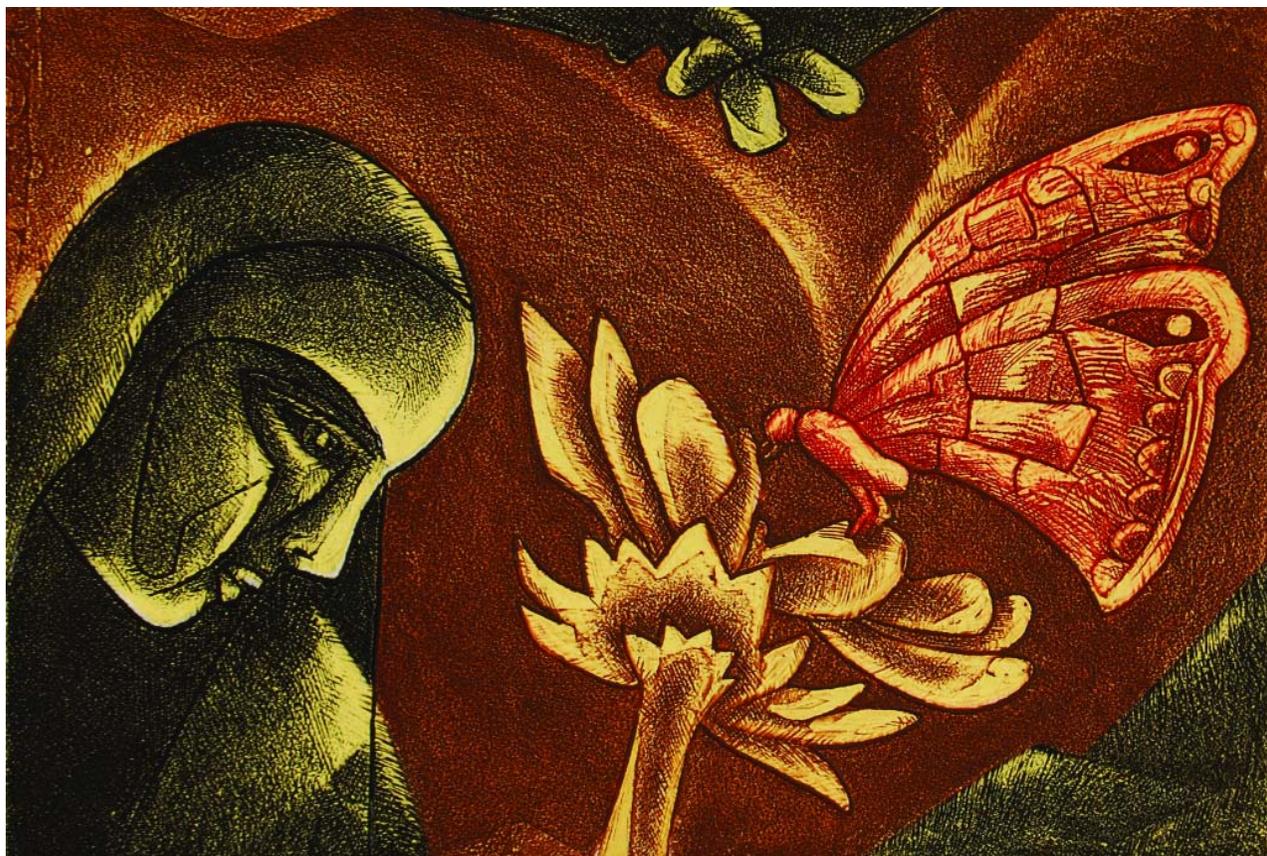


**Uttam  
Kumar  
Basak**  
*Intimacy*  
Etching,  
38 x 20 cm



# Making an Impression

By DEEPANJALI KAKATI

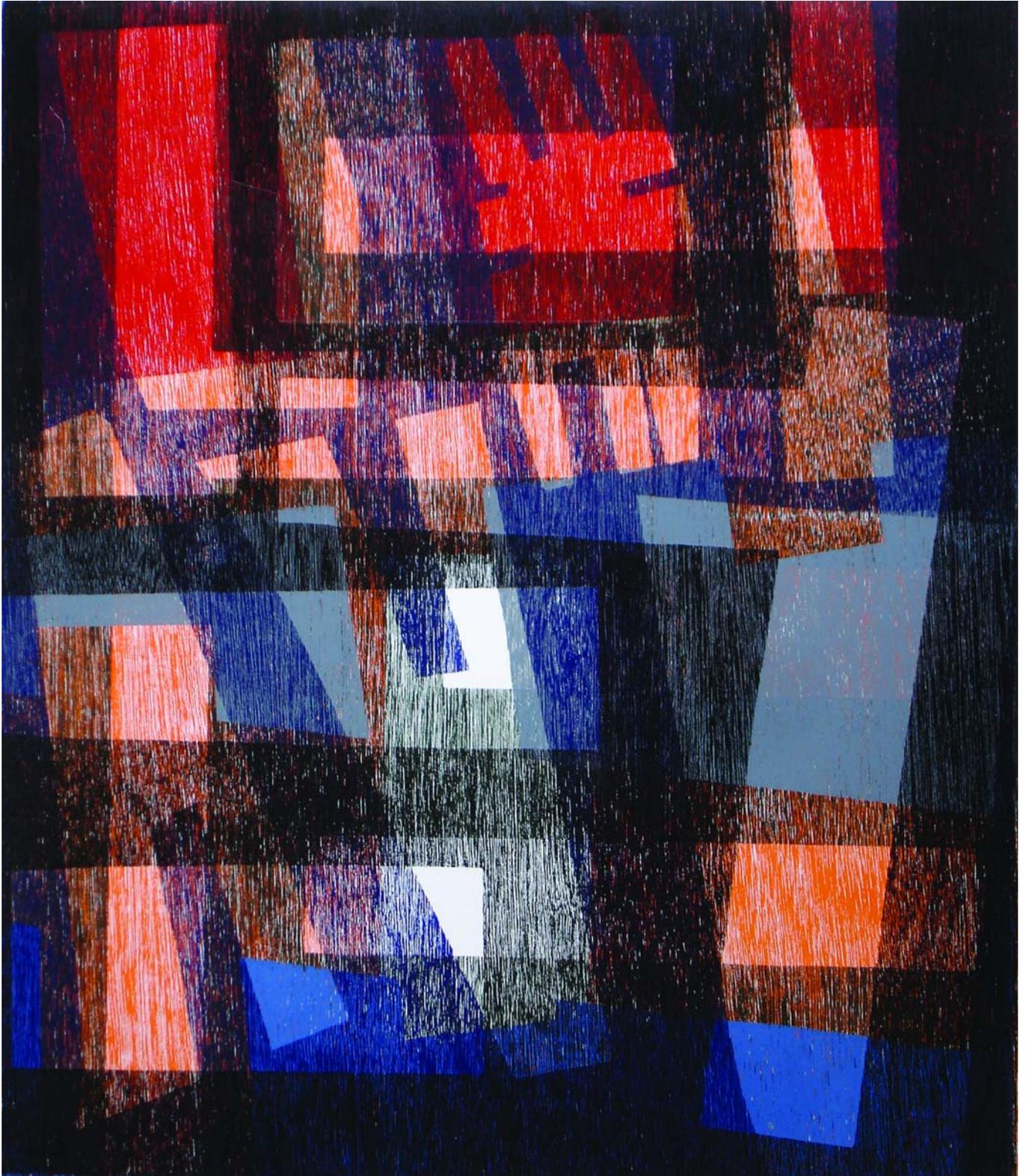
The Frank Museum's first display of Indian art showcases contemporary prints.



**Walter D'Souza** *Tricycle*  
Woodcut, 43.18 cm x 55.88 cm

Contemporary Indian printmaking is on display for the first time at Otterbein College's Frank Museum of Art in Westerville, Ohio, in an exhibition titled "Current Impressions." Selected by New York-based printmaker and curator Vijay Kumar, the 35 prints are in different media including etchings, serigraphs, woodcuts, engravings, aquatints and lithographs.

There were three criteria when Kumar asked the 29 artists to submit their work. First, the prints had to be made by traditional, hands-on methods. "I did not want to include digital (computer-generated) images or scanned-image reproductions," he says. Second, the prints had to be on paper no larger than 56 by 76 centimeters, to make them easy to ship to the United States. Third, the prints had to be recent, done since 2004.



Bhawani Shankar Sharma *Color Symphony*  
Woodcut, 64 x 52 cm

"I am especially pleased that several artists produced a new print series in response to the invitation to submit work for this exhibition," says Kumar, whose first memory of printing dates back to his childhood in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, where he saw woodblock printing on fabric.

The works depict a variety of themes and sensibilities. While Walter D'Souza says "Tricycle," which is part of his series "Ticket to Ride," is a comment about "the present scenario we are journeying through in the subcontinent," Hemavathy Guha's "The Clown" lends itself to multiple interpretations with its use of the traditional clown mask to show moods ranging from glee to pathos.

"I've tried to transform the subtle tones and rhythms of various musical compositions into visual forms," says Bhawani Shankar Sharma of his "Color Symphony."

"The imagery in a few prints can identify their country of origin, but this is not true of most," says Kumar, who planned the show to be diverse in both style and theme. "Some work is humorous, some narrative, some mostly concerned with issues of composition and color. Images by several artists involve galaxies and outer space, many include figures, but all are quite personal."

So, from the rich hues of Uttam Kumar Basak's "Intimacy," the folk motifs in Shahid Parvez's "Friends" to the multidimensional perspectives in Yashpal Chandrakar's "Ten Windows," the exhibition provides a glimpse of the varied palette contemporary Indian printmaking has to offer.

"I attempt to create humor in my work, which comes from the perception and depiction of the incongruities of existence which are always present in the folk and tribal art forms from which I draw my inspiration," says Parvez.

"I look at the scene with a child's curious mind, full of richness as well as complexity. The overall treatment is a subtle blend of an adult's experience and a childlike fantasy."

Other artists participating in the exhibition include Dattatraya Apte, Rajan Fulari, Hanuman Kampli, Vijay Kumar, Avijit Roy and K.R. Subbanna.

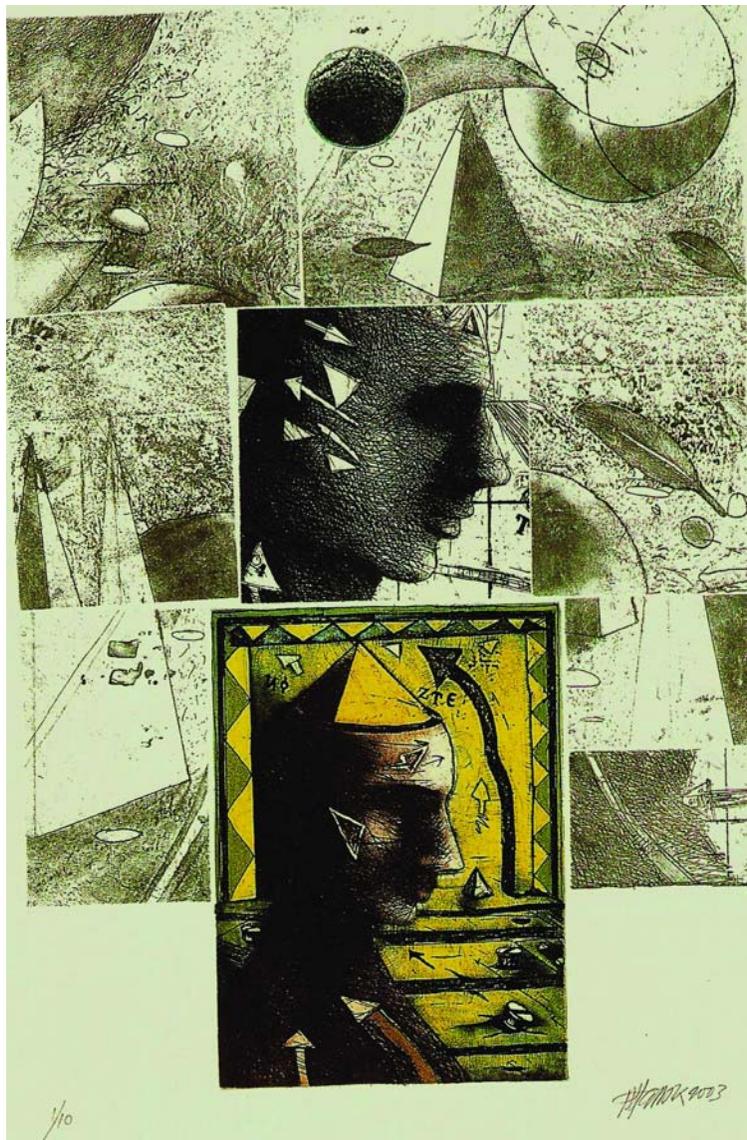
The museum is located in Westerville, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, in the house of Lillian Frank, who taught art, theology and philosophy at Otterbein College for 29 years. With the help of her husband, Paul, she converted the former Salem



Courtesy Nicholas Hill



"Current Impressions" exhibition at the Frank Museum of Art, Westerville, Ohio



Yashpal Chandrakar *Ten Windows*  
Etching, 58.42 x 43.18 cm



**Shahid Parvez** *Friends*  
Serigraph, 35.56 x 45.72 cm



**Dattatraya Apte** *Star Gazing*  
Intaglio, 30 x 50 cm



**Hemavathy Guha** *The Clown*  
Woodcut, 55 x 45 cm

**For more information:**

Frank Museum of Art

<http://jsp.otterbein.edu/dept/art/frank/museum.html>

Vijay Kumar

[http://www.iaac.us/erasing\\_borders2008/curator.htm](http://www.iaac.us/erasing_borders2008/curator.htm)



**K.R. Subbanna** *Remains in Moonlight*  
Etching, 19 x 27.5 cm

Evangelical Church, built in 1877, into a residence in 1956. The structure was given to the college after she died in 1999, for the purpose of creating a museum for the college's collection. It opened in 2004.

According to museum director Nicholas Hill, small private colleges in Ohio agreed to focus their art collections in particular areas many years ago in order to maximize their resources.

"The Frank Museum of Art has a mission of exhibiting global art exclusively. We have had several...of African and Japanese works but nothing from India," says Hill. "Another reason for the selection of an Indian exhibition was that there is a large Indian American population in the Columbus, Ohio, area."

The exhibition, which is open from April 2 to June 6, came about because of Hill's contact with Kumar at the

Manhattan Graphic Center in New York City. Kumar had coordinated a major U.S.-Indian print exhibition in 2004-06 that traveled to India, and Hill's work was included in the show.

Later, when Hill was planning upcoming events he invited Kumar to curate the Indian print exhibition.

Kumar has planned several Indian art shows in the United States, particularly in the New York City region. "There are now more than 10 galleries in Manhattan that show primarily contemporary art from India. Many of their clients are of Indian heritage," he says. Recently, long-established galleries like Marlborough in New York City have also begun exhibiting work by Indian artists.

"Whether or not Indian contemporary art will come to the mainstream of American art only time will tell," he says.

