

exhibition

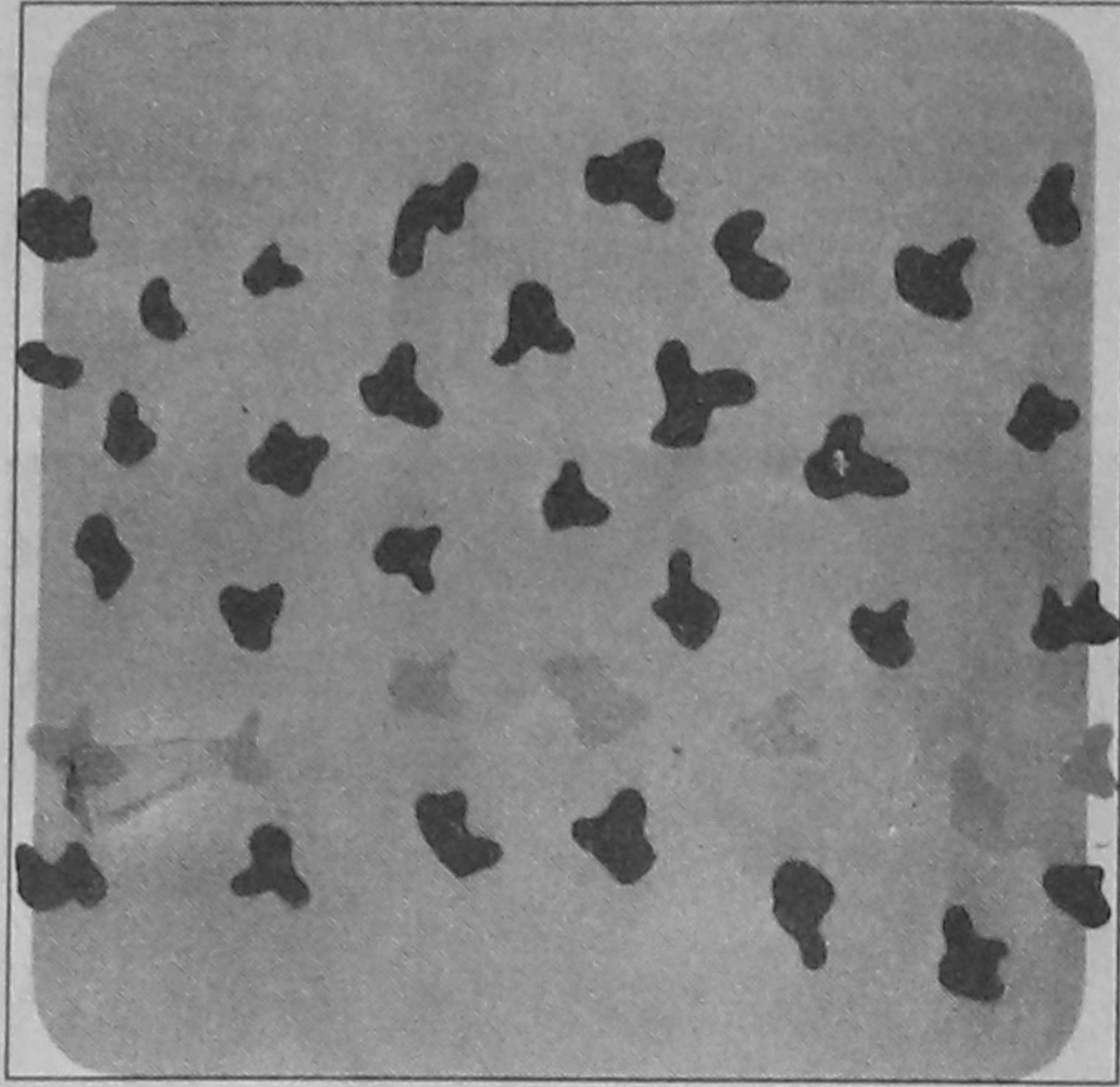
The Return of The Native

Bangladeshi-Greek artist Omar Zafar's interactive paintings captivate city's gallery-goers

By Tawfique Ali

AN Athens-based young artist Omar Zafar has unveiled a new horizon of painting by hammering a way which invites art lovers and admirers along with artists into an interactive creation of art. The idea is to invite and involve viewers' creative participation with the artist. And in the process, art lovers are not merely idle viewers, they are expected to play an active part, of course in a creative manner, to bring out the artist in every individual for Omar believes that art minded people are not merely spectators rather they too can give shape to their artistic desire. In the current exhibition being held at Bengal Gallery at Dhamondi, the painter invites the visitors to configure themselves an art idea of their own along with that of the artist. Zafar terms this work as "creatively interactive paintings."

Zafar's art is about keeping painting alive by redefining it, by inventing a new vocabulary. In this 'creatively interactive paintings' he replaces the canvas by a magnetic surface and vinyl coated magnets are moved around the surface by the viewer who is now a creator creating abstract or specific forms. Forms are not fixed on his magnetic fields as rules are not fixed, thus



Artworks that invite the viewers to take part to give a configuration

breaking one of the oldest and most traditional concepts in art history, the distinction between the creator and the spectator. Zafar's art is not confined by limitations of any kind. It is scientific in nature because it is experimental, it is ephemeral and undergoing continuous change as the spectators can tirelessly

create new forms and therefore it is timeless. If as the artist believes there are two periods in painting, the period of creation and the period of function, then his 'creatively interactive paintings' fulfill both.

A number of art works that are being displayed in the exhibition have been done in household

gloss paint and acrylic on steel and vinyl coated magnetic sheets. Sheets are mostly of 120x120 cm square size. Paint is dried and splited into pieces in irregular shapes.

"I don't impose any particular size because in that case the work might lose its interactive character," says Zafar.

According to him, 'creatively interactive painting,' inspired by the advent of the new millennium, do away with the traditional barrier between the artist and the spectator by enabling paintings to be experienced not only on a sensory level, but also on a creative level as well. This type of expression also allows the creation period, and the functional period of painting to coexist simultaneously, making the experience creation as the artist does. Painting has always been strictly placed within a given area for audience to simply observe. Creatively interactive paintings interferes with this process as the paintings are displayed for mental as well as physical interaction. Spectators are encouraged to pick up its many magnetic painted pieces and interact creatively by placing them on various locations all over the painted steel surface. The artist in this cases hence, transforms into a producer that provides the audience with a stage and actors. Audience in turn thus, take up position as directors of the painting.

Interactive painting consequently, erases the rigid compositional aspect of painting, as the placement of its magnetic pieces allow the formation of

various forms of the pictures that may be repeatedly changed at any time.

Themes surrounding "Creatively Interactive Painting" surface directly from contemporary multicultural and cross-cultural encounters. There are traces of "POP," "Formalism," as well as "Minimalism" and "Installation art." A new look for painting has been experienced; and the paintings bear traces of contemporary architecture, design and new hi-tech innovation such as virtual reality, genetic engineering as well as astrophysics.

Zafar has realized what the artist in the 60s tried to battle, and has made it an advantage in his art. In the 60s the artist realized that once their artwork left the studio and entered into the system of art distribution or art market (gallery) and promotion (art critics, media) they had no control over this creation. It could

so that one can be the artist. He entrusts one with the power of a creator.

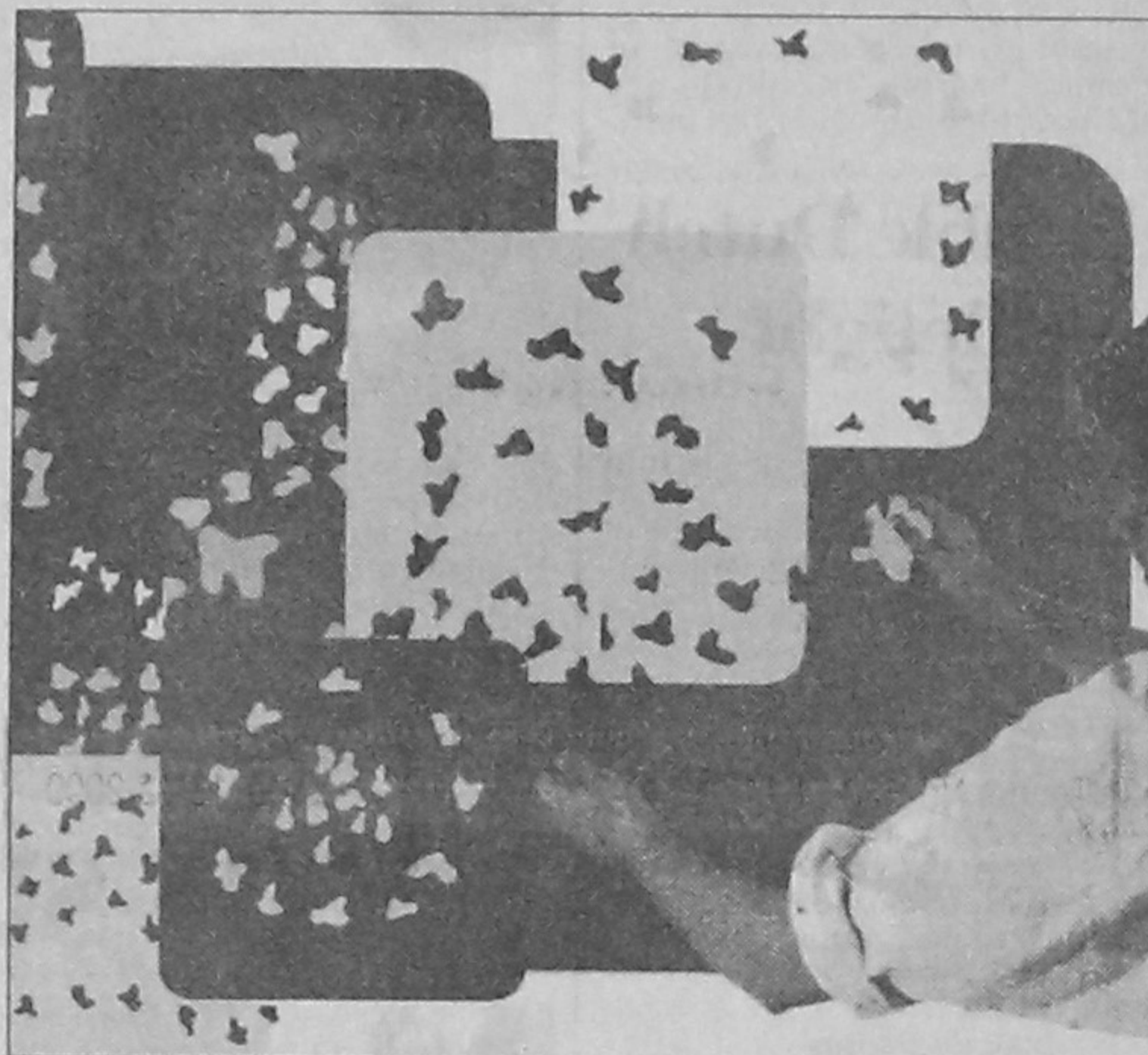
Born in Bangladesh (Dhaka) in 1973 he mostly studied art abroad. He did his BA (Hons) at Studio Arts, Clark University, USA in 1996. He has held several exhibitions: Mime, Yours, His/Hers, Theirs and Everybody Else's paintings in Bangladesh, Three Person Group show, called "Extension of Man" in Athens, Greece and "MI Art" at Milan Art Fair in Italy all in the year 2000. His other exhibitions have been held in Massachusetts, New York and Athens since 1996.

Zafar is currently a lecturer at Campus Art and Sciences University, Athens, Greece. From 1998 to 1999, he had been an art teacher at Razi School, Wood Side, NY.

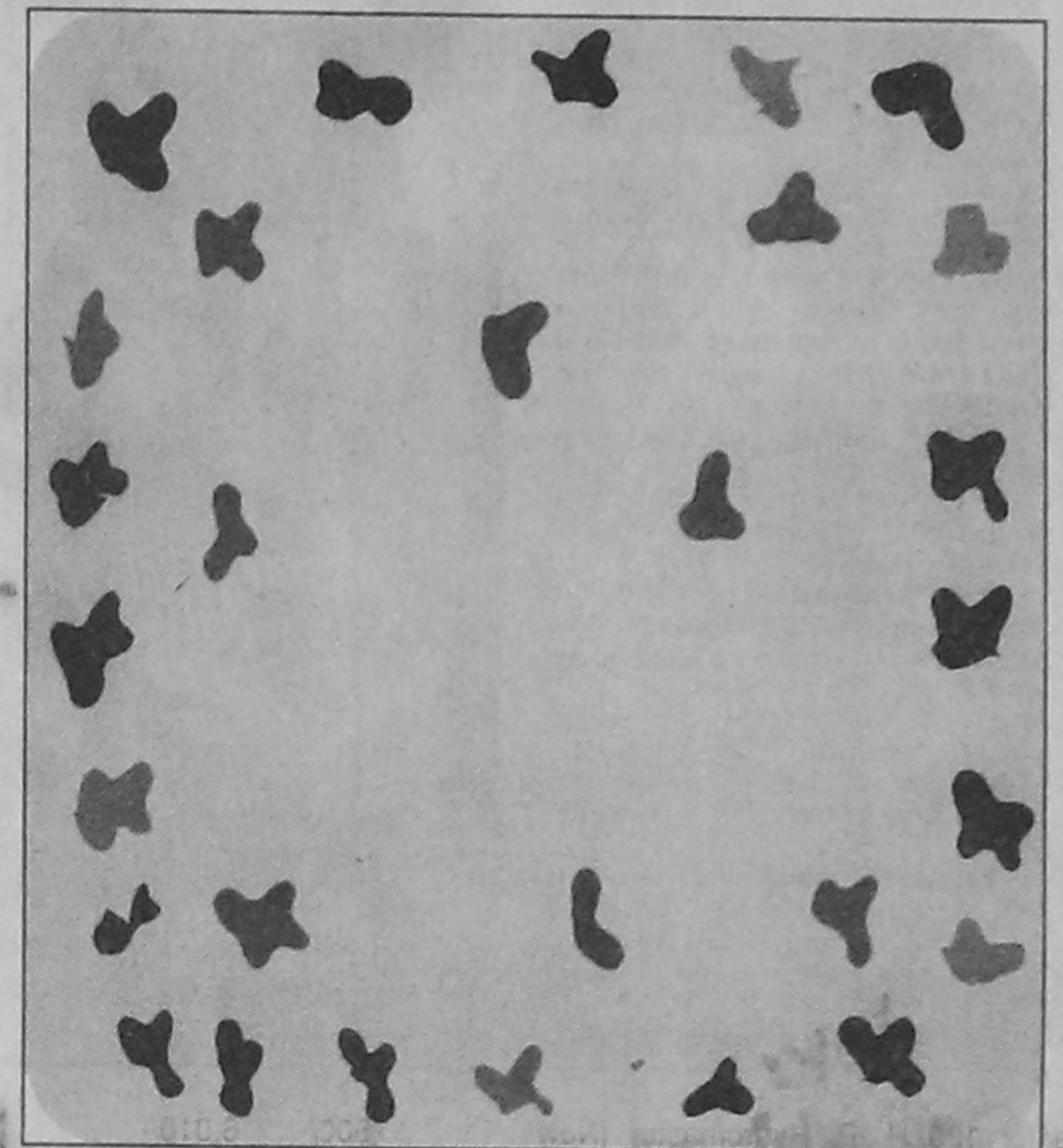
He has been awarded with Clark University Art Award from Massachusetts in 1996 and



Omar Zafar



Interactive paintings at a glance



Household gloss paint and acrylic on steel and vinyl coated magnetic sheets

be presented, interpreted, experienced, marketed in any way the owner found suitable, often disregarding the artistic objective. Zafar realizing this creates his art

Artists Space Independent Projects grant from New York in 1998. The exhibition will run till January 9.

Recommendations

Pleasure of Life

Pleasure of Life is a group exhibition, a part of Chobi Mela, the 1st Festival of Photography in Asia, which started on December 19 at the Indian Cultural Centre.

This exhibition is the final product of World Press Photo's series of three seminars held annually at Pathshala since 1998. Along with Bangladeshi photographers, there were groups from Bosnia Herzegovina, Peru and Zimbabwe. Through the intensive process of analysis and editing, argument and review, what finally stands is a complex and distinctive collection of photo stories, images and words that expresses each individual photographer's search into the theme 'Pleasure of Life'.

The exhibition will remain open from 10:00a.m - 6:00p.m. everyday till January 3, 2001.

Mine, Yours, His/Her's

An exhibition titled Mine, Yours, His/Her's of creative interactive paintings by Omar Zafar was inaugurated at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts on December 20. The exhibition was jointly inaugurated by Abdus Samad Azad, Minister for Foreign Affairs and George Papandreou, Foreign Minister of Greece.

The exhibition has reopened after the Eid holidays on December 31 and will continue from 12 to 8p.m. till January 9.

World Press Retrospective 2000

Chobi Mela, the First Festival of Photography in Asia was formally opened on December 15 at Bangladesh National Museum with the inauguration of the retrospective exhibition of the World Press Photo Foundation, featuring the most significant press photographs taken over the last forty-five years. Many of these photographs have become icons in world history. This exhibition is being held at Bangladesh National Museum gallery and will remain open everyday from 11:00a.m - 5:00p.m. till January 5, 2001.

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



Hostile Waters

Tonight on HBO at 10

A chilling thriller which recreates the true story of a collision between Soviet and American submarines off the US coast that almost caused a nuclear disaster. Starring Rutger Hauer, Max Von Sydow, Martin Sheen

(Vinod Khanna, Kum Kum) 5: Shadi Ke Baad (Jeetendra, Rakhee, Shatrughan Sinha)

STAR WORLD
6:30 Live In The World With Joyce Meyer 7:00



Maggie Winters on Star World at 9:00p.m.

The Pretender 1:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show 2:30 NYPD Blue 3:30 Grace Under Fire 4:00 The Bold And The Beautiful 4:30 Mork & Mindy 5:00 Happy Days 5:30 Baywatch 6:30 Hollywood Squares 7:00 Home Improvement 7:30 Star News Asia 8:00 Friends 8:30 2 Guys A Girl And A Pizza Place 9:00 Maggie Winters 9:25 Star News Asia 9:30 Ally McBeal 10:30 The Practice 11:30 Friends 12:00 Star News 12:30 2 Guys A Wonder 6:30 Fox Kids-Daily 7:30 Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki 8:00 Tu Tu Main Main 8:30 Hasna Mat 9:00 Siski 9:30 Kaun Banega Crorepati 10:30 Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki 11:00 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 11:30 Aaj Ki Baat 12:00 Shagun 12:30 Telebrands 1:00 Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki 1:30 Star Movie Show 4:30 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 5:00 Saans 5:30 Meri Saheli

STAR MOVIES



Bolte Chai on Ekushey TV at 7 pm

Girl And A Pizza Place 1:00 Maggie Winters 1:30 Ally McBeal 2:30 The Practice 3:30 2 Guys A Girl, And A Pizza Place 4:00 Maggie Winters 4:30 Ally McBeal 5:30 Creflo Dollar Daily 6:00 Kenneth Copeland Ministries

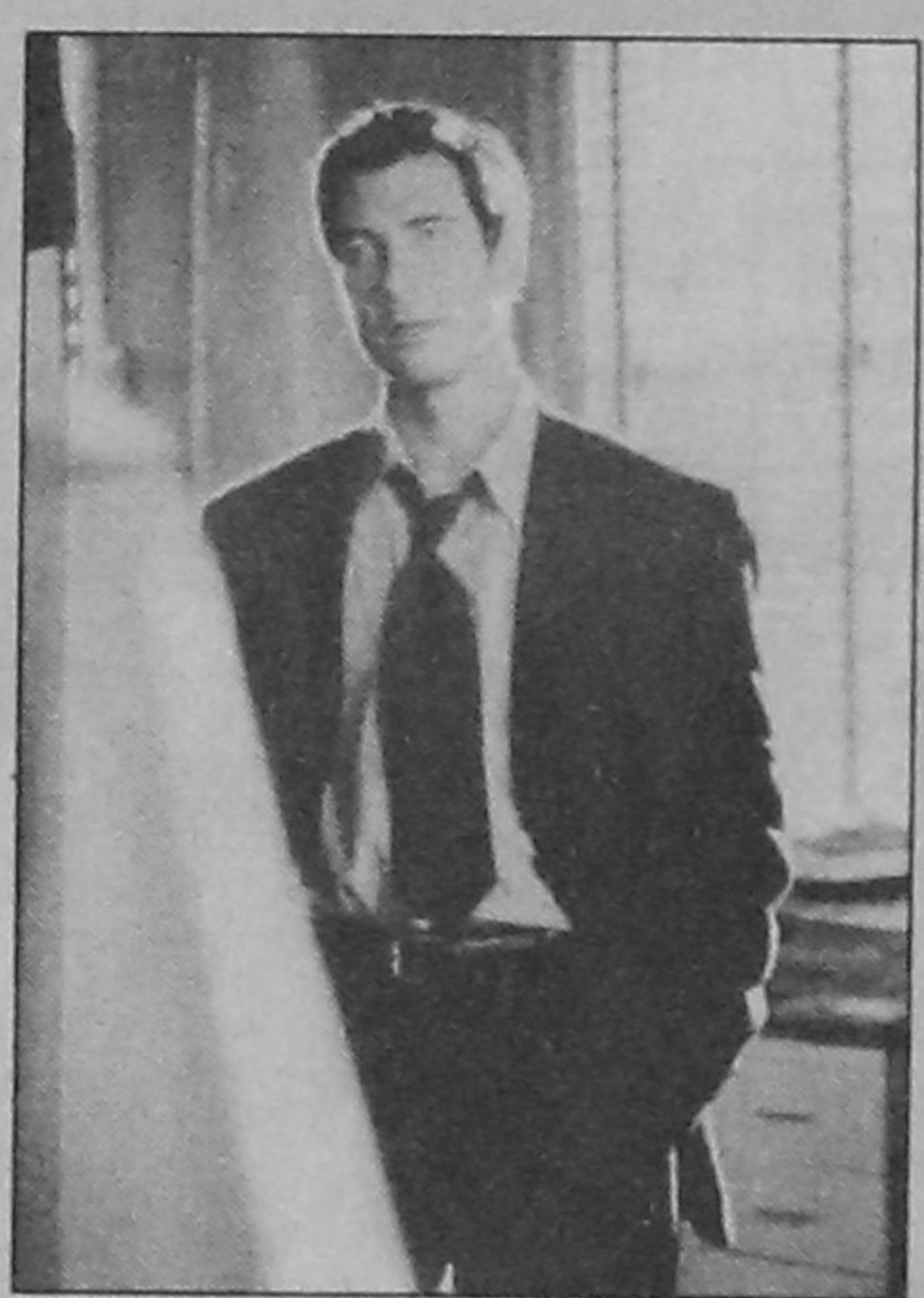
STAR PLUS

6:00 Tu Tu Main Main 6:30 STAR Geetmala 7:30 Hit Ya Fit 8:00 Cine Jharokha 8:30 Good Morning India 9:30 Star Morning Show 12:30 Hit Ya Fit 1:00 TSN 1:30 Tanha 2:00 Meri Saheli 2:30 Saans 3:00 Shagun 3:30 Gharwali Uparwali 4:00 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 4:30 Cine Jharokha 5:00 Hit Ya Fit 5:30 Sewalal Mewawala 6:00 Small

7:00 Drama: Jungle Boy (PG) 9:00 Drama: 12 Angry Men (PG) 11:00 Action: Money Talks (15) 1:00 Midday Movie: Hoodlum (15) 3:30 Horror: Wishmaster II 5:30 Drama: True Blue 7:45 Drama: 12 Angry Men (PG) 9:30 E! Bts 10:30 You Pick Theflck.Com: 12:45 Hearts of Fire: Au Pair 1999 (G) 3:15 Romance: Friends & Lovers (15) 4:30 E! This: The Selena Murder Trial

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

6:30 Animal Survivors 7:00 ESPU 7:30 Outer Bounds I & II 8:00 Without Warning I 8:30 Lonely Planet V 9:30 Beyond 2000 10:00 Next Step 10:30 Go For It! 11:00 Intimate



The Practice on Star World at 10:30 pm.

Escapes 12:30 Wild Discovery 1:30 Medical Detectives I 2:00 Medical Detectives I 2:30 Medical Mysteries 3:30 Animal Survivors 4:00 ESPU 4:30 Outer Bounds I & II 5:00 Without Warning 15:30 Lonely Planet V 6:30 Popular Mechanics for Kids II 7:00 Pop Sci 7:30 Wild Discovery Series 5:30 Medical Mysteries

CNN
4:00 CNN This Morn-



Friends on Star World at 8 pm

BTV
3:00 Opening announcement 3:20 Open University 4:00 Khabar 4:05 Programme on Mother and Child health 4:20 Cartoon: Casper 4:40 Programme on Homeopathy 5:20 Educational programme for College and Univer-

Headlines 12:05 Ajker Potrikay 12:15 Bangla Movie: Ma Bap 2:40 Drishti 3:00 Ekushey News Headlines 3:05 Drama Series: Choto Choto Dheu 3:30 Shampa Rezar Boithok 4:00 Bauliana 4:30 Expedition to the Animal Kingdom 5:00 Circus Circus 5:30



Home Improvement on Star World at 7 pm.

sity students 5:45 Drishti 5:50 Ajker Potrikay 6:00 Ekushey News Headlines 6:05 Classic Cartoons 6:30 Life on the Land 7:30 Bolte Chai 7:30 Ekushey News 8:00 Drama Series: Bismriti 8:30 Pother Paychali 9:00 Drama: To be Confirmed 10:00 BTV News 10:20 Chitrogeeti 11:15 Ekushey Late, Night News 11:30 Ekushey News Headlines

BBC WORLD
6:00 BBC News 6:30 World Business Report 7:00 BBC News 7:30 Asia Today/Asia



Face to Face on BBC WORLD at 10p.m.

Business Report 8:00 BBC News 8:30 Asia Today/World Business Report 9:00 BBC News 9:30 Asia Today/Asia Business Report 10:00 BBC News 10:30 Hardtalk 11:00 BBC News 11:30 Talking Movies 12:00 BBC News 12:30 Hospital 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hardtalk 4:00 BBC News 4:30 Jancis Italian Feast Rough Science 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Reporters ex World Review 6:00 BBC News 6:30 Hospital 7:00 BBC News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 Click Online 8:00 BBC News 8:30 Hardtalk 9:00 BBC

HBO
7:00 Presumed Innocent 9:45 The Exorcist 12:15 Wag The Dog 2:15 Wolfen 4:45 Tootsie 7:00 Marathon Man 9:30 Cinema



Chitra Geeti on Ekushey TV at 10:20 pm

Secrets Ep 4: Epic Battles 10:00 Hostile Waters 12:00 Gardens of Stone 2:15 Wag The Dog 4:15 Tootsie

AXN

6:00 Big Sky II/Secrets & Lies 7:00 Heart of Courage 8:00 Cyberteam in Akibabara/Flame of Recca 9:00 Slam Dunk/Samurai X 10:00 Charlie's Angels I/Angels on Wheels 11:00 Heart of Courage 12:00 Pensacola III/Tip of the Spear 1:00 Movie: Guncrazy 3:00 Who Dares Wins/Cyberteam in Akibabara 4:00 Flame of Recca/Slam Dunk 5:00 Samurai X/Who Dares Wins 6:00 I Dare You 7:00 VIP II/Return of the Owl 8:00 Movie: Universal Soldier II: Brothers in Arms 10:00 Charlie's Angels I/Angels on Wheels 11:00 VIP II/Return of the Owl 12:00 Movie: Universal Soldier II: Brothers in Arms 2:00 Big Sky II/Secrets & Lies 3:00 Silk Stalkings V/Sweet Punishment

STAR GOLD

8:30 Bollywood News 9:00 Daal Mein Kaala (Kishore Kumar, Nimmi Agha) 12:00 Geet Bahar 12:30 Saathi (Rajendra Kumar, Vyantimala) 3:30 Bollywood News 4:00 Dhamkee (Vinod Khanna, Kum Kum) 7:00 Geet Bahar 7:30 Rang Birangi Hira Aur Patthar (Shashi Kapoor, Shabana Azmi, Ashok Kumar) 10:30 Bollywood News 11:00 Shadi Ke Baad (Jeetendra, Rakhee, Shatrughan Sinha) 12:30 Shadi Ke Baad (contd) 2:00 Geet Bahar 2:30 Dhamkee