

T Note. Approval would have to be sought to reprint the
Section from Sir Kenneth Clark's Rebuttaut & the Renaissance.
1 Clughaig as Engraver. 17 Jan 1980 KMC

May I first apologize for Paul Drury, who so much wanted to give this appreciation tonight, of one whom he regarded so highly and thought of always with friendship and affection. Unfortunately having greatly looked forward to being here since his invitation early last year, he is not well enough at present to make the long journey.

Nevertheless, he was so concerned to play his part in honouring Clughaig as an engraver, that he asked me to speak for him. May I say how pleased I am that I agreed to do so, for all that I have learned about Clughaig over the past few days has convinced me that he is indeed worthy of celebration. To discover such an artist is a rare experience.

I should stress however that I speak not as an historian but as a working artist. The first artist to be involved in these celebrations, I ~~think~~ think that Clughaig would have liked this and he would certainly have understood my problems.

Paul Drury was a particularly appropriate choice, because of the close relationship which the two artists formed during Clughaig's trip to London in 1936, and also because of the high regard which they had for each other.

Although Clughaig did have some earlier lessons in

etching from D.I. Smart in 1931, and his first plate can be seen in the exhibition, I have been told that he regarded Paul Drury as his true teacher in the techniques of etching and that he would often quote him, later in life, on technical matters.

As Paul Drury thought that you might like to know something of their time together, he has prepared from his diaries of the ^{period} a brief, but factual account of the period. To me the most extraordinary thing when reading these notes, is the enthusiasm shown by elughrai for the new medium. There was a mature, indeed celebrated artist, discovering a new means of expression and delighting in it, from the first moment.

The suggestions that lessons should be taken with Paul Drury appears to have come from Arthur M. Hind, keeper of the Prints and Drawings at the British Museum and a celebrated historian of the art of the print. Indeed, his is perhaps one of the most important contributions in this field during the present century. Cambell-Dodgson who had previously held the position of Keeper, was also involved in bringing the two artists together.

Their first meeting took place on the 30 July 1936 at Lancaster Lodge, where they seemed to have ~~had~~ established an immediate rapport, and the first lesson was fixed for the 3rd August at Paul Drury's ~~studio~~
~~studio~~ Wimbledon studio.

As Paul Drury's father was the eminent sculptor

Alfred Drury, R.A., one can imagine how greatly the atmosphere of the home and the studios must have appealed to Chughtai. How he must have felt at home in such company.

The first lesson lasted from 11am to 6pm. A small plate, about 6" x 8" had been prepared in advance 'with a good hard ground' and this was drawn, bitten and printed by the end of the lesson. 'All had gone well', was the cryptic ~~note~~ note in the Diary, 'R chi very keen to do more.'

Unfortunately there is no record of the subject matter of this first plate. Six subjects were recorded during the lessons, but there 'were others' and this first plate must have been one of those. In such a lesson, the main preoccupation of the teacher is to ensure technical success, one watches that too much ground is not removed, or that the plate is not overbitten. With this need to concentrate on technique, it is not surprising that the subject matter was not recorded.

At the next lesson, on the 4th August, it is noted that a plate was bitten and printed, the subject, 'Stork'; and on the 8th August, four further designs were ready for transferring to plates. One of these — 'Girl and Shepherd' was bitten on the 19th August, during what was noted as, 'A very long day. 11am-7pm!'

The following day a further large plate was bitten and printed and four days later, on the 24th, yet another design 'Girl at Shrine' was bitten and printed and a ground was laid on a smaller plate for a second 'state'.

In a little over three weeks nine designs had been undertaken, which shows a prolific out-pouring of ideas. (Although this at first appeared ~~as~~ surprising, as I have learned of Chughtai's output in all fields, it was to be expected.)
But there was more to come, as more grounds were laid and tracings transferred on the 8th September. ~~as~~ By the 15th it is recorded that he was now laying his own grounds and tracings. With the note 'He can now do all this very well.'

The prodigious amount of work carried out during these few weeks was however, only a part of his activities, ~~as~~ on the 19th September he brought for inspection some old prints which he had bought. Paul Drury notes that 'one was a Legros'. These prints are now part of the Museum collection. He also brought with him some larger plates for grounds to be laid. These could well have been 'Prisoner' and 'Woodcutter' which are recorded as have been bitten on the 21st and printed one week later.

The size of the plates had now become so large, that it seemed advisable to find larger equipment on which to work. Chughtai had also expressed an interest in aquatint, so it was decided that it might be advisable for him to seek the help of the Central School of Art, where Paul Drury taught in the evening. So on Tuesday the 29th they went to the Central School where they met WP (Bill) Robins and others. It was arranged that work could be carried out on the larger plates and also for him to study aquatint under the guidance of Mr Devonish, the technical instructor, ^{who was} a recognised authority on this process.

I would like to quote directly from ~~Paul Drury's notes~~^{Paul Drury's} last two notes on the Diary:

'Robins helped him and Chughtai soon mastered these techniques. He did some splendid work, fluent in execution, rich effective in tones decorative yet full of human qualities & sympathy.'

December 26: Met R. Ch. 7.45 pm and took him to Campbell Dodgson's lecture. Introduced him to many people. He has genial presence and much enthusiasm. English very well spoken. Will be going back to Lahore with stocks of materials and tools. We all wished him further success.'

This visit was made at a particularly fortunate moment, for the appeal of prints was still strong (there had been a boom in the early 30's) and there was also a great interest ~~in~~ in the art of the Indian subcontinent.

The wonderful collection of Mogul paintings and other Indian art in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the encouragement given to the study of this work by Sir William Rothenstein, then Principal of the Royal College of Art, had created a climate in which ^{the} fine work in this tradition could be appreciated.

It was also the period when historians such as your Honorary Advisor, Basil Grey, were doing so much which was to lead to greater understanding. A period when West looked East, and East looked West, a very rewarding situation.

This looking to the East was not a new thing however, for the artist whom Chughtai most admired, Rembrandt, had ~~had~~ looked at and copied Mogul paintings. There is ~~had~~ also evidence to suggest that he may have owned them. Some of these drawings are in the British Museum collection and I shall be showing slides of two of them later.

Before I do so, I would like to quote a passage from Sir Kenneth Clark's book on 'Rembrandt and the Renaissance' which is concerned with these copies, ~~but also~~ raises another point which may have some significance for students of Chughtai.

Sir Kenneth is discussing Rembrandt's drawing of 'The Angel Departing from Manoah':

" The Persian costume of Manoah in this drawing shows that it is also about the same date as the strangest of all Rembrandt's sources of information, a group of Mogul miniatures of which he is known to have made at least twenty-eight copies. No doubt one reason for copying them was the belief that they would give him information about the people of the East (even about their footwear), which he took to be a single, unchanging territory, once inhabited by the "dramatis personae" of the Old Testament. But we cannot doubt that an even stronger impulse was his reaction against the complexities of Baroque design, which had already led him to seek for parallelism and simplicity in classical reliefs in a Quattrocento grouping. The miniatures he copied, many of which are now in the Schönbrunn Palace, are in fact second-rate examples of almost contemporary Mogul paintings, but he found ⁱⁿ them a mastery of profile rooted in the long tradition of Middle-Eastern art. The Jews of captivity, if they had looked at the forbidden images of their conquerors, would have seen figures in this profile style, so in a sense Rembrandt was right in

thinking that these miniatures were some sort of evidence of how people of biblical times had appeared to one another.

Indeed, as we study these extraordinary recreations of the East, we begin to feel that for Rembrandt the profile pose was not simply a useful element of design. Did he not feel that it gave to an image a sort of magic, or at least a timelessness, placing it outside the flux of action?"

Perhaps this should lead us to study ~~again~~ the use of the profile in Chughtai's work. Did he indeed use the profile when he wished to create, to quote Sir Kenneth again 'a magical remoteness'? This would be an interesting piece of research for some Chughtai Scholar.

Introduction to slides

Although I now realize that the previous speakers on this occasion have not used slides, it did seem to me that it would give some reality to our discussions in London, that it would give some reality to the names which Chughtai mentioned after his visit, if we could show examples of their work.

It also seemed worthwhile to show a small selection of historical prints some of which he is known to have studied. My comments will be brief, but I think that there are times when his creative course seems to have run parallel to ~~of these artists~~

~~of these artists~~ that of a western artist. Here they touch briefly, only to separate, then another parallel path, another separation.

these slide

Perhaps after seeing ~~examples~~ & then the prints you will find examples of your own.

Sheet 1

* Not for publication.

* Remarks.

Beginning of Engraving.

Martin Schongauer. 1440/1491.

- 1) The Virgin with Garden
- 2) Tristesse Helder.

First real artist engraver

Development of engraving

Albrecht Dürer 1471/1528

- 3) Woodcut
- 4) Melancholia
- 5) 'Man on Horse'
- 6) The Prodigal Son

Master of technique
of engraving.

Lucas van Leyden 1494/1533.

- 7) Musicians

Beginning of Etching

Jacques Callot 1592/1635

- 8) A Firing Squad
- 9) RICULINA / METZETIN

1st to use second biting.
100 years was recorded.

Development of Etching

Van Dyck 1599/1641

- 10) Portrait of Jan Snellinx

(1st etched portraits
as major work 18 plates)
Portrait etching scarcely
existed before van Dyk

Rembrandt 1606/1669

- 11) The Prodigal Son
- 12) 100 Guilder print
- 13) Crucifixion.
- 14) Old men under tree
(moque copy)
- 15) Setting figure
(moque copy).

The great etcher.
work based on local
scene except for
fascination with oriental
costume & accomplishment

Development of Signature

Goya 1746/1828

- 17) 3 capricios
- 18) Tauromagia

Satirist, master of
the signature.

The period of reproductive engraving

William Blake 1757/1827

- 20) Plates from
Book of Job
- 21) Book of Job

Rebirth of Artist Engravers.

James Mc Whistler

- 22) 1st state, etched plate
not by Turner
- 23) Juncture of
Seven & wife
canvases

1st work on all
plates by Turner
carried out totally
by Turner

- 24) Traghetton

from Venetian series
- influence many
after him).

Studies 2

Aphonse Legros. 1837/1944. 25 La Mort du Vagabond
26 Portrait.

Sir Frank Short. 1857/19* 27 Morning Hare

William P. Roberts. 1882/19* 28 Barn by the Stream.

Pablo Picasso

29 Illustrations to Buffon.
Troy (Toad?)
30 Bull.

Influence Turner
completed unfinished plates
of 'Liber Studiorum'

Paul Drury

1903

- 31 Evening, cottage & Pigcon (1924)
32 Steeplejack 1925
33 September 1928
34 Chundorland 1--
35 Landscape -

The Bull - it is interesting to compare this with Clugthorpe plate

Early plates influenced by Samuel Palmer, who he and Graham Sutherland greatly admired.
Both artists produced plates showing his influence in the mid 20s.

As will be seen from the diary. P.D. mentioned Clugthorpe to Graham Sutherland.

* dates to be supplied

The enormous problem which faces every artist is that of finding his true identity. By this I mean those qualities deep within himself which provide his unique vision of the world. Unfortunately once found is not enough and a continuous process of rediscovery must take place. In doing this he has to tackle not only influences from the past, but also influences from the present. He will also have to challenge his own past vision, and the capacity to do this, which may mean changing something which is successful, could be the real indication of his greatness.

Perhaps for the artist this is the consciousness of which Iqbal spoke when he said:

'A man conscious of himself changes the whole world.'

*This may have been omitted.
Add if appropriate.*

This must have been a particularly difficult problem for the Asian artist during the past century. For not only was he often trained by western artists, but his own great tradition was not the vital force it had once been, and must often have seemed restrictive. As if this was not enough, like artists the world over, he has been subjected to ^{the} influences of an ever increasing outflow of reproductions of art from all cultures.

The effect of this outpouring of information has not been so difficult for the artist in the west, for his tradition has always had a pattern of change. Curiosity and the desire to understand the visual world, has been the basis of almost all western art and only in rare cases has the artist been concerned with a more mystic ^{world}. (Blake is such an English artist, but there are others particularly the symbolists).

In pursuing this desire to know & to rationalize what he appeared to see, the artist often became scientist, ^{for example} Leonardo da Vinci's studies of human anatomy, and indeed almost everything else, plants, rocks, water, and Uccello's development of ~~the~~ perspective. ~~one too~~ There are many others even to the present day.

During the Renaissance, the artist was indeed often also an architect, ^{and} a civil engineer. Just before I came I read an article which suggested that Michelangelo's most important contribution to humanity was not his art, but his engineering! NOT for me of course!

One of Chughtai's major achievements it seems to me, is that he took from all this information only such things as would aid his own creativity. He came back from his European trip not with an ill fitting suit, but with material which he could ~~not~~ cut and tailor to fit himself perfectly.

On a purely technical level, for example, his knowledge of the processes of engraving; a medium which suited some previously undeveloped facets of his personality perfectly. Even his very first plate 'Under the Arch' (carried out under the technical guidance of D. I. Smart during the trip to England in 1931) shows his instinctive understanding of the potential of the bitten, as opposed to the drawn line.

This was not an etched version of one of his drawings but a new work; an etching. You will find ~~that~~ in the plate a roughness and urgency in his line, not because it is ~~etched~~, for he could have had lines

which had the same qualities as those in his brush-line paintings, if he had wanted that effect. (This subject was later carried out in a second larger version after the 1936 trip and as both prints are in the exhibition it is worth comparing them).

^{also}
He must have found encouragement when studying the works of the western masters for the need within himself to distort the figure, so that he could achieve a greater intensity of emotion. It is known that he studied Rembrandt, ~~who he so much adored~~, in great depth. His interest in aquatint must have led him to Goya, the master of this method, and ~~that~~ he knew the work of Picasso very well.

This distortion which is most apparent in the etchings, requires draughtsmanship of the very highest level. But the creator of the brush-line drawing 'More than Shadows' was such a master. If only you knew how difficult it is to produce such a drawing and how incredible that the artistry which produced such perfection in one idiom, could be harnessed to the totally different needs of 'Dead Shrine' or 'The Endless Horizon'.

When one has seen the paintings it is understandable why the aquatint process attracted him, for it offered the opportunity of exploring in print form, those qualities which he was discovering in paint; the remarkable inner radiance of light for example, ~~the~~ which pervades the two prints of the pigeons. Two beautiful prints in every way.

Yet as you will see, there are very few tonal plates in this manner. He soon reverts to a mixture of etching and aquatint. Was it because he instinctively realized

that this new and alien ~~new~~ medium would best be used to express things which he could not explore in his paintings, where however consciously he tried it, he would have found it difficult to divorce himself from tradition?

One thing is certain, to know Chughtai and to appreciate him fully one must know both the paintings and the prints.

Each in its own right would be a remarkable body of work for an artist to have left; together they are a truly astonishing achievement by a great artist.

Note: The final section (an addition) was not written out.
What was said exactly is on the tape. The following is roughly what I planned to say.

I must be completely honest with you. Having agreed to come for Paul Drury, I was then rather concerned. I did not know the man as Paul did. What if the work was not good?

When I received the copy of Chughtai's Iqbal, my mind was put at rest, for it was then obvious that he was indeed an exceptional artist. This was further confirmed when I received the etchings. There were no more doubts. I could be as complimentary as I wished without hesitation. Each day since I have been here I have seen more of Chughtai's work. Each day has been a new experience.

This morning at 1 am ~~1~~ I saw this exhibition with many ~~new~~ prints, ^{which were new to me.} Do not accept my word for their quality, ^{individually & as a body of work,} rush in and see them for yourselves.

My great hope is that the public will rush in too, for here they have an artist of whom they can be proud.