

exhibition

Dreams Never Die

By Navine Murshid and Ekram Kabir

THERE has always been dreamers, because, as they say, in our dreams we do not see what the world is but what it can be. And so did Ahmed Nazir in his nine-day-long seventh solo painting exhibition that ended on June 2 at Dhanmondi's smartly arranged Gallery 21.

Nazir expressed all his dreams on his fifty-one canvasses in abstract manner, appareling his subjects with dancing colours using geometrical forms which left the audience with mixed emotions. Some were puzzled, some enchanted and some tried to think over it going beyond the artist's abstractness all by themselves. But to simplistic onlookers, Nazir's works were sheer ecstasy by only looking at the different shades of colours for a couple of minutes.

"I do not believe and see what everybody does and says — Bangladesh is enriched with not just 'green', it has so many enchanting and cheering colours, so many shades that it's hard to resist terming this country as beautiful," said a Nature lover Ahmed Nazir, adding: "All you have to do is to keep your eyes open — and the Nature will start whispering to you; and then you will go far



far away from this madding crowd of brazen urban life."

To the critics, Nazir reacted, "My works are not abstract," he argued. "On the contrary, they are realistic, very realistic, because although the Nature is the one magnanimous entity, yet I tried to steal from it what I felt like stealing: I pilfered the beauty, the forms, and of course the colours from Mother Nature and then juxtaposed all of them by su-



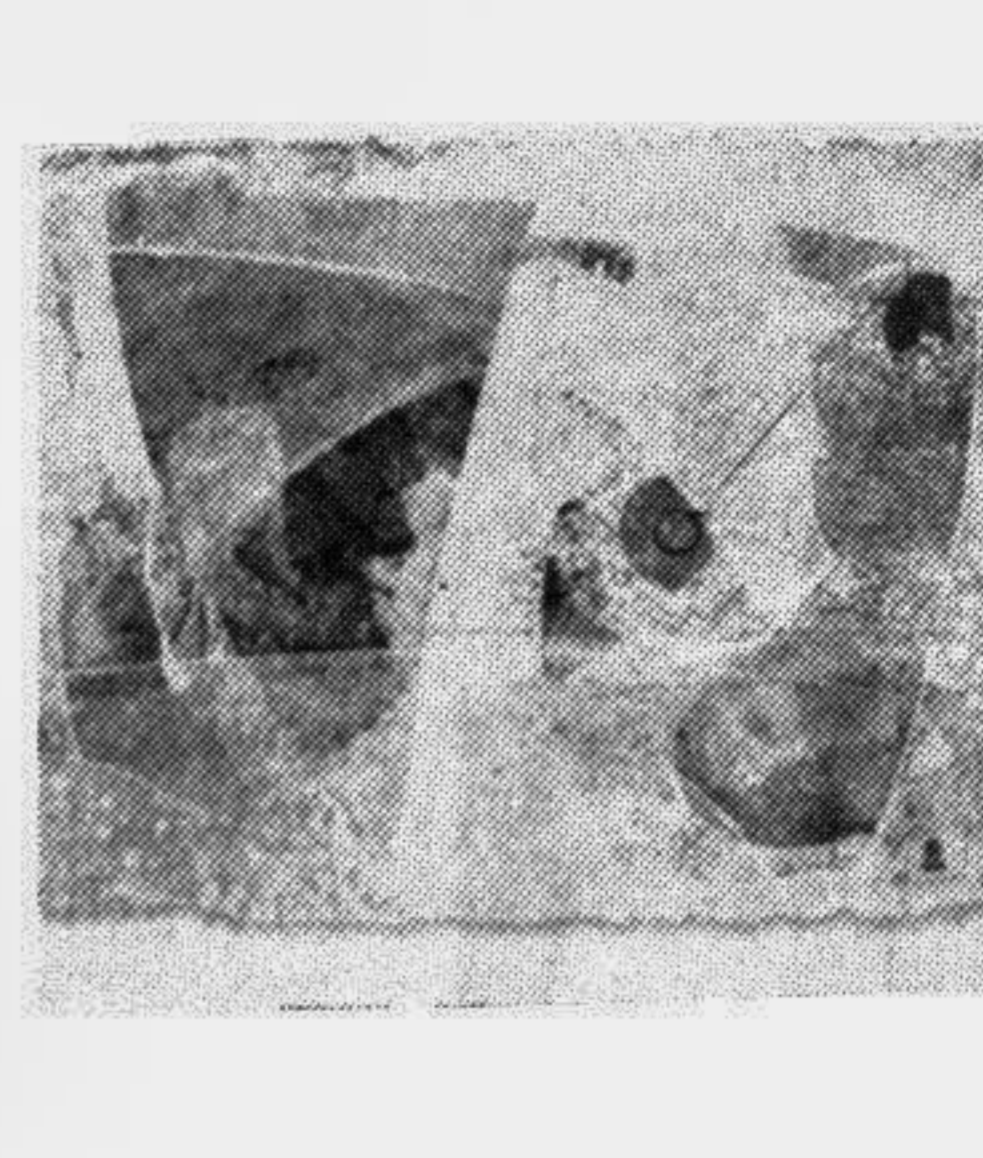
perimposing my own imagination, said a thinking Nazir.

He was right: if one got closer (not in terms of distance, but in a world what Nazir felt) to his works, s/he must have realised the art-works were ordinarily realistic. He brought in forms from unconstrained shadows, colours from his orthodox surroundings and then worked with his own way of imagination and feeling.



If a connoisseur has had allowed his/her eyes (which go deep down the heart) to play along the paths created by Nazir's paintings, s/he must have grasped the truth in his words. To this sect of audience, it was like new life on earth, a beginning of a new creation, a new education on the Nature, a new fathoming process towards out-of-doors and the purest 'trust' and 'faith' in it.

Take the painting with dark circles



with white flakes in distinctive shapes for example — it was actually signifying the moon, partially covered with wandering clouds. One could almost feel the clouds slowly move past. And here the young painter used small triangles to draft this slowness on his canvasses.

Apart from depicting the pond at the Dhaka Charukala Institute and a part of the Old Dhaka, there were several small pieces which attracted viewers'

attention the most. Nazir's brushwork with green borders on two adjacent sides and forms and figures were scattered on those.

Explained Nazir: "We were going on a picnic to Mymensingh, and there was a green shade on the top of the windshield of the bus. This knocked in my mind — while standing, I could see outside through the green part and at the same time the normal part of that front glass. There were two different appearances of the outside world through these two colours, but where these 'two' mingled, it gave a novel, blurred image altogether. There was another wonderful aspect of this green: the forms or figures which were not clear through the normal glass-colour, they were immaculately visible through the 'green'. I felt that I was looking at the real scape through 'green', and that was really an amazing realisation!"

Ahmed Nazir is increasingly, with his imaginative experimentation, drawing commoners' attention to his works, and for that matter into the art galleries where people can to a great extent forget their own nightmares and revive their lost dreams to look forward. After all in this world, light and darkness, and dream and dullness go hand in hand.

profile

John Mortimer : A Prolific and Witty Writer of Multi-dimensional Literary Merits

By A S M Nurunnabi

JOHN Mortimer is best known for his plays and his dramatic versions of his novels. He sides habitually with the underdog, defending them while indicting, often satirically, their opponents. Mortimer champions those he terms "the lonely, the neglected, the unsuccessful," and those engaged "in the war against established rules." He delights in pricking the pretensions of the pompous and exposing repression or hypocrisy, cloaked though it is in the mantle of respectability.

Although Mortimer first wrote films, more visual than verbal, he then de-

voted a decade to the novel, a form to which he returned in the late 1970s. In his novels, the language is orchestrated at its most urbane and boasts cunning cadenzas and playful arabesques.

Mortimer's distinguished career in jurisprudence has frequently found him as defence attorney in prosecutions on grounds of obscenity or blasphemy. As a stalwart champion of press freedom, he has denied any danger inherent in his books 'Last Exit to Brooklyn' and 'Inside Linda Lovelace'.

Most of Mortimer's novels involve attempts to solve a mystery. Despite his boyhood enthusiasm for Sherlock Holmes, he creates superior suspense in

'Paradise Postponed', 'Summer's Lease' and 'The Narrowing Stream'. However, in his recent fiction, Mortimer focuses less on suspense than on character, atmosphere, and often, social humour.

Marriage, love, and sex, and failure repeatedly turn up as Mortimer's subjects-as in 'I, Claudius', 'A Voyage Round My Father', 'The Judge' and 'Rampole of the Bailey'. He observes human frailties and foibles with clarity, compassion, and amused detachment. Foremost in his comic arsenal are an ironic sense of the ridiculous and a keen sense of the few telling details required to create individual eccentricity. His is a good ear for how people talk, often enlivened by

a slyly comic intent. He veers into as-tringent satire or deep pathos only rarely. Mortimer fulfils our expectation of eloquence in middle-class speech, idiosyncratic character parts, respect for individual liberties, and humour aimed at evoking more grins than guffaws. He shares his wry amusement at people genially created and brought to life with understated but inventive theatricality.

His one-act plays are also worthy of praise. In 'The Dock Brief', Mortimer wins our sympathy for the life's losers — a weebegone wife-murderer and his court-appointed attorney — in which the accused has been saved by his coun-

sel's incompetence. In another one-act 'What Shall We Tell Caroline', Mortimer's cautious optimism for those willing to leave the shelter of tradition for the risk of independence imbues Mortimer's study of the 18-year-old Caroline's escape from over-protective parents.

Zest for life lived fully and compassion for crippled souls also inform other plays such as 'Two Stars for Comfort', 'the fear of Heaven' and 'The Prince of Darkness'. His comedies include farces. His mastery of the form shows in 'Marble Arch', 'Mill Hill', 'The Wrong Side of the Park', 'A Voyage Around My Father' and 'Collaboration'.

For all his theoretical permissiveness, Mortimer does not write what the censorious could label lewd or profane. He defends hedonism in works of the utmost civility. Even at its more mundane, Mortimer's prose is literate and sensitive to both cerebral quirk and linguistic nuance.

Mortimer's philosophy is nowhere more articulated clearly than in the admonition of a girl's family friend in a play: "Everyday day she should collect some small pleasure to keep her warm — because when she reaches our age, it won't be the things she's done she'll regret, it will be the things she hasn't done."



poems by James Killingsworth

Your Mark

You pressed onto the sheet like the quiet of a nightshadow. You fell into sleep right where feathery dreams had combed you layer by layer, making you still, so still.

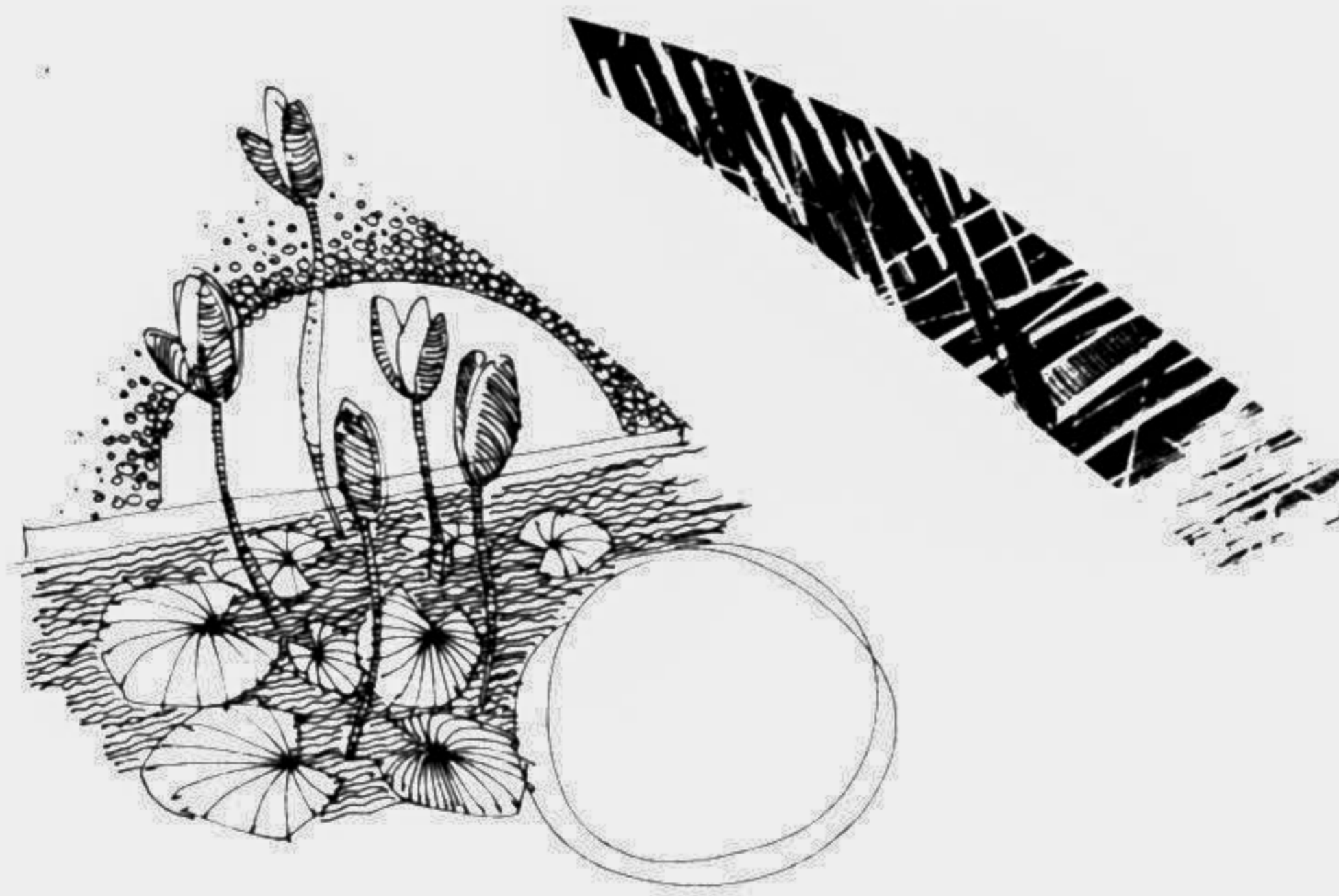
I lean closely to hear. Is there a breath? Is there yet a place for eyes, for laughs and pinches? Could your hand slip through to ripple time, even now?

In this milky twilight I listen for air to stir above us as the sun and moon play with the tides. I look to see the quite shape of night, to learn what stillness can do. Back and away, you carry me to forests where the air is made again and plunge me into waters where eternity is re-born and I wonder how your imprint can already be there, your look and your smile.

Thread

Do stars really dangle afterall? Innocent weavers and tailors never plan beyond their cloth, but innocent fingers travel down lifelines hidden in palms, never fearing the abrupt halt, the final stop of time. And, my love, we dangle. Yes we dangle under the light of day and the choir of starlight. We scour our tiny room looking for warp and weft, hoping for even a gossamer net to catch us if affection snaps for a moment or if shears define and end our dreamy suspended animation.

Your hair spreads across my shoulder and spills down the edge of the pillow. It grew and grew once, making a fan of luxury before anyone who cared to gaze. Gladly, I would sprinkle dots of my precious lifeline for the scent from the thin,



glorious waterfall you once brushed before sleeping.

The Rain

Where is there music? Some say in the mind, others in the hand. Can there be music without dancers or ears to learn it or hearts to find its heart?

But perhaps it is in the great storms of the night, where you have buried your smile in my dreams. It may be the wave washed seashells that fit one inside the other where music, borrowed from the clouds, is found at last. May well it be the immeasurable thunder and the flood of roof beats that launch music, sending it, like an arrow, into the soul.

But the torrent of your life, the very one that sings out the melody of my tomorrow is music enough — for now, for then.

Old Friends

Sometimes ancient spirits meet on the road. Wearing the bodies of places and peoples far away in eye and ear and pace, they recognise through time's hazy orb the presence of another hand, another heart, another breeze, another starlight, another sand grain from their own fragment of eternity. Ancient spirits may not say straightaway that chance meetings have brought them sisterhood and brotherhood and the joining of the heart, but they know it start-on to finish. They are joined in an instant.

Necklace

Drops of dew, indivisible, shining, hidden, shielded into a brief eternity. Two days now minutes and days weeks. From moment to moment, your soft hand changes — once a pillow, once a hard diamond, once a dream, once ready to pounce. But compressed in each touch is a test and a forever to grace you.

A Good Tired

Rainy eyes and lazy legs. No longer Lara; too tender to Tendulkar. Just bluschy, roofie, kluzzy, ploply, droply, plunkly, pinkly, sfosic, milchey tired. A day in the office. A night in heaven.

So now I see. We are willing just to row together. I sneak a hand into the water and splash your back. You cut your oar hard to the right and shock my entire shirt with water from the river. We tumble into the stream. Forget the boat. We kick back to shore... lie there drying. We let the wind make a capsule over us. You roll on top after my leg has come over yours and made us both ignore the wet of our shirts, the soft threats from the rocks under us. I warm you. We look for a notch that is where we exactly fit and find it and bring together minute by minute by minute by minute like a song from under the clouds.

It is a great tired. Your eyes are making truth by the second like your breath, like your closeness, like your clever fingers, your soft palm, your lips, and your smile. It is a great tired, not just a good one.

