

RECOMMENDATIONS

Book Fair

Bangla Academy organises Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela, a three-week long book fair at its premises to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister today

Etching Print Exhibition

A solo etching prints exhibition by Rashid Amin, a Charupith Fellow (2001), starts today at Gallery 21 at 6 p.m. Eminent artist Qayyum Chowdhury will inaugurate the exhibition. The exhibition will remain open till February 10 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.



Musical evening

Amra Kuri, a cultural organisation arranges a solo musical evening of teenage singer Sanjida Suma today at 5 p.m. at the auditorium of Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Suma will present patriotic, folk, classical and hindi songs in the soiree.

Drama Festival

Natty Utsav 2002, the national festival of drama will begin today and will continue for the next three weeks till February 20. To be organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, the drama festival will feature 'Natty Jalsa' after the staging of the theatrical productions, each evening. Each Jalsa will include cultural events to be performed by members of the theatre groups. Coinciding with the drama festival will begin the 'Street Drama Festival 2002' that will continue till February 7, 2002. 'Fair & Lovely Drama Festival 2002' starts at the Showkat Osman auditorium of Central Public Library today. The weeklong festival has been arranged with the theme 'Reach for the Skies'. DESH NATOK has composed five of the seven theatrical plays of the festival.

Exhibition

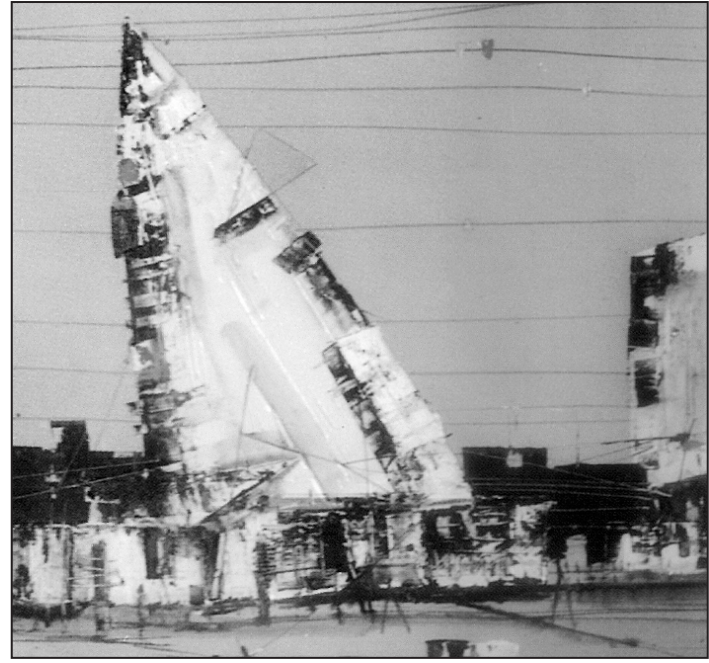
Urban images in geometrical fantasy

Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed's painting show opens in Japan on February 4

FAYZA HAQ

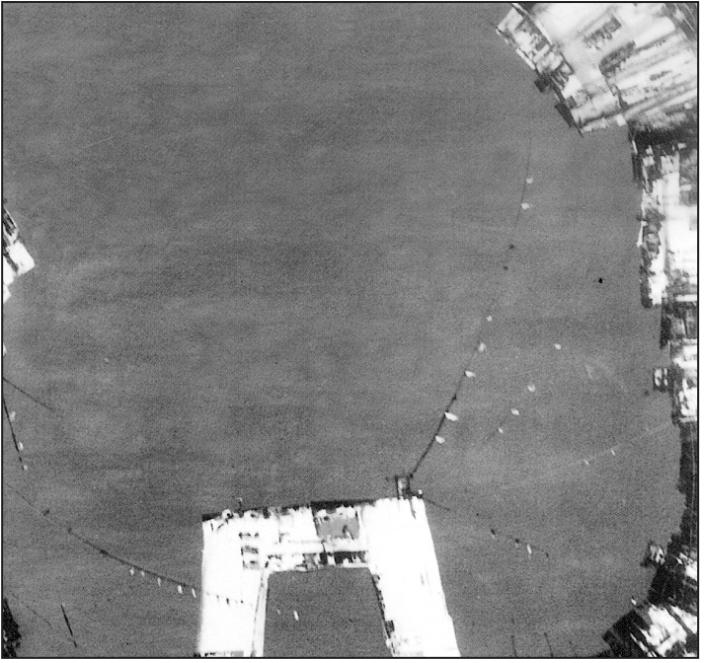
KAZI Salahuddin Ahmed has taken his exhibition to Japan, to Chuwa Gallery. With it goes his urban images which he creates with such precision and imagination. He presents scenes of old Dhaka drenched in his romantic vision of the old dilapidated walls, bridges, windows and ladders and roofs. He turns the mundane and ugly into something exotic and exhilarating. He uses geometrical shapes to exaggerate his images which he puts in with his palette knife and sometimes strips of rubber. Sometimes he even uses his fingers to settle his shapes and tones.

In "Urban image-9", oil on paper, he has a long strata of houses with intriguing texture work in oblong and square shapes of white, yellow and brown. Its placed on a scintillating expanse of red which is covered with more rectangular images of brown in a row and other scattered



Broken image-2 oil on paper

ones in pale shades. The horizon is a contrasting purple which sets off the magnificent scene of debris and falling houses seen though pink



Urban image

tinted vision. Salahuddin has tried his best to preserve images of his childhood that he witnessed in old Dhaka and what he sees everyday around him. He does not see the ugliness, hopelessness or squalor but a beauty of forms, even though broken and crumbling.

Salahuddin presents a vision from below a tunnel to the yellow roughly oval shape at the top. Ladders and steps of all shapes and sizes done in black, green, pale yellow and red from the fascinating tunnel seen from below. The angle of the painting is unique indeed to have seen charm and delectable forms in something that comprises of sticks of stones and is unconventional in every way. Past all the grim images which almost gives one a vertigo as one studies them is the ray of yellow hope. Just as the mass of ruby red brought optimism in "Urban image-9" so the touches of

vermilion interspersed in the masses of dark hues and the opening roof at the top speaks of persisting joy in an environment of mundane shapes and forms.

More broken shapes, one like the sail of a boat but which is apparently a fragment of a building with more houses in front and side are found in "Broken image-2" which is oil on paper. The triangular remnant of the building has triangles, rectangles and circles and masses of pale yellow on it. The simple red tiny circle and the minuscule vermilion square brighten the image. The strips of wiring that once contained buntings in red add further interest to the composition. Out of ruins and remnants Salahuddin has once more created images that boggle the mind.

Another image is a dirty green mass of collected water or a field of grass surrounded by pale yellow,

jade and black edges of buildings. The artist's penchant for buntings which speak for celebration are brought into the painting. The shades of sap green intermingled with dark emerald green brighten the surrounding and offset the mass of green which is almost encircled except for on top.

Another creation that is overtly modern is the mass of blue with waves of gray, beige and flecks of white and black along with three dots set in a row. At the left end is a mass of pale blue with rectangles of grayish blue which could be a portion of a house seen along the banks of the flowing river.

Salahuddin is a self-taught artist who has a Masters in International Relations from DU. He has attended many workshops such as the India-Bangladesh Art Camp by Kolkata Nandic, India, in 1999. He attended the metal workshop conducted by

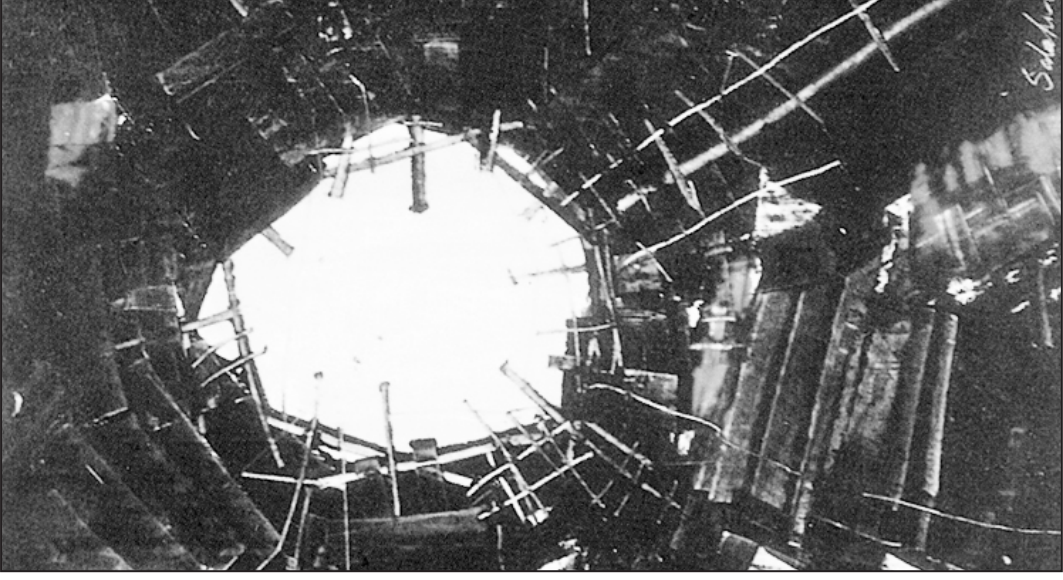
Suzanne Benton at the Institute of Fine Arts, DU, in 1995. He also attended the Art History and Art History Appreciation at the Bangladesh Shilpokala Academy, Dhaka in 1989.

He has had 14 solo exhibits such as at the Seas Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia, 2001, Tourist Service Centre, Nepal, 1989, and Shajahan Art Gallery, New Delhi, India in 1998, and at Art Konsult, New Delhi, India in 2000.

Salahuddin has taken part in over 35 joint exhibits in places like Long Island, USA 1999, The Snow Gooses Gallery 2000 at Artoday, New Delhi, India 1999, USA, International Mail Art Exhibition Argentina 1998, "Thirty Painters" Exhibition from Bangladesh" and Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Japan in 1998.



Urban image



Urban images-12 oil on paper

Theatre

Reaching for the sky

Weeklong drama festival Fair & Lovely Nattyutsav 'Chhooye jabo ashim aakash', organised by Desh Natok, opens today at the Showkat Osman auditorium of Central Public Library



A scene from 'Birasshho Kabya'

AZIZ AMIRUL

COUNTRY'S leading theatre group Desh Natok holds a weeklong drama festival entitled 'Fair & Lovely Nattyutsav' with a thematic subtitle 'Chhooye jabo ashim aakash' --- I will touch the infinite sky.

The inauguration of the drama festival will take place at 5:30 in the evening at Showkat Osman auditorium of Central Public Library, with artist and cultural personality Mustafa Monwar performing the opening.

The festival venue will be decorated with numerous tiny, colourful candles-on-clay-pots, each having an inscribed name on it, of a famous artist of Bangladesh.



vanished), Loha (Iron) and Nittyta puran (Ever old). Guest groups will stage Kamala Ranir Sagar Dighi and Roktokorobi on February 6 & 7 respectively.

Tickets will be available before the show for Taka 50/- and 100/-. Desh Natok came into being in 1987. A group of young drama activist was behind the formation of the group. The group in its initial years concentrated on street performance focusing on issues of social and moral degeneration.

Some of these theatrical performances included dramas like Maharajar Goonketon (Praise of the king), Khela (Game), Jatra Nasti (Cancellation of tour), Lebaas (Garment / outer cover), Both (Feeling), Research, Parthokko (Difference), Sarmeyo (Canine), Jogoddol (Overweight) and Anirdharito (Gratuitous).

The audience received all of these theatrical productions with high enthusiasm and received critical acclaim. Desh Natok staged their first production in 1990. So far, the group has produced five plays in total and performed those at home and abroad.

Festival

A double delight

Two drama festivals open today

CULTURE DESK

BANGLADESH Group Theatre Federation, an umbrella organisation of more than 125 theatre groups of the country, is hosting two major drama carnivals National Street Drama Festival and National Drama Festival, both beginning on February 1, 2002.

The Street Drama festival is being organised to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Language Movement and to be celebrated throughout the month of February, this year. A total of 45 groups from across the country are expected to take part in the mega-event.

The main shows will begin at 4:30 p.m. everyday in front of the central Shaheed Minar premises in the city. Each of the first two evenings will feature five dramas with a duration of approximately three-and-half hours on each evening. The rest of the five evenings will have on their schedule seven dramas (each evening).

The organisers have released a note of declaration prior to the

inauguration of the festival. Bangla drama has a rich historical background with street side performance being a major significance of the whole effort. The folk art of Jatra and Palagaan have come along a long way since the middle ages when there were certain religious implication of the art of performance in this part of the globe.

Later on, in contemporary periods, the drama activist of this country have acted out in public gatherings, fairs and in street festivals often in times of political instability to show their attitude of anguish and rebellion, against political leaders and quarters.

The beginning of a new millenium has probably, brought all the drama activist and connoisseurs at a single meeting point to culminate and rejoice through the forthcoming festival of street drama. The street carnival would happily coincide and mingle with the fervour of the National Drama festival that would continue for a longer period. The sacrifice of the martyrs during the



struggling period of Language Movement remains ever fresh in our memory, which would find new perspective and affiliation with the celebrations.

As Liaquat Ali Lucky, the secretary-general of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation says, 'The contributing role of the performers of stage and street drama was continuing well when in recent times we have started experiencing the approach of threatening quarters. The influence of the ill-motivated quarters seems to activate once again after a considerable break'.

The organisers hope of a complete eradication of all sorts of fundamentalist commotion from the society of the peace-loving commoners where the role of drama would be highly significant in order to expose the true appearance of the masked, hypocritical characters.

The National Drama Festival will begin on February 1, 2002 at the Mahila Samity auditorium at Bailey road in the city. Justice Habibur Rahman, a former Chief Advisor of

Caretaker Government, will inaugurate the event at 10:30 a.m. Renowned drama performers and directors Ramendu Majumdar, Ataur Rahman, Mamunur Rashid, Nasiruddin Yusuf and Luva Nahid Chowdhury will deliver speech in addition with a welcome address from Liaquat Ali Lucky. Eminent drama actress Sara Zaker will preside over the opening ceremony.

A rally of the organisers will begin from the venue at 11:30 a.m. A special two-hour 'Nattyta Jalsa' will be arranged every evening in honour of the drama performers, after the completion of public performances.

A total of 21 theatre groups from across the country are scheduled to participate in the stage drama festival.

Tickets will be available at the venue counter on the day of the respective show that would start at 6:30 p.m.

Interview

All about Pitaah

In this interview with Subhash K Jha, Mahesh Manjrekar explains constraints on his creativity, and how he intends to overcome them

MAHESH Manjrekar released two films in 2001 - Ehsaas and Tera Mera Saath Rahe. The films, though well-intended, bombed badly. 2002 has started on a more positive note for this hyper-prolific director, with Pitaah, a searing adaptation of John Grisham's A Time To Kill. Mahesh, though, has no time to kill. With a cluster of films on the anvil, the director has enough to keep him on his toes for a while to come. There's also lots of hustle and bustle at the Manjrekar residence. The filmmaker has just, somewhat reluctantly, moved into a larger, more swank accommodation. "Given a chance, I'd have stayed on in Chunabhathi. But what to do? My children are growing up. I need more space." In a frank and free-wheeling interview, the director explains constraints on his creativity, and how he intends to overcome them. Excerpts from the interview:

Pitaah has just been released, and Sanjay Dutt is being praised for his performance. How would you judge his performance? Yes, he has done a fantastic job. He's completely transformed in the film. I think in Pitaah, Sanju has left his performance in Vaastav far behind. It's one of the best performances I've seen since I have been

watching films. In Vaastav, he was cast like the most powerful person in the world. Here, he's so vulnerable. In both, he's equally convincing. Sanju needs to be told what to do. He's completely a director's actor.

Pitaah is a pretty brutal film, don't you think? Pitaah isn't my story. It was narrated to me by cinematographer Tejaa, who said it was based on an incident in Andhra Pradesh. But I told him it's exactly like John Grisham's A Time To Kill. Tejaa said he hadn't read the novel or seen the film. But the similarities were uncanny. I told him if the story was based on A Time To Kill, he should come out with it. But fact is, 90 percent of Indians have never heard of John Grisham.

The film is about the rape of a nine-year-old girl. Isn't that too brutal for Indian audiences? I get a shiver up my spine every time I see the scene where Sanju's character applies oil to the rapist's body, unaware of the fact that it's his own daughter's blood. I didn't want the little girl to die. I kept her alive. I wanted that hope to remain. The film has opened very well. I've kept the songs at a minimum. The Saik Ankola-Anupama Verma duet is just two-lines long. I did not want to include the holi song. But the

distributors said the film was too tense. I think everyone, including Om Puri and Mita Vasishit, has done a fantastic job.

Now all my past commitments are completed. Pratibimb, my sequel to Vaastav, is almost complete. Now, I just have Kutumb. Sequels are still not quite an established trend in Hindi films. When did you decide to make a sequel to Vaastav?

I sat down and discussed it with Sanju, and decided to go ahead with it. As for the acceptability of sequels in India, I also have my own misgivings about that. So far, there has been only one sequel in Hindi commercial cinema: Nigahen, the sequel to Nagina. But the filmmaker I admire the most - Satyajit Ray - made his Apu trilogy. I don't know how Pratibimb will be received. Everyone has enjoyed making the film. This time we've avoided that raw energy of Vaastav. I told Sanju to play his role - that of Raghu's son, Rohit - with less madness. The sequel had to look different. I made sure of that. This is a more human story than Vaastav.

Was it difficult to take up the story from where it left off? Yes, in the sense that I had to keep in mind the fact that not everyone who'd see Pratibimb would have

seen Vaastav. The story, therefore, had to stand on its own. I've made sure there are no scenes interconnected with the previous film. The idea was put forward to Sanju, when I had taken him to London for his trial makeup in my proposed love story Ek Ajeeb Prem Kahani. Sanju wanted to name it Youth. I said I couldn't bear the name. Then he suggested Vaastav 2. When I had named my film Vaastav, everyone told me it was weird name. But people got used to it over time. I believe people will get used to Pratibimb the same way. Anyway, when I sat down to write my scenes, I ended up with 120 scenes. However, I don't want Pratibimb to exceed the two-and-a-half hour timeframe.

Is Pratibimb going to be compromise-free? I'm trying my best. I've learnt my lessons. Half my dialogues used to be written on the sets. No more of that. Namrata Shirodkar plays Sanjay Dutt's mother in Pratibimb. Did you have a tough time convincing her to agree to that role?

Not at all. Besides, she only plays Sanju's character's mother when he's a child. Namrata looks extremely pretty. In Tera Mera Saath

Rahe, she was fabulous. And she'll be equally good in Pratibimb. But you must see Shilpa Shetty in my film. She'll shock you. She has done one really difficult sequence, for which she had wanted her lines beforehand. I told her to trust me. And she did a brilliant job. Then there's theatre and television actor Anoop Soni. He plays the main villain in Pratibimb. He's simply superb.

You keep getting into run-ins with the censor-board? I know. For Pitaah, I asked for a U/A certificate, so they would give me an A. In Tera Mera Saath Rahe, the censors asked me to delete the name of a product from the soundtrack. In that case, shouldn't they have cut 75 per cent of Yaadein? The problem is, half the panellists don't understand cinema. It's pathetic. In Ehsaas, they wanted me to delete a few shots from that sequence where Sunil Shetty's son and servant go to the laundry to borrow a suit for him from an alcoholic staffer at the laundry. They said, remove the alcohol bottle from the counter. If I were the producer, I'd have fought for that sequence. But, sometimes, producers are just too tired to argue.

Source: Internet