

Creations Both for Gallery and Home

by Lamis Hossain



'Awaiting' glaze painting on slab stone ware



of the vase is unassumed and left unpainted, but an eruption of jade glazing spills onto one of the sides. Hossain manages to achieve harmony between the opulent and the

rudimentary in a piece that might have otherwise seemed irritatingly incomplete.

Apart from the vase, there were two other eye-catching displays at the exhibition. One

RIMITIVE and sophisticated elements forge a unique alliance in Syed Shahadat Ho-ssain's world. The creations on display at his 2nd solo exhibition of studio ceramics at La Galerie from the 12-17th December, seemed fresh from the archaeology dig of an ancient village. Stone slabs with coarse edges, vases, sturdy plates, and pregnant pots, represent the raw side. Yet the faint impressions on stone, the precise etchings, and the varied texture and shape, add refinement to Hossain's work.

The 28-year old artist is a graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts in Dhaka. He holds a BTEC from England and participated in an artist-in-residence course in Japan last year. Hossain held his first solo painting exhibition in 1986 and his first solo ceramic exhibition two years ago at La Galerie.

Texture is the focal point in Hossain's glaze paintings on stone slabs mysteriously entitled 'Awaiting'. Creases, dimples, shadows and sparse engravings on stone evoke abstract images. Although two of the stone slabs have identical names and size, they evoke different emotions. One of the pieces leaves a grainy but unrumpled surface in a corner balanced out by circular ripples on the other. It seems as if the calm area of the slab is about to be overcome by the impending waves. The other piece has more jagged edges. The few smooth surfaces are overshadowed by sandbar like creases. It could anything from a sea beach after high tide, the footprints of a bird, or the tracks of your mind.

Among the most beautiful of Hossain's pieces is a vase. Most

is a sculpture, yet again entitled 'Awaiting'. A small bird-like creature appears perched on a basin resting on a rectangular slab. Is the creature, if it is indeed a bird, about to take off or take a sip of water? Nothing is clearly spelt out, except the overwhelming prettiness of the scene.

Another conspicuous creation is one called 'Family'. Earthy stripes line an ash blue background. Peeking out from under the stripes are a few faces outlined in black. The faces seem identical.

Hossain's stone ware plates rely less on texture and more on careful and clear strokes of colour. It is not the use of many hues but the balance achieved with so few which is noteworthy. There are no bright, garish colours here, but only whispers of cream, beige, ash blue, dark brown and black.

There are also numerous pots among Hossain's creations. At first glance, they all appear very similar. Many of them are roundish, and seemingly bloated with their contents. Vitality, and fertility are images that spring to mind. The pots are distinguished only by their earthy, reddish or black colours, and their different textures. Some of them look like beehives while others like termite hills.

Shahadat Hossain's work reveals an immense amount of maturity for a young artist. His creations are set apart by their balance and rhythm achieved through the restrained use of colour, varied texture, precise etchings and careful strokes.

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Now, the dozens of opera houses in Beijing before 1949 have shrunk to only a handful as Chinese tradition gives way to new modern tastes among Chinese youth. A planned new theatre, promised by the government, is stalled for lack of funds.

Chinese performers and directors say they must breathe new life into the art form by developing new young performers even though the number of school for nurturing new talent is decreasing under new financial pressures and an end of the government subsidies of the past.

With foreign tourists a major source of support for opera performances, some troupes are even adapting folklore and stories from other countries' historical heritage for presentation in the Peking Opera format in China.

The so-called revolutionary operas from the days of the Cultural Revolution have also been revived to appeal to some sections of the Chinese public who resist the new economic freedoms in China and feel the heat of her school sports. But the tale of a benevolent and a little child.

'Tabu' is the story of the intimacy between an elephant and a little child.

'Khune Harin' (the killer deer) is the story of a deer which being interfered while eating in a vegetable garden became furious and caused the tragic death of a little boy.

'Kala Ar Dhola' (black and white) is about the faithfulness and dutifulness of two geese.

'Itu's Ashukh' (itu's illness) is the story of a little girl who got upset, being ill just before

the heat of her school sports.

But the tale of a benevolent and a little child.

'Loadshedding' is a short thrilling story.

'Tiger' is a story on the intimacy between man and his pet animal.

The stories are easily readable and interesting for children.

Reviewed by Md Mahbub Hassan

Published by Mahbub Prakashani, Chittagong.

Pages-48 Price-Tk 30.00.

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