

RECOMMENDATIONS

Book Fair

Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela, a three-week long book fair at the premises of Bangla Academy is in progress. The fair is open everyday from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Ghazal evening

A Ghazal evening will be held on February 17 at the Best Western La Vinci Hotel at Kawan Bazar in the city with solo live performance of Ghazal exponent Mesbah. The show will start at 7 p.m.

Book Bazaar

Ekushey Book Bazaar, a fair of books and journals on Language Movement, will be inaugurated at 8 p.m. this evening at Etceetera, Plot-SE (F) 1, Gulshan South Ave., Gulshan-1, Dhaka. The event, to be organised by Yasmeen Murshed and Syed Maher Murshed, will end at 10:00 p.m.

Boutique exhibition

An exhibition of boutique items titled 'Chorowa Poshak Prodorshoni' is being held at Ali's Knitwear Bangladesh at Hse-49, Rd-15/A, Dhanmondi. Rehana Ali is hosting the event that includes display of traditionally designed saree, punjabi, shalwar kameez, indigenous apparels and hand-made wax candle. The exhibition will remain open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday till February 22.

Group art exhibition

Nine contemporary artists will display their works in a group exhibition to be inaugurated today at 4:30 p.m. in the Zainul Art Gallery of Fine Arts Institute in the city. The show will continue till February 21 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Seventh Solo

The 7th solo art exhibition of artist Samiran Chowdhury is being held at Divine Art Gallery in Hotel Sonargaon. Samiran's 25 works in water colour, mixed media and acrylic are on display. The exhibition will remain open for the visitors from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. till tomorrow.

Drama Festival

Nattyo Utsav 2002, the national festival of drama is going on at the Mahila Samity auditorium in the city. A drama of a particular group is staged everyday at 6:30 p.m. The festival will continue till February 20 organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation.

Art Exhibition

A 12-day painting exhibition by renowned artist Maruf Ahmed started at the Shilpangan Art Gallery in the city from February 7, 2002. The show will remain open for all till February 18, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Exhibition

Dwelling on modern existence

Ilse Hilpert's solo at Gallery 21

FAYZA HAQ

Ilse Hilpert, who is having an exhibition at Gallery 21, says, "Mr Lenferding and I hit upon the idea of having a workshop on self-management in the international art scene and here in Dhaka. I will be giving a lecture on the international art scene. This was decided 15 months ago before I'd left Bangladesh to go to Germany."

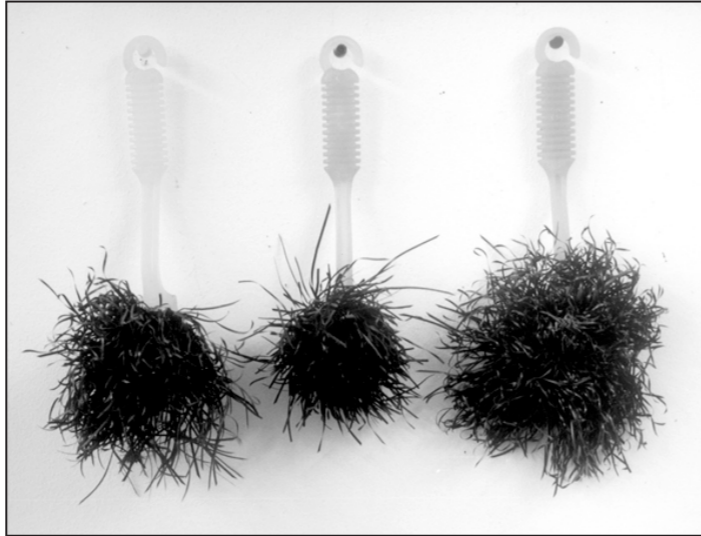
Touching on the workshop that she had run, Hilpert says, "We had 18 participants and most of them were students of BFA at the Fine Arts Institutes or had already their bachelor's degrees in that subject. Some were known artists like Rashid Amin and Azad who have held solo and group exhibitions of



Ilse Hilpert

their own. Some re invited by the Goethe Institut and one participant came from Design and Technical Centre. Most of the participants were chosen by the well-known artist Mahmudul Haque. His choice was good as the young artists were eager to learn and very amicable. The workshop was for five days from 10am to 1pm."

Commenting about her work, Hilpert says, "My scene is always the same. I deal with man and his relationship with nature. In Bangladesh, earlier, I had worked with natural materials like handmade paper, jute, bamboo, netting etc. Now I am using completely artificial materials. I make them, glue them and even sue scans and prints as when I visited a lot of museums and



art galleries last year in different parts of Europe including London, Paris and a new museum in Austria. I realized that in the contemporary scene it is usual to use the new media like video. I did bring in my environment in my work. I show how the distance between man and his environment is becoming more and more. Nowadays many things are being replaced by artificial items.

"This exhibition is different from my other works as I could bring only small items from Germany so that this is like some portable exhibition. I had no space or time to bring

the effect of haste and apparent carelessness. I wanted to stress on the way that contemporary art is presented. They are hammered on the walls and have no frames. You could also put them on the ground. The programme is geared to show how art exhibitions are conducted today."

Asked if she faced any problems arranging her exhibition, Hilpert says, "As I had limited funds it was impossible to bring vast amounts of art works. The budget for the workshop was also limited."

Talking about what made her go



bigger items. I think that the layout is also different because they give

into fine arts, Hilpert says, "I am not influenced by any special artist. I

see what is going on in the contemporary art scene and in the process I know a lot of artists whom I like and others whom I don't. I'm looking for my own way. In my childhood I was guided and inspired by my mother who painted as a hobby and who gave me crayons to play with."

Touching on the women painters of Bangladesh, Hilpert says, "I had a joint exhibition with Rokeya Sultan and Alka Mathur at the Divine Gallery and my work was included in the Bengal Foundation's exhibition of women painters. I personally know some local artists here like Rokeya, Sultana, Naima Haque and Nasreen Begum. I think that they are as good as their male counterparts. There are many female students in the Institute of Fine Arts but like all over the world there are not enough female artists."

Elaborating on her present exhibition at Gallery 21, Hilpert says, "I'm a visual artist. After I've finished my work the viewer has to decide what he wants to see. In 'Soft gummy' you see scans with brown, gray and yellow colours. Another creation inspired by candy is another 'Soft gummy' which is an image of a candy in the shape of a child with hands, hair, eyes and other details. In 'Candy hamburger' one sees sweet candy of different colours in a plastic container."

We see actual candies in an acrylic in another exhibit. 'Candy hamburger' shows candy hamburgers next to an actual hamburger. The 'Guitar gently weeps' brings in a toys playing a guitar with his trousers and feet fitting into a square shape at the bottom making the image grotesque and funny. In 'Shake rocker zoomed' you see a set of scans of a doll dressed in blue plastic and propped on more plastic. The hair too is plastic while you can barely see the rounded eyes. At the side is the actual doll in an acrylic glass container. There are representation of baby clones seen against a background of black and brown. They are held in a transparent container the three side of which are burnt. You see them again in a depiction of a child being formed set against an almost formed infant. In 'Melted beauty' you once again see distortions of nature and impact of mechanized life. You see the part of the hands and legs of woman in this



with acrylic wool all around her.

There are also multicoloured straws that have been heaped together and displayed as symbols of present day life. They too are contained in an acrylic envelope. This was inspired by Hilpert's observing that many children in Bangladesh too tend to use them and play with them later. In 'Brush handles' you see the handles of brushes in scanned forms. There are actual brushes hanging at the side with coconut fibres stuck to one of them. In 'Disfunctioning brushes' and 'Brushed winter' in which we

been used up with time. The brushes are depicted as torn, fragmented and worn out with age. Here the artist stresses on the point that people today, specially children, are removed from nature and do not have the actual experience of seeing cows of living fish. Around them is a wall of artificiality, Hilpert comments.

In 'Gestures' are scans and depict movements of hands. Similarly very nouveau is the depiction of 'Childhood welded' with three little dolls put together which bring in memories of young days which



see used up plastic brushes where the part used for brushing have

most people treasure and look back on. This was part of an exhibition for

UNICEF. In 'Nature' grass, leaves and roots are replaced by plastic which again are held in acrylic container as if they were some endangered species. Meanwhile 'Bags international' brings in a scan of eight plastic bags from Chile, Germany, Turkey, China, Spain, Surenam (Africa) and Kenya. Next to them are seen a heap of Bangladeshi jute bags to stress on the artificiality of modern life.

In Hilpert's lecture 'The international Art Scene', which is a part of her threefold programme in Bangladesh, she talks about museums, art galleries, art fairs, art associations and art trade. She talks about the British museum founded in 1753 and the 'Musee des Arts' at the Louvre in 1793 along with the 'Alte Nationalgalerie' in Berlin which was built in 1876. She also mentions the 'Museumsquartier' built in 2001 in Vienna. She also touches on the Tate Gallery in London.

Dwelling on public art galleries, Hilpert says that they normally don't possess their own collections and that they only offer the space and have to rely on changing exhibitions. She says, that because of the new popularity of art and their rivalry with the museums they are looking for a new legitimization. Touching on galleries she says that the art trader sells mostly to vendors but the collector who buys regularly and serves as a multiplier is the backbone of the gallery, and that contrary to the buyers the art collector is a reliable factor in the art trade.

Ilse Hilpert, born in 1950 in Germany, did her Masters in Fine arts and taught as an art teacher in Germany from 1973-82. After that she worked as an art consultant in different projects outside Germany in places like Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Rwanda. She has participated in various joint ventures in Germany and has taken part in numerous group exhibitions and solos in Bangladesh such as 'Through Different Eyes', 'Women Waging Peace', 'Through the Eyes of a Stranger' and 'Women in Bangladesh'.

Theater

Twentieth Century Girls - a musical satire

The Twentieth Century Girls, a physical theatre production of The Kosh, enthalls the spectators of Dhaka

SAIFUL ISLAM

THE British Council staged The Twentieth Century Girls; a physical theatre of exuberant acrobatics, dance, satire and music, last night. It is the latest production of the UK (London) based touring company The Kosh. Founded in 1982, by Michael Mervitzer and Sian Williams The Kosh has performed in twenty-six different countries in nineteen years. Fiona Creese and Sian Williams were on stage last evening.

The Twentieth Century Girls is like an amazing journey of forty-five minutes through the tunnel of the history of the last sixty years. In other words the western history of the last sixty years is condensed in forty-five minutes and mirrored by the interaction of two actresses who do not talk. They do not speak to us; but they do sing for a very short while. Though they do not speak to us we listen closely to their steps. Whenever their heels and shoes strike the stage-boards we hear



The Kosh enthalls audience

clear the echo of million footsteps. By their dance and steps, by their acrobatics and delicate moves they render history. Strictly speaking, the very detail and growth of western history which is, of course, predominantly American. In the background the speeches of the famous US leaders are played to emphasize the American bent of the plot by their

words we are informed about the attack on Pearl Harbour, the assassination of Kennedy, Vietnam brought into war by America, and allied attack on the Serbian position in the Yugoslavia. We also hear about the first British nuclear plant. Years after these events we are again informed about them last evening and are captivated by the comical presentation of so serious events that resulted in profound changes throughout not only the western civilization but also the civilization of the world. Actually those events of Western Europe and America do touch and involve tragically Asia and Eastern Europe. The satirical undertone of the theatre gives us a lot of clues, in fact their happy go lucky way of living gives us food for thought. We think and we are inspired to look into the past from a different point of view

Though sarcastic the theatre creates a real world of its own. The authenticity established by them ironically creates a suspension of



A scene from Twentieth Century Girls

Schedule of National Drama Festival

Venue: Mahila Samity auditorium, Dhaka

Table with 4 columns: Date, Time, Video, Theater



Dhaka experiences physical theatre at its best in Kosh's performance

Poetry

At long last

Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the pre-eminent Urdu poet gets official recognition

JONAIQ IQBAL, from Islamabad, Pakistan

THE well-known editor of Pakistan Times and the great Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz has been officially certified and recognised as a great poet worthy of national adulation.

It happened on Tuesday when in a surprise development the Ministry of Information of the Pakistan Government celebrated the 91st birthday of Faiz Ahmed. Faiz was born in Sialkot, Punjab in 1911.

Syed Anwar Mahmood, Secretary of the Information Ministry, associated himself with the commemorative program. In addition, he took this unusual step of declaring in the invitation card, send out for the occasion, that he should be counted among the poet's admirers.

The official recognition of Faiz Ahmed Faiz is seen here as a reflection of the governments' altered attitude towards the late poet, so as to induct modern liberal thoughts in the society.

In 1950 he was imprisoned along with Major General Akbar Khan and

Air Commodore Janjua in what is known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case and since then the government media had ignored him.

democratic and autocratic dispensation. Faiz was awarded with Lenin Peace Prize for his contribution to world literature.

During Zia-ul-Haq regime, Faiz Ahmed had spent a life of exile, first in Beirut as the editor of the celebrated Lotus magazine, and afterwards in London.



Faiz Ahmed Faiz

His verses were not aired on the state electronic media. No official condolence was issued on his death in November 1984.

Faiz is included among promi-

ent and outstanding post-colonial intellectuals. The Russian Revolution made a great impact on him. He reflected an anti-authoritarian bent

of mind and wrote profound but lyrical verses to express the helplessness of the weak and down trodden masses who are condemned to live under anti-

He last visited Dhaka in 1974 in the entourage of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Faiz had empathised with the sentiments of the people of Bangladesh. The poet wrote a poem on Bangladesh in 1974 in which he sighed and asked, 'How many monsoons would it take to wash away the spots of crimson blood in the country where at one time I received warm welcome but was now a stranger?'

Festival

Iran shopkeepers see sales soar for Saint Valentine's Day

AFP, Tehran

TEHRAN'S traders were rubbing their hands Thursday after seeing sales of perfumes and other gifts soar ahead of Saint Valentine's Day, a new occasion for celebration by young lovers in Islamic Iran.

"In the past four days we have

seen an increase in customers of between 150 and 350 percent," said Amir Kazemian, a perfume salesman on a central Tehran avenue.

A colleague, Khosro Poshteh-Kuhi, said that up to 65 percent of clients were men buying perfume for women.

Owners of trendy shops selling dolls, chocolates or candles also saw sales rocket, by 200 percent on

Saturday, rising to 600 percent by Wednesday, while chic Chinese, Japanese and French restaurants were booked up for Thursday night.

Shopkeeper Farhad Saleh said Saint Valentine's Day had been increasing in popularity over the past five years.

Sociologist Nashmil Razavi said this was due to the appearance of satellite dishes, which although officially banned gave young Iranians a window on Western culture.

While sexual relations outside marriage have been illegal since the 1979 Islamic revolution, the attitude of the authorities has softened, particularly since the arrival of reformist President Mohammad Khatami in 1997.

Nevertheless, coffee house owners in Tehran said they had been warned that police planned to visit their premises on Saint Valentine's Day to crack down on any perceived hanky-panky.

Police also make a habit of swooping on parties to see in the

Western New Year, and a few months ago destroyed all the female mannequins in Tehran clothes shops.

Obituary

Actor Ahsan Ali Sidney no more

CULTURE DESK

SYED Ahsan Ali Sidney, a renowned drama artist, passed away (Inna lilla he wa inna ilaihe rajeun) at a city clinic yesterday at the age of 63. He was suffering from various complications since long. Television Nattayakar Shanga has expressed their deep condolences at the expiry of the senior drama actor and has extended their sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

