

PRESS RELEASE

KRISHNA REDDY

Editionmaker: Contextual Sculpture to the Conceptual

May 20 – July 16, 2016

Preview: Friday May 20, 2016, 6 – 8 pm

Experimenter presents, *Editionmaker: Contextual Sculpture to the Conceptual*, Krishna Reddy's first solo at Experimenter, Kolkata. The nonagenarian sculptor and pioneering printmaker shows a range of work encompassing his long and illustrious career spanning over seven decades. The exhibition opens on May 20 and will be on view until July 16 2016.

Krishna Reddy's solo at Experimenter includes a series of viscosity prints, watercolors, photographs and sculpture showing a multifarious approach to his practice. Reddy's practice has been led in constant experimentation and he has a natural affinity for sculpture. Reddy spent his time learning sculpture under Ram Kinkar Baij and forming the ability to observe his surroundings which also included animals and more under the presence of Nandalal Bose. This was an India of great paucity, resources were rare, Baij had developed numerable techniques of experimentation with material based on this paucity, which Reddy accepted and drew from with delight. Reddy still possesses a childlike amazement for change. Never reducing his practice to something that he has arrived to and stayed there.

A strong sculptural element is therefore very prevalent in the viscosity prints on view. Keeping close connection with landscape and embodying their visual element in his prints, many of the works are influenced by human figures, emotional connects between man and nature, animals and a nuanced understanding and perspective of nature itself.

Krishna Reddy never formally joined or associated himself in the movements of aspirational modernism that commenced in India particularly the Progressive Artists Group of whose members he was particularly close too. Immediately after Santiniketan he was at the Slade School of Art in London. Here in terracotta he made figurines that would remind us of Henry Moore. Moore had many affinities with India and also an affinity of not celebrating the patron but rather the British coalmine worker. Later an opportunity to work with the already famous Russian sculptor Ossip Zadkine in Paris, made Reddy cross the channel. He would stay in Paris for about two decades. Ossip Zadkine installed a certain degree of minimalism into his sculpture. They became elongated almost following the form of the material. This material integrity we see with his use of other materials there on. Running a sculpture studio and practice in Paris was an expensive vocation even though Reddy in 1950, exhibited in the Salon de la Jeune Sculpture in Paris with a large outdoor sculpture. This work is most emblematic

of his practice through his career. Reddy soon met Stanley William Hayter and joined the groundbreaking studio Atelier 17, of which he later became a director. Here his first tryst with a mentor was with Joan Miro who was interested in engraving an intaglio of a multi-coloured print. Somewhere Miro got tired of his interest, of which Reddy became obsessed and then finally found the format of a multilayered troughs format printing using the viscosity of the oil in the ink to make multi-coloured prints, thereby pioneering and mastering the technique that is now known as viscosity printing. One could rather call him a constant experimenter than an innovator.

In William Stanley Hayter's renowned Atelier 17 in Paris in the 1950's, of which he later became director, Reddy mastered the technique of multi color viscosity print and came to be well known as the pioneering artist of this form of printing. It is not difficult to imagine that the etching plate itself would have seemed a sculptural object, with deep impressions that would allow the control of managing the differing viscous nature of the inks he used in making his prints. A series of watercolors of forests and groves made during his time in London and Paris the 50's and 60's show his continued interest in nature, where dense determined strokes of the brush exemplify his visual brilliance in representing nature. The Paris student protest of 1968, marked a turning point for Reddy and an important print, *Demonstrators* is on view at the solo along with a recent resin cast of the original brass sculpture by the same name. Reddy did not end his tryst with experimentation. Photo-realism arrived in his repertoire for a brief moment as he emotionally dealt with the adoption of his daughter Aparna and the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971), which had sent millions of refugees into Indian West Bengal, a series of prints from the time are being exhibited. Another section of the gallery shows a series of photographs taken by Reddy of his studio and his sculptures revealing a robust multilayered practice rooted in sculpture and printmaking. Pedagogy defined his practice and continues do so, and he remains an emeritus teacher in New York.

KRISHNA REDDY – *Editionmaker: Contextual Sculpture to the Conceptual* is curated by Sumesh Sharma along with curatorial inputs by Judy Blum and Prof. Anand Nikam. Special acknowledgements to Sir JJ School of Arts, Bombay & Clark House Initiative.

Krishna Reddy, (b 1925, Nandanoor, Andhra Pradesh, India) studied Fine Arts at Viswa Bharati University, Santiniketan (1942-47) and taught at the College of Fine Arts, Kalakshetra, Madras as the Head of the Arts Department until 1949. Thereafter he joined the Sculptor Course at London's Slade School of Art and studied under Henry Moore. In 1950 Reddy moved to Paris and joined Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17, which he later directed. During his two decades in Paris, Reddy closely associated himself with the French International Avant Garde movement and participated in the Paris student protests in 1968. In 1976 he moved to New York and joined as Director of the Department of Graphics and Printmaking at New York University and finally at print department at Copper Union, where he continued his experimentations and

remains professor emeritus in New York. Most recently, The Workshop Model, a pedagogical exercise in the form of retrospective exhibitions curated by Prof Anant Nikam, JJ School of Arts – Bombay, Zasha Colah and Sumesh Sharma, Clark House Initiative Bombay has toured many institutions throughout India. Earlier in 2011 another retrospective on Reddy – The Embodied Image – was curated by Roobina Karode at the Indira Gandhi National center for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi. Reddy has had numerous solo and group exhibitions through his career and his work is in the permanent collections of several private and public collections of Tate Britain, Metropolitan Museum, NY and Kiran Nadar Museum, New Delhi among others. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1972 and the Gagan Abani Puraskar by Viswabharati University in 1980 amongst several other awards and recognitions. Reddy lives and works in New York.

For further information, images and press related queries, please write to admin@experimenter.in or call on +91.33.2463.0465 / +91.33.4001.2289.