

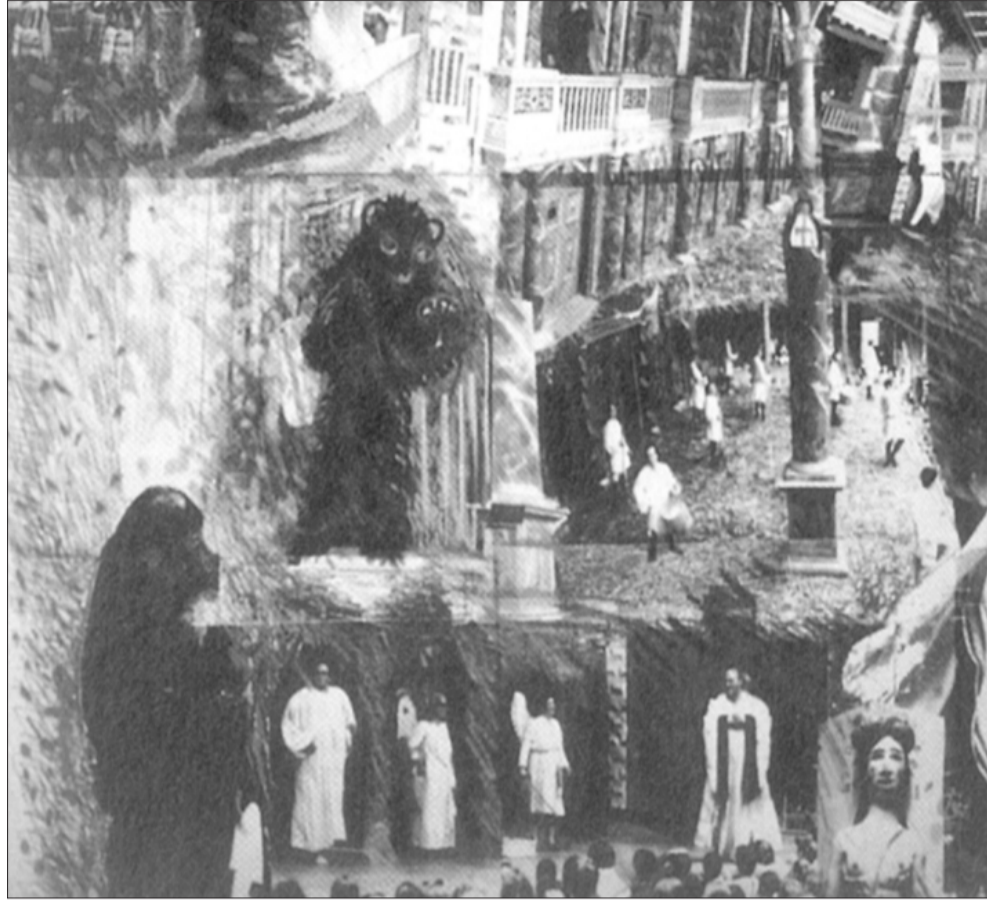
Art

Polly Hope bridging two worlds

SAYEED AHMAD

COLIN Imray, [later Sir Colin.] and Shirley Imray, [later Lady.] were good friends of ours. A month after they arrived as High commissioners in Dhaka. We invited them to a sit down dinner with a few friends and we just clicked. Colin and Shirley were art connoisseurs and so we had a lot in common. I, although a bureaucrat, was always deeply absorbed in cultural and artistic pursuits, and it was this aspect which brought Colin and myself close. Shirley too had a serious interest in the arts and had been involved at the Victorian and Albert Museum London in various research publications connected with the Indian sub-continent. My wife, Purveen Ahmed, with her background in arts and crafts, led us on to a stimulating and enjoyable friendship. Colin used to invite a lot of art lovers to the residence and did many promotional programmes for British artists.

Polly Hope was commissioned by the British government Art Collection to make art works for the new high commissioner's residence in 1989. She designed a large textile work with nakshi kantha stitching as a mural for the entrance lobby, and another wall of the famous Bengal terra-cotta tiles. Using these two traditional media Polly Hope gave us a new dimension to the art works. I already had an ongoing television series on BTV on World Theatre, so after we met at Colin's house. I invited Polly to do an interview on TV. Polly is a person of great qualities, and versatility, besides being a most social and responsive personality. Very outspoken, clear-headed and extremely genuine in heart, she either takes to people or does not. We got on right from the start. She spoke about her works and techniques and especially her belief that traditional and classical forms should never fade away, but must move on. There must always be new expressions and interpretations. Always be a synthesis of the old with the new, both through technology and modernistic expression. One such outstanding work is an Old town scene and the other is Polly's large



Shakespeare's Globe London (detail).

work on the GLOBE theatre at her SPACES and PLACES exhibition in Dhaka.

Polly's husband was the renowned architect Theo Crosby, he was a partner with Sam Wanamaker in the Globe project, which was to rebuild Shakespeare's Globe on its original site where its foundations had been found. The project was completed two years after Theo's death in 1994 and we had occasion to witness a performance of "The Tempest," there. It was a marvellous experience to sit on the wooden benches set in tiers around the stage, which had no wings, the performers entering in full view of the audience, [as in jatra]. The audience were also standing in the theatre yard close to the stage and expressed their comments, laughter and jeers, quite openly, just as it used to happen in Shakespeare's time. The Globe theatre, in its new entrance, has a glass facade and ambient areas, balconies, restaurant and book and souvenir shops. We looked at several books on Theo Crosby's work and life and realised what a man per excellence he was! We met Theo several times over lunch in their house He was energetic and jovial and had a very handsome personality, yet unassuming. He showed us his workshop where he was doing metal casting for his projects.

During our visits to London we were houseguests of Polly and Theo at their Whitehall flat just off Trafalgar Square near Embankment tube station. This was a fantastic study cum living attic, which had to be reached by climbing up a narrow twisting staircase. The flat looked out onto garden and a lovely view of the Whitehall buildings and Buckingham palace. On entering it was like seeing a magical world. The display of masks, kites, hanging mobiles stereo music sets, records and books, books strewn from floor to ceiling enchanted our minds and mood. Polly had set up the kitchenette for us with basics so we could be utterly comfortable. On a desk we found sheaves of notes on paper spread in all directions. On closer look we read some interesting notes written by Theo of his young days in Africa. I wonder if this valuable autobiography was published?

Polly always invited us to spend time with her at the house near Brick Lane Spitalfields, an area also known as 'Little Bangladesh.' This house was once a brewery in a large sprawling compound enclosed with brick walls. Here too Polly had created a charming world with works of art, beautiful paintings, lovely inviting arrangements in the dining and sitting areas, and most enchanting of all, an exotic parrot named

Figaro swinging on an iron swing shrieking his calls every now and then. She also had a menagerie of dogs and cats.

Polly was always keen to have talented people around her and encouraged artists from many disciplines. She has deep knowledge and interest in music, opera, singing, painting, theater and photography. During one of our visits we met an actor from Germany who had come to perform the role of Shylock in the 'Merchant of Venice' in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Polly was working on Elizabethan costume replicas for the souvenir shops at the Globe. Polly had also designed some most interesting Turkish odalisque paintings, which Purveen had had embroidered at the 'Skill Development Centre' she ran in Dhanmondi, Dhaka. These were highly successful needlework pieces and adorn Polly's spacious studio in Brick Lane.

Polly Hope's return to Dhaka after eleven years, bringing her marvellous exhibition of works entitled 'Spaces and Places,' is indicative of her prolific and dynamic creativity. She says, "this is my aim with my new large works, to show places that have moved me, places I've enjoyed; I would like to hand on this enjoyment." That's typically Polly, giving, sharing, making the world go round.

We are lucky to know this great and fine artist, an innovator, a trail-blazer. At the end I wish to congrat-



Eloise (detail).

ulate Dr Shahidul Alam who arranged the First Asian Photography Exhibition in Dhaka from November 2000 to late February 2001. Polly Hope's 'Spaces and Places' exhibition concludes the grand show of the 'Chobi Mela' at DRIK Gallery, Road 15/A Dhanmondi. This exhibition is characterised for its use of photographs drawings, brushwork and textile impositions placed in 360 degree spaces, beyond normal vision. Polly Hope has broken new ground.

Sayed Ahmad is art critic and playwright



Royal Art, Diana's Flowers.



Polly Hope with Sayeed Ahmad and Perveen Ahmed in her exotic courtyard in Brick Lane, London, 1998.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Solo exhibition

A solo exhibition of artworks by Dilara Begum Jolly has started at the Gallery 21. The exhibition will continue everyday from 10a.m. - 8p.m. till February 26.

Art Exhibition

A solo art exhibition by Faruk Ahmad was inaugurated on February 17 at the Divine Art Gallery, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

The exhibition will remain open everyday from 10a.m. - 8p.m. till February 26.

Music of Water

On the occasion of Convocation 2001 of Jahangirnagar University, Centre for Nature Photo Study (CNPS) organised a solo photography exhibition by A M M Ikram titled Music of Water at the Jahangirnagar University auditorium, which started on February 16.

The exhibition will remain open everyday from 10a.m. to 5p.m. till February 26.



Film Show

Walt Disney Retrospective by Zahir Raihan Film Society.

Zahir Raihan Film Society are screening 6 animated fairy tales by world famous American animated film maker Walt Disney from February 18 to 20 at the German Cultural Centre at Dhanmondi (Road No. 02).

On February 19, Sleeping Beauty at 4:00 p.m. and The Little Mermaid at 5:30 p.m. and on February 20, Beauty and the Beast at 4:00 p.m. and Aladdin at 5:30 p.m. will be screened. Children are allowed free access to all the shows.

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



Without Limits on HBO tonight at 10. The film follows the late famous distance runner Steve Prefontaine from his youth in Oregon where he worked with legendary coach Bill Bowerman, later to Olympics in Munich and his early death at 24 in a car crash. Co-produced by Tom Cruise, the movie was voted one of Time magazine's Top Ten movies of 1998. Without Limits stars Billy Crudup, Donald Sutherland and is directed by Robert Towne.

CHANNEL
6:30 Eyewitness II 7:00 In Care of Nature 7:30 Outer Bounds I & II 8:00 Without Warning I 8:30 Lonely Planet VI 9:30 Beyond 2000 10:00 The Quest 10:30 Go For It! 11:30 Intimate Escapes 12:30 Wild Discovery 1:30 Medical Detectives I 2:00 Medical Detectives I 2:30 Vital Breakthroughs 3:30



Dharma & Greg on Star World at 10:30p.m.

Animal Survivors 4:00 In Care of Nature 4:30 Outer Bounds I & II 5:00 Without Warning I 5:30 Lonely Planet II 6:30 Crocodile Hunter's Croc Files II 7:00 Splat II & III 7:30 Wild Discovery 8:30 Wild Asia 9:30 Medical Detectives Season 4 10:00 Ultrascience II 10:30 Airborne 11:30 Discovery Profile Series 12:30 Wild Discovery 1:30 Wild Asia 2:30 Medical Detectives



Fraiser on Star World at 11:30p.m.

8:30 Happy Days 9:00 Nash Bridges 10:00 Murder Call 11:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 12:00 Strange Luck 1:00 Grace Under Fire 1:30 The Bold & the Beautiful 2:00 Mork & Mindy 2:30 Happy Days 3:00 Baywatch 4:00 The Simpsons 4:30 Home Improvement 5:00 STAR News Asia 5:30 Friends 6:00 Sabrina 6:30 Everybody Loves Raymond 6:45 STAR News Asia 7:00 Dharma & Greg 7:30 Frasier 8:00 Chicago Hope 9:00 Friends 9:30 STAR News 10:00 Sabrina 10:30 Dharma & Greg 11:00 Everybody Loves Raymond 11:30 Frasier 12:00 Chicago Hope 1:30 Sabrina 1:30 Dharma & Greg 2:00 Everybody Loves Raymond 2:30 Frasier 3:00 Creolo Dollar Daily 3:30 Kenneth Copeland Ministries 4:00 Life In The Word With Joyce Meyer 4:30 World News 5:00 Grace Under Fire 5:30 Mork & Mindy



Everybody Loves Raymond on Star World at 11p.m.

BTV
3:00 Opening Announcement 3:20 Open University 4:00 Khabar 4:05 Educational Programme 4:30 Shasthathatha: Healthcare programme for mother and children 4:45 Sports Programme 5:20 Anu Poromanu: Science programme for teenagers 5:45 Puschitathaya 6:00 Khabar 6:10 Unmesh 6:35 Lok Lokalo: Programme by tribal 7:00 News Headlines 7:05 Dolon



The 1st episode of the new drama series Lohar Churi on Ekushey television at 3:05p.m.

Champa: Nazrulsangeet Programme 7:25 Ekush Amar Ohonkar 8:00 News in Bengali 8:20 Drama: Amra Phul Dite Jabo 9:30 Jadur Nagari 10:00 News at Ten 10:20 Antaranga Aloke 11:30 Khabar/ The News 11:45 Close Down

CHANNEL i
6:15 Close Up (Guest: Gazul Haque) 6:50 Akattorer Dinguli 7:00 Sports Time 7:40 Sai Sur Sai Gane 8:00 Din Protidin 8:25 Job Line 9:00 Amar Chobbi 9:50 I Focus 10:00 Reciting from Holy Quran 10:10 Suvo



Bengali movie Notun Prithibi on Ekushey television at 8p.m.



Toyota World of Wild Life on Ekushey television at 7p.m.

Sandha 10:40 Vasha Amar Ahongker 11:15 I Close Up (Guest: Gazul Haque) 11:50 Akattorer Dinguli 12:00 Sports Time 12:40 Sai Sur Sai Gane 1:15 Job Line 2:00 Amar Chobbi 2:50 I Focus 3:00 Bangla Cinema: Nil Akasher Nichea.. (Razzak/Kobori) 6:00 Reciting from Holy Quran 6:10 Suvo Sandha 6:40 Vasha Amar Ahongker 7:15 Musical Pro Badhon 7:50 Akattorer Dinguli 8:00 Aso Mili Sampriti Bandhone. 8:40 Spy Cam



Bipasha Hayat stars in the drama Proti: Chunia on Ekushey television at 8p.m.

9:15 Business File 10:00 Anondo Dhara 10:50 I Focus 11:00 Bangla Cinema: Alotuku Asa: (Razzak/Suzata)

HBO
6:30 Nothing but Trouble 8:30 Johnny Skidmarks 10:30 Crossing Delancey 12:30 Final Analysis 3:00 Cops and Robbersons 5:00 Love Affair 7:15 As Good as It Gets 10:00 Without Limits 12:30 The Hunted 2:45 Crossing

2:30 Sarhad (Raj Babbar, Danny, Farha) 5:30 Badal (Sanjeev Kumar, Vijaylaxmi)

BBC WORLD
6:00 BBC News 6:30 Asia Today/Reporters 7:00 BBC News/Asia Today Inc Asia Business Report 8:00 BBC News 8:30 Asia Today/Reporters 9:00 BBC News 9:30 Asia Today/Asia Business Report 10:00 BBC News 10:30 Earth Report 11:00

BBC News 11:30 Italian Feast 12:00 BBC News 12:30 India Business Report 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hardtalk 2:00 BBC News 2:30 Correspondent 3:00 BBC News 3:30 Hardtalk 4:00 BBC News 4:30 Top Gear ex Waterworld 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Correspondent 6:00 BBC News 6:30 Face To Face 7:00 BBC News 7:15 World Business Report 8:00 BBC News 8:30 Hardtalk 9:00 BBC News 9:30 Asia Today 10:00 BBC News 10:30 Mastermind India 11:00 BBC News 11:15 World Business Report 11:30 Click Online 12:00 BBC News 12:30 World Business Report 12:45 World Sport 1:00 BBC News 1:30 Hardtalk 2:00 BBC News 2:30 Holiday 3:00 BBC News 3:30 World Business Report 4:00 BBC News 4:30 Asia Business Report 4:45 World Business Report 5:00 BBC News 5:30 Asia Business Report/Asia Today

CNN
4:00 CNN This Morning 4:30 Asia Business Morning 5:00 CNN This Morning 5:30 Asia Business Morning 6:00 CNN This Morning 6:15 Asia Business Morning 6:30 Asian Edition 6:45 Asia Business Morning 7:00 CNN This Morning 7:30 Business Unusual 8:00 CNN & Time 9:00 World News 9:30 World Sport 10:00 World News 10:30 This Week in the NBA 11:00 World News 11:30 Best of Q&A 12:00 World News 12:30 World Rept 1:00 World News 1:30 World Sport 2:00 World News 2:30 Best of Insight 3:00 CNN & Time 4:00 World News 4:30 Biz Asia 5:00 Asia Tonight 5:30 World Sport 6:00 World News 6:15 Asian Edition 6:30 Biz Asia 7:00 World News 7:30 CNNHotspots 8:00 Asia