

WHAT'S ON



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Truce - Juddhobiroti
Artist: Ata Mojlish
Venue: Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia
Date: January 25 – February 1
Time: 3 pm – 9 pm (Except Mondays)



Winter Festival
Title: Heem Utshab
Venue: Jahangirnagar University
Date: February 6-7
Time: 10 am onwards



Group Art Exhibition
Title: 7
Venue: Galleri Kaya, Uttara
Date: January 24 – February 7
Time: 11:30 am – 7:30 pm



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Breaking Ground: Modern Art in Transition
Venue: Subir Choudhury Exhibition Hall, Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi
Date: Dec 17 – Feb 15
Time: 1 pm – 8 pm (Except Sundays)



Exhibition
Title: Whiny Women: Pop-Up
Venue: SAVVA, Gulshan
Date: February 2 – March 8
Time: 12 noon - 11 pm



Art Workshop
Title: Performing LIFE - A Performance Art Workshop in Bangladesh
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum
Date: February 3-5
Time: 10 am- 5 pm

EKUSHEY BOI MELA

preparations in full swing

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Books everywhere -- on shelves, shops, and vans-- this is how Bangla Bazaar, the biggest book hub of the country, looks like when preparations for Ekushey Boi Mela begins every year. Known commonly as *Boiyer Adi Bari*, Bangla Bazar turns busy since the month of January, among its hustle and tussle, and a crowd of cover designers, writers, editors, and most prominently, book binders.

With the month long Ekushey Boi Mela 2020 knocking at the door, over 400 different publishing houses are busy as ever. Around 3500 new books are launched every year at the Ekushey Boi Mela. Books that have been well received by the readers are reprinted as well.

The neighbouring printing presses of Bangla Bazar are spending hectic days, often even skipping lunches to complete their work fast. Over 100 book binding stalls are working double shifts, day and night.

Farid Ahmed, the President of Knowledge and Creative Publishers



This year's the Ekushey Boi Mela will feature 34 pavilions, accomodating 322 publishers.

PHOTOS: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Association, shared his experience. "We have been incredibly busy since the last couple of weeks," he said. "We plan to release all our new books by the first week of Boi Mela."

We also spoke to Monirul Hoque, owner of Ananya Prokashoni and Executive Editor of Knowledge and Creative Publishers Association. "We actually spend the whole year preparing for this event," he said. "However, the last moments are always full of pressure, and takes a lot of hard work." Besides the publishers and writers, the

book cover artists and new writers are also spending busy days at Bangla Bazar since the past couple of weeks. Celebrating *Mujib Shoto Borsho*, more than 200 books, on the life and works of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be launched.

The construction of stalls and pavilions are also underway at Suhrawardy Udyan. This year's the Ekushey Boi Mela will feature 34 pavilions which will host the participation of 322 publishers. "We have already finished our work for the pavilion,"

mentions A K M Tarikul Islam Rony, the editor of Tamrolipi Publications.

A new entry gate, adjacent to the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), University of Dhaka, will be built in order to ensure easy entries to the fair. For the first time, designated book launching corners and a platform for book readings and panel discussions has been constructed at the venue. The Boi Mela, which traditionally begins on February 1, has been rescheduled to open on February 2, due to mayoral elections.

In the mindscape of Ata Mojlish



PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Artist Ata Mojlish is known for his precision of work and impeccable presentation skills. As I opened the door to his ongoing exhibition, *Truce-Juddhobiroti*, at Dwip Gallery, I stepped into a red and blue zone. A CRT TV presents the basic intention of the artist. "I wanted to recreate my psyche here. Anyone who walks in will learn what goes on in my mind," said Ata as he caught me at the entrance. A square piece on the floor with the words, 'You do not belong here' made me anxious. I could not resist but ask what the artist meant - he shared that those words sum up the feeling of being uprooted from his home and placed in a space which is not his own. As he lives in the USA, many assume that Ata has an enviable life, but rarely do people realise that there are two sides of a coin. Ata highlights the side that is less talked about.

"I lost my father at a very young age. I practically have no memory of him. I accidentally found a portrait of him that was kept away from me for a long time. Finding that portrait made me realise that there is a void in my life," adds Ata. He faced further difficulties when he started living in a different country. Amid the apparent perfection of his life, he felt detached from his roots. Through digital photo manipulations and video making, which he defines as 'non art materials', he calls a 'truce' with his inner battle.

He practiced photography and worked around with photo editing tools for a long time. He consciously wants to break away from that to express his feelings of imperfection. "I try to process and represent the disconnection that I feel with my home. In an effort to find these photographs, I am trying to confront certain parts of myself as well," explains Ata.

Truce- Juddhobiroti is also a beautiful story of reunion of two close friends, Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo, the curator of the exhibition, and Ata. The two have been confidants of each other for more than

a decade. "Since we were both in different countries, we practically worked through the exhibition online. I like dealing with works that break the hierarchy of art and make it more salient to public interaction," says Apurbo. To that end, the UV ray pens in the exhibition let the audience spend some time spotting the invisible writings on the walls and read through the commentary of the artist.

Ata explained that his mother, sister, fiancé and Austin's iconic *Hi, How Are You?* mural are the inspirations behind his work. "Everyone who walks into the exhibition and looks through the works are helping me become heard. I placed my lens at different spots to recognise their effort even in my absence," says the artist.

The nifty square frames, the colours and the provoking sound tracks are the subtle, yet striking details of the exhibition. At the same time, Ata intends to give a sense of the turmoil that occurs in the society. *Truce – Juddhobiroti* is open to all at Dwip Gallery till tomorrow.



Pictures on exhibit at the event.

BANGLADESH BANDS GEN NEXT

Fuze



PHOTO: COURTESY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bangladesh Band Gen Next is a project aimed to promote young and upcoming bands by providing them with a unique platform to express their talents. The programme has selected 26 young bands from Chattogram in for its first run.

Fuze is a rock band that started its journey in 2017. Made up of Anindo, Rocky, Sifat, Mithu and Raj, the musicians pride themselves on performing in a lot of live shows. "In Chattogram, there is a lot of talent, but few opportunities," says Anindo, the vocalist of the band.

Bangladesh Bands Gen Next is helmed by advertising agency Creato, and produced by 49 Blue. The programme is sponsored by Marks Full Cream Milk Powder. Fuze's *Kabbo* is now available for streaming on their YouTube channel.



PHOTO: COURTESY

REVIVAL'S

'ANUPRANAN-ENLIVEN'

shines a light on

mental health

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Revival organised their first interactive event, *Anupranan – Enliven*, on January 24 and 25 at 3rd Space, Dhanmondi.

The opening ceremony of the event started with a speech by Revival's Founder and President, Tazreen M Khan. The event also included an art exhibition on mental health and an interactive session on normalising mental health issues with psychologists Rahnuma-E-Jannat and Tahneena Mehreinn. Rafsan Sabab and Tashfikal Sami put up a stand-up comedy show for the audience.

On the second day, free and quick counselling sessions with a therapist took place. Subsequently, the guest judge Morshed Mishu handed over the prizes to the participants and winner of the art and meme competition. The day was drawn to a close with an uplifting entertainment session featuring performances of music, comedy and poetry. Special guests Masha Islam, Tony Batch and Said Sizan were also in attendance.