



Imagine, a dystopian reality, one where 1980s Japan had a ban on sake, much like how real world 1940s America had a ban on illegally home brewed ‘moonshine’ down south which the people loved but the government couldn’t stand just because it wasn’t taxed. What ensued were the moonshine-runners, born out of necessity and backed by big city gangsters like Al Capone, to ‘run’ the cheap stuff coast to coast to illegal bars, or ‘speakeasies’. Canonball record in the 1930s anyone? The ‘moonshine runners’ in their beefed up yet stealthy hot rods outran the government agents in their run off the mill police cruisers in the solace of the night. And thus, NASCAR was born a couple of years later, also out of necessity (really is the mother of invention eh?)

Now imagine Japanese gangsters, i.e the Yakuza backing home brewed sake runners, to run the sweet stuff while evading the Japanese rozzers (police) in their heavily equipped (for comfort) Nissan Cedrics and Toyota Crowns chasing Japanese sake runners in their version of moonshine runners, which I am willing to wager would look something like Mahir Zawad’s 1982 Toyota Corolla KE70 GL edition. At first glance, it can and will pass off as any muscle car, like an 80s dodge charger squished from end to end to shorten its wheelbase. Heck, it would



even pass off as a prop vehicle in any of the movies from the fast and furious franchise. Most likely jumping off of cliffs or evading bad guys on ice in the name of Family. Following a tip-off from a friend on a Ke70 for sale, as he tells me, set him off on his impulse crusade to acquire it. It was a long time dream based on a car his uncle had. He googled Bosozoku builds online and dreamt of doing the same. Wide wheels, stretched tires and old Japanese iron.

Following an accident in 2017 involving the KE70 one night, his rebuild project began with Alfred’s blessing, “Why do we fall? So that we can learn to pick ourselves up” as he comforted Master Wayne. With the help of his elder brother, Tanweer Zaman, whose red GRB STi hatch we featured many moons ago, Mahir Zawad counts himself lucky as the rebuild started taking it’s desired widebody shape.

‘Borrowing’ parts and a set of deep dish Watanabe’s which were meant for his brother’s AE86, the restomod project started taking shape. The difference in its dimension is night and day when it’s parked next to a regular bog standard E70 Corolla. The flared arches are angled just right to house the 15” deep dish 9j and 10.5j (front and rear respectively) Watanabe wheels wrapped in 225 Toyo



Proxes. Gone are the bumpers, both front and rear, like a drag car. which complements its demeanor.

It is scientifically proven that old cars look ten times cooler with their safety regulated steel or plastic bumpers off, the differences in US and EU spec cars being a testament, i.e the bumper guards in all US spec Ferrari F40. Okay, so the science involves a lot of petrolheads snorting coffee cup after coffee cup while huddled over images of cars others would call....


‘old model er gari’.

The ageing carbureted 4K was wrenched away to make way for the beefier and popular EFI 7K found in Toyota Noahs, mated to a low range 5 speed from a Hilux, ditching the Spartan-like factory 4 speed. This is a popular setup in Bangladesh for Mazda RX8s with blown rotaries. Because this thing has torque and reliability.

The pumped up kicks are rebounded by HWL coilovers, while the chassis dynamics was rigidified with a host of Ultra Racing and Cusco strut bars, Polyurethane bushes, in conjunction with rear control arms from an AE86. The car does not handle like it was meant to from factory, rivaling modern sports cars dare I say. This is how you keep an old soul running. The car as the owner, analogizing himself to an old soul tells me, blood, sweat and tears aside has taught him a lot of things. Most importantly, humility and patience. As project cars lead to a never ending road to progress, Mahir Zawad hopes for the best as he tells me how the build has amazed him, as well as win hearts and minds of people online, even from countries far away.

*Wondering what Hippari means? A Japanese car culture term for stretched tires.*


Photo: Ahbar Milky



**MITSUBISHI MOTORS**

## Classic lines with a modern soul

Although classic cars are adored for their beauty and collectability, their age and high maintenance costs cause many to avoid them. Some work around this issue by doing away with the car's original powertrain, replacing it with a modern one. This process, known as "restomodding" in the car community, greatly diminishes the car's historic value but leaves its owner with a better performing vehicle. The first and second-generation **Mitsubishi Pajero** are popular restomod choices among enthusiasts, who modify these already rugged off-road platforms to go anywhere and do anything.



# Tech and art reconnects lost memories of forgotten places: The tale of Uronto Artist Community

NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

Uronto Artist Community was formed at a time when contemporary art was gradually losing connection with the masses in the country. Artists from different backgrounds were not collaborating, and many of their works were being colonised by the western ways, missing the social realities of our country.

The community’s journey started with its first residential exchange programme in 2012, piloted in Kushtia. While visiting her hometown in Kushtia, Sadya Mizan, the founder of the community realised that there were many residential homes that were losing their visuals. “There were many zamindar palaces, rich in cultural history, local music and theatre practices whose narratives were being abandoned with time. And who could be better than artists to recreate those narratives?”, said Sadya Mizan. “That’s how the name “Uronto” (flying) came to be because we realised that the narratives were flying in such places, and we wanted to travel from one place to another to rediscover them”, she added.

The idea was to create a platform for story-telling through interdisciplinary artistic interventions and reconnect with lost memories of forgotten places.



The community creates opportunities to connect cultural histories through coexisting and co-creating through collaboration between artists from diverse backgrounds, gaining access to memories that inspire creative workers and empower current generations with knowledge.

In 2013, the residential exchange programme had an open and international call. “This was never meant to be a commercial project, as we feared that it would hamper the organic character of the programme. We mainly focused on the rural areas, as no one usually went there to exchange artistic interests with the locals. We usually set up open studios in the venue. We want the projects to be sight responsive so that they can respond to the stories better. Hence we use local materials to develop the projects. We leave the installation arts to the locals and bring few reference elements to display”, said Sadya.



Incorporating technology into this form came out of the need to connect to the masses while conveying a particular message and story through art. Some of the most significant works from the

The interesting tech bits about the installation were designed in collaboration with an engineering student, Mehedi Hasan Rupok from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST). Rupok has a passion for robotics, and from his expertise and interests, he set up an invisible monitor with a special goggles for the spectators to see the display and the documentary that was being shown on the monitor. To add another bit of a tech twist, Rupok also set up a switchboard inspired from old calling bell from the old buildings and coded them in a way where the switches were functioned to display the artists’ works in a small monitor peeking out of an old wooden door after being pressed.

The most significant tech-based project by the group was a VR project that took the spectators back to a forgotten place to reconnect to its lost narratives. This project was displayed at the Dhaka Art Summit 2020. The latest residency editions took place at Dubolhati Palace, a crumbling Zamindari (feudal landlord) palace over two hundred years old in the Naogaon District of Rajshahi in Northwest Bangladeshi. This VR project invites visitors into the space that inspired almost thirty participants from ten countries to keep the stories of this area and era alive.

In the 10 minutes of VR tour, the audience could experience 15 artworks but a small zine was distributed during the show for the audience to read and know more about all the works done in the 8th and 9th episode at Dubolhati by scanning QR code. The VR experience enabled the audience to understand the unconventional venues that Uronto work with, and showed how contemporary forms of multiverse artistic expressions merged into the structure. The VR work was complemented with a graphical representation by Sadya Mizan, of a scroll painting (in Bengali and English), which was originally done by a participating artist- Fouzia Mahin, during the recent residency which contains the mythical narratives in the surrounding community at Dubolhati about the Dubolhati Palace.

When asked about the community’s future plans regarding these projects, Sadya said, “We want to create a Dhaka-based platform for collaboration between art enthusiasts from different disciplines. Finance is always an issue when it comes to implementing such projects. We also aim to properly archive our VR projects and start a publication.”

Photo: Nahaly Nafisa Khan