

Interview

An architect with a dream of more cultural interchanges

Slide presentation on new architecture in Berlin tomorrow

FAYZA HAQ

CLAUDIA Riemke, who helped with the setting up the exhibition on the new buildings of Berlin at Goethe Institut, and put in the necessary commentaries during the accompanying slide show, has been to Bangladesh last year for four months.

Claudia says, "I stayed with architect Saiful Huq and we had worked together on some projects, specially domestic ones such as the guest house located near an orphanage in Chittagong. I had joined Saiful's office for four months from January to May last year. We also joined a competition for a memorial for the victims of the

Liberation War, with the two of us working like a team. We had met in Berlin, when he was there two and a half years ago to study German and German architecture. We had a long talk on how we could collaborate on projects in Bangladesh and that is how am here. We have the same wavelengths and we arranged the trip through e-mail correspondence."

"The reason why I am helping Goethe Institut with the poster exhibition and the slide show is because I used to visit the Goethe Institut in Berlin frequently and they requested for my help. The exhibition is an extension of a German festival in India. The slide show features the development in Berlin in the last decade after the Berlin

Wall came down. Many developments took place remarkably rapidly. Originally, I come from Frankfurt from the west but I moved to Berlin to complete my architectural studies. Living there for eight years now, I love Berlin. I know all the buildings that are included in the slide show. If people ask various questions you have to know everything about the city, which I do. The show also includes an entertaining lecture."

Asked what aspects of the Berlin architecture she had taken, Claudia says, "The slide show has already been designed. It has not been made by me. Saiful Huq and I decided to make a lecture out of the slide show to make it lively and

clarify all the aspects of the architecture in Berlin. Here people get the chance to discuss if they like. I arranged the layout with the people in Dhaka of the poster exhibition as I know the subject so it is easy to organize it. Basically my stay in Dhaka for four weeks is a break for me. I'd love to stay longer but I can't. I can only stay for a fortnight at the most working on the exhibition and the lecture. The lecture is scheduled on May 4."

Speaking about how she got into architecture, Claudia says, "I think my first steps to architecture was my keen interest in art and I studied art history first and also studied graphic designing for a while. I felt really

drawn to architecture as it combines many aspects and felt the need to create ideal environment. For me architecture is a perfect combination of realistic things like how to build a wall, a roof or a door. This is combined with the idealistic design aspect. All these aspects are so interesting to me. The same applies to Berlin which I have helped to project. "It is not a beautiful city. Munich in comparison is much more attractive, architecturally and from the viewpoint of the landscape. I feel that Berlin is changing over the years and it is very exciting. It is getting more cosmopolitan and I experienced this personally as I have friends from various countries such as Bangladesh. It is very lively. I will not compare it to London or Paris for each city has its own individual attraction. Each has its own atmosphere and Berlin is special in its unique manner of continuous changes. This makes the city lively and interesting."

Asked to talk about the architects who have inspired her, Claudia says that there are many like Louis Kahn, Zamthor and Sauerbruck / Hutton. She says, "When I first came here I studied Shere-e-Bangla Nagar. I went to the Parliament building twice, just to sketch the structure. I spent hours there and talked to a lot of people about it. I did some own

design in the eastern part of Berlin as there have been many disasters there. I feel they have been adequately reconstructed the buildings although there is still a lot of work to do. East Berlin is really good now. A lot of money was needed to do this task and the government has helped generously. In the Eastern part there was a great lack of facilities like kindergartens, schools and other social amenities. Now, the whole situation has improved greatly."

Talking about her impressions of Bangladesh, Claudia says, "I loved my stay here because of the warmth of the people. Most of the time I stayed at Dhaka, although I had the opportunity to visit other places too like Srimangal, Chittagong and the Sunderbans last year. This time I came to visit friends. I find the Bengali mentality very heart warming. When I came here last month, I stayed with Bengali families, almost like a family member. I like the food, although I have to eat a lot of rice to reduce the spice. The sweets are sometimes too much for me. But I loved trying out all types of food here, including the 'pitahs'. Last year I went to Ramna Bataiul on 'Pahila Bashash' wearing a sari. I have heard 'Rabindra Sangeet' and have loved them. I have been exposed to the 'sitar', 'harmonium', 'tabla' and the 'sarod' while at Berlin."

"Coming to Bangladesh, I cannot deny the western media concept that there is a lot of poverty and natural calamities. The traffic pollution and the lack of education cannot be denied. My Bengali friends are suffering because of these elements. However, there have been changes and there are people here who are educated and have stayed back in the country in order to bring a change in the environment and other social elements. There is hope for the country."

"I've been to Thailand, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore and love Asian culture. I hope to go to India next time. I hope to have inter-cultural exchange through my work. As I know a lot of Bengalis living in Berlin, for instance, who are artists, geologists who deal with organic problems like arsenic. Through them and those I know living in Bangladesh itself, I hope to have better understanding and cultural interchanges from time to time."

Claudia Riemke

research of Asian architecture based on village and tribal architecture. It is inspiring to see how people create their own environment. I collected the facts to make a book of my own. I have done urban design mainly for the eastern part of Berlin and am also a consultant for architectural design." "My experience includes that with Werbeagentur Zinnecker, Bad Homburg and Deutsche Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt am Main. I have three years of working experience, specializing in urban

RECOMMENDATIONS



Architecture in Dhaka

A seminar on the future of Dhaka city titled 'Architecture in Dhaka - Transforming the City' will be held at the Goethe Institut (German Cultural Centre) on May 5. Time: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Morning session), 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Architects, planners and people from other disciplines will critically examine the current architectural and planning scenario of Dhaka and put forward recommendations.

13th National Convention

The 13th National Convention of Bangladesh Uchchi Shilpi Goshthi will be held on May 4 & 5 at the Dhaka Mohanagar Nayamancha. This includes cultural programmes daily at 7:00 p.m.

Satyajit Ray Retrospective

Satyajit Ray Retrospective organised by Zahir Raheen Film Society is now being held at the auditorium of the High Commission of India at Road No. 2, Dhanmondi. Screening schedule: Kanchanjangha (The Kanchenjunga) on May 5 at 3:30 p.m., Charulata (The Lonely Wife) on May 5 at 6:00 p.m., Nayak (The Hero) on May 6 at 3:30 p.m. and Aranyer Dinratri (Days and Nights in the Forest) on May 6 at 6:00 p.m.

Art Show

"Mindscape" - 4th solo painting exhibition by Syed Iqbal is now being held at the Bengal Shilpaly, Road # 27, House # 275/F, Dhanmondi. "Mindscape" is a series of sensitive art work by the artist. The show will remain open to public from 12 noon to 8 p.m. everyday till May 4.

2nd Solo

The 2nd solo painting exhibition by Shumona Haque is now being held at the Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. The exhibition will come to an end today at 8:00 p.m.



This building designed by Claudia is located in an area, which is being revitalised. Here you find accommodation for single parents.



House for artists designed by Claudia. It was originally built 100 years ago.



Lofts for artists planned by Claudia

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



So I Married an Axe Murderer on HBO at 10:00 p.m. Comic extraordinaire Mike Myers is a guy who is afraid of commitment. He invents absurd excuses to break up with his girlfriend until he meets Miss Right. Unfortunately, the woman of his dreams might turn out to have a fatal flaw - she could be an axe murderer.

BTV

3:00 Opening Announcement
3:20 Open University
3:45 Documentary
4:00 Khabar
4:05 Cartoon: Burny & Friends
4:30 Ta Ta Thoi Thoi: Dance lessons for children
5:00 School Debate
5:45 Dharma O'Jibon
6:00 Khabar
6:20 Shasthathathy: Healthcare programme for mother and children
6:35 Programme from Chittagong station
7:00 News Headlines
7:05 El Pritibhi
7:30 Shondhamaloti: Nazrulsangeet programme
8:00 News in Bengali
8:30 Drama serial: Roder
8:45 Ta Ta Thoi Thoi: Dance lessons for children
9:00 News Headlines
9:05 Magazine show: Bohurupi
9:30 Movie: Karishma
10:00 Banglar Mukh
10:30 News in English
10:55 Mukti Pothe
11:30 Konkha / The News
11:45 Closing

EKUSHEY TV

12:00 Ekushey Midday
12:20 Bangla Film: Geet

12:40 Drishti

3:00 Ekushey Headlines

3:05 Drama Serial: Probashi Porjai

3:30 Kena Kata

4:00 Taroka Mela

4:30 Expedition to the Animal Kingdom

5:00 Circus Circus

5:30 Drishti

5:50 Ajker Potrikay

6:00 Ekushey Headlines

6:05 Classic Cartoons

6:30 Chardike

7:30 Ekushey News

8:00 English Series: Peter Benchley's Amazon

9:00 Drama: Konkha

10:00 Pepsi Concert

10:30 BTV News

11:00 Ekushey Nightly News

11:30 E Shopthar Bishbo

12:00 Ekushey News Headlines

13:00 Pather Ke Sanam

(Manoj Kumar, Mumtaz, Waheeda Rehman)

3:00 Woodland Bollywood

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11:00 Geet Bahar

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