

Narendra Srivastava, Applied Artist and Designer Par-excellence

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Abstract

Narendra Srivastava was a graphic designer who designed for a famous French fashion designer Pierre Cardin and Rosenthal, the famous porcelain industry in Germany. A designer of substance – Narendra was fantastic at his work – a master class.

Keywords: Narendra Srivastava, NDMC logo, Pierre Cardin, Salvador Dali, Sylvia Murr, Ellora, Ajanta (Maharashtra), Konarak (Odissa), Ashoka Hotel, the National Gallery of Modern Art, Devanagari script, ASIAD-72, L'école Estienne Rosenthal Porcelain Ltd., Germany

Introduction

Narendra worked with a variety of people-from national to international-from Government Organizations to Corporate bigwigs. He has been able to carve out a distinct name for himself in the graphic designing industry, scholars, students, artists, design professionals seek inspiration from his works. Narendra Srivastav with his sheer willpower was able to carry out the most arduous and the most demanding of creative tasks. However, the great man, never got satisfied with himself and has always tried to get one step higher than where he was. Thus, reiterating that it is a never-ending journey on the path of excellence.

Aim of the Study

To understand and appreciate the journey of a successful Applied Artist Narendra Srivastava.

Main Text

If you have ever been in Delhi, you cannot have ignored the prominence of the NDMC logo- proudly displayed on all the signage and government buildings. This Symbol was designed by Sh. Narendra Srivastav, a designer par excellence.

The NDMC logo is Designed in a circular form showing continuity of the process of cause and effect- which is never ending-civic demand and its fulfilment.

It is divided by two white streaks sculpting the circular form into a massive tree trunk and two identical forms of leaves on either side.

The trunk denotes the silhouette of the building in which the offices of the N.D.M.C are housed. The structure is symbolic of Progress, Strength, Stability, and Confidence all these achieved through sincere and hard work as the motto in Devanagari depicts. The letters NDMC in Roman Style delineate the entrance to the building. The logo has withstood the test of time.

The horizontal line beneath the NDMC letters signifies a step to the building.

The two similar leaf-like forms on either side show the Growth and Harmony between the two elements-Man and Nature and Ecological Equilibrium.

This logo has been the identity of Delhi for several decades.

Narendra Srivastava was born on 5th august 1931 in Delhi. His father Krishna Srivastav worked as head clerk in Birla mills while his mother Durga Devi was a homemaker and from Aligarh. He had four brothers and two sisters. His wife Chamma was also a homemaker, they had 4 daughters. He did his high secondary from Sanatan Dharma School after which he went for pre-medical training in Pillani. However, very soon he lost his interest in the medical field because he had a passion for something very fascinating - "ART" on his mind.

This led to him talking admission to Polytechnic College (prominently known as College of Art, Delhi which got affiliated to the eminent University of Delhi in 1972) in Delhi in 1947, the year in which our country got independence and can also be considered as the year in which this great artist got new wings to take a flight to a very opportunistic career After completing his diploma in 1955, he contributed to his field as a teacher, he worked diligently and inspired artists with his impeccable knowledge. At this time, he was under Mr. Sanyal who was head of the department. He has famously designed the cover for late Sh. Rabindra Nath Tagore's book 'SADHNA'. Granted a fellowship in 1967 for applied art by the

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French government. Since then his creative growth and activities have been divided between Paris, Germany, and India. In Paris, he worked in the studio of Pierre Cardin Fashion in 1969. His work was inspired by a lady named Sylvia Murr, with whom he had developed a great liking during his post-teenage days. In 1969, he held his first exhibition on the Evolution of the Devanagari script in Ecole Estienne, the oldest school of book designing and printing. He has also done typography for some great writers amongst which his work for MITRO MARJANI is well known. Apart from this, he has created portfolios for renowned writers - Nirmal Verma (which incidentally was also his first portfolio), Vishnu Prabhakar, Kunwar Narayana, Krishna Sobti, Nemi Chand Jain, Manohar Shyam Joshi.

He also took up the Nehru fellowship in 1973. He also designed accessories for reputed hotel chains like Ellora, Ajanta (Maharashtra), Konarak (Odissa), Ashoka Hotel (Delhi)etc. Besides this, he was the first Indian Applied Artist whose retrospective exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi.

Narendra Srivastava once in an interview quoted "As I come from a wonderful world full of contradictions, frustration, disorder, extreme heat, extreme dirt, extreme refinement, and extreme distress and a world where two systems of values come into conflict at every level and every instance of life. I am in search of a source of energy by which one can overcome the disorder and reach towards peace." To him apart from work which gave him peace, representing victory over chaos, and control over anarchy, and human domination over chance." Every work of his sets forth a sort of model of balance, which he assumed underlies in this world. He sought a balance- this saved him from getting lost in a pseudo-mystical world where superpowers are supposed to maneuver the limp humanity.

Miss. Sylvia Murr, a French lady who was a sociologist and taught in a school, proved to be a great motivator to him. Mr. Srivastava was into the innovative aspect of typography. He was helped a lot into the technical aspect design in French by Miss. Sylvia who was researching the Devanagari script. He was introduced to Sylvia by his classmate who was Sylvia's friend when he joined the French Institute of languages. He was accompanied by Sylvia during his visits to India where he showcased his work during an exhibition in the National Gallery of Art, Delhi. She left no stone unturned to help Mr. Srivastava reach the "Pinnacle of success" where he stood. She helped him in interacting with all the relevant persons of his field in the foreign land to providing minutest of knowledge of concerned script in which she researched. She was one person who stood with him, always guiding, counselling, and motivating him to the never-ending status of fame and bring the best out of this legendary artist. Narendra Srivastava worked intensively on the concept of "OM". He continued to think, design, create symbols, and worked on the

potential significance of "Om" for his international clientele.

An acknowledged expert in typography, he employed the constructional qualities of Devanagari letters to surprising results. The unusual blend of the western form and Indian content is the secret of Narendra's work. Devanagari letters and words like "Dharma" with the letters juxtaposed or sometimes in reverse-printing technique lend a strange Mondrian-like atmosphere to his work. The reverse printing effect can ever class Narendra with the other psychedelic-pop style artists far ahead of his times. Sometimes he used individual Devanagari letters or parts of them almost as if they were symbols – as in his acrylic on canvas "Moon". The sense of the design is strong in most of the paintings. Narendra's graphics are well in the psychedelic-pop style and colors to reinforce the impression of his paintings.

Development of Designs and logo

A logo is an interpretation and then representation of an artist's mindset about a particular thing. A good graphic designer has a very witty sense of color, combination, typography, and environment whenever he carries out the design of a logo. Narendra Srivastava had all these qualities besides having great respect for his field and an almost religious approach to his mannerism of carrying out work. A good design is an expression that works with visual combination and strategy. The service of graphic designer is observed from the moment when a human being wakes up in the morning and brushes his teeth with design on the brush and tube it to showering at night with the design the bathroom accessories-be it on tiles, curtains or washbasin. Though it will be quite misleading if one thinks that a graphic designer's work is confined to such a small or minor piece of work. A graphic designer can also go wide in his imagination when he designs logos for corporate houses showcasing adaptability, multi-functionality, and sheer calibre in his work. Narendra Srivastava caught the first attention in this respect, where he had designed logos from corporate houses which glitter on high rises to big government organization like NDMC to the international game like ASIAD to minor things like cups, napkins sugar pouches for famous hotel chains of Ellora's and Ajanta's under the flagship of Maharashtra Tourism. He proved and established his versatility of being a reputable graphic designer. A famous author once said that the "purpose of a good graphic designer is that allows us to see what might have been overlooked so easily". Narendra was able to quite magnificently look at overlooked things and make them look splendid throughout his life. The other prominent work for which he won acclaim-

The symbol for Seventh Non-Aligned Summit 1983

Three features underline the design of this symbol. The five leaves of the Peepal tree, the number 7 forming the stem of the trunk & the dove.

The five leaves of Peepal which are considered to be an auspicious tree in India, have a symbolic reference to the auspiciousness of the

Summit for the achievement of perfection, as also to the Panchsheel-the five principles of peaceful co-existence between nations, recognized internationally. They also represent the five continents of the World signifying the global Character of the Non-Aligned Movement. The similarity of the World signifying the global character of the Non-Aligned Movement. The similarity of each leaf in size and shape stands for equality of nations and for the affinity which exists amongst nations by way of the most common element they all represent i.e. the people, the human being.

The ordinal number 7 forms the stem or trunk of the tree as well as denotes the order of sequence of this Summit. It also hints at what has been the most common meeting place for people in the orient. The concept of the organized meeting of the people originated in Village Panchayats, which invariably has been conducted under a tree, so to say, in the absence of a conference hall since time immemorial. Gautam, the Buddha-the apostle of peace attained Parinivana or the spiritual enlightenment under the tree.

In the heart of the Symbol is the image of a dove, signifying that at the core of the proceedings of the Summit is the message of Peace.

Book Designing With Typeface

To his credit, Mr. Narendra has designed book covers for the portfolio of various eminent writers amongst which his work for Krishna Sobti and Sadhna was quite renowned. He depicted and developed his typographical skills during his work of "Mitro Marjani" where his depiction of letters communicated entire visual drama and the storyline that was going on in the play. Mitro Marjani is a story that revolves around Mitro, short for Sumitrawanti, who is married into a close-knit family of existential values and mannerisms. She is the मंझली बहू. It is her dialogue with her in laws and brothers in law and sisters in law, that takes us on a journey. It was such a great artistic piece of work that just by merely looking at the way the words were being typographical, a person could easily comprehend the situation. With the skill of master story teller his excellence and understanding of typography and command over design and aesthetics made him a visual communicator par excellence.

Narendra has done illustration for "Kamayani" a novel in the abstract form. Kamayani (Hindi:कामायनी) (1936) is a Hindi epic poem (Mahakavya) by Jaishankar Prasad (1889-1937). It is considered one of the greatest literary works written in modern times in Hindi literature. It also signifies the epitome of Chhayavadi school of Hindi poetry which gained popularity in late 19th and early 20th centuries. This complex novel is visually narrated by Narendra Srivastava. His work in this novel mainly used three colors - white, red and black. And these three colors were the only colors that were used by him during his entire work on Kamayani because Narendra felt that these three colors depicted a human life in three most crucial stages - white for birth, red for youth and black

for death and there was not much left, beyond this, to be included. This minimalistic approach to express complex subjects is a challenge very few artists undertake.

Narendra Srivastava had never been a man with ordinary ideas and this very trait of his personality has led to him becoming one of the finest applied artists that the world has witnessed. It is not just his work in his country which includes him designing logos of NDMC, ASIAD-72, and Non-Aligned Summit but also his professional indulgence with foreign clients that have proved acknowledgment of his work internationally and led to him signing some best international assignments of his life. His career was flagged off when he designed Posters for international graphic artist Paul Colin. However, his big break came in the 1960's when he went on scholarship to study Applied Arts in Paris. It was there when he joined Ecole Estienne. L'école Estienne is the traditional name of the l'École supérieure des arts et industries graphiques (ESAIG) (Graduate School of Arts and Printing Industry). It is located at 18, Boulevard Auguste-Blanqui in the 13th arrondissement of Paris, not far from the Butte-aux-Cailles. In 1887 the anthropologist and linguist Abel Hovelacque proposed that the city of Paris should create a municipal school of arts and professional printing for the industry. In November 1889 the school opened with 108 students in temporary premises on rue Vauquelin.

The school was named in honour of the Estienne family, a famous family of 16th-century printers including Henri Estienne (elder), Robert Estienne, and Charles Estienne. Its vocation was to address the poor qualifications and standards of printing and book-making, covering theoretical and practical aspects.

The main building was designed by architect Menjot Dammartin and built-in 1896. The frame of the machine shop (1200 m²) was built by the Gustave Eiffel workshops in Levallois-Perret. The premises were inaugurated in July 1896 by the President of France Félix Faure.

Narendra Srivastava was one of the notable students who used this exposure and researched on Devanagari script and put up an exhibition at Ecole. Mr. Pierre Cardin came to see the exhibition and got highly impressed by Narendra's work. Narendra was immediately hired by Pierrie and designed graphics for his wide variety of clothes which won him a lot of international acclaim. One of his yet other international assignments includes him designing plates for Rosenthal Porcelain Ltd., Germany in the 1970,s where he worked with yet another international design and art legends. Rosenthal products excel through their design, functionality, quality, and constant innovation. Established designers and up-and-coming newcomers create exclusive gifts and accessories, as well as avant-garde collections for the dining table and sophisticated interiors. With exceptional craftsmanship, the company manufactured porcelain "Made in Germany" and celebrated its 140th anniversary in 2017. The present

website features “Narendra Srivastava was a well-known typographer his works were based on the Devanagri writing of the Indians. In each of his works sees some kind of model for equilibrium, which he regards as a basic element of the world.

Narendra Srivastava worked for Rosenthal in 1975. For Rosenthal studio/line he designed the pattern Indian Rice on the shape Duo.”

Conclusion

The journey of an Applied Artist is full of challenges, enriching experiences and dynamic exposures. It is a rewarding career choice for persons with creative abilities. Name and fame accompany this profession. Throughout his life, Narendra worked with a variety of people—from national to international—from Government Organizations to Corporate bigwigs. He had been able to carve out a distinct name for himself in the graphic designing industry, scholars’ students, artists, design professionals seek inspiration

from his works. Narendra Srivastav with his sheer willpower to carry out the most arduous and most demanding of creative tasks. But, the great man, never got satisfied with himself and has always been trying to get one step higher than where he is at present, and thus reiterating that it is a never-ending journey on the path of excellence.

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