

Exhibition

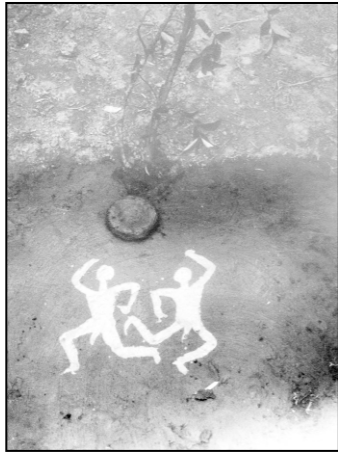
In praise of vanishing peoples

Shameem Hasan's exhibition of "Nishkanda" at Goethe Institut

FAYZA HAQ

SHAMEEM Hasan, who held his exhibition "Nishkanda" at the Goethe Institut, says, "although this is a photographic exhibit, I do not consider myself primarily a photographer. The lens is merely a medium through which I express my feelings and beliefs. It is just like others use painting, acting or singing to tell others of their innermost feelings. Even though I have not been trained as a photographer I have something to say through my photographs. I have my ideologies and dreams to

improve society and they motivate my work. 'Nishkanda' is a part of a trilogy. "At first I had an exhibit called 'Mandi: Dying Rituals' at the Alliance Francaise and the pictures in them were mainly taken from 'Nokni Middi' (worship of tutelary deity) ritual of the Mandi the third largest indigenous community in Bangladesh. Generally called 'Garu' these people are proud to call themselves 'Achik Mandi' (hill dweller). Through the photos I wanted to show that we as human beings are forgetting original goodness and are degenerating. The rituals of these primitive people remind

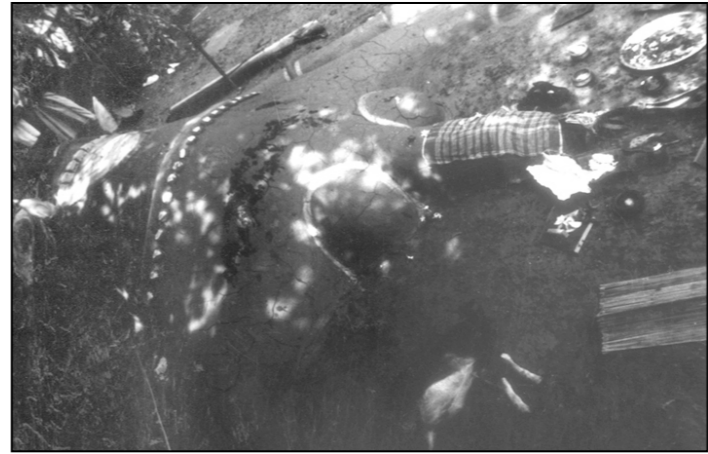


men of their innocent beginnings. I feel that we should return to our original pristine existence.



the worship, for instance, which is interesting. "To me this is not a mere

uttering of magic spells or a hidden protesting ritual of frightened pagan people. With civilization the fine elements of nature are probably defeated. Our own society, in its present state, is a confused one. It does not, for example, know whether it is 'Bengali' or 'Bangladeshi'. A lot of good qualities in it were destroyed with the passage of time. If our sense of values were all that admirable, we would not see the list of rampant evils in our society that go unchecked. Even though we are supposed to have come upon the right religion yet evil prevails in our everyday existence. We are



wrong to question or sniff at the religion of others as in the case of 'Nishkanda' worship where evil is warded off by prayers and sacrifice."

"ramda" and the wooden slab for slaughtering animals for the worship. One could also detect the "dhol" and the "gamchha", which covered the phallus of the deity, were all a part of the ritual. The scene was caught just before the actual sacrifice of a goat. The other adult onlookers were also included. Scattered utensils were brought into this image. This was specially in dark green, black and gray, tones which invoke reminiscence of the historical past.

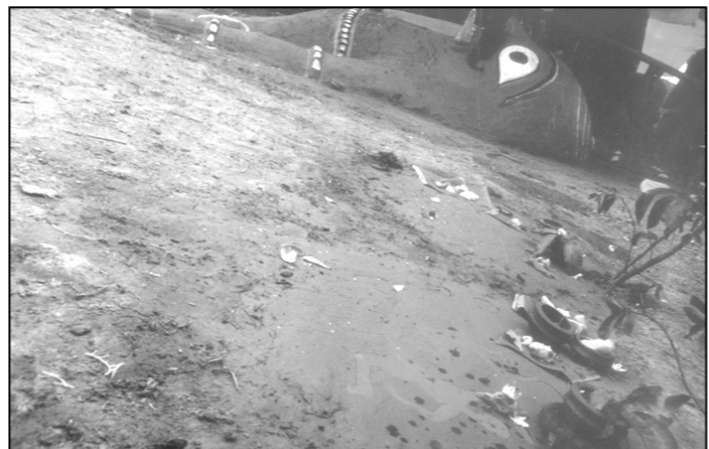
In another photo one found the head of the pigeon that had been sacrificed as well. Blood stains mingled with the four repeated scarlet dancing figures of primitive men. At the back of this depiction of mud was the god reigning supreme over the scene.

Shameem, in his depiction of ancient rites before the little herd of god brought in a simple, forgotten way of life that was untouched by modern civilization. Peace and harmony prevailed among the trees and boulders where the primitive people went on undisturbed with their routine of ancient customs and traditions.

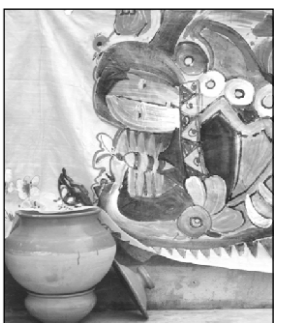


The third part of the trilogy was 'Mro- a pilgrimage' and this is about one of the eleven indigenous communities of the Chittagong Hill tracts focusing on their way of life, their trees, flowers, totems and taboos.

"Nishkanda" is the second part of the series and it deals with a local deity of the low caste Hindus and here I am inspired by Sartre's 'Iron in the soul'. I had photographed these people ten years back and coming back from Russia and the Nether-lands I focused my attention on the same people. These photographs are taken at Tangail, where I have my home. Professional photographers will not like my work and term them as too dark. I prefer the pictures to be misted and covered in dark shades as the theme demands it. The subject is the folk god of the ignored Hindus. They say that this worship is to get rid of fear and grief. I believe that there is a lot of sense in this although it is different from our customary Muslim beliefs. They cover the god's phallus during



RECOMMENDATIONS



Kriti's Eid collection

Kriti's rich collection of sari and salwar-kameeze ensemble for the upcoming Eid festival opens at Ariel Centre on November 29. Open from 10 am and 8 pm, the show will run till December 4.

Art show

A group art exhibition by Zahid, Shamim, Kakoli and Safin has opened at The High Commission of India cultural centre, 754, Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi. The show runs everyday from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. till November 29.

Crafts and fashion works show

A Crafts and Fashion Works Exhibition is now being held at the Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, Shahbagh, Dhaka. The show will run till November 30.

Alfred Hitchcock Retrospective

Zahir Raihan Film Society, in collaboration with Indian High Commission in Dhaka, has organised a fortnight long Alfred Hitchcock Retrospective. 'The Lady Vanishes' starring Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave & Cecil Parker, will be screened today at the Indian High Commission Auditorium at 6 in the evening.

Fashion

A colourful apparel show by Altamira, a fashion gallery, is now being held at House # 1, Road # 2, Dhanmondi. The show, open from 10 a.m to 10 p.m. everyday, runs till December 14.

TV GUIDE

TV GUIDE section containing Today's Highlights, Pick of the Day, Sports, and various channel schedules (BTV, Channel-i, BBC World, STAR GOLD, STAR PLUS, STAR WORLD, ESPN, STAR SPORTS, ZEE TV, ZEE CINEMA, ZEE MUSIC, ALPHA TV BANGLA).