

exhibition

A Captivating Tale of Hilly Life

A group art exhibition at Zainul Gallery by tribal artists captures the essence of being tribal

BY TAWFIQUE ALI

There is no denying the fact that even today we hardly know about the life and culture of the various tribes living in different parts of the country; never been bothered about their dreams; have not paid attention to their belief and expectation; did not have time to understand their values and rituals; in a word, they pushed into the margins of our cultural and social space.

Rich in aesthetic value, tribal culture has a glorious heritage of its own ----and the hilly people treasure cultural identity even at the face of all oddities. When four tribal artists team up to put up a show, now being held at the Zainul Gallery, it sends a positive signal to the cultural circle.

This exhibition by the four up-and-coming artists is a bold step to secure an access to the mainstream art world of the country.

One feels that such occasions act as a fantastic bridge between minority culture and national culture. These artists are honest in their attempt to retain their cultural entity and uphold the notion 'unity in diversity.'

This group of four artists, Dhanamoni Chakma, Subhankar Talukder, Ronel Chakma and Milon Jyoti Tripura, belong to Hill Artists' Group, an organization of Fine Arts students and freelance artists established in March, 1992, convened by Dhanamoni Chakma. The works done by Dhanamoni (M.F.A Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka) and Subhankar (B.F.A same institute) put on display are mostly in oil on canvas and paper. Dhanamoni has also two drawing sketches which are quite good.

Ronel and Milon's works are



Deceived Woman by Dhanamoni Chakma

study on Oriental Art done in water colour and mixed media. The works of all four artists are basically done in realistic vein with tribal life-style as their recurrent theme.

That might be because of the fact that I come from the Hill district, Dhanamoni said while explaining his works. 'But the picture Child Labour was done as a general theme and as a reaction to the repression on children and violation of child rights worldwide,' he added. The picture is an oil painting depicting an image of a slogging minor. His Jum Cultivation in oil on canvas is a fine depiction of the traditional cultivation in Hill Tracts.

Dhanamoni's Mother and Child is a very simple depiction of meditative mood.

Ronel's The Biju festival depicts a traditional ritual on the eve of Chaitrasankranti----an occasion of bidding farewell to the old year and welcoming the new one. On this auspicious occasion tribal maidens float flowers as offerings in the brook; bathe and pray for well-being of the tribe. Colour has been aptly applied in this work to capture the spirit and the mood of the occasion.

Subhankar's Life and Environment and Catching Carapace at Night are two noteworthy pieces on the show. Life and Environment projects upon how environment influences life and livelihood in the Hills. Catching Carapace shows struggle for life in which three figures appear in an impressive combination of brilliant colours.

Ronel's series Wait is the visual expression of human's eternal longing for his dear ones.

Milon's long series of six works on Woman is a portrayal of mysterious and various untold deep feelings and longing of women.

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