimented his art through formalistic practice. He has adopted characteristics of materiality in his body of artworks as a branch of Indigenous modernism. In this way, he has realized his connection to 'Lothal', where he got birth and evidenced the physical world at first. He has valued this experience in his art and explored his primitive connection in art practice. In the Researcher's perception, his notion to

utilize material is based on three important points. The first promotes his specific experience of the existing surroundings, the second expresses his existence within the art world and the third pin-points his notion to search the plasticity and expression of the material.

The adoption of materiality in Himmat's creation is the reflection of the surrounding where he spent his life. It has a specific notion to explore the surroundings. Sometimes it is evident in more physical manner and sometimes it gets exposed under the psychological level. He is practising art since last five decades and has a long journey through a village to cosmopolitan settlement. Starting from the rich cultural surrounding of 'Saurashtra', he has experienced the cultural as well as physical potentials of Ahmadabad, Baroda, Delhi and Jaipur. The structural fragmentation of these cities helps him to juxtapose several things into his artistic creation. It is clearly evident in his 'Silver Painting Series' where he has introduced the silver as a body colour of the capital city which is actually full of wealth (fig. 3.6). This series also focuses its structural development as a modern city with multicultural interfaces. It has a modern sense of space and material. In this regard, when the researcher asked the Critic/Curator Johny M. L., he said that the work of Himmat Shah has been adopted from the bird's eye view perspective and it has a kind of landscape structure which shows his keen interest into the existing surrounding. In this series, he has used cement, ply-boards, plaster, concrete etc. as a base material and added primary colours in the composition. It's a kind of symbolic perception of a city with the aspects of materiality. So his artistic and aesthetic sensibilities push him to pick local surrounding as a common phenomenon in his creation.

Apart from this, his adaptation of material is based on a strong and rare image from the subconscious mind. It is a kind of a psychological appreciation of the surrounding which he realized in his childhood. Between 1970's to 2002, he referenced and realized clay as a medium. It has nostalgia of childhood memory. It has a cultural significance as a basic, universal and sacred medium across the world. It has a phenomenal ability to act as a micro-human cell and has a touch a fell sensibility. It has a sacred and healing power of human civilization. Himmat Shah adopted this material from the high end of human civilization and utilized its physicality to create his body of work. He has referenced the ability of this material in the tribal society where this material has a reorganization and adaptation as an important material in the art as well as in life and has a several metaphorical and

metonymic meanings. Himmat Shah adopts this material as an important constituent of human life and the base material for the development of human civilizations. Through this, Himmat Shah has addressed his primitive connection to the ancient 'Lothal' (a Harappan Port City) where he got realized this universe for the first time. Aspects of primitivism provided him a structure to reduce Indian and western cosmopolitan sophistication & social restrictions and handle a work of art with simplicity. The adoption of 'primitive art' motifs and themes helped him to develop a revolutionary tool against the established art practices. It also provides an everlasting journey behind the whole primitive world. It is a realization and appreciation of primitive art which is vigorously evidenced in his terracotta sculptures. Here is a physical as well as spiritual association with a material which evidenced aspects of materiality in his art.

Besides this, the adaptation of material in Himmat Shah's art is based on creating new and specific values as an artist. If someone asks about his art, he generally used two sentences fluently '*Wah Kya Bat Hai*' and '*Kuch Dhamaka Hona Chahiye*'. It has several meanings but for him, it sparks his notion to create art which is an ambitious act to do something stunning, innovative, extraordinary and path-breaking. Like his contemporary Rajendra Tikku (Sculptor) has told the investigator that the thinking process to the adaptation of material and form is always out of the box and it is a common phenomenon in Himmat's creation. Here the search for a material has a personal, individualist approach to utilize it. He generally used to visit Sunday market to search ethnic and other objects which suited him. He collects them and tries to relate himself to them. His Found Object Series is the result of this practice. Here you find a kind of juxtaposition of several objects to produce an art form. He has not produced the collected ready-made objects directly, he has a different perspective and opinion so he has cast that object in clay and then juxtaposed it in his way. It has a solid appreciation of clay as a material and after casting in clay, the object gets a transformation or re-birth. It signifies his artistic sensibility and realization to material and materiality of a medium. Adopting new material, searching new object/form, it is his habit to create extraordinarily. It has an initiation to showcasing his artistic output to show his existence in-front of the existing world. It has a symbolic meaning that 'I am alive'.

The third point suggests his understanding of the material to know the plasticity and expression of a material. It helps to express his core ideas in perfect

harmony. In this way, he generally applied the developmental process to see the performance of a material. In an interview with the Investigator, Himmat Shah said that 'I usually cast a sculpture in different material to know its plastic value and expression. Every material has specific characteristics and adaptation in the society. Shah would generally say, 'I always try to know these dimensions which help me to get a significant material for my sculpture'. Actually, this is the way when Himmat Shah realized that two dimensional (painting) surface was not helping him to express his inner-self. It had not so much ability and a possibility to juxtapose different layers of forms on a surface. In this regards, Ghulam Mohammed says, 'during 1960's, Himmat and Jairam started experimentation. Usually, we perceive the aspects of creation; a kind of construction. But both had started distortion/ destroying the material to get significant expression. It was really a new experience which we have realized. And for modern Indian art, it was a new notion to adopt a material for the creation'. This practice symbolized a kind of methodical madness that seems to suggest in their experimentation, a limitlessness of form and expressions.

In the search for the plastic value of a material, he usually used the evolving method to admire the expression of the material. Through this he makes a journey to identify suitable material which has an inherent cultural meaning; a history as an art material or medium. He casts his sculpture in different materials; it is a kind of a pattern to address the issue of materiality. In this way, not only or sculpture, Himmat Shah also used pedestal as an integral part of the sculpture. It shows his methodological procedures to see material value in his creative output; a co-existence of different material in a form. Through this, Himmat Shah's adaptation of material signifies his appreciation on theoretical as well as performance ground which sparks his notion to express art as a life form through the aspects of materiality.

Himmat Shah is an important Indian artist whose journey has evidenced, realized and juxtaposed several debates of Indian modernism. Modernization of his visual language is always on his priority which he developed with the tools of 'formalism' to search for a significant form. It enables him to create a body of work where adaptation of fundamentals of art is the core issue to design his creative output. These initiations enable Himmat Shah to propagate a secular identity as an integral part of modernization of his pictorial visual language.

It has also a psychonormative approach to see the world with an individual eye. It is a kind of an individualistic assertion where human is the core component in aesthetic appreciation. This ability of Himmat Shah has been nurtured and governed by the Baroda School. This School has molded him as an inventor, not a follower. Being a formalist, he has created a body of work which creates the bridge leading from modernism upto post-modernism. He has worked with a way, searching for a new mode of production for addressing physical existence of a material and its cognition to society and he also believed in the primacy of creative impulses over rationalism. As he always says, 'I didn't recognize or believe in isms, there is no modern or ancient art... art is always art...!' it is a kind of madness which enables him to reference and realize a new mode of production of art to create new horizons in his art. On the basis of what he believes, he has focused on the need for experimentation and love for individualism, the two most important components in his art.

It is a kind of Himmat Shah's quest for the self. This is the primary aspect of creation in Shah's work which he answers through his artistic expression, adhering carefully and attentively to his individual insight. In this context, it is interesting to note that he is always active to define and redefine the language of his art. This is because he is more attached to visual sources rather than textual ones. This enables him to emphasize sensory appreciation, in the process of transcending the limits of the specific time-zone and creating an extensive visual orbit, rather than wasting his energy on things like the clash of civilizations and nationalities, he lays more emphasis on cultural and artistic reconciliation. Here he tried to propagate the idea of progressive nationalism consolidating the cultural values of human civilizations.

Though his art identified with the trends of modernity, individuality, nationalism and materiality, but for Himmat Shah, it gets a singular meaning that is a constant search of his inner self; a struggle for his existence as an artist. For this he has focused on Indigenous resources adopting Indigenous modernism. It provides him a radical toll to reference and realize primitive societies which is spread all over the world. Via referencing these societies, Himmat Shah has developed a significant stylistic device which has a wide appreciation of Form, Content and Material. Addressing the issue of artistic expression, he has not only recognized the physicality of material but also realized the human engagements and associations with material from the ancient times. It is evident in his terracotta's 'Haed Series' sculptures, done between 1980's to 2002. It is the phase of consolidation over a medium and form.



These 'Head's' sculptures become iconic creation in the context of post-colonial Indian Art. 'Heads' became Himmat's obsession in his last stage that dating has lost its meaning, they have lost their identity and locale. They are self- personified, self-centered and self-encumbered for human beings. Through this coordination, he gives his art-language a multilayered and multi-dimensional aura and transcends the regional, the local making his expression truly universal and global.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Himmat Shah is an Avant-Guard artist whose art is essentially a search of self. It is through this search or quest that he endeavours to give an expansion to his art as well as establish a balance between his inner and outer world, doubtlessly giving preference to Nature, highlighting the spontaneous process of Nature and the co-existence of beings and objects within it. He has kept a vigilant eye over the visible changes occurring in his environment. Though always maintaining a social posture, he actually gives primacy to multiple echoes of meanings instead of the dramatic effect of events and to the representative characterization in place of the individual one. His quest of self it is which has faced him to take extensive journeys to numerous villages, town lets, cities and metros. The rich material collected in these travels has rendered his art multi-dimensional.

It was during the days of his study of Arts in Baroda in 1950's when he first become aware of the language of art as well as arguments and issue pertaining to it. It was here that he synthesized the modern art-language in his paintings. In his expressive experimentations he shows keen interest in carving out new nuances in existing proverbs as well as finding newer modes of expression, something very much in tune and his quest of self. Further, there is this question of individuality which is very much central to Himmat Shah's quest of self. In the view of the researcher the issue of identity is a primary aspect in Shah which he answers through his artistic expression, adhering carefully and attentively to his individual insight. In this context it is interesting to note how he continually defines and redefines the language of his art.

During the years of 1960's, Himmat Shah started living permanently in Delhi. Here the issue of identity props up again in quite a different perspective, for now he has to face the gaints of the Indian Art already well – established in the market, and the struggling younger artists, as well as the connoisseurs and critics aligned to various Art-groups who were committed to their own social-political-cultural aims and objectives. This decade is known for the debates in the domain of the Modern Art

in Delhi. It will be relevant to note here that all these art groups were trying to define modernism in the Indian context. This paradigm is visible in the art of Himmat Shah too when he draws his Erotic Series Drawings within the Indian proverb. These drawings should be seen in all the three contexts:

1. The crisis of identity
2. The question of finding one's own bearing in the market
3. The search for Indianness

Each of these issues is of vital significance in the context of Modern Indian Art, and has deeply influenced its language as well as the endeavors of the artists of the time.

## **5.1 FINDINGS**

Himmat Shah's art cannot be viewed within the precincts of any particular time-span. This is because he is more attached to visual sources than textual ones. This attachment to the visual enables him to emphasize sensual appreciation, in the process transcending the limits of the specific time-zone and creating an extensive visual orbit. Rather than waste energy on things like clash of civilizations and nationalities, he puts more emphasis on cultural and artistic reconciliation. Through this coordination he gives his art-language a multilayered and multi-dimensional aura and transcends the regional, making his expression truly universal. He tries to create a visual language which assimilates both the real and surreal. In the treatment of the real and the virtual as also the treatment of imagery, there is more emphasis on his own self-created definition of art, and an original product, which can be termed "The Art of Himmat" is the result.

There is also a strain of Individualism in Himmat Shah's art. This is evident in the way he gives primacy to self in his exploration of the language of art, and the way he gives primacy to only those elements that he considers appropriate. This makes him pay extra emphasis on the employment of the proper medium than the craft or art in his thematic development. To start with, the influence of the Western Art Movements weighed heavily on Himmat's art, but it diminishes gradually as his inner sensibility and understanding become more and more lucid and transparent. During the second half of the decades of 70, the question of the quest of self and the crisis of identity get unified in a vision in which, the researcher can say, that Himmat Shah's

art presents universal experience from an individual perspective, giving greater credence to subjective sensibility than the mere objective, where creativity is expounded through a formalist practice. The art of Himmat Shah thus became a standard in itself. Being, and at the same time breaking, which is its life-process to be exact as amply emphasized and demonstrated earlier, there is always a willingness in Himmat Shah towards the creation of a forceful art-language.

It was in 1967, when he returned from France that the transition from two-dimensional to three-dimensional in his art takes place. This is clearly visible in the “Cement Mural” and the “Silver Painting Series” created during 1967 to 71 in Ahmadabad. This effort is a part of his process of creating an art-language perfectly suited to giving full expression to his emotions. In the decade of 1980 he starts working fully as a sculptor, getting in return all the dimensions capable of expressing his visual experience. In this form he achieves the epithet through which he can paint as well as sculpt. During this period, he begins creating “head sculptures”, an endeavor in which he is very close to the primitive art, for he takes inspiration from the echoes of civilization and culture of the Harappan port-city Lothal, his birthplace. He adopts the form for his clay sculptures from the terracotta pottery of Lothal. Not only this, he also draws inspiration from the tradition of the pre-historic African Mask and wooden and terracotta sculptures while creating his head series sculptures. He adopts the head series sculptures as a metaphor from the tradition of the community-culture where the head represents the entire human body and symbolizes timeless expressions. The Head Series is the representative work of Himmat Shah through which he passes from present to past and back again to present. These are simple as well as enigmatic creations, real as well as abstract, solid as well as transparent. In these he has employed pure colors in like red, yellow, blue, white silver, and gold which exhibit the primitive and the folk emotion of his art. Himmat Shah develops the inner essence of his art through a cyclic repetition which connects his creative-process with the tribal and folk art, letting go of the mythical concepts.

The art of Himmat Shah is a celebration emanating from within an elegy. For example, while delineating mourning, he never lets his self to be immersed in it, but like an impartial observer and artist enjoys the act. In the clay-sculptures of the Head-Series, he has depicted this skill in particular, and has touched the highest peaks of the creative process. He has chosen clay as the medium as a committed professional, for it

has the ability to satisfy his creative impulses. In order to reach the full possibility of clay, he has processed it in many ways and spent years understanding the true nature of clay. He uses the plasticity of the clay through the “Slip and Slab” techniques and treats the clay-idols to temperatures ranging from 600 to 1200 degrees. In the process he employs different chemicals to achieve the desired color and texture. During the 1990 to 2000 decade Himmat Shah created some Head Sculpture of such intricacy as to take the odious beyond the limits of the form. They look like artifacts from primitive excavations, very enigmatic and spiritual. The form in these artifacts is synonymous with meaning-sensibility.

The art of Himmat Shah has evolved through various phases of experience. They transcend the limit of civilization and culture. There is a revolt here against the established culture of authority- in fact he has searched for himself in his art. As such there is a climax of individualism in the art of Himmat Shah which is firmly resolved towards his own standards and aesthetic-insight. He takes his creative-process to a level where the difference between form, insight and medium is erased. This researcher feels that the trying situation, in which Himmat Shah lived and expressed, makes for the truism, “we are surrounded by infinity and by infinite possibilities”.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

Modern Indian art is directly related to the art trends and traditions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries of Europe. Modernity is not just reflected in the selection of theme, subject matter and ideology but also in form, style and technique. The native artist cut off from the roots, tries to locate himself in the Post-Colonial India amidst confusion and uncertainty. In order to find his identity, the native artist in the colonial phase faced a dilemma. He had to relate himself to the cultural ethos besides catering to the educated masses and the western art market. The academic art language and the indigenous training system went hand in hand till half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The later period shows artists rejecting both these trends. The art scene from 1910-1960 was a crucial period which the Researcher has noticed after witnessing its several offshoots. The major concern for the researcher was to see Himmat Shah, whose art activities started from 1950's onwards, not just as a painter/sculptor but as a true modernist thinker. Himmat Shah is not only looked upon as a mere artist but his life and his art practices have also been discussed in the backdrop of corresponding socio-cultural

developments of Post-Colonial India. The Researcher has discussed all forms of artistic trends used by Himmat Shah in his career but the main focus is on his 'Head Series' Sculptures.

The first research objective was associated with his personal development as a sensible artist and human being in the domain of Post-Colonial Indian Art. The researcher has in a nutshell, delineated his progress from 'Lothal' (a Harrapan Port City where he was born in 1933) to Baroda, to Delhi and finally to Jaipur. A long artistic journey of life (more than five decades), enables him to juxtapose several nuances of existing surroundings in order to develop artistic sensibility. His perceptual sensibilities are grounded on the visual records created by the human beings; it's a kind of constant travel through cultures and civilizations. The success story of Himmat Shah is based on his sensible presentation of his art which revolves around three important factors. The first, his sensibility is surrounded by Mother Nature; a huge arena of human learning from the spontaneous act. He essentially follows the raw energy of nature as an enigmatic act which enables him to perform as the 'son of soil'. He explores his artistic practice with the tools of 'Formalism' to justify his enigmatic appreciation of Mother Nature. Secondly, the researcher deduces that Himmat Shah's artistic sensibility is more concerned with the Baroda School. His sensibility is guided by N. S. Bendre, Sankho Chaudhary and K. G. Subramanian; his teachers who influenced him in his formative stage. Here he encountered the debates of modernism for adopting Form, Content and material. This School has given him a platform to see and realize modern art practices with his individualistic sensibility. His sensibility is based on a strong individualistic approach while his thinking is the backbone of his creation. For the third point, this researcher finds Himmat's reflective index sharpened by J. Swaminathan, after he joined the Group 1890 at the initiation of a Delhi based thinker. In Himmat Shah's sensibility concern, Swaminathan is a true mentor who made this young artist aware of continuous debate of Indigenous Modern imagery and the aesthetics of the tribal art. This situation has enabled him to reference and realize the material sensibility and the necessity of experimentations which consolidated in his terracotta sculptures. After a long artistic discourse, Himmat's artistic sensibility is found focused on 'self'; it is a kind of an expedition into his 'inner self'.

To satisfy the second objective, the researcher has taken up Himmat Shah's creative output in order to understand the aspects of modernity, individuality, nationalism and materiality. Modernity in Himmat Shah's concern is a phenomenon of a modern man who does not belong to any political or economic system but has a psychonormative approach to see this world with an individual eye. This notion enables him to adopt and practise the ideas of 'Significant Form' with the help of elements and principals of art. It helps him to generate a new pictorial visual language which is not referenced with any ethnic group, caste, region or religion. So modernity, in his concern to be evident as an avant-garde ambition is in visual experimentation towards obtaining a secular identity. In concern to individuality, Himmat Shah has worked with a way where the primacy of a creative impulse is very significant in his creation. He believes that every human being is significant for this universe; 'Man is supreme, no body above him'. Through this notion, he became capable of delineating his internal anger, fears and frustration in his creative output through experimentation with visual language in his own way. Individuality in his concern is a tool to propagate himself as an artist in international art scenario. In nationalism, he didn't follow the idea of nationalist art. He adopts progressive nationalism to search and create the path of 'Indigenous Modernism'. It enables him to reference and realize primitive art practices of tribal societies which paved the way for a powerful artistic device to consolidate people's cultural practices in a broader way. Through referencing Western modern visual art innovation of 'formalism', he also become capable of articulating a secular identity in his body of work. 'Materialism' in Himmat Shah's concern is a way of addressing material sensitivity for his art work where 'Phenomenon World' is evident not only in a form of physical matter but also as a people's engagement since the ancient times. By adopting this notion, he was able to express his creative output for global artistic mass.

The third objective is seen against the whole methodological process adopted by Himmat Shah in the context of formal visual innovation and material application in his body of art work. For this end, he has been interviewed extensively for every step he had taken. The views and comments of his contemporaries have also been recorded against the backdrop of his terracotta art. This has been deduced by the researcher that Himmat Shah, starting from Baroda where Cubism and other European art trends were being practiced, reached at the *Garhi* Studio when the love for tribal art was the

call of the day. The synthesis which he ultimately reached at Delhi was resulted by a thorough deep analysis and investigation of visual language. In the Researcher's perception, the later work, 'Head Series' sculptures of Himmat Shah displays the fusion of all trends and tendencies. There is a feeling of rebirth and a healing power earth surface, Himmat Shah has used this metaphor as a votive element. His love for clay is evidenced in his terracotta sculptures which have more than two decades of innovation and appreciation as art material. With this, he has referenced the modern and primitive art in the way of experimenting his art form. For this purpose, he has continued his experimentation to transmit his transformative style, all human feelings to the best of his abilities. All kind of experiments which were possible have been tried by him to arrive at the desired result. For the surprise of the Researcher, Himmat Shah has achieved his goal as a modernist sculptor by arriving at a formalist structure which retains indigenous elements as well as pre-historical vocabulary in a perfect harmony.

About the forth objective, the Researcher has investigated his association with Indian and non-Indian sources. In this regards, Himmat Shah's art is evident as a metaphorical appreciation of visual art language. It has a prismatic way of adaptation of visual imagery which he has seen and analyzed from the visual records of human existence ignoring all the discourse of race, region and religion. In the way of adopting imagery, he always concentrates on visual quality of art work. His sculptures are inspired by Western Modern Art movements, especially Cubism and Minimalism and it is profoundly impacted by Henry Moore, Constantine Brancusi, Morandi, Modigliani, Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee. Besides, his sculptures are more associated with pottery tradition of India. He also takes inspiration from Indian miniature tradition for promoting surface quality in his sculpture. By adopting pottery as a form of sculpture, he has taken inspiration from French modern pottery. Since the beginning of his career at Baroda School, he is very much inspired by African tribal art. It provided him a way of Metaphysical adaptation of visual imagery. His art adapts visual imagery from various sources to create a body of harmonious art work, emphasizing cross cultural meaning and nuances of civilizations for the sake of art and culture in his own method and procedure. The Researcher has attempted to analyse the body of art works of Himmat Shah from every different angle and perspective and sincerely hopes that he has put the thesis and antithesis into a



harmonious, balanced and logical synthesis of proving the objectives that are the *raison d'être* of this Doctoral Dissertation.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The researcher has concluded during his interaction with the artist against his art work that his sketching and drawings need to be looked more closely. As the preliminary drawings are very crucial for the development of an artist as well as his creation, serious scrutiny is required. It has been found that drawings and sketching are the mirror of Himmat Shah's creative process and aesthetic sensibility hence should be judged and evaluated by bringing the psychoanalytic approach to our aide. In the case of Himmat shah whose career spans about fifty years, this researcher has come across through his primary data more than hundreds of drawings displaying a sensibility and creativity of great merit. The researcher wants a serious attempt to study latent force showcasing the time period in which they were made. It is an endeavor of this researcher to take this collection of drawings and sketches as a case study for identifying the sources and extensions of Himmat Shah's creative processes.

The researcher has felt artists from village background coming to the Metropolitan culture do not have same sensibility and creativity which a Metropolitan born artist has. The researcher suggests that artist of both these backgrounds should be studied for their reaction to the modern art and this is a suggestion of the researcher a comparative analysis should be made to ascertain the reasons.

This has been concluded by the researcher that each and every art practitioner should have a basic understanding of the research methodology. The researcher is of the view for good research knowledge of proper tools and techniques are needed for scientific and academic training procedure. This methodological training would objectively guide the fresh researchers to identify the problem, the extension of the problem and means to solve the selected problem. It is suggested that this subject should be added to the curriculum for the Master degree level in all disciplines.

The researcher has concluded that the Indian library system is outdated. In modern cities and at the college level for the researcher there is no proper atmosphere. The lack of infrastructure restricts the exchange of ideas and practical evolution. The researcher suggests that library books should be given by the librarian himself. For the better maintenance, a librarian should be entrusted to collect the books from the reader. It is also suggested by the researcher that the facility of an e-digital library should be made available to the researcher.

## IMAGE GALLERY



Figure. 1.1. Verma, R. R. (2013, December 17). Draupadi [Painting]. Retrieved September 09, 2017, from <https://www.gktoday.in/raja-ravi-varma/> In exile and in disguise, Draupadi sadly serves as a handmaiden beverage in the court of Kichaka.

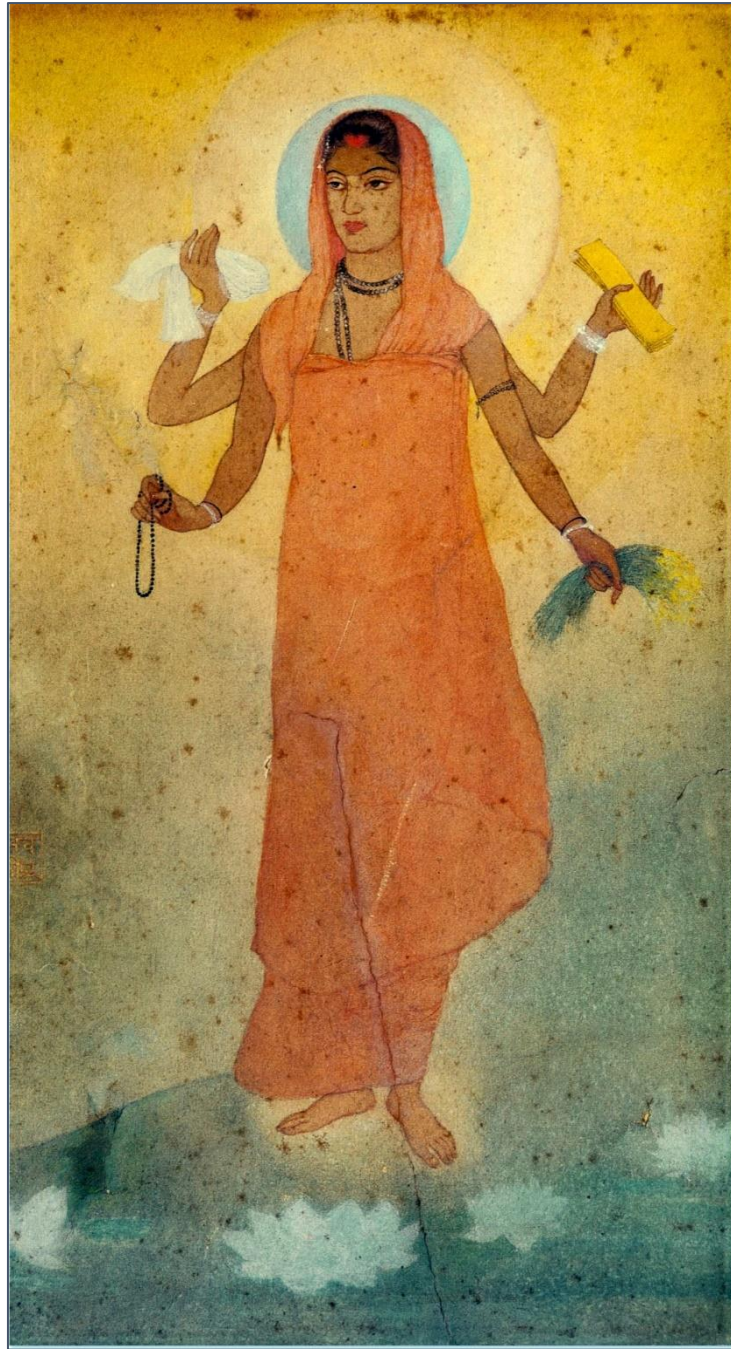


Figure. 1.2. Tagore, A. (2016, March 28). Bharat Mata [Painting]. Retrieved September 09, 2017, from <http://inspiroindia.com/bharat-mata-the-iconic-painting/> 'The woman as the Nation', a very revolutionary depiction which was mainly conceived keeping in mind the Swadeshi movement and the patriotic fervor during Indian freedom movement.

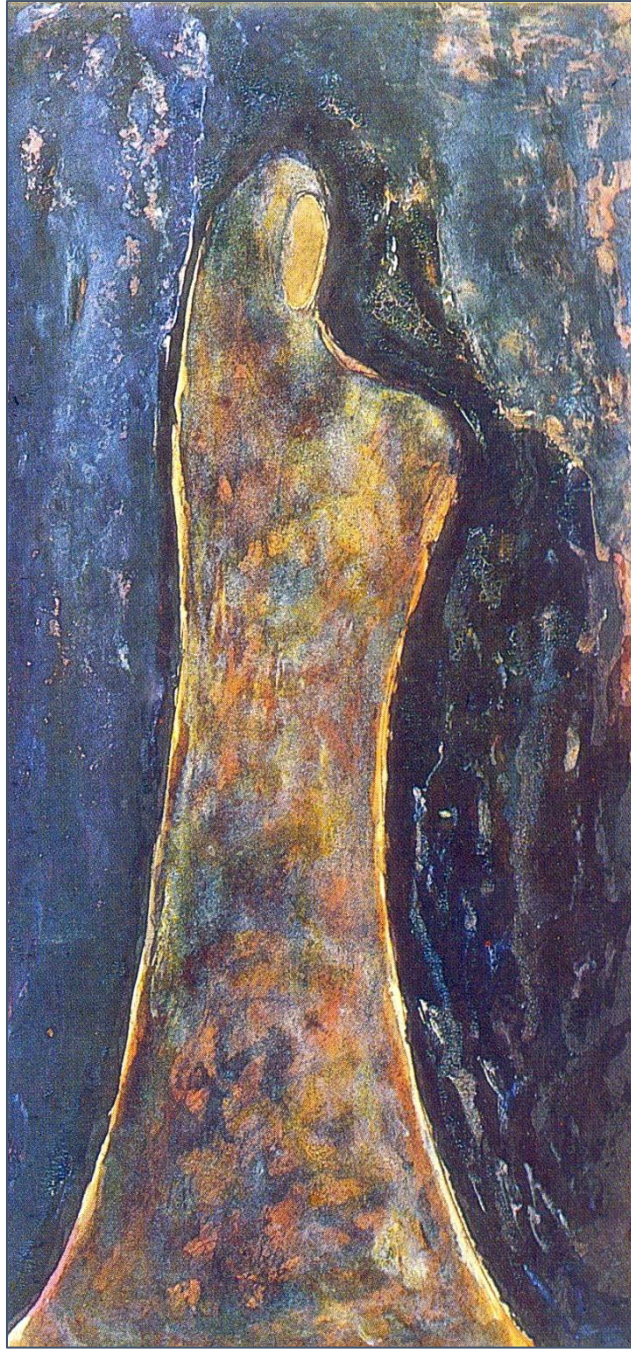


Figure. 1.3. Tagore, R. (1861-1941). Standing Figure [Painting]. Retrieved September 09, 2017, from [http://indiaopines.com/rabindranath-tagore-paintings/Covering their hands and bodies under folds of their flowing veils or saris signifying the closeted existence of the Bengali women of his time.](http://indiaopines.com/rabindranath-tagore-paintings/Covering%20their%20hands%20and%20bodies%20under%20folds%20of%20their%20flowing%20veils%20or%20saris%20signifying%20the%20closeted%20existence%20of%20the%20Bengali%20women%20of%20his%20time.)



Figure 1.4. Sher-Gil, A. (1973). Bride's Toilet [Painting]. Retrieved September 09, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amrita\\_Sher-Gil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amrita_Sher-Gil)



Figure 1.5. Bose, N. (1936). Radha's Viraha [Painting]. Retrieved September 20, 2017, from [http://www.indiapicks.com/Indianart/Images/N\\_Bose\\_Radhas\\_Viraha.jpg](http://www.indiapicks.com/Indianart/Images/N_Bose_Radhas_Viraha.jpg)



Figure 1.6. Mukherjee, B. B. (1947). Medieval Saints [Mural Painting]

Retrieved September 20, 2017, from <http://engrave.in/blog/indian-art-binod-behari-mukherjee/>



Figure 1.6. Mukherjee, B. B. (1947). Medieval Saints [Mural Painting].

Retrieved September 20, 2017, from <http://engrave.in/blog/indian-art-binod-behari-mukherjee/>



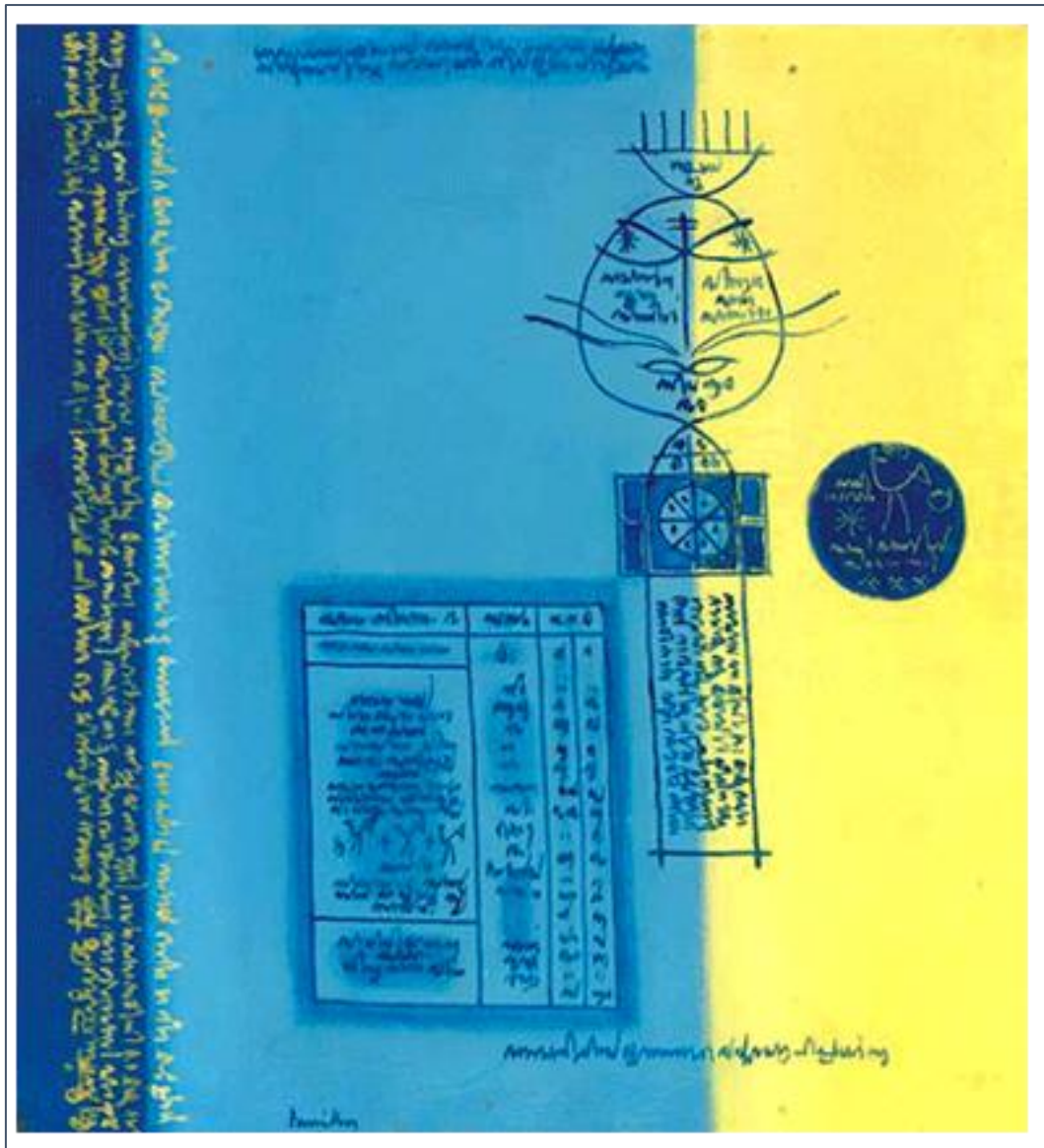


Figure 1.7. Paniker, K. C. S. (1911-77). Words and Symbols [Painting]. Retrieved September 20, 2017, from <https://www.invaluable.com/artist/paniker-k-c-s-80sfsjzrxh#related>



Figure 1.8. Husain, M. F. (1956). Between the Spider and the Lamp [Painting]. Retrieved September 20, 2017, from <http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/70/MFHusainFacedWithPromiseAndProtest>



Figure 1.9. Gujral, S. (1952). Mourning Enmasse [Painting]. Retrieved September 18, 2017, from <http://in.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1353186/the-significance-of-satish-gujrals-partition-paintings>



Figure 1.10. Swaminathan, J. (1983). Untitled [Painting]. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <http://www.saffronart.com/auctions/PostWork.aspx?l=6834>



Figure 1.11. Himmat Shah in Early Age [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh



Figure 1.12. Himmat, Vinod and Raghav Kaneria [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh



Figure1.13. Himmat Shah in Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh.

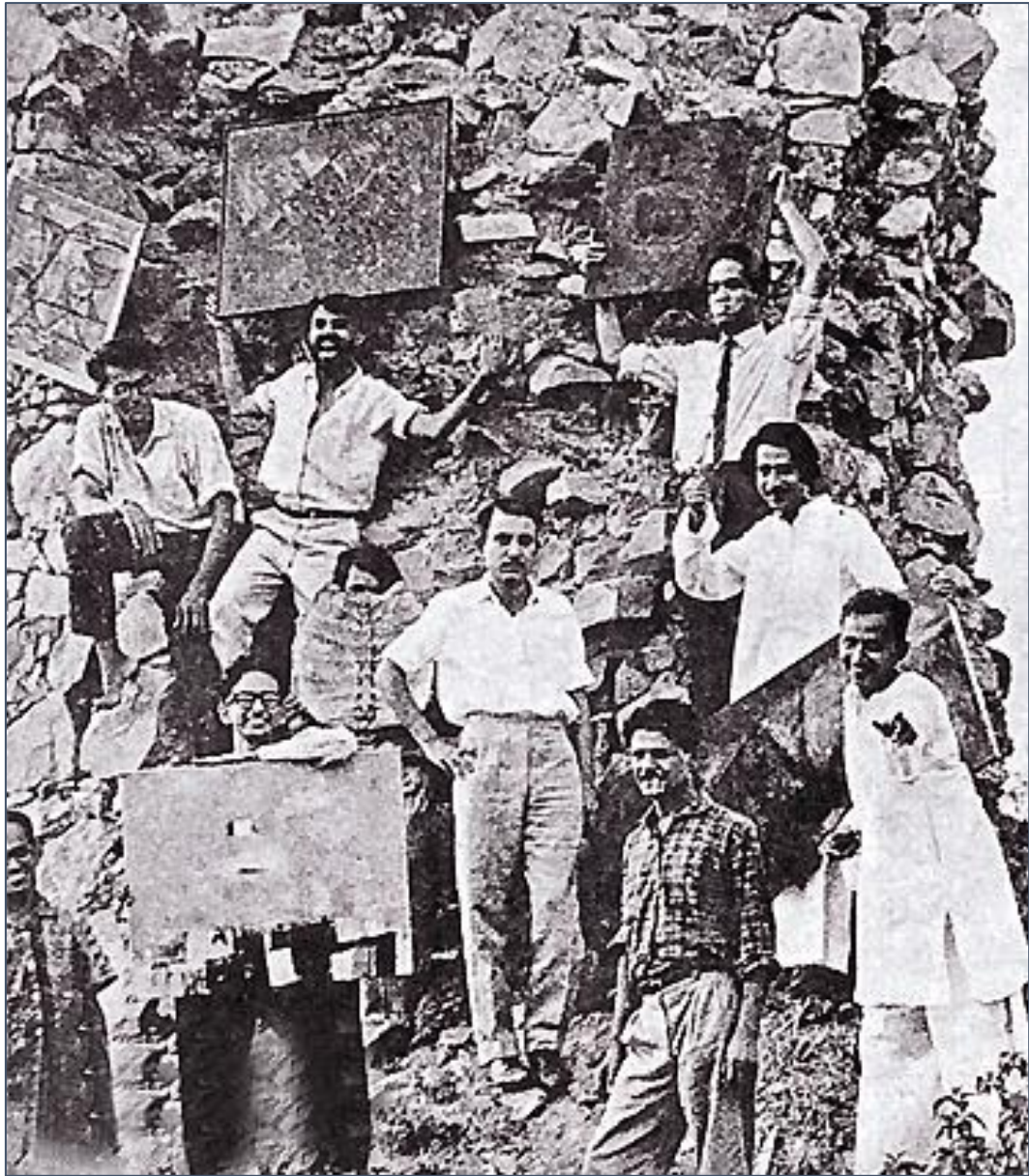


Figure 1.14. Parekh, K. (1962). Members of Group 1890 [Photograph]. Contemporary Art in Baroda (Sheikh, G. M. 1979), Tulika Publication. 156.



Figure 1.15. Shah, H. (1963-64). Untitled [Drawing]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from <http://www.himmatshah.com/drawings.html>

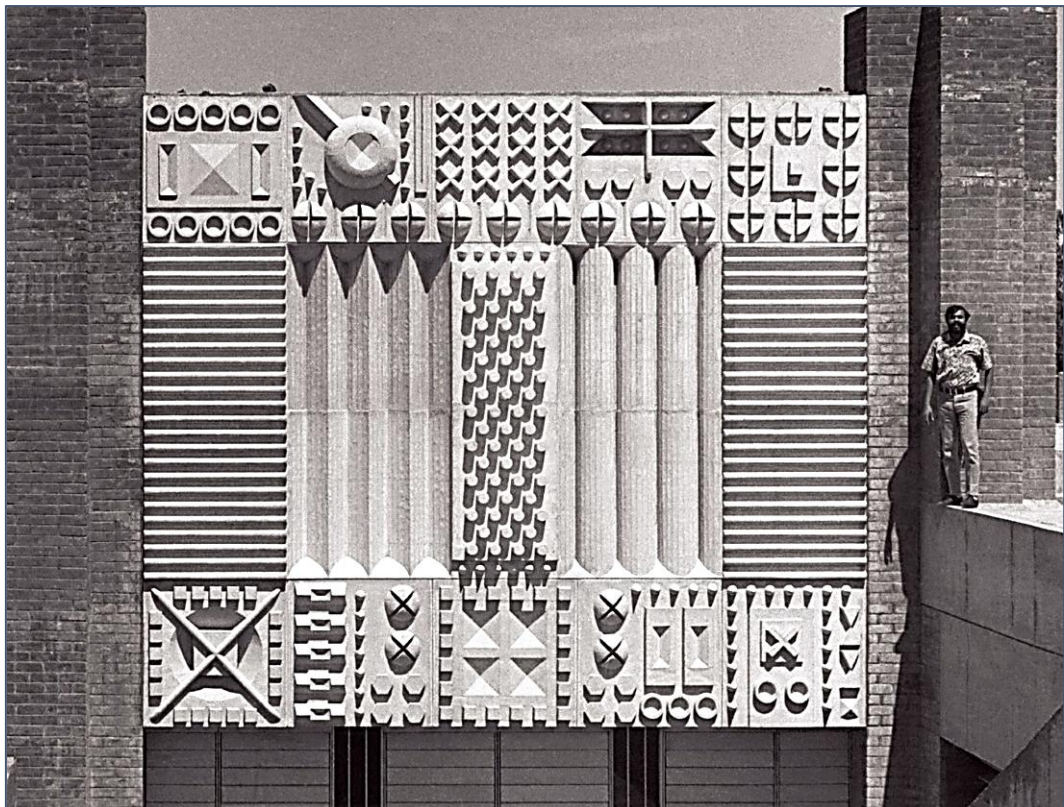


Figure 1.16. Shah, H. (1967-70). Mural at the Saint Xavier's school, Ahmadabad [Mural]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <http://johnyml.blogspot.in/2016/02/a-courageous-retrospective-himmat-shah.html>





Figure 1.17. Shah, H. (1967-70). Installation of Mural at the Saint Xavier's school, Ahmadabad [Photograph]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <http://www.himmatshah.com/high-relief.html>



Figure 1.18. Shah, H. (1967-70). Untitled [Silver Painting]. Retrieved August 18, 2017, from <http://www.himmatshah.com/silver-paintings.html>



Figure 1.19. Shah, H. (1979-82). Untitled [Sculpture]. *I Live with Himself: The studio life of Himmat Shah* (Karode, R. 1988). *The Art News Magazine of India*, 3. 4: 66.



Figure 1.20. Shah, H. (1979-95). Himmat Shah in Garhi Studio [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh



Figure 1.21. Shah, H. (1983-89). Himmat Shah's Exhibition in Art Heritage Gallery, New Delhi [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh.



Figure 1.22. Shah, H. (1979-2000). Himmat Shah and E. Alkazi [Photograph].  
Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh.



Figure 1.23. Geeta Kapur, Raghu Rai, Himmat Shah, Prayag Shukla and Roobina Karode  
[Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh.

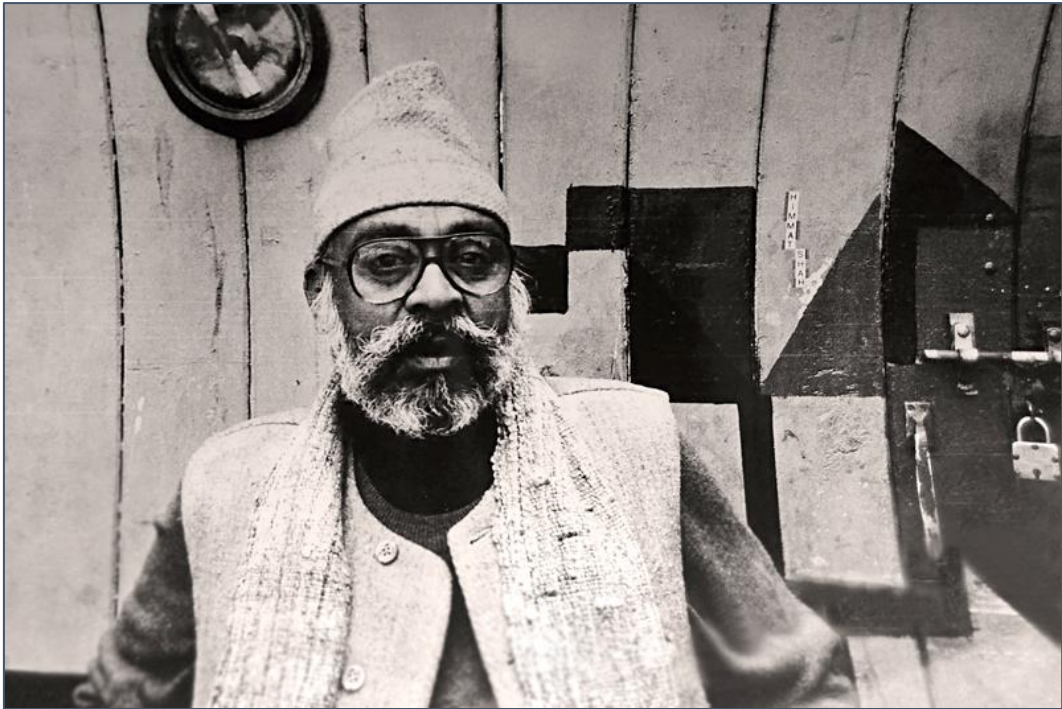


Figure 1.24. Himmat Shah in Garhi Studio [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh



Figure 1.25. Singh, A. K. (2016). Himmat Shah's Retrospective Show, 'Hammer on Squire' [Photograph]. Retrieved June 18, 2016, from KNMA New Delhi.



Figure 1.26. Honor, Legends of India, Himmat and Manish Sisodia [Photograph]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <http://legendsofindia.org/site/>

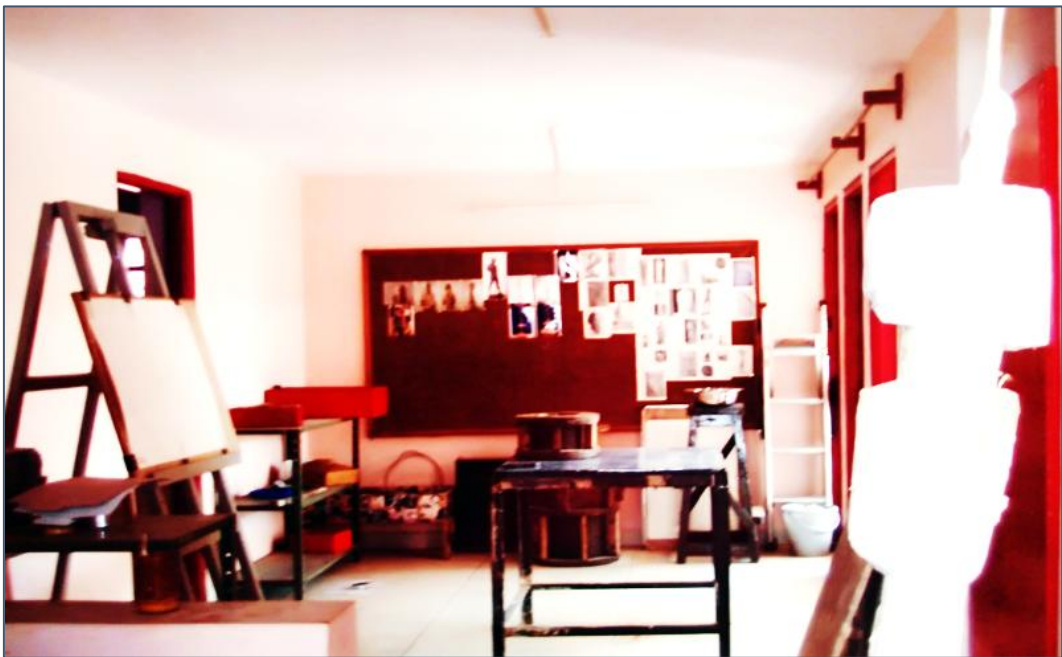


Figure 1.27. Himmat Shah in His Jaipur Studio [Photograph]. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from Artist Himmat Shah by Arjun K Singh.



Figure 3.1. Shah, H. (1963-64). Untitled [Drawing]. Retrieved August 18, 2017, from <https://www.himmatshah.com/drawing-works.html>



Figure 3.2. Shah, H. (1963-64). Untitled [Drawing]. Retrieved August 18, 2017, from <https://www.himmatshah.com/drawing-works.html>



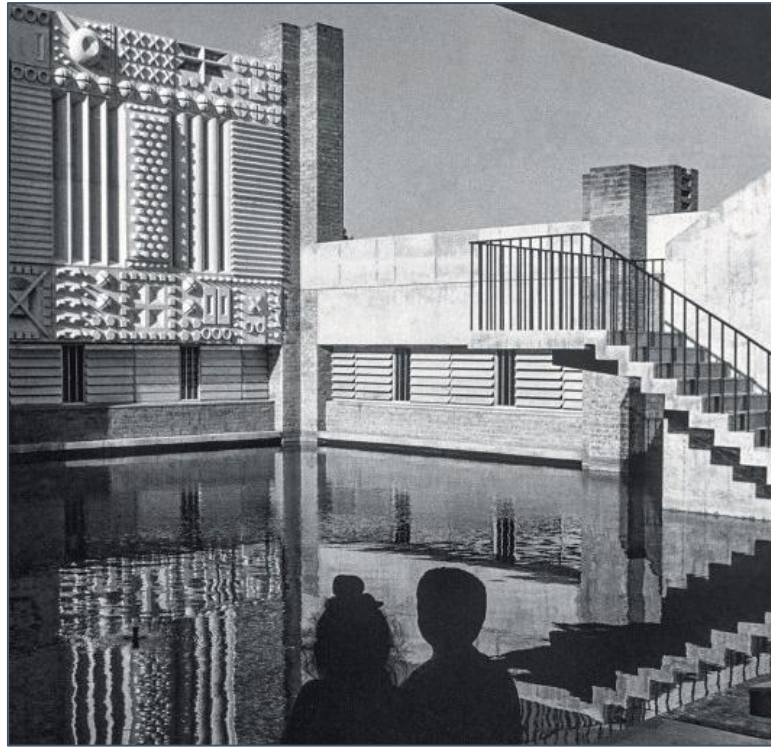


Figure 3.3. Shah, H. (1976-70). Mural at Saint Xavier's school, Ahmadabad [Photograph]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <https://thinkmatter.in/2017/01/23/the-architecture-of-hasmukh-c-patel/>

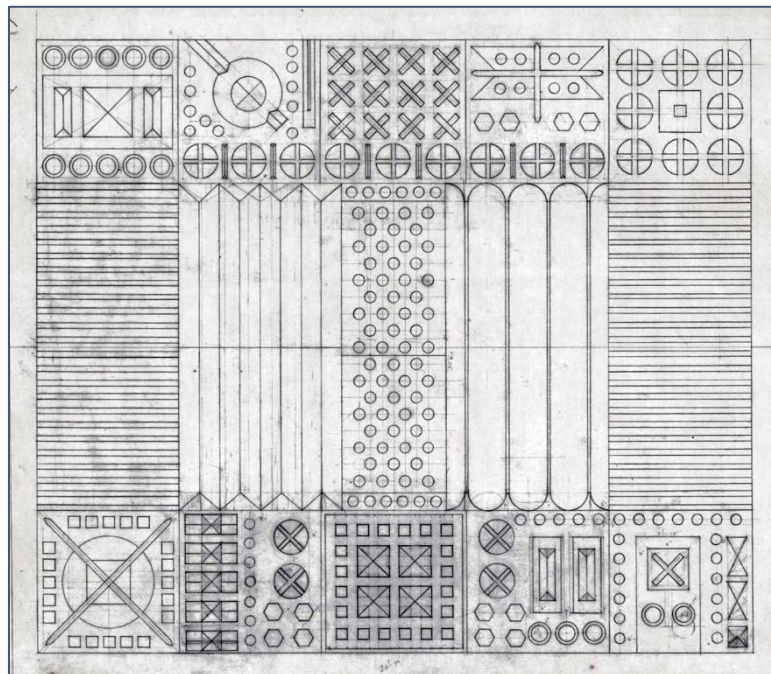


Figure 3.4. Shah, H. (1967-70). Untitled [Drawing]. Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <http://www.himmatshah.com/high-relief.html#features/27>



Figure 3.5. Shah, H. (1968-71). Untitled [Silver Painting]. Retrieved September 21, 2017, from <http://www.himmatshah.com/silver-paintings.html#features/30>



Figure 3.6. Shah, H. (1968-71). Untitled [Silver Painting]. Retrieved September 21, 2017, from <http://www.himmatshah.com/silver-paintings.html#features/30>



Figure 3.7. Shah, H. (1962-63). Untitled [Drawing]. *The Naked Lines* (Karado. R. 2006, Catalogue). Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi.



Figure 3.8. Shah, H. (1995-2000). Untitled [Sculpture]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <https://www.artsy.net/artist/himmat-shah>



Figure 3.9. Baij, R. (1938). The Santal Family [Sculpture]. Retrieved June 18, 2016, from <https://frieze.com/article/santhal-family>



Figure 3.10. Bhagat, D. (1917-88). Untitled [Sculpture]. Retrieved August 18, 2017, from <http://lalitkala.gov.in/gallery.php?tpages=27&id=345&page=7>



Figure 3.11. Bhagat, D. (1966). Ravana [Sculpture]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <http://www.saffronaer.com/artists/dhanraj-bhagat>

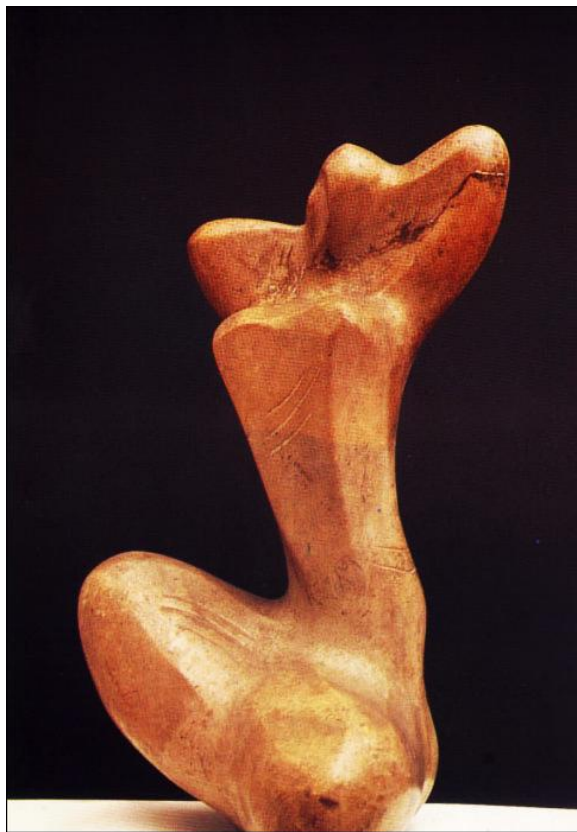


Figure 3.12. Chaudhary, S. (1949). Sringer [Sculpture]. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <http://www.craftsofindia.com/postcards/fine-art/pcard16.shtml>

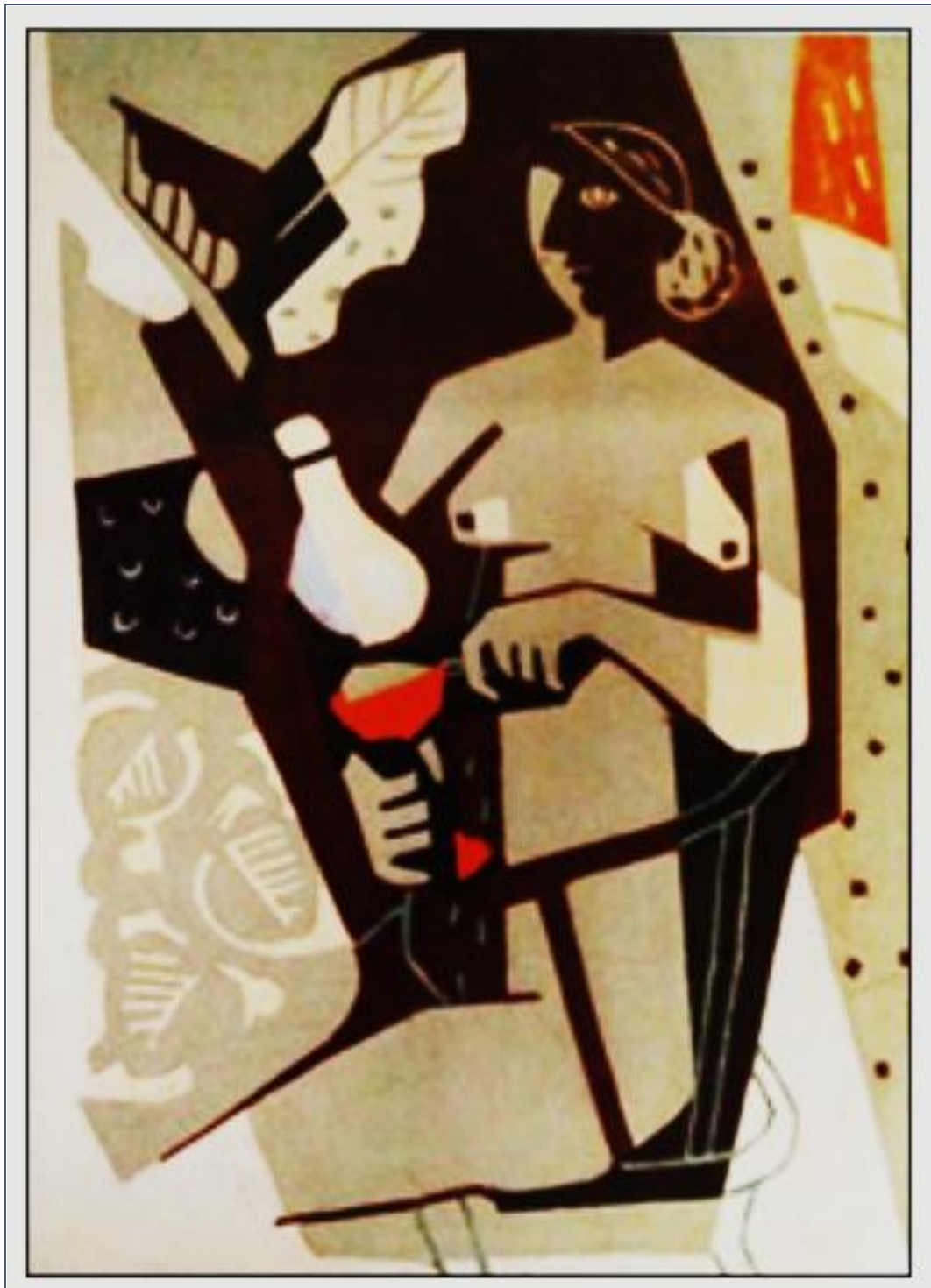


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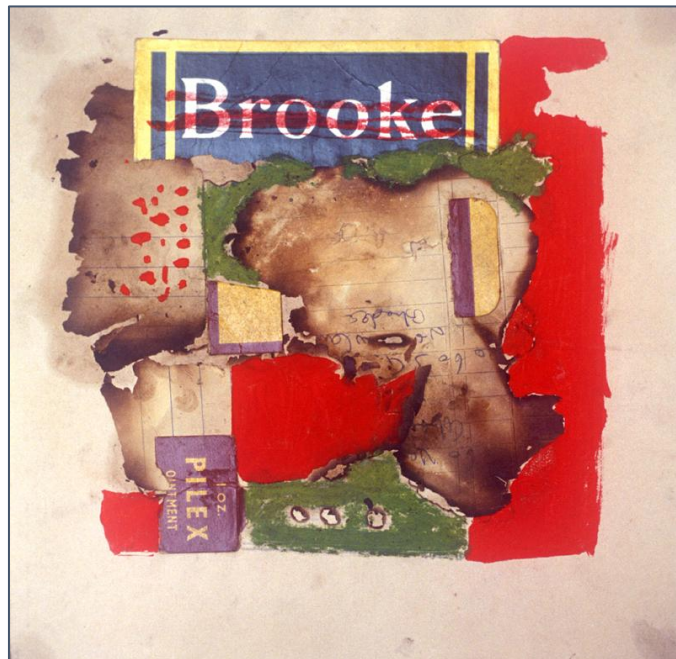


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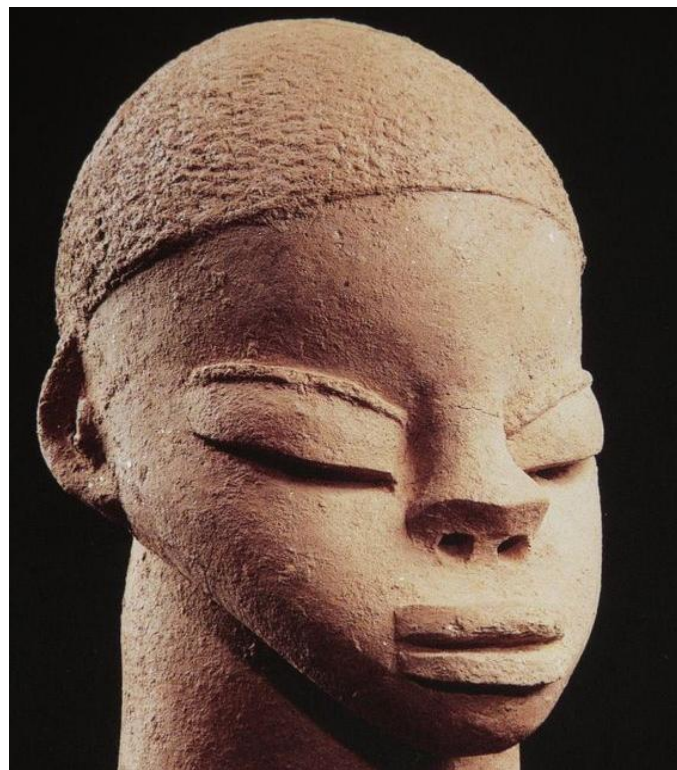


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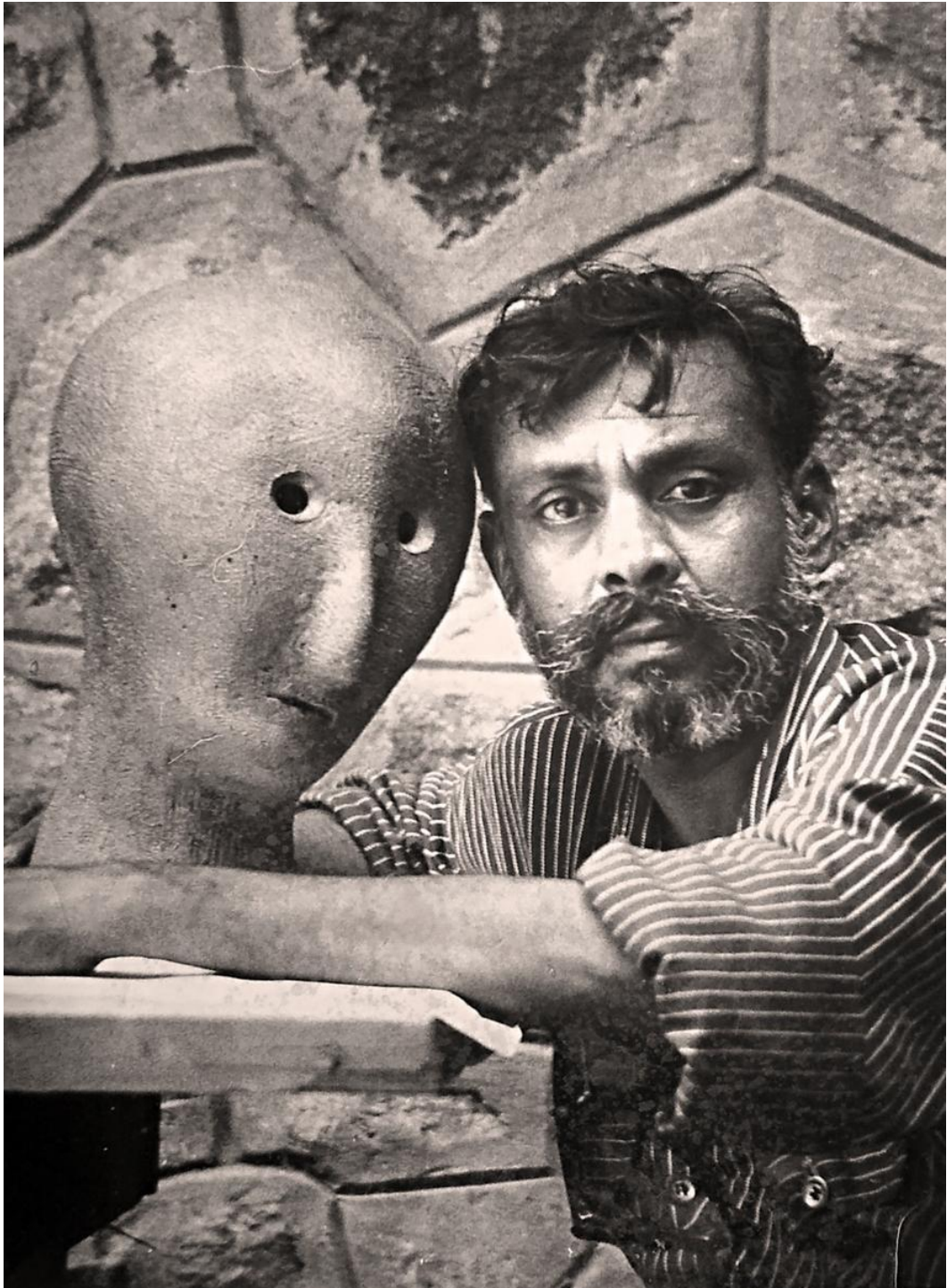


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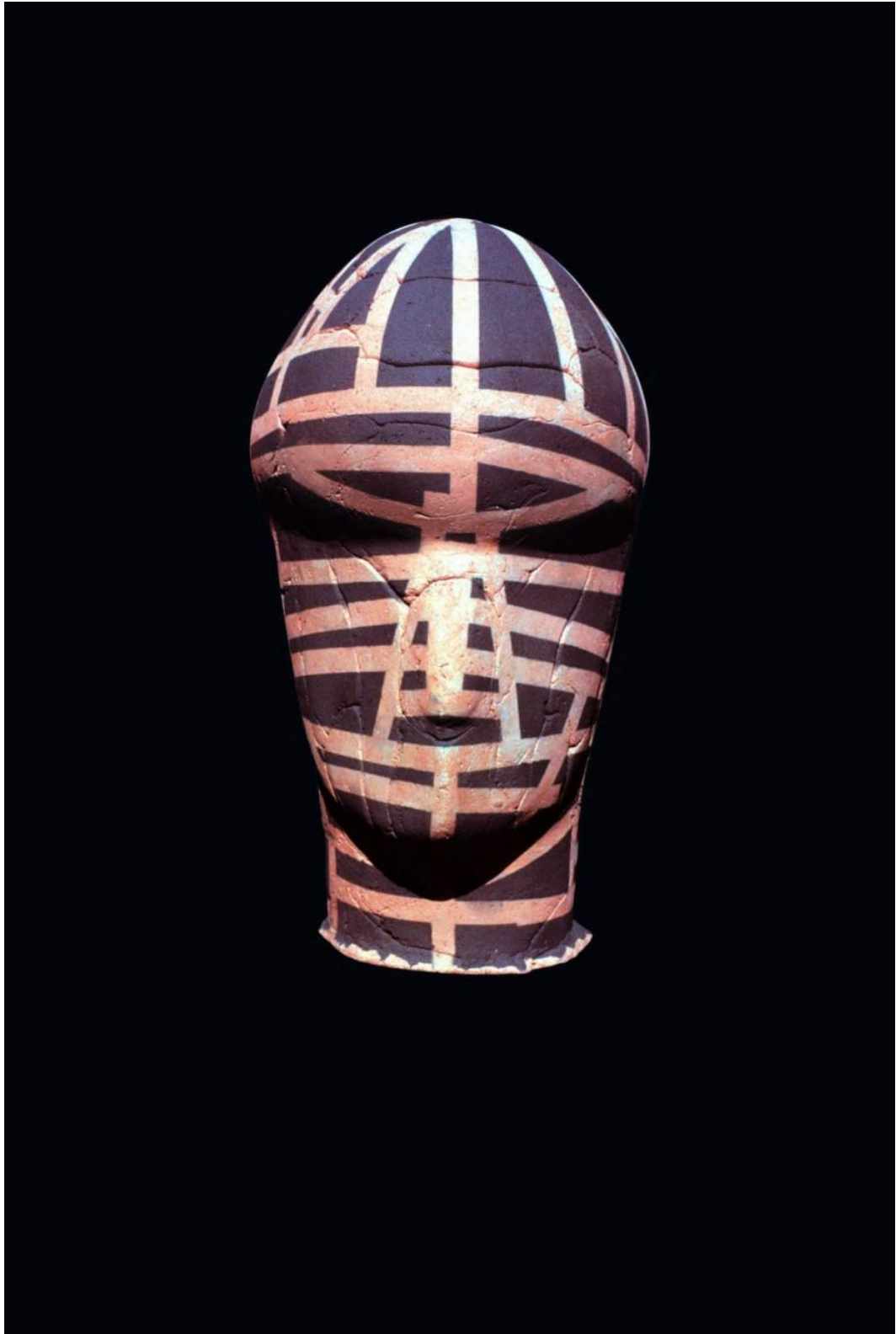


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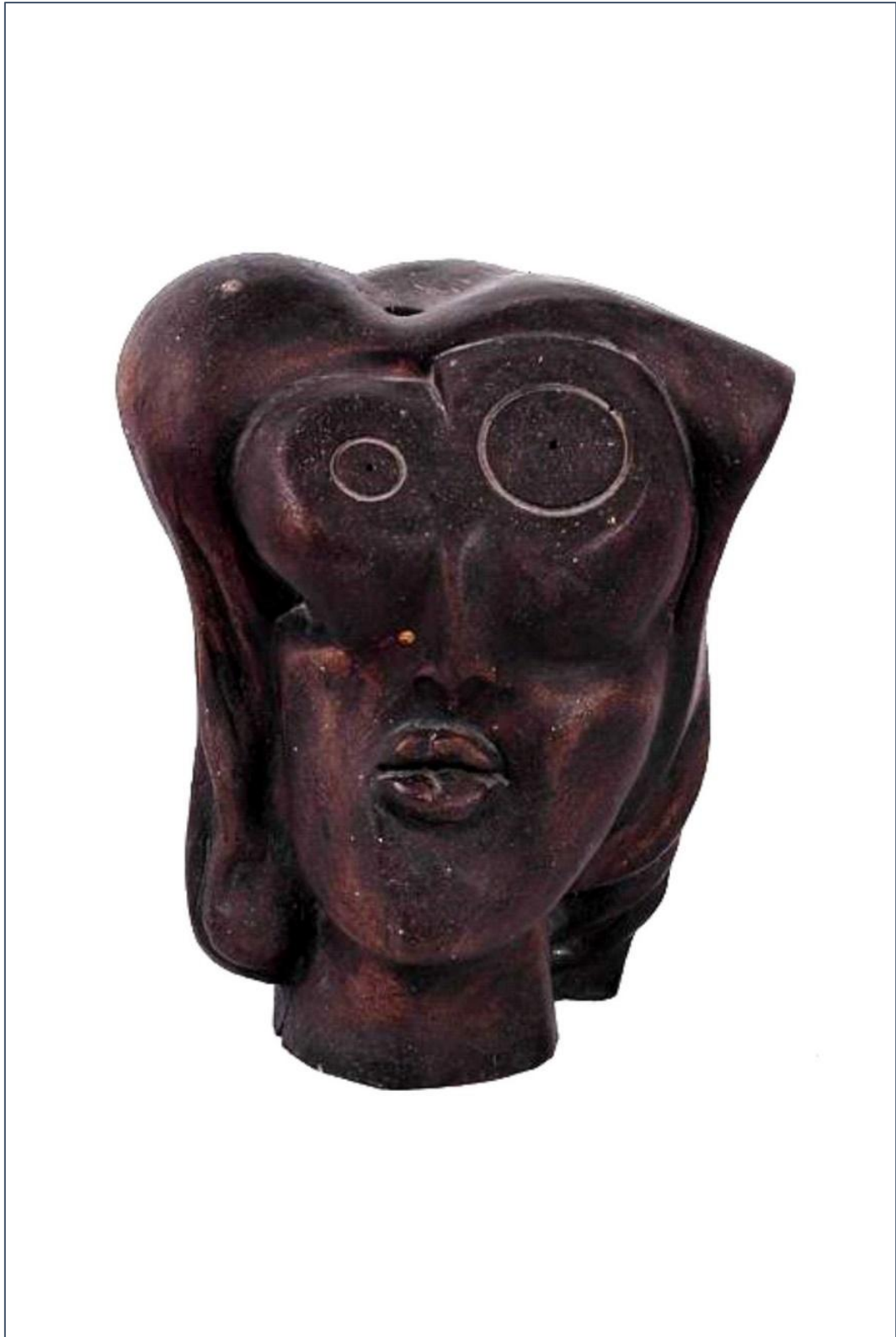


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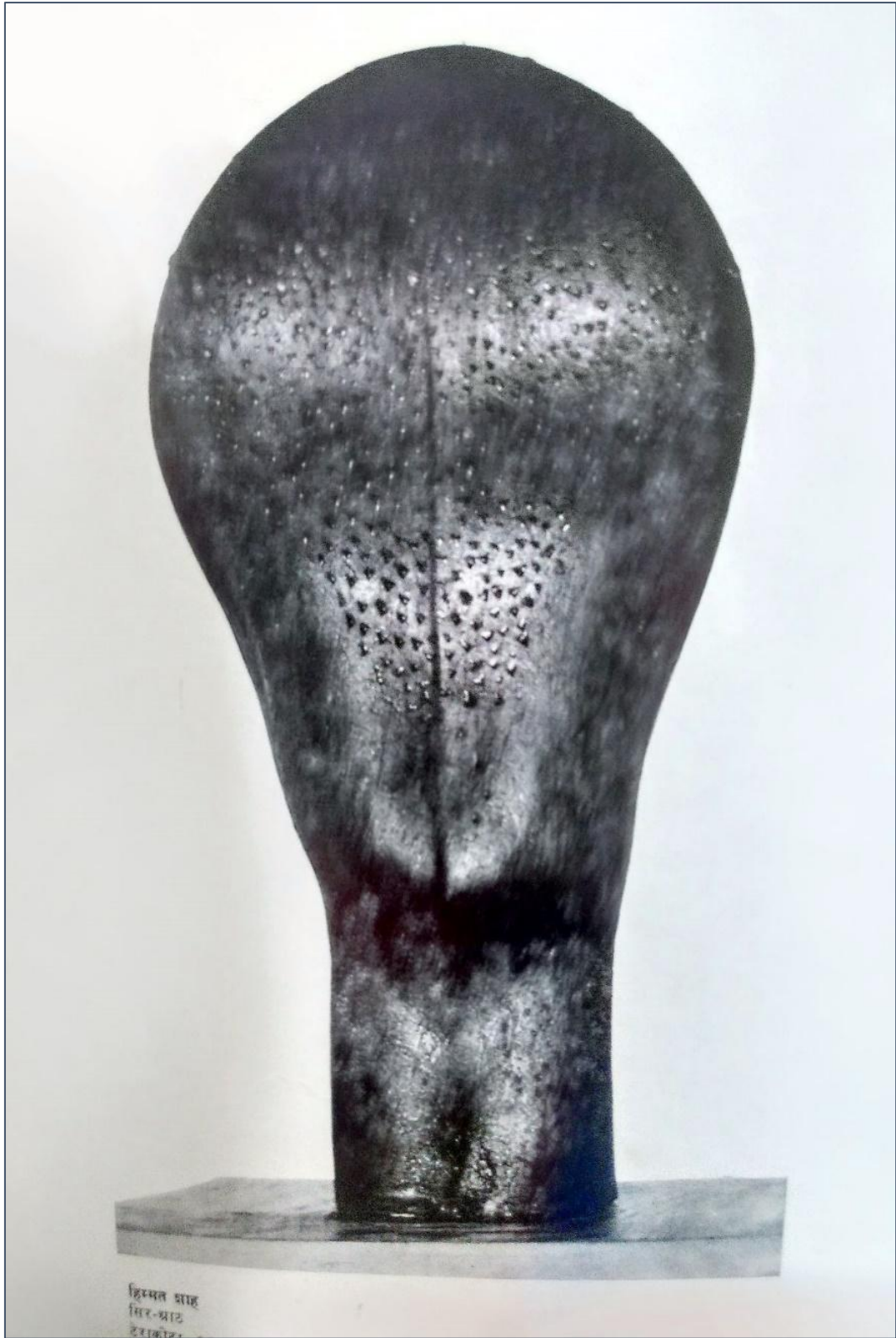


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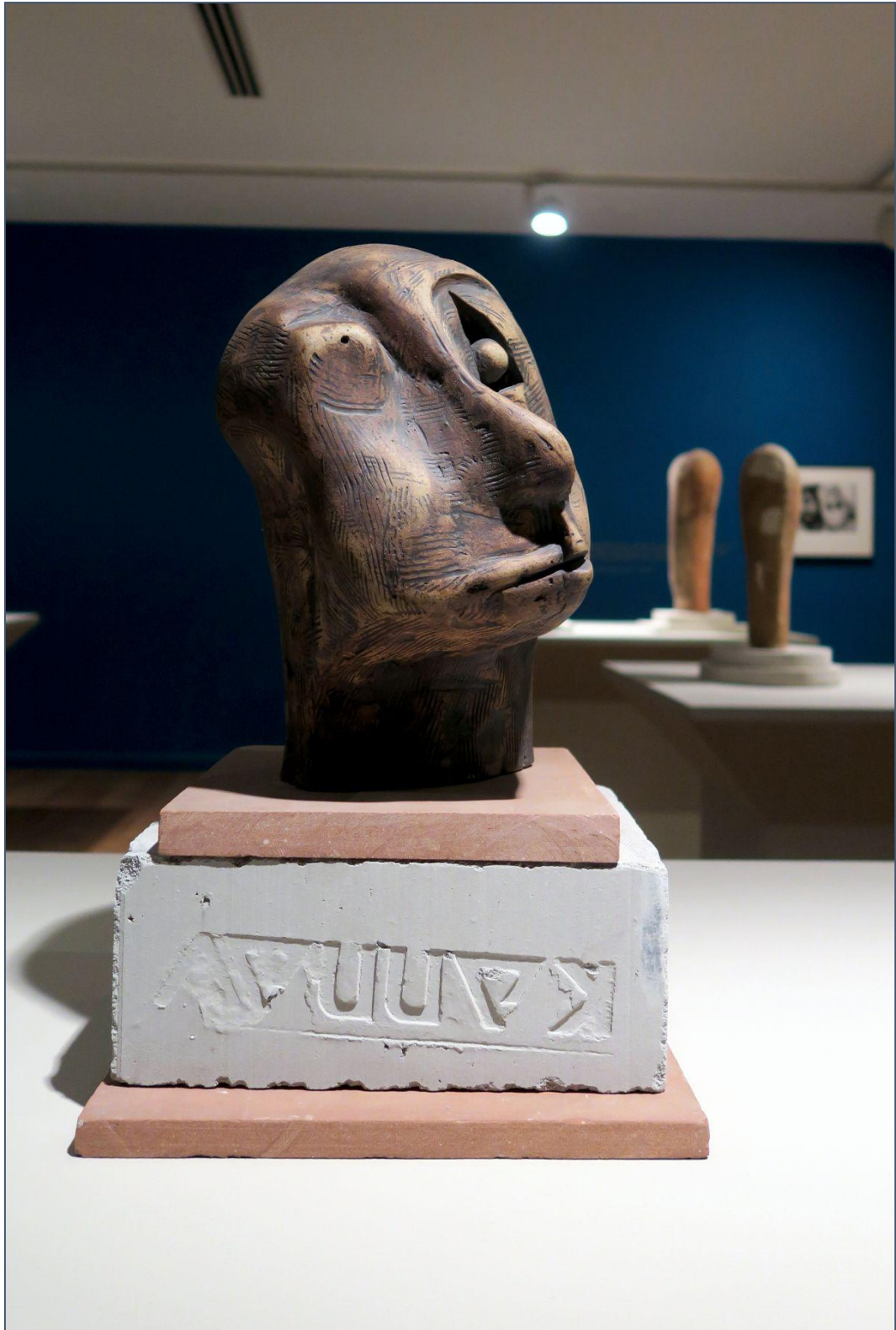


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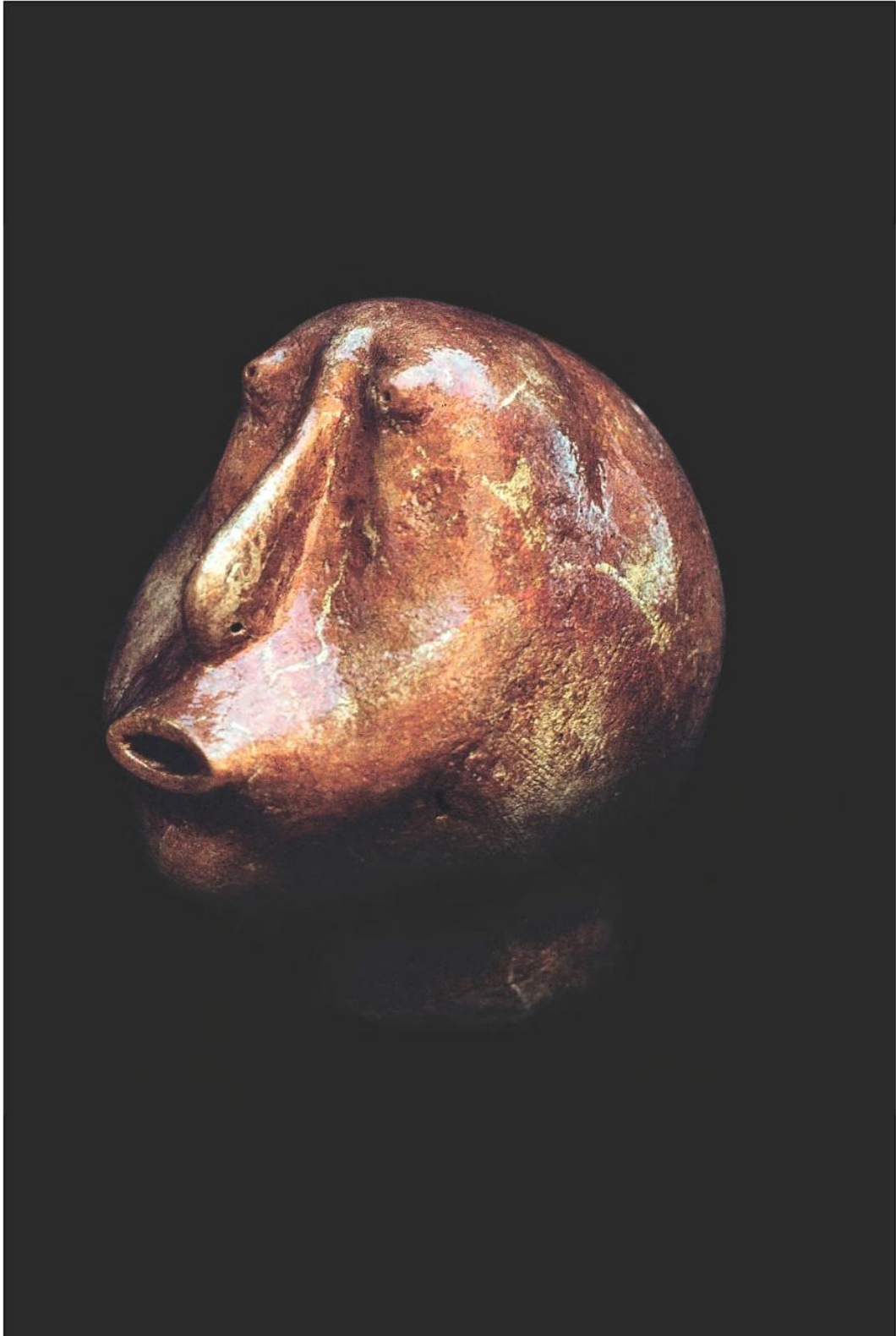


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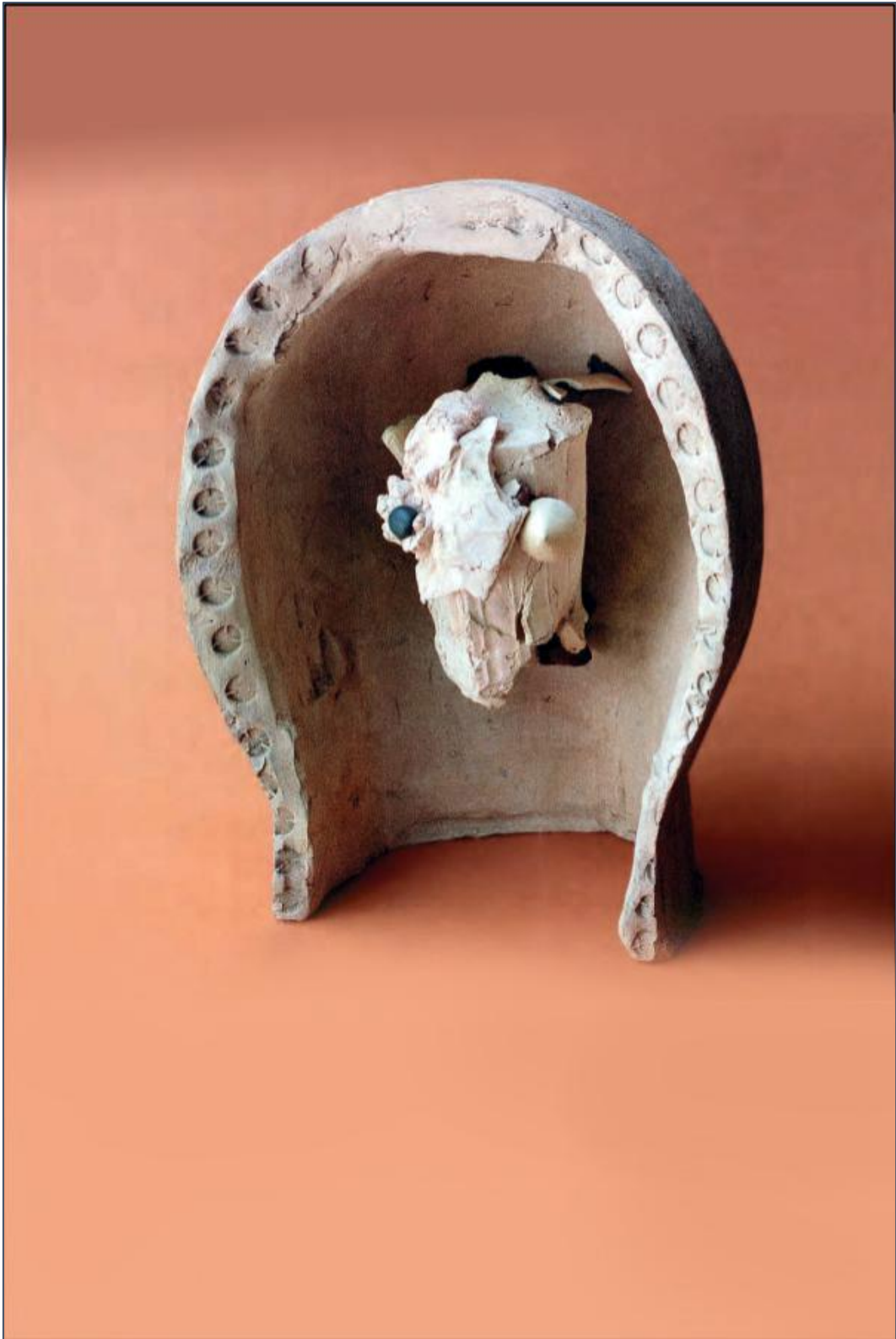


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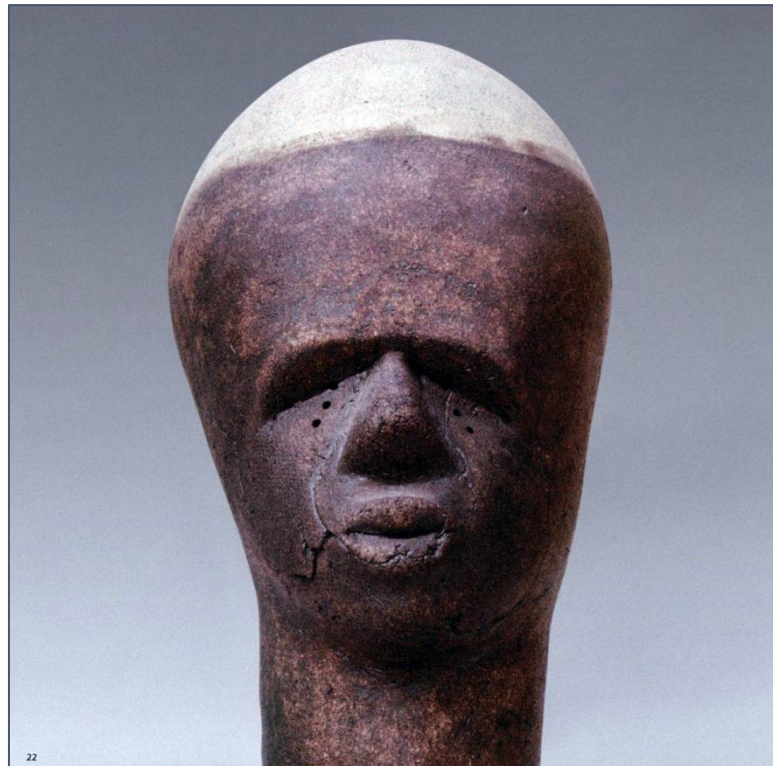


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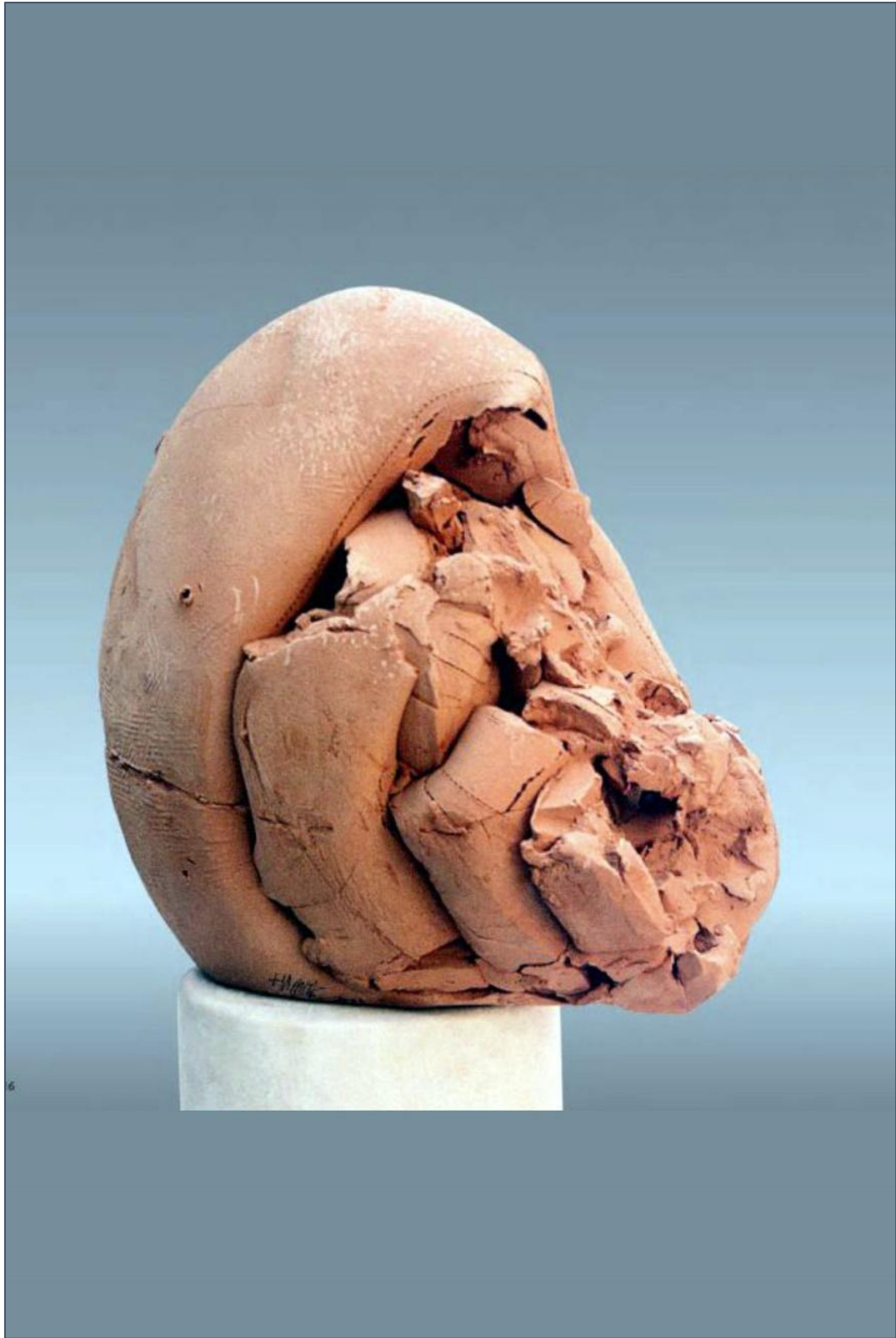


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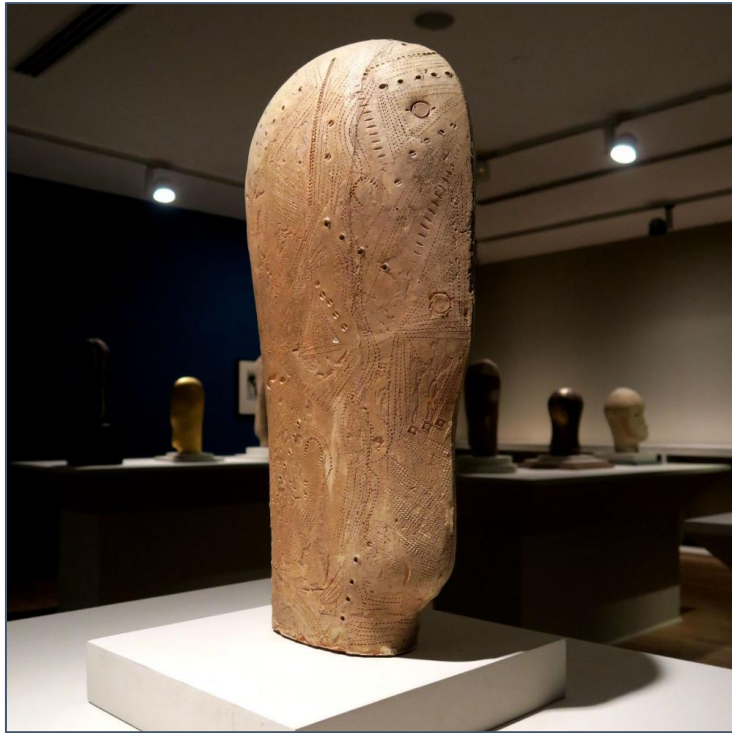


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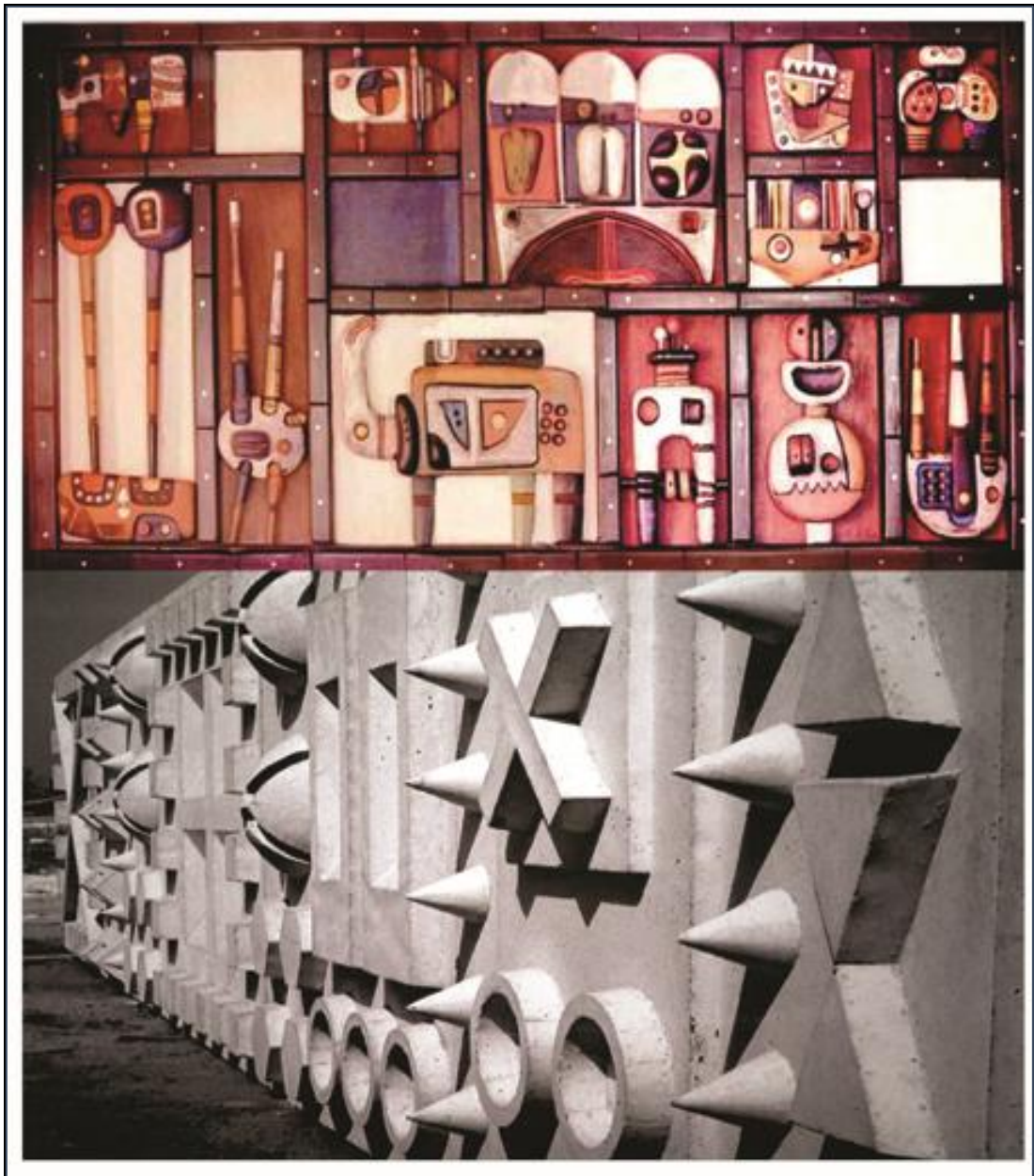
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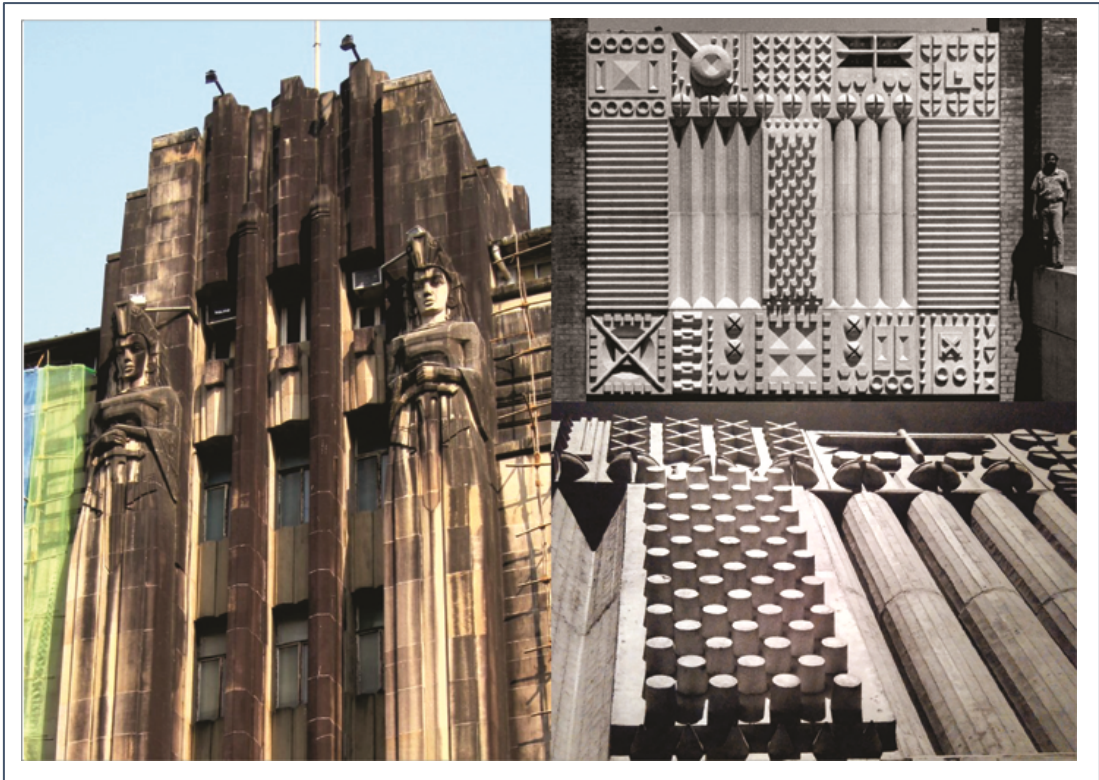
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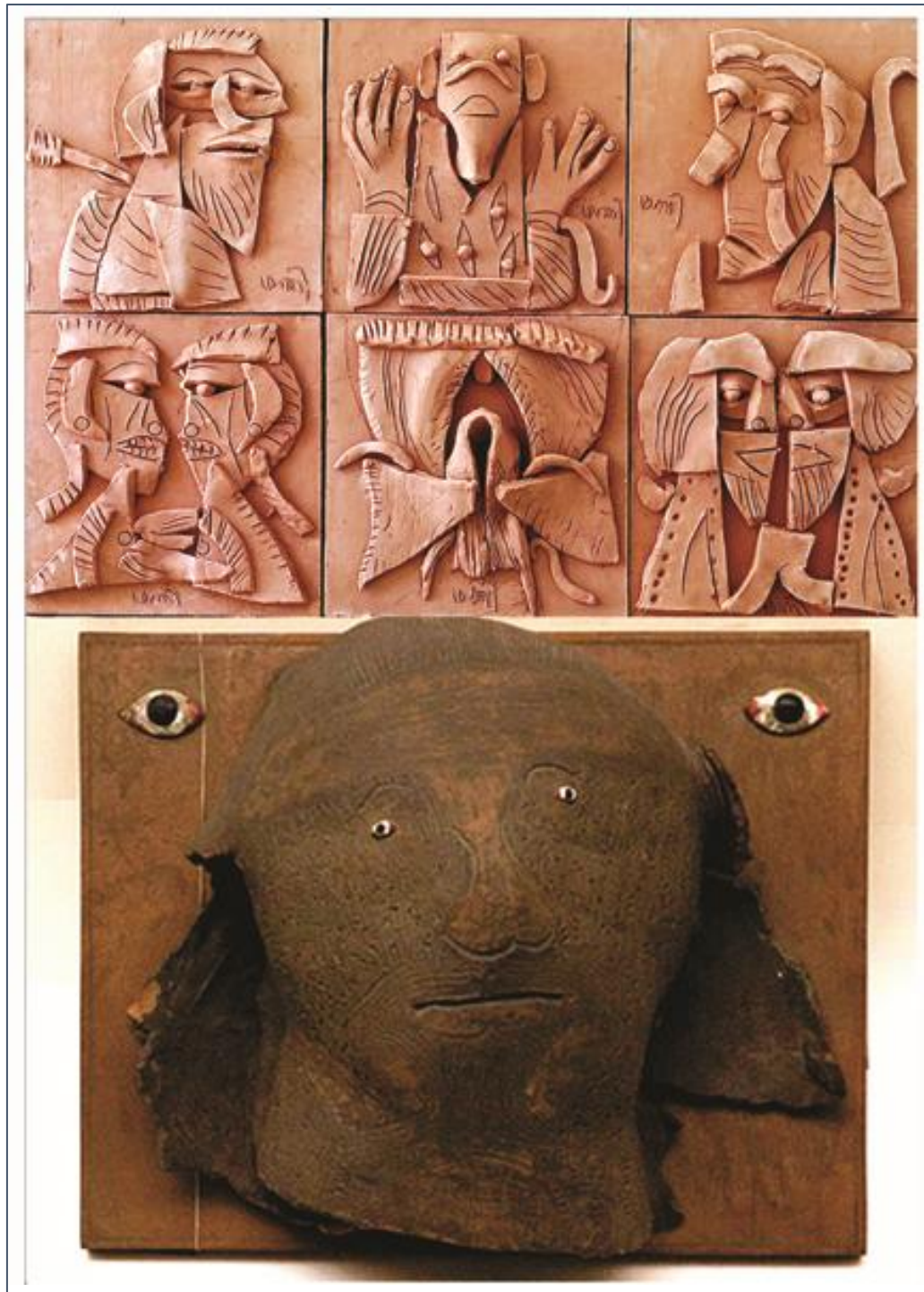
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Upper Figure 3.63. Subramanian, K. G. (2008). Anatomy Lesson [Mural]. Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <http://www.documenta14.de/en/artists/13564/k-g-subramanyan/> Lower Figure Shah, H. (1979). Untitled [Sculpture]. National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. Retrieved September 22, 2017, from <http://ngmaindia.gov.in/sh-modern-sculpture.asp>



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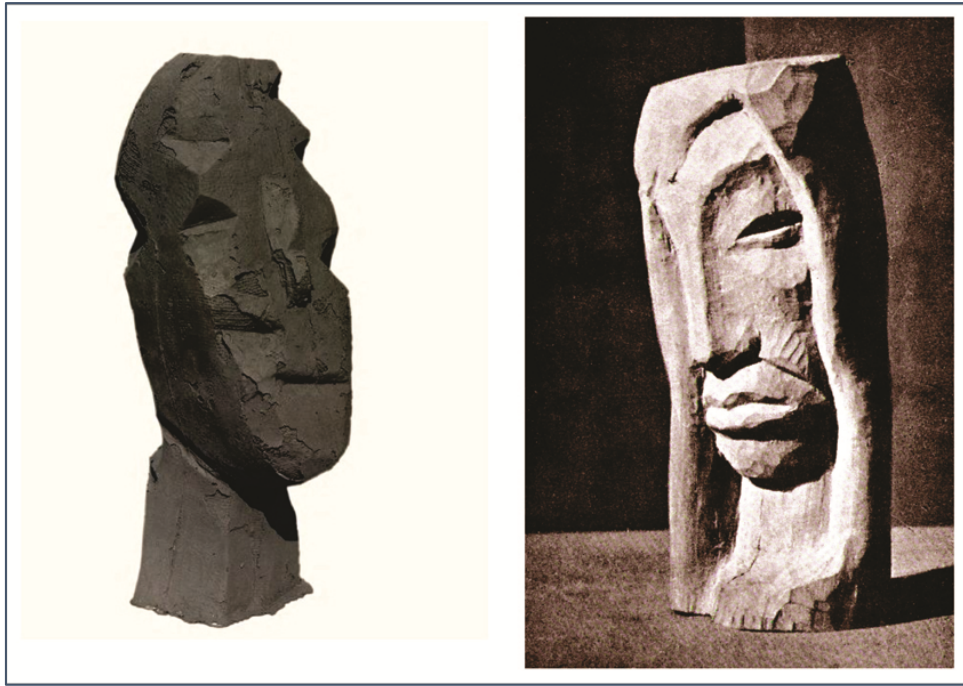


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## **APPENDIX-A**

### **ARTIST PROFILE**

#### **Himmat Shah**

Contemporary Indian Artist

Born July 22, 1933, Lothal (Gundi), Gujarat, India.

#### **Education:**

- 1952 Studied under Shri Jagubhai Shah, Bhavnagar (Gujarat)
- 1953 Drawing teacher's course at J.J. School of Arts, Bombay
- 1955 Joined Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda
- 1956-61 Awarded Govt. of India, Scholarship for Advanced studies in Painting,  
Worked under Prof. N.S. Bendre
- 1966-67 Studied Etching under S.W. Hayeter and Krishna Reddy, Paris

#### **Field Excellence:**

- 1959 National Award for Painting, Lalit kala Akadami, New Delhi
- 1961 Gold Medal Jammu and Kashmir Akadami of Art
- 1962 National Award for painting, Lalit kala Akadami, New Delhi
- 1962 Bombay Art Society Award, Bombay
- 1962 Progressive Painters Group, Ahmedabad
- 1963 'Group 1890' Exhibition, Lalit Kala Akadami, New Delhi
- 1967-71 Design and Executed Monumental Mural in Brick, Cement and Concrete
- 1969 All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society (AIFACS) Award for contribution to Art
- 1981-82 Lalit Kala Akademi's Research Grant to Work at Garhi Studio, New Delhi
- 1983-85 Fellowship for Outstanding Artist, Govt. of India
- 1985 All India Printer's Camp, Jammu Kashmir Academy of Art Culture &  
Languages
- 1988 The Sahitya Kala Parishad Award, New Delhi
- 1991 Eminent Artists Camp, IPCL, Vadodara, Gujarat
- 1992 Indian Artists, Bhart Bhavan, Bhopal, India
- 1994-96 Awarded Emeritus Fellowship given Eminent Artists in the field of  
Performing, Literary and Plastic Arts



- 2001 National Art Workshop, Chitra Kala Parishad, Bangalore
- 2002 National Seminar on ART-LIFE INTERFACE: An Interrelationship between the Arts organized by Indian Council for Philosophical Research, New Delhi
- 2003-04 Honored by 'Kalidas Samman', Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
- 2004 Felicitating Himmat Shah, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
- 2014 Gagan-Abani Puraskar, Vishwa Bharti University, Shantiniketan
- 2016 Life Time Achievement Award, Legends of India, New Delhi
- 2016 Retrospective 'Himmer on Squire' KNMA, New Delhi
- 2016 Bihar Kala Puraskar, Art, Culture and Youth Dept, Govt of Bihar
- 2017 India Today Art Award for best Solo Show 2017, India Today, New Delhi

**Collection:**

Ebrahim Alkazi and Art Heritage, New Delhi. Nitin Bhayana, New Delhi. Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. Neville Tuli and Osian's-Connoisseurs of Art Archive, Bombay. Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi. Rahul and Manisha Gera Baswani, New Delhi. Rohit and Harika Suchdev Baswani, New Delhi. The Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai. Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi. Ananta Art Gallery (Mamta Singhanian), New Delhi. Predeep Choubey, New Delhi. IPCL, Vadodara, Gujarat. Bhart Bhavan, Bhopal. Octovio Paz, Mexico.

- ❖ Artist lives and works in Jaipur since 2004

## APPENDIX-B

### RATIONALE FOR INTERVIEWING ART PRACTITIONER

Sl. No.	Name	Specialization Area of Exper	Reason for interview	Remarks regarding Himmat Shah
1.	Prof. (Dr.) Ratan Parimoo	Art Historian, Critics, Painter, Academician  Born: 1936, Srinagar  Study: Faculty of Visual Arts MSU, Vadodara  Faculty: Dept. of Art History & Aesthetics, Faculty of Visual Arts, Vadodara. Presently, he is the director of L. D. Museum in Ahmedabad	He is an eminent art historian, academician and critic. He has studied and taught art history in Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University Baroda and became Head of Department of Art History and Dean Faculty of Fine Arts Baroda. During the study in Baroda he was collogue of Himmat Shah. He has published many research papers and books.	Himmat's working methodology articulates that he is the 'son of the soil'.  His artistic practice is inspired by French modernism.
2.	Pro. K. G. Subramanyan	Indian artist, Critics, Painter, Academician  Education: Presidency College, Chennai  Faculty: Dept. of Painting, Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara  Born: 15 February	He is an eminent art academician, artist and art historian. He has taught painting in Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University Baroda and Kala Bhawan Shanti Niketan. He was one of them who taught Himmat Shah in	His terracotta works are very expressive and ironic. I have noticed a vibrant but concealed energy in the artistic output of Himmat Shah.

		1924, Kuthuparamba  Died: 29 June 2016, Vadodara	Baroda. He has published many research papers and books.	
3.	Prof. Gulam Mohammed Sheikh	Indian artist, Critics, Painter, Academician  Born: 16 February 1937, Wadhwan  Faculty: Dept. of Painting, Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara  Education: Faculty of Visual Arts MSU, Vadodara	He is an eminent painter, academician and art historian. He has studied and taught painting and art history in Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University Baroda. During the study in Baroda, he was colloqued of Himmat Shah and both are the core member of 'Group 1890'.	After independence whatever art comes to our mind, Himmat has a unique place. His Landscapes/Head in clay Himmat has made one finds his personal gaze working perfectly.
4.	Prof. (Dr.) Dipak Kannal	Art Historian and Academician  Head, Dept. of Art History & Aesthetics  Dean, Faculty of Visual Arts MSU Vadodara.  Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara	He is an eminent academician and art historian. He has studied and taught art history in Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University Baroda. He knows Himmat Shah very well due to both art the part of Baroda school.	In 1960's Himmat Shah had made Silver Series Paintings. They appear quite decorative from the out-side but when you look deeper they drag you inside. You get a feeling of eroticism, the mounds of the breasts and the depth of the navel, most sensuous work indeed.
5.	Prof. Krishna Chatpar	Sculptor, Academician  Faculty: Dept. of	Himmat Shah and Krishna Chatpar both have from Baroda School and	His mindset is impulsive and has a great appreciation of western

		<p>Sculpture, Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara</p> <p>Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara</p>	<p>both are taught Ahmadabad architecture college during 1960's. Krishna Chatpar became the professor of Sculpture Department, Faculty of Fine Arts MSU, Baroda.</p>	<p>innovation.</p> <p>His compositions evidence a great modern design sense and in some context, it is inspired by Minimalism.</p>
6.	Prof. Jyoti Bhatt	<p>An Eminent Painter/ Printmaker/ Photographer</p> <p>Faculty: Dept. of Painting, Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara</p> <p>Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara</p>	<p>Prof. Jyoti Bhatt is one of them who become first mentor and friend in Baroda. Both are from Bhavnagar, Saurashtra and till date, both are a very good friend and art practitioner.</p>	<p>Himmat's experiment shows an adaptation of art practice on the developmental basis; a content research.</p> <p>Identification and experimentation with the suitable medium are one of the single goals of his creation.</p>
7.	Prof. Mahendra Pandya	<p>Sculptor</p> <p>Head, Dept. of Sculpture, Faculty of Visual Arts, M.S. University, Vadodara</p> <p>Born: 4th October 1926. Indore, Gujarat</p> <p>Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara</p>	<p>He was an art academician and sculptor in MSU Baroda. Being the part of Baroda School and as a sculptor, his feedback about Himmat's work is very important.</p>	<p>Souza's influence on his works can be felt.</p> <p>Himmat went to use Brancussi, Picasso Paul Klee and other modernists for their Minimalist approach and through them he found importance of form for his work.</p>

8.	Mr. Johny ML	<p>Delhi Based Culture Critic, Art Curator and Writer</p> <p>Born: 21 March 1969 (age 48), Vakkom, Kerala</p> <p>Education: Dept. of Art History and Aesthetics, MSU, Vadodara</p>	<p>He is also the part of Baroda School. He has studied art history from Dept. of Art History MSU Baroda. He is a very active Delhi based art historian and curator.</p>	<p>Himmat Shah was searching a minimal line which he found in 'Head series' sculpture. it has a constant search of himself which he has achieved with the appreciation of western masters. It has also a deep reading of artist surroundings.</p>
9.	Prof. Vivan Sundaram	<p>Delhi Based Painter and Academician</p> <p>Born: 1943, Shimla</p> <p>Education: MSU, Vadodara And Slade School of Fine Art, U.K</p>	<p>He is a contemporary artist of Himmat Shah and both are the part of Baroda school. He was also very close to 'Group 1890'. He has very closely observed Himmat Shah in Garhi Studio.</p>	<p>Whatever he is trying in his terracotta shows a nearest relation with Lothal's ancient civilization and terracotta as a medium of expression has a universal connection and that should make us to link Himmat's works with Mexican ancient terracotta art.</p>
10.	Mr. Vipul Kumar	<p>Freelance Sculptor</p> <p>Born: 6<sup>th</sup> February 1970, India</p> <p>Educational: M.F.A. Sculpture, B.H.U., Varanasi.</p> <p>Studio: Bhaisalana, Rajasthan.</p>	<p>He has very closely observed to Himmat Shah in Garhi Studio. In Jaipur, He was also very near to Himmat Shah. He is also an art practitioner.</p>	<p>Himmat Shah's state of mind is existential. He didn't wish to create a decorative piece, has a strong demand to see his creation with a specific artistic notion.</p>

11.	Mr. Vinod Bhardwaj	<p>Delhi Based Art Curator, Film and Art Critic, Filmmaker, Writer and Poet</p> <p>Born in 1948, Lucknow, U.P., India</p> <p>Education: Lucknow University, Lucknow</p> <p>Studio: South Delhi, Delhi, India</p>	<p>He is a Delhi based journalist and art critics and has published several articles and films on Himmat Shah. During the stay in Delhi, he was very near to Himmat Shah. He has a deep study of Himmat's life and creation.</p>	<p>He is an artist who loves solitude aloofness with his work of art.</p> <p>From the beginning he used to talk about himself only. In my opinion he is self-centered person.</p>
12.	Mr. Prayag Shukla	<p>Poet, Fiction Writer, Translator, Art Critic, Curator and Editor</p> <p>Birth: 28th May 1940, Calcutta</p> <p>Education: Allahabad University, Allahabad</p>	<p>He is a Delhi based journalist and art critics and has published several articles, catalogues and news reports. He is very close friend of Himmat Shah. He has a deep study of Himmat's life and art works.</p>	<p>Himmat does not like interference that is why I consider him a great artist. Not in his life but in his creative process he does not allow any clash, hostility, intrusion and discouragement of any sort.</p>
13.	Mr. Amrut Patel	<p>Delhi based Painter, Designer</p> <p>Born in 1947, Gujrat</p> <p>Education: Diploma in Painting from CN College of Fine Arts in 1968</p> <p>Job: The Weavers</p>	<p>He is a Delhi based art practitioner. Due to the part of Gujarati community, he is very close to Himmat Shah.</p>	<p>From the beginning of his career he was very much aware about his identity as an artist. He works and live for himself and has an ambition to create art work for international market.</p>

		Service Centre, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India		
14.	Mr. Ashok Bhowmick,	Delhi based Painter, Writer, and Cultural Activist  Born in 1953, Kanpur, India  Studio: New Delhi, India	A Delhi based art practitioner and critic. He has very closely observed the art practice and art market of Delhi.	I know his work doesn't have any social or political connection at all. It has a formalistic idea of innovation.
15.	Prof. Dhruva Mistry	Sculptor  Dean: Faculty of Visual Arts, M.S. University, Vadodara  Born: 1957, Gujarat  Education: Royal College of Art, MSU, Vadodara	He is a well-known contemporary sculptor and academician. He is also part and parcel of Baroda School. He has very clearly observed the rebellious attitude of Himmat Shah.	His learning process is different. He learns from trials and errors. He learns with his experiments rather than your good advice.
16.	Mr. Nagji Patel	Artist/ Sculptor  Born: 1937, Gujrat  Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU Vadodara	He is a contemporary of Himmat Shah and very good friend. He is a well-known sculptor and academician and also the part of Baroda School.	Himmat has a strong practice in pursuit of form. When he started using clay (at Garhi Studio) all the possibilities that he learnt he employed them to great advantage. His work is quite strong technically as well as aesthetically.

17.	Mr. Raghav Kaneria	<p>Artist/ Sculptor</p> <p>Born: 1936, Gujrat</p> <p>Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara, Gujarat, India</p> <p>Faculty: Dept. of Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU Vadodara</p>	<p>He is the very close friend of Himmat Shah and both belong to Saurashtra. He is the contemporary sculptor of Himmat Shah.</p>	<p>Himmat's work is greatly influenced by the BENIN ART FORM. Benin is a regional period of African art.</p> <p>I have noticed a vibrant but concealed energy in the artistic output of Himmat Shah.</p> <p>There is a feeling of rebirth in his 'Head Series' sculptures.</p>
18.	Prof. Vinod Shah	<p>Visual artist/ Painter</p> <p>Born: 1934, Gujrat</p> <p>Education: MA in Painting from MSU, Vadodara</p> <p>Faculty: Dept. of Painting, Faculty of Visual Arts, MSU, Vadodara</p>	<p>When Himmat was studying in Baroda he was very close to him and observed the working methodology of Himmat Shah. After that, he has seen Himmat's practice time to time.</p>	<p>Himmat's terracotta's are my favorites works. It is his habit, if his own work fails to satisfy, he would not hesitate to destroy it. He would keep his thinking channels wide open.</p> <p>During 1950's-60's, in Baroda, he has referenced and realized the debate of materiality. It seems he is always aware about it.</p>
19.	Mr. Umesh Verma	<p>Delhi Based Painter, Thinker</p> <p>Born: 1935, Uttar Pradesh.</p>	<p>He has very closely observed the art practice of Himmat Shah. In Garhi Studio, Delhi both are worked more than</p>	<p>Himmat often does doodle on many papers or accidentally plays with lines or points in order to find something tangible which help</p>



		Education: Painting, School of Art, Delhi Polytechnic	twenty years. He, himself an art practitioner and has the very deep understanding of Himmat's art.	him to present as a creator.  Eroticism has remained in the center of his art, in Himmat's works one gets solid impression of it.
20.	Prof. (Dr.) Vinod Shahi	Educationist, Poet, Playwright, Author and Critic Jalandhar, Punjab.	He is an eminent critic, writer and a painter. He has closely observed the modern art and literature practice.	In the art of Himmat, man occupies a center role, a man's world. Whatever comes before us lifeless, for Himmat it gets personified. A human spirit starts pulsating through them even if they are objects from nature. Himmat is trying to search human mind through his 'Head Series' sculpture. The physicality of which resides within the eyes and their sockets helped by other holes in the skull guides us to walk through them to the netherworld.
21.	Mr. Rajendra Tikku	Indian Sculptor  Awarded: Padam Shree  Born: 1953, Jammu and	He is an eminent sculptor and academician. He is the very good friend of Himmat Shah. Both are very closely	Himmat Bhai has a great sense of space and it is surrounded by the idea of life form. His work is objective. So when a work becomes

		<p>Kashmir</p> <p>Education: Kashmir University with Science and Law.</p> <p>Studied sculpture from the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Srinagar</p>	<p>associated with 'Art Heritage Gallery's New Delhi.</p>	<p>objective it creates personal space. It makes its presence and announces that I am here; an extension of human existence.</p>
22.	Mrs. Roobina Karode	<p>Art Historian, Curator, and Critic</p> <p>Director and Chief Curator, Kiran Nader Museum of Art, New Delhi</p> <p>Education: Maharaja Sayajirao University of Vadodara</p>	<p>Since 1990's She is very closely associated with Shah. She has curated several shows and published several articles, books and catalogue on Himmat Shah.</p>	<p>Himmat's work is related with formalism and his 'Found Object' sculpture series can be seen in conceptualistic frame.</p> <p>In his terracotta, the liquidity you feel, it's a result of constant research of more than twenty years which he has been referenced and realized in 'Garhi Studio'.</p>
23.	Mr. Shanti Dave	<p>Painter, Sculptor, Muralist</p> <p>Born: 25 September 1931, Gujarat</p> <p>Education: Dept. of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU Vadodara</p>	<p>He is a Delhi based contemporary art practitioner to Himmat Shah and had a very close relation. Both artists are the part of Baroda school.</p>	<p>Himmat, in reality, is the true replica of his name, his personality resonances his spirit. He has shown a positive attitude to his life in those hard times. I salute him for his output.</p>

24.	Mr. Ved Prakash Bhardwaj	Delhi Based Painter, Journalist, art writer, Journalist and Curator  Born: 1 <sup>st</sup> February 1961	He is a Delhi based journalist, critic and art practitioner. He is now the part of Garhi studio where Himmat Shah has spent more than twenty-five years.	In his studio at Garhi he would keep clay in his tub for many months and years. To get different layers and loved to experiments on each layer its quality and texture by mixing other material also.
25.	Mrs. Ira Chowdhury	Indian Artist/ Potter  Education: Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan (1949)  Faculty: Pottery Section, Faculty of Fine Arts (1951-70).  In 1976, Working at the Garhi Studio, New Delhi	She has given patronage to Himmat when he was studying in Baroda and in Garhi, she has also taken care Himmat as a mother/mentor.	Himmat is credited to have worked under many influences but if you will ask him his reaction he will not respond. As he treats his subjects according to his own whims. He is not bothered by any Tom Dick and Harry.  He has generated his sculptures from Indian pottery tradition.
26.	Mr. Manapatta Ramachandran	Secretary, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi  Education: Dept. of Art History & Aesthetics, Faculty of Visual Arts  MSU Vadodara	Due to an integral part of Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi, he has closely observed the art practice of Himmat Shah in Garhi Studio. He is also the student of Baroda School.	Himmat Shah believes to borrow objects from somewhere he sees and realizes his surrounding for his ultimate creation.

27.	Prof. (Dr.) Shivaji Panikkar	<p>Art Historian, Critic, Academician</p> <p>Professor, Dept. of Art and Aesthetics, Ambedkar University, Delhi</p> <p>Education: M. S. University of Vadodara Bharata, Natyam and Art History</p>	<p>He is an art historian and academician and closely associated with the radical group of south Indian sculptors. He has a critical vision about art-practitioner.</p>	<p>In Himmat's work, one can find an impact of the west. It has also a strong sense of eroticism which is clearly visible in his terracotta silver painting and drawings.</p>
28.	Prof. Thomas John Kovoov	<p>Sculptor, Academician</p> <p>Assistant Professor in University of Rajasthan, Jaipur</p> <p>Education: Faculty of Visual Arts, Banaras Hindu University</p>	<p>He an academician and owner of artist foundry '<i>Sukriti</i>' Jaipur, where Himmat Shah has cast his metal sculptures. He has closely realized the working methodology of Himmat Shah.</p>	<p>The continuous working in a direction to create art is Himmat Shah's strength. He has experienced many ups and down which is visible in his creation.</p>
29.	Prof. Manmat Rao	<p>Sculptor, Academician</p> <p>Education: Dept. of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Vadodara</p> <p>Faculty: Associate Professor, College of Art Chandigarh</p>	<p>He taught sculpture in Collage of Art Chandigarh. He has an observation of Himmat's work.</p>	<p>He a true Indian modernist and has executed the idea of Indigenous modernism. But in some context he falls between modernism and post-modernism.</p>

30.	Prof. (Dr.) Sushil Kumar Singh	Academician  Principal, Shivalik Collage of Education, Gurdaspur.  Education: H. P. University, Summer-Hill, Shimla, H. P.	He has a deep knowledge of research methodology and helped the searcher to design this study.	Himmat Shah's journey of five decades shows a wide arena of social and cultural experience of the method, material, techniques and ideas. And it is clearly evident in his drawings.
31.	Mr. Jasvinder Singh Sakkral	Freelance Art Historian  Lives at Phagwara, Punjab  Education: Dept. of Art History & Aesthetics, MSU Vadodara	He is an art historian and a part of Baroda School. He has a deep sense of appreciation of Himmat's art work.	His terracotta's which is done during 1995-2002 has a highest sense of spirituality and has a realization of inner-self
32.	Mr. Pramod K Man	Delhi Based Freelance Sculptor, Painter  Education: Dept. of Sculpture, Government College of Art and Craft, New Delhi  Studio: Kaladham, Gurugram, New Delhi	He has worked several years with Himmat Shah in Garhi Studio and had several memories and observations. He himself a sculptor and art practitioner.	Himmat Shah is very much inspired by philosopher Osho. His terracotta works are out of the box which sought his connection to indigenous tradition.

## APPENDIX-C

### FOCUSED GROUP STUDY

#### MEMBERS OF FOCUSED GROUP AT NOIDA, UTTAR PRADESH

**Vikash kumar** (Former Curator NGMA), New Delhi

Sr. Assistant Director, FICCI Art and Cultural Division, New Delhi

Education: School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU, New Delhi

**Suraj kumar Kashi** (Freelance Artist), Delhi

Education: Dept. of Applied Arts, Government College of Art and Craft, New Delhi

**Ranjeet Singh** (Freelance Painter) Delhi

Education: Dept. of Painting, MFA from Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU, Varanasi

**Ujjwal Ankur** (Assistant Professor) Satyam Fashion Institute, Noida

Education: National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology

Ministry of Culture, Government of India

**Pranamita Borgohain** (Art Consultant) Ananta Art Gallery, J K Group, India

Education: School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU, New Delhi

**Namrata Mishra** (Art Educator) Billabong High International School, Noida, U.P.

Education: Government College of Art and Craft, Chandigarh, India

**Suchismita Mohanty** (Visual Artist, Guest Faculty) Ashoka University Sonapat,  
Haryana

Education: National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and  
Museology, Ministry of Culture, Government of India

## MEMBERS OF FOCUSED GROUP AT JALANDHAR, PUNJAB

**Basudeb Biswas** (Associate Professor, HoD of Sculpture Department) APJ College of Fine Arts, Jalandhar

Education: Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan, W B, India

**Mohinder K Mastana** (Assistant Professor) APJ College of Fine Arts, Jalandhar

Education: Kala Bhavan, Shantiniketan, W. B., India

**Saroj K Sarkar** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: School of Fine Arts, Performing Arts and Communication, Hyderabad University

**Gurucharan Singh** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: Dept. of Sculpture, Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU, Varanasi

**Sushanta Kundu** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: Dept. of Sculpture, Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU, Varanasi

**Ritesh Ranjan** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: Dept. of Art Education, JMIA University, New Delhi

**Amit Kumar Das** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: Dept. of Applied Arts, Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU, Varanasi

**Prasad Kumar Swain** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: Dept. of Print Making, Faculty of Visual Arts, M S University, Vadodara

**Saroj Kumar Das** (Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts) LPU, Punjab

Education: Dept. of Sculpture, College of Art and Craft, New Delhi

**Mr. Jasvinder Singh** (Freelance Art Historian)

Education: Dept. of Art History, Faculty of Visual Arts, M S University, Vadodara

**APPENDIX-D**  
**QUESTIONIER**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ART PRACTITIONER**

1. How was the modern art born in India? How did it develop during pre and post-Independence era?

Ans.....

2. How do you see the art of Himmat Shah in the context of Modern Indian art?

Ans.....

3. How do you see the expansion of form and content in the art of Himmat Shah?

Ans.....

4. How the modern art was born in India? How it was developed during pre and post-independence era?

Ans.....

5. How can you see the art of Himmat Shah in the context of modern Indian art?

Ans.....

6. How do you see the expansion of form and content in the art of Himmat Shah?

Ans.....

7. How was the life and composition of the city of Himmat Shah in Vadodara?

Ans.....

8. How was the life and composition of Himmat Shah's Delhi and Garhi studios?

Ans.....

9. What is the importance of consciousness and group consciousness in art and how both have influenced the development of the language of art?

Ans.....

10. Can we comprehend the art of Himmat Shah from his contemporaries such as Pradosha Das Gupta, Somnath Hore, Mahendra Pandya, Raghav Kaneriaetc?

Ans.....



11. In the art of Himmat Shah, there is a repetition in terms of form and contents, how you see it.

Ans.....

12. How do you see Himmat Shah's art and the use of group 1890?

Ans.....

13. Is there any aspect of regionalism highlighted in the art of Himmat Shah?

Ans.....

### **THE INTERVIEW WITH ART CRITICS, CURATORS, AND EDUCATORS**

1. What are the positive and negative aspects of the Bengal Renaissance in India? To what extent did it help in the development of modernism in the country?

Ans.....

2. What is the significance of personal consciousness and group consciousness in the art and how both of them have influenced the development of the language of art?

Ans.....

3. What are the positive and negative aspects of Bengal Renaissance in India? To what extent did it help in the development of modernism in the country?

Ans.....

4. What is the significance of personal consciousness and group consciousness in the art and how both of them have influenced the development of the language of art?

Ans.....

5. How will the language of art be developed in the primitive society? How did modern art take inspiration from it?

Ans.....

6. How was modern art born in India? Before independence and after independence, how it developed.

Ans.....

7. Why Western traditions dominate the Indian modernity? Is there any business angle of it?

Ans.....

8. In the post-modern phase, how the market is affecting the language of art and what type of construction it is making in it. Is this fine for future of visual arts?

Ans.....

9. Did the Cold War interfere with the development of the language of modern Indian art? How it is?

Ans.....

10. What has changed in the Indian art culture by the breakup of Soviet Russia?

Ans.....

11. How do you see the expansion of form and content in the art of Himmat Shah?

Ans.....

12. How can we see Shah's art in terms of Indian modernism?

Ans.....

13. Does any aspect of Aristotle's art vision appear in the art of Shah? If yes, then what are they?

Ans.....

14. In what is indigenous reflected in the art of Shah?

Ans.....

15. Is there any aspect of regionalism in Shah's art?

Ans.....

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEGENDARY ARTIST HIMMAT SHAH**

1. It is believed that your work has a great impact on childhood memories. Where were you born and what have you experienced there?

Ans.....

2. You left home during childhood. What was your age at that time would you have been at that time and why did you leave the house?

Ans.....

3. How long did you study at the Bal-Mandir (Dakshinamurty Institute) and how did artist Jagubhai Shah meet you? How did you get the education from them?

Ans.....

4. When did you join C. N. College of Arts and how was your experience?

Ans.....

5. It is believed that your work has a great impact on childhood memories. Where have you been born and what have you experienced there?

Ans.....

6. You left home during childhood. What time would you have been at that time and why else did you leave the house?

Ans.....

7. How long did you study from Bal-Mandir (Dakshinamurty Institute) and how did artist Jagubhai Shah meet? How did you get the education from them?

Ans.....

8. When did you join C. N. College of Arts and how was your experience?

Ans.....

9. Where did you take the training of art teacher and how was your experience as an art teacher in a village named Sardhav?

Ans.....

10. When and how did you join the faculty of visual arts, M. S. University Baroda? How was your experience with this institute?

Ans.....

11. Why did you leave to study in the faculty of visual arts, M. S. University Baroda?

Ans.....

12. How your relationship with Prof. N. S. Bendre was and what did you learn from them?

Ans.....

13. What did you learn from Sankho Choudhary and K. G. Subramanian?

Ans.....

14. In Baroda, did you live from 1955 to 1961; describe the circumstances of life there? From whom did you meet, and how did you relate to them?

Ans.....

15. You received National Award for Painting by Lalit Kala Akadami in 1959 and 1961, what kind of work did you send to this exhibition? What kind of reaction did you have in the art world and what kind of inspiration did you get?

Ans.....

16. Why did you leave Ahmedabad in 1961 and depart for Delhi? Have you found any changes of art practice in those places?

Ans.....

17. How did J. Swaminathan and Ambalal meet and how the Group 1890 was established and for what purpose?

Ans.....

18. What is the difference between Progressive Artist groups and 'Group 1890's objectives? And what is the relevance of its art history?

Ans.....

19. What were the reasons the 'Group 1890' broke, was it any personal or clash of mind setup?

Ans.....

20. How did you start working on your burnt paper collage series and what were your goals? How did this idea generate in your mind?

Ans.....

21. How did you start working on an erotic series drawing, and for what purpose it was motivated? Was it influenced by Indian art or Western Art?

Ans.....

22. How did you meet with Octavio Paz and how did he influence your art and life? Did they have some help for the study tour of France?

Ans.....

23. What did you see in France, how did this study affect your art practice?

Ans.....

24. Which act of art and artists influenced you while watching museums in France? It is said that Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Brancusi etc. have a lot of influence on your art. How did you take inspiration from them and how did they use it in their own art?

Ans.....

25. What is the experience of working in the 'Atelier 17' studio in France? What did you learn from Krishna Reddy and W. S. Hayter?

Ans.....

26. Which contemporary artists influenced you in India, and what motivation did you take from them?

Ans.....

27. The mural art you have done in Ahmedabad is different from the past, why is it so? And why did you use the geometrical abstraction in this mural? What is the special thing in your opinion that separates you from murals created by other artists?

Ans.....

28. When were you making mural art in Ahmedabad, which artist was there?

Ans.....

29. Why did you go back to Delhi again in 1971-72 and start a new job there? When did you take your 'Barsati' in Kailash Colony, Delhi?

Ans.....

30. How did you connect with Garhi studio and how long did you work there? It is believed that the work done in Terracotta on there is your most important job.

Ans.....

31. When did you start head series sculpture and for what purpose was it inspired?

Ans.....

32. How did you work in the slip casting technique and what is your specialty in it?

Ans.....

33. Do you have inspiration from folk or tribal art, how is that?

Ans.....

34. In Indian modern art, there is a big influence of mythology in tantric arts, how do you understand and have you used some aspects of it too?

Ans.....

35. Does any modern Indian philosophy inspires you? Have you used it in your art?

Ans.....

36. At the end of 1990's, you sold the whole studio to Delhi Art Gallery, why did you do that, there were some financial reasons behind it?

Ans.....

37. Why have you shifted from Delhi to Jaipur? What work have you done here and how important is it?

Ans.....

38. It is believed that you have always run away from an institution like home. What are your thoughts behind this? How do you feel when you have all the resources today?

Ans.....

39. You have published four books from 2013 to 2016, what are the objectives behind it?

Ans.....

40. In 2016, your retrospective show happened in KNMA New Delhi, how it was possible and how it inspired your life.

Ans.....

41. From 2013 to 2017, you have received so many honors, who are they and what organizations have been provided by them?

Ans.....

42. What is your perception about the language of art and how you have use it in your art?

Ans.....