

Exhibition

Intimate encounters

Award winners, judges, participants of the ongoing Asian Art Biennale speak their mind

AZIZ AMIRUL

THE visiting artists of the ongoing Asian Art Biennale in Dhaka had a rare opportunity on last Friday to relish the breathtaking beauty of riverine Bengal.

After completing some hectic sessions of seminar and other formal schedules over the last couple of days, the foreign delegates, exhausted, welcomed the trip as refreshing.

The trip started at around 9:30 in the cool morning, offering an opportunity to discover Bangladesh intimately.

"It is simply a new world to me. This is my first tour of Bangladesh and now I know why Bangladesh is called Golden Bengal.

Nobuho was accompanied by senior artist, Naoko Majima, one of the three grand prize winners of the current exhibition.

Both the floors of vassal of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation were full of beaming artists, brimming in ecstatic mood while on one corner of the upper deck could be seen Victor Chin, the Malaysian painter who remained busy, sketching away age after page with scenes of the surrounding vista of the river banks.



Participating artists of the Asian Art Biennale pose for a family photograph

edge of the lower deck continued a different feat as the Turkish artist and art-critic Melih Gorgun spanned his muscular arms sideways in a bid to play the role of the 'Titanic' hero!

The tour comprised of around 50 artists and delegates of the participating countries along with officials of the organising institution Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

"I had never thought that one such honour from this Biennale would wait for me. I am fascinated, overwhelmed", stated Krista as she continued with her analysis regarding the standard of Bangladeshi artists.

The distinguished guests, more than satisfied with the unique hospitality of the hosts, ended their memorable river cruise after completion of a hearty lunch served on the deck.

Among the large group, one could find only three artists including Majima who received Grand Prize awards and Honourable Mentions on January 9 at the opening ceremony.

"Since the early days of my art career I utilised my talent to attain personal joy, to refresh my mind. I

never thought of receiving any award but only worked for the contentment of artistic discovery", said Mokhes.

"I submitted three of my printworks to the selection committee and was rather disappointed when only a single entry got final nomination. How could I think of receiving any special recognition when I was participating with a lone piece of work? But the

most unlikely probability turned out to be the most fertile reality". Emmanuel Torres, Chairman of the Jury Committee intervened in between. "We were a committee of four, one short of the originally designed five-member Jury Committee. It was, of course, a tough decision to judge the achievements of so many brilliant artists, almost everyone possessed with god-gifted potential, yet



Naoko Majima from Japan, a Grand Prize winner at the 10th Asian Art Biennale

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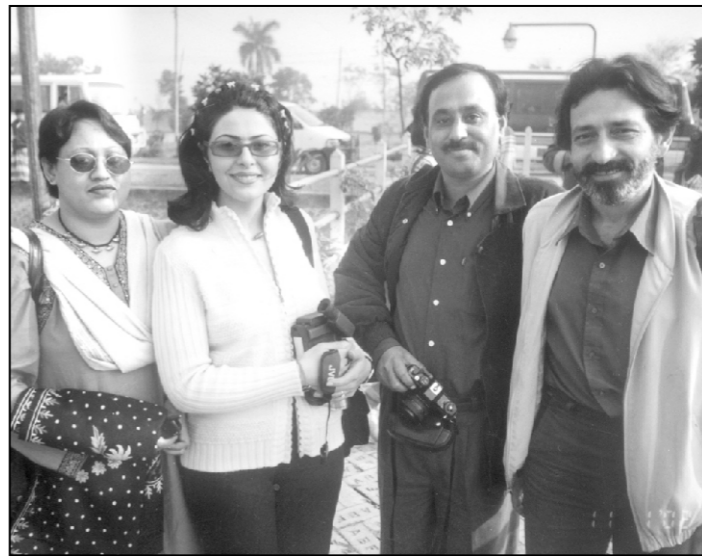
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Mokhesur Rahman (2nd from R), a Grand Prize winner, from Bangladesh is flanked by Iranian artists Daryoush Saidi and Krista Nassi on his right

Rahman was a popular choice of the panel and his medium was printwork, a medium that has remarkable possibilities in this country".

The veteran jury official expressed a high note of satisfaction on the organising capacity of the Bangladeshi organisers. "Bangladesh has made a tremendous development in art and culture. The country may be poor in financial resources but is certainly rich in intellectual and artistic entity", added Emmanuel. On an inquiry about the current trend of Asian art, Emmanuel stated on the proliferation of a pluralistic trend in the regions of Asia and the Pan-Pacific rim. "Here in our South Asian culture, there seems to be an occurrence of branching out of trends among artists.

Apart from traditional forms, some try to venture out towards the spiritual type and others maintain within them strictly unorthodox, purely exclusive trends", felt the Jury Committee Chief. "I believe that there should remain no categorised forms of trend and all should have their individual style and capacity which is what I have witnessed among many young artists of the subcontinent".

The only artist out of the seven 'Honorable Mention' winners of the biennale, present in the tour-party of the cruise was Krista Nassi from Iran, who has installed a work 'Human and the Chair' at the venue

of National Museum in the city. A chair submerged in a tall aquarium explained the issue of modern mans' quest of earning fame and comfort amidst political unrest and warfare. One day the man would die symbolised by the submerged chair with a mask upon it with a fake world of glitter and glory symbolised by the colourful fish and coral life under water.

"I had never thought that one such honour from this Biennale would wait for me. I am fascinated, overwhelmed", stated Krista as she continued with her analysis regarding the standard of Bangladeshi artists, the venues and about the overall Biennale concept. "I am happy the way everything has been arranged. The venues are well designed, so are the program schedules. I feel that the approach of Bangladeshi artists should move towards post-modernism. Most of the Asian artists try to follow postmodern concept but here they are stuck with the traditional and modern idea", added Krista, a 30-year former art college lecturer.

The distinguished guests, more than satisfied with the unique hospitality of the hosts, ended their memorable river cruise after completion of a hearty lunch served on the deck. The two buses of a rental company, loaded with guests, headed towards the National Museum, site of the two-day seminar that ended later in the evening.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Theatre festival

A five day long dance drama festival, organised by Indian High Commission in Dhaka, in collaboration with Centre for Asian Theatre and Indian Council for Cultural Relations, has opened at the National Museum Auditorium. Shows will be held at 6:30 p.m. everyday till January 16.

Today's show: Recital of Chhau Dance of Bihar, Choreographed by Kedar Nath Sahoo. On January 15: Meghnad Badh Kabya directed by Rudra Prasad Sen Gupta, Nandikar, Kolkata. On January 16: Urubhangam directed by Kamaluddin Nilu of Centre for Asian Theatre, Dhaka. On January 17: Meghnad Badh Kabya at Muslim Institute Auditorium, Chittagong.

Nrityanchal Festival 2002

Nrityanchal, a front ranking organisation in the country to institutionalise dance as a popular form of art, is organising a five-day long dance festival from January 10 to 14 at Bangladesh Shishu Academy Auditorium.

Nrityanchal presents a 'Kathak Evening' (a Kathak dance recital) at 6:00 p.m. today, the closing day of the festival.

Art show of three Bengali pioneers

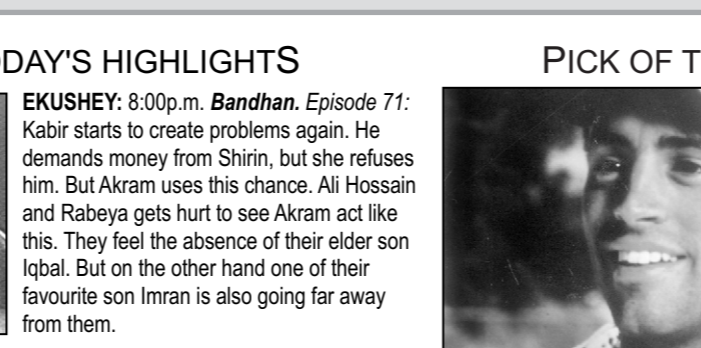
An exhibition showcasing works of pioneer artists Zainul Abedin, Qamrul Hassan and S.M. Sultan- of Bangladeshi art movement is being held at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts at Dhanmandi. This show is the second of a series presented from the collection of Abul Khair, chairman of Bengal Foundation.

Asian Art Workshop

Bengal Foundation will hold a three-day art workshop involving the participants and delegates of the 10th Asian Art Biennale at BRAC Centre, Rajendrapur on January 14 at 12:00 p.m. The workshop will be inaugurated by Fazle Hassan Abed, chairperson of BRAC as chief guest while noted artist Safuddin Ahmed and Professor Anisuzzaman will be present as special guests.



Mokhesur Rahman, this year's Grand Prize winner from Bangladesh



Victor Chin, from Malaysia engrossed in drawing a sketch

TV GUIDE

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