

WHAT'S ON



**Art Camp**  
Title: 4th Annual Art for Autism 2020  
Venue: Charukola, University of Dhaka  
Date: February 22  
Time: 8:30 am – 3pm



**Solo Exhibition**  
Title: Parables of the Womb  
Artist: Dilara Begum Jolly  
Venue: Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi  
Date: February 4 – March 28  
Time: 2 pm – 8 pm (Except Sundays)



**Book Fair**  
Title: Amar Ekushey Boi Mela  
Organiser: Bangla Academy  
Venue: Bangla Academy Premises  
Date: Feb 2 - 29  
Time: 3 pm - 8 pm; 11 am - 9 pm on weekends



**Art Exhibition**  
Title: In/Out of the stones of our mind  
Venue: Dwip Gallery  
Date: February 19- 29  
Time: 3pm to 9 pm (February 19 from 6pm to 9pm)



**Art Workshop**  
Title: Kata Kuti - Collage Workshop  
by Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo  
Venue: Studio 6/6 (Mohammadpur)  
Date: February 22  
Time: 11 am to 6 pm

# In conversation with Deepali Dewan

ZIAUL KARIM

A large congregation of artists, curators and scholars came together at the recently concluded Dhaka Art Summit (DAS) 2020. The biennial event was an investigation and reflection on how forms of artistic productions and practices impact our lives. Her research interests include colonial, modern and contemporary visual culture, knowledge production, art education, decorative arts and historiography. She teaches at the University of Toronto and is affiliated with the Centre for South Asian Studies. She is the author of *Raja Deen Dayal: Artist-Photographer in 19th-Century India* (2013, co-authored with Deborah Hutton), *Embellished Reality: Indian Painted Photographs* (2012), and the editor of *Bollywood Cinema Showcards: Indian Film Art from the 1950s to the 1980s* (2011). We caught up with her for a brief conversation during her visit to Dhaka.

**Could you elaborate on some exhibitions that are instrumental in educating people about contemporary South Asian art?**

A few art exhibitions have done a good job of laying out major themes in contemporary South Asian art. These include: the Asia Society's *Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions / Tensions* (1996), curated by Apinan Poshyanada, which took a broad view of Asia, and the Peabody Essex Museum's *Midnight to Boom: Painting in India after Independence* (2013), curated by Susan Bean, which covered three generations of artists and major trends. In terms of photography, I find myself going back to *When Three Dreams Cross: 150 years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (2010), curated by Sunil Gupta for the Whitechapel Gallery, which catalogues essays that take a deep dive into certain themes. It is interesting that these exhibitions mostly proceeded the emergence of the art biennials in Kochi, Dhaka, Karachi, Lahore, and now Goa, which have come to be major stages for the presentation of contemporary art of the region. I think that contemporary art



PHOTO: KAZI MUKUL

practice has become diverse and wide ranging, with an increasing number of artists. In fact, we can get a sense of the overall trends in contemporary art through multiple platforms today. Having said that, I think that exhibitions that present an overview of South Asian art are in many ways, an invention of the West. They have the effect of looking in from outside or above and are more relevant from outside of South Asia. In that sense, there is an element of 'othering' built into such exhibitions.

**Which exhibitions were the most challenging for you to curate?**

So far, all the exhibitions I have curated were stimulating in different ways. But I would say that one of the most challenging was *Between Princely India and The British Raj: The Photography of Raja Deen Dayal* (2013), because the research that went into that exhibition

and the execution took nearly ten years. Dayal had a prolific career, with over 40,000 photographs to his name. His studio also remained active after his death in 1905. For this project, my colleague Deborah Hutton and I looked through many archives and clues from different places and years. Sometimes, we found an important document just before we were scheduled to leave and so, we had to work quickly. Another project, *The Family Camera* (2017) was equally challenging, but for different reasons. For this one, I managed five co-curators, multiple interns, and a tight deadline to arrange the exhibition in time for Canada's sesquicentennial celebrations.

**What are some of the main hurdles you face in representing South Asia art to Canadian audiences?**

One of the main challenges in representing South Asian art to

Canadian audiences is to figure out ways to make the material relevant to people from different backgrounds. As a curator of South Asian art at a North American museum, I think a lot about the people and how to address their varying degrees of familiarity with the region of South Asia. Locally, there is a significant South Asian diaspora population in Canada, and there are non-South Asians who have extensive connections to South Asia. There are also audiences who know very little about South Asian culture. My curatorial approach is to provide people with basic information but also to challenge them with depth and complexity. I also try to present information that challenges stereotypes. Moreover, I think we need to shift from the mode of explaining things to a predominantly white audience to consciously choosing to address the South Asian viewers.

## EKUSHEY SPOTLIGHT

# Syed Iqbal's homecoming with 'Meye Tumi Zanjibar Toronto'

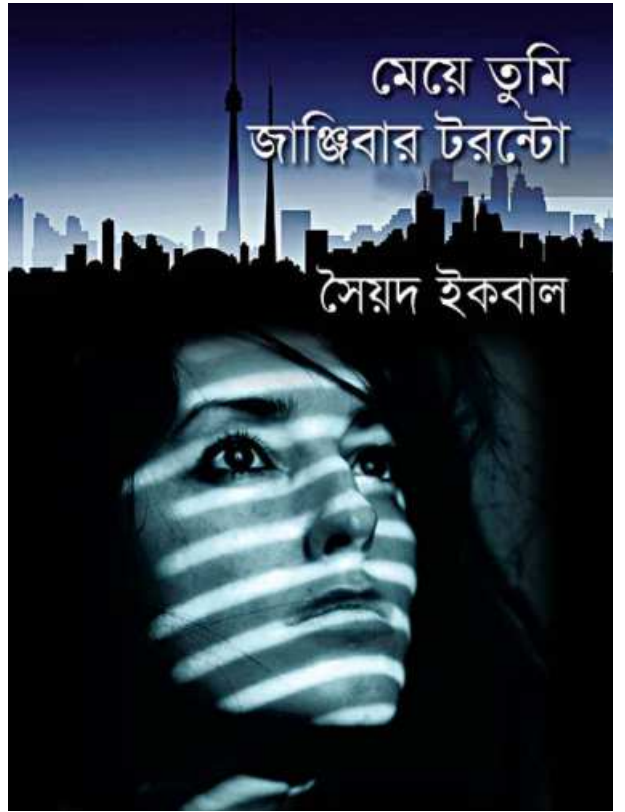
ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Renowned painter Syed Iqbal is a self-taught artist who has been living and working in Canada since 2002. Being an avid writer as well, the artist began his writing career with *Kushol Ar Mrityu Buro* (1978), a book for children published under the banner of Shishu Academy. Over the past four decades, he has published a number of novels and short story collections. He has also illustrated many children's books. His 36th book, *Meye Tumi Zanjibar Toronto*, was released at the Ekushey Boi Mela 2020, recently.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The novel, published by The Royal Publishers, is based on the love story of Shubodh Kumar Das, a Bangladeshi currently seeking political asylum in Canada, and Farah



(Sarah), a Lebanese illegal immigrant who works as a dancer in Zanjibar Bar, located in downtown Toronto. "The character of Shubodh is presented in a parallel dimension to the meaning of his name, 'shubodh'—the sense of goodness," mentions Syed Iqbal. "With their families' responsibilities burdening their lives, both the characters are also undergoing existential crisis in a foreign land."

Grounded on his experience of migration and displacement, Syed Iqbal draws inspirations for his stories from real life characters. "I mostly prefer to show two different cultures merging together in my work as I want to show Bangladeshi characters interacting with foreign cultures," adds the writer who has also designed the book cover for this publication. "Many of my other novels, including *I Love New York*, also shows how two different characters, hailing from different parts of the world, come together and develop an emotional and intimate bond of love."

The writer pays frequent visit to the Ekushey Boi Mela to meet and greet his readers. *Meye Tumi Zanjibar Toronto* is available at stalls 411 to 414, for BDT 105 (under a special Ekushey Boi Mela discount of 25 percent and a 10 percent Bikash cashback offer), at the Ekushey Boi Mela 2020.



## TV WATCH

**The Tauquir Ahmed directorial 'Fagun Haway' will be aired on Channel i today at 3 pm. The film features Nusrat Imrose Tisha and Siam Ahmed in the lead roles.**

PHOTO: COURTESY



PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Celebrated actor TAPAS PAL passes away

**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA**, from New Delhi  
Tapas Pal, celebrated film actor and former lawmaker of West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress, passed away in Mumbai, due to a cardiac arrest at the age of 61, according to reports.

Pal, who was visiting his daughter in Mumbai, complained of chest pain at the Mumbai airport during his return to Kolkata. He was rushed to a hospital in Juhu, but breathed his last at around 4 am (local time) yesterday. The actor was suffering from heart complications and was in and out of hospitals for treatment since the past two years.

Pal joined politics from 2001.

He was a two-term member of Lok Sabha, Krishnanagar, from 2009 to 2019, and a member of the West Bengal legislative assembly from the Alipore constituency in Kolkata from 2001 to 2009. He is survived by his daughter and wife.

He remained away from cinema since his arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Rose Valley chit-fund scam in December 2016 and was bailed out after 13 months. He was also imprisoned after his arrest.

Known for his romantic roles, Pal rose to popularity in Kolkata with his debut in Tarun Majumdar's *Dadar Kirti* in 1980. He went on to become a household name for his lead roles

in *Saheb* (1981), *Parabat Priya* (1984), *Bhalobasha Bhalobasha* (1985), *Anurager Choyan* (1986) and *Amar Bandhan* (1986), among other films.

Pal won a Filmfare Award for his role in *Saheb*. He made his Bollywood debut in Hiren Nag's *Abodh* (1984), opposite Madhuri Dixit.

Actors Ranjit Mallick and Chiranjit and director Buddhadeb Dasgupta offered their sincere condolences to Pal's family and described him as a brilliant artiste.

"I am yet to come to terms with the news, even though I knew that he was not keeping well for some time. He was like my younger brother," Mallick said.



**Imphal Talkies and the Howlers, a folk-rock band from Manipur, India, perform in Habiganj and Sylhet during their three-day tour in Bangladesh, which concluded recently.**

PHOTOS: DWOHA CHOWDHURY