

WHAT'S ON

Group Exhibition
Title: Parampara
Venue: Gallery Chitrah, Dhanmondi
Date: February 15 - 29
Time: 10 am - 8 pm

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 (and out of) the stones of our minds
Venue: Dwip Gallery
Date: February 19 - 29
Time: 3pm to 9 pm (February 19 from 6pm to 9pm)

Cartoon Exhibition
Title: Shojonghati Rekha
Venue: Kala Kendra
Date: February 21 - March 17
Time: 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm

In (and out of) the stones of our minds

Mustafa Zaman elaborates on modern curation

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

The traditional role of an art curator is to assemble, catalogue and manage artistic and cultural collections. However, when put in practice, curation may take various forms. Artist, Critic and Curator Mustafa Zaman has a heart-to-heart conversation with *The Daily Star*, revealing his current concepts of curation. His current work, *In (and out of) the stones of our minds*, is currently on display at Dwip Gallery.



(From left) Rokeya Sultana, Mustafa Zaman, Dhali Al Mamun and Monirul Islam at 'In (and out of) the stones of our minds'.



Artworks on exhibit at the event, currently underway at Dwip Gallery.

Mustafa Zaman's first exhibition in the 90's was supposed to be a conventional painting exhibition. However, he changed his mind and put forth

ground-breaking image installation, using digital materials instead. Use of digital medium was a breakthrough then, now it is a well-accepted medium in the main stream. The curatorial note poses three queries, which had overwhelmed the young minds during that time. Nineteen years into the new millennium, they are still the most contentious issues. "Dilemma is the primary catalyst of my practice now. The surrealist concept of automatism works in me more," says Mustafa Zaman.

Having worked with some African artists recently, Zaman came across the practice of 'unthinking', which in simple terms, refers to going into creative endeavours without any contexts or preconceived notions. "African artists practice 'unthinking' because they do not want to remain in the frame work of western-centric ideas. The discourses behind their works are fascinating. If people knew these discourses, at least those that are

relevant to this region, they could have a better understanding. Every creative piece needs to be contextualised," he says.

The spontaneous positioning of body, image, material, and desire are evident in the gallery space of Dwip Gallery. "It is a celebration of what we want to do in this space. In the exhibition, we have artists from the 80s. We are also featuring young photographers, whose works show their vision of social concepts now. They sometimes converge and contradict, but that is the beauty of dialogues," Zaman emphasizes.

The naming of the exhibition was coined from John Lennon's song *Mind Games*. "The song is striking, it introduced terms like mind guerilla, which essentially is our state. We belong in our minds, more than in the society. I felt this could be a point of departure," he says.

Reading critical images, however, is

not an easy job. Is it at all necessary to try to understand each art piece? If yes, then is the artist or the curator to take the lead in it? Zaman answers that interpretation, retelling and conversation on the concept is required, and adds that it is primarily the curator's job. "Communication breakdown is also a part of modern curation. Basic courses on development of art should have been made mandatory in Bangladesh," he asserts.

Visiting exhibitions often churns ideas, concepts and ignites social inquiries. Using memory techniques, you draw upon visual imagination and can help to make mental connections between space and material objects. *In (and out of) the stones of our minds* will be open at Dwip Gallery till February 29, 2020.

EKUSHEY SPOTLIGHT

'Babuibelala': Reesham Shahab Tirtho's take on parenthood

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA
Parenthood is an emotional experience for many. While some parents enjoy capturing the special moments of their children through camera, while others take up different mediums.

Reesham Shahab Tirtho is a renowned artist. This year, he has showcased his journey as a father in his illustrated book, *Babuibelala*. When Tirtho's daughter was born, he started portraying her everyday activities in humorous drawings and illustrations. "New parents inspired me to turn my sketches into a book, as they could relate to the drawings," explains the artist. Tirtho doodled on his sketchbook with a pen, and created the series of drawings for the book, which was recently released at The Ekushey Boi Mela.

Tirtho's daughter, Audri, is now nineteen months old. "When she grows up, these doodles will help her understand the journey we went through and they will bring back her childhood memories," he shares.

Tirtho further commented on the scope for emerging artists and illustrators in Bangladesh. "Young artists should not focus on fame and popularity. Rather, they should aim for consistency in the quality of their work," he says.

After graduating from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in Architecture, Tirtho opened Studio Terracotta. "I want to incorporate architecture into visual arts in the future," he explains.

Babuibelala, published by Mayurpankhi, is available at stalls 761 to 763 at a discounted price of BDT 150.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



PHOTO: COURTESY

Bharatanatyam dancer Dr Narthaki Nataraj arrives in Dhaka today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Noted Bharatanatyam dancer Dr Narthaki Nataraj is set to arrive in Dhaka today. The artiste has received the Padma Shri for her exceptional achievements in cultural activities in 2019. She is the first transwoman ever to receive the prestigious state award. She also received an honorary doctorate from Tanjavur Thanthai Periyar Maniammai University, in

2016. Dr Nataraj has participated in many international dance events in the UK, USA, India and other parts of the world.

Bandhu Social Welfare Society, an organisation that works for the rights and social acceptance of the transgender community, has arranged a formal reception for her tomorrow at Bangladesh National Museum, where she will perform. The event will begin from 6:30 pm.



PHOTOS: PIYAS BISWAS

Khurshid Alam Alok's 'Banglar Apon Soudho' underway at BSA

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

Khurshid Alam Alok's solo photography exhibition, *Banglar Apon Soudho*, is underway at the National Art Plaza of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). It showcases 126 photos of different constructions of the Shaheed Minar, built by children across the country. Noted artist Mustafa Monwar inaugurated the exhibition on February 20. Professor Mohammad Rafiqul Islam and artist Nasim Ahmed Nadvi were present at the

ceremony as guests. BSA Director General Liaquat Ali Lucky presided over the event.

25 years ago, while visiting his village, the photographer came across a group of children building a Shaheed Minar. Since then, the artist set out to find more such constructions of the Shaheed Minar. To that end, he visited several districts, including Barguna, Rajshahi, Manikganj and many others.

The children built and decorated versions of the Shaheed Minar in their own way, not confined to black and white

elements.

"The Language Movement and the Shaheed Minar are the base of a new and bright life for the children. Subsequently, they have envisioned colourful versions of the monument, in the hope of wonderful days ahead," says Khurshid, who plans to continue his search for such constructions. He hopes that the true history of the Language Movement reaches children across Bangladesh.

The exhibition is open to all every day from 11 am to 8 pm, until February 29.

A gathering of artists at OPSB

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Eminent artist Professor Nikhil Ranjan Pal of Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, is conducting the 'Gouache Painting Workshop and Seminar 2020' at the Faculty of Fine Art (FFA), University of Dhaka (DU). Keeping that in mind, Oriental Painting Studio Bangladesh (OPSB) arranged an event for artists at their premises in Elephant Road, recently.

Renowned Bangladeshi artists Monirul Islam, Mohammad Eunos, Syed Abul Barq Alvi, Shahid Kabir, Nisar Hossain, Shishir Bhattacharjee, Mohammad Iqbal, Rashid Amin, Zahid Mustafa, Bishwajit Goswami and Sourav Chowdhury, together with art collector Nazrul Islam and several poets, elocutionists, musicians and theatre activists attended the programme.

At the event, promising poet and multi-talented artist Anindya Amat received the Leap Year Award (February 29, 2020) for his creative endeavours. Zahangir Alom, winner of the 2016 Leap Year Award, handed over the prize to Anindya Amat. Noted artist Malay Bala, the



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

founder of the award, gave the winner a cheque of BDT 50,000. Artist Amit Nandi, one of the three founding members of OPSB, was present at the ceremony.

The event also featured a cultural programme, where the awardee recited a few poems. Shaola Brototi Attoja performed a Bharatanatyam piece. Mohammad Eunos recited one of his self-

composed poems. In addition, Dr Debproshad Dawn, Associate Professor, Department of Music, DU, performed several folk songs and a few timeless songs, originally recorded by Bhupen Hazarika. Zahangir Alom performed several songs of Manna Dey, while Nazrul Islam and his troupe presented several folk numbers at the event.