

Colour of youth, graffiti of youth

HARUN UR RASHID

THE emerging periods have seldom been 'happy times' for different trends of art. 'Expressionism', 'Impressionism', 'Surrealism', 'Cubism'—just name any of them, all were subjects of sour criticism and rejection when they came into being. However, all these practices later proved to be the products of genius experimentations. One such genre of painting is graffiti, which rose in the West in the face of an extremely antagonistic atmosphere.

The harsh tone has, however, become somewhat understated in many countries and graffiti is now being considered an artistic expression.

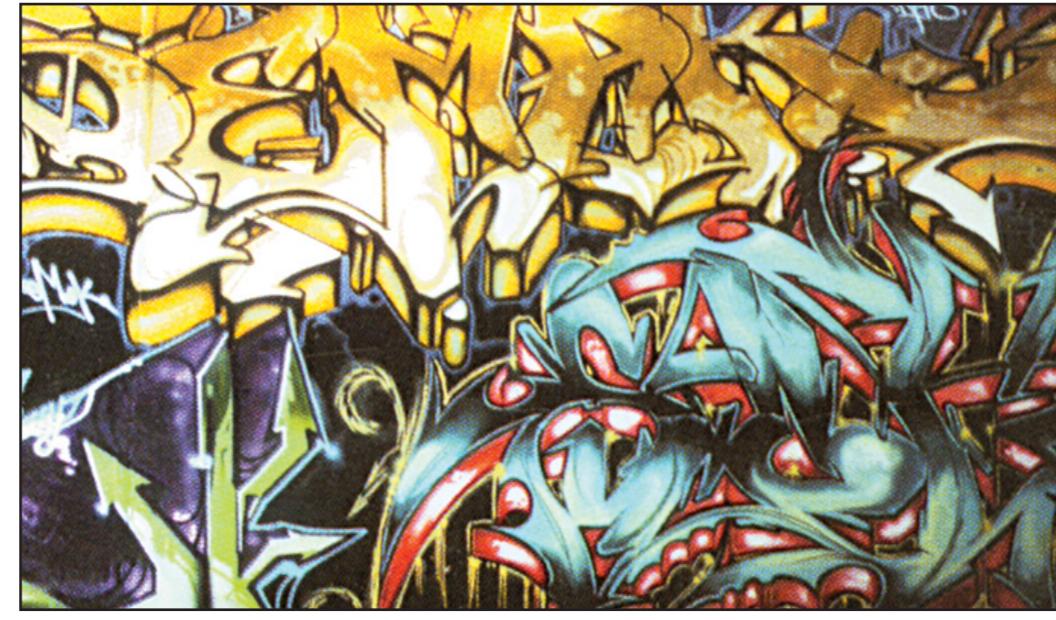
Young photographer Sajal Khalid is currently holding an exhibition of images of such colourful and 'youthful' graffiti he has seen in Germany. Colourful because graffiti is always a display of bright and burning colours like red, blue and yellow. And youthful because, painted generally by youths—mostly teenagers, graffiti

depicts the thoughts and artistic innovations, protests and rages, hopes and dreams of the young generation.

Rightly titled *Colour of Youth*, the exhibition at the Goethe Institut was supposed to be inaugurated by Dr Humayun Azad. But the saddening demise of this versatile writer and linguist lead to a change. Renowned photographer and ornithologist Enam-Al-Haque opened the exhibition.

Having originated from the Latin word *graffito*, meaning 'illustration', graffiti is originally a calligraphy-based art form, which demonstrates popular sentiments about different issues.

In the early 1950s, some Hispanic bands in Los Angeles and Mexico used to write the names of their groups on walls. The 1970s saw the use of the method for political purpose, namely demonstrating propaganda of political parties. From this practice arose a method called



The calligraphy in graffiti has acquired 3-dimensional effect over the years



Graffiti often voices against war

'Pochsca' in Paris by spraying paints on paper-cut letters. It was during this period that spray paint was invented which made graffiti more popular because of its swiftness.

In the 1980s, the letters in graffiti began to acquire 3-dimensional effects—an aspect that made the display more attractive. The attraction was further enhanced in the 1990s as graffiti began to incorporate figures of humans and other objects.

Graffiti is quite like the writings on walls in our country. The differences between the two are: the walls in Bangladesh mostly display political slogans or election related propaganda, while graffiti depicts views on more universal topics. Again, while ours are mere calligraphy, graffiti entertains more graphical aspects like

objects and human figures.

Despite the artistic nature of graffiti, the harshness towards this new art trend, however, came to such extremity as to brand it as an act of crime—more precisely, an act of 'vandalism'. The reason was that the graffiti artists—mostly in their adolescence—used public as well as private properties, such as the walls of side-walks, houses and subways.

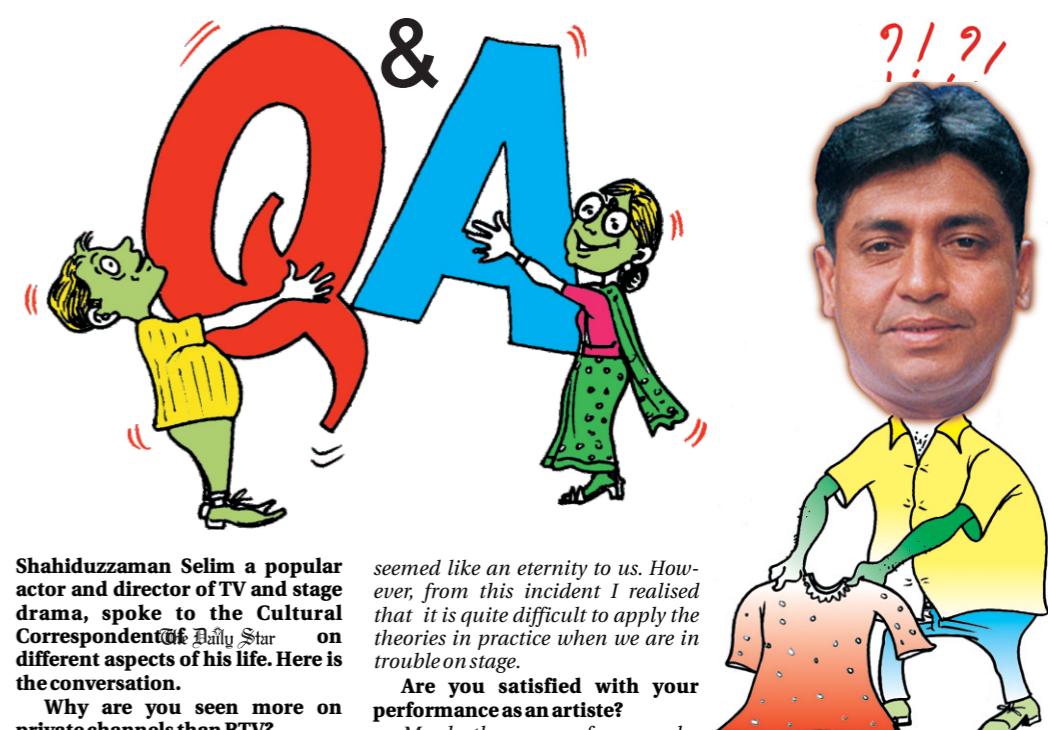
The situation has, however, changed much at present. The German government now often commissions artists to paint graffiti at select places. Sajal's photographs show one such five-storey building in Dresden wearing a huge graffiti work on its facade.

Graffiti generally expresses popular views on issues varying from world politics to Internet hazards. One such graffiti on political personalities features the 'ugly faces' of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and the US president George W Bush.

Graffiti is often influenced by what it is painted on. Sajal's photograph depicts one such graffiti painted on an electrical power room. It displays various electrical gadgets like heater, sewing machine and television—all of which are run by electricity.

Sajal's endeavour is no doubt welcome, as he brings this curious art form to Bangladeshi viewers for the first time. The 24 photographs, however, seem few in number. Also the photographs are not large enough to clearly reveal the aesthetic value of this graffiti.

The exhibition runs till August 24.



Shahiduzzaman Selim a popular actor and director of TV and stage drama, spoke to the Cultural Correspondent of The Daily Star on different aspects of his life. Here is the conversation.

Why are you seen more on private channels than BTV?

The plays of private channels are well organised and carefully crafted. The technical quality and the high production values are absent in the government-owned channel. It is not that I don't want to work for BTV, but apparently there is a lack of coordination. And quality is an element of the past.

What is your most memorable experience on stage?

We studied one of Stanislavsky's theories about maintaining the pace of a play in case any artist forgets the dialogue, does not get any cue or fails to come on stage in time. But it was different in practice. For instance, in a sequence of the drama *Kirtankholi*, actress Rita Abdullah was supposed to come on stage after I delivered a dialogue. But somehow, she didn't show up. Along with my co-artists, I stood still for about a minute. Meanwhile, I was trying hard to remember those theories of Stanislavsky to bring back the concentration on stage. Finally, she came on stage after a minute which

seemed like an eternity to us. However, from this incident I realised that it is quite difficult to apply the theories in practice when we are in trouble on stage.

Are you satisfied with your performance as an artiste?

May be there are performers who would reply in the positive. But, frankly, I am not yet satisfied because of a different reason. I don't think I have any God-gifted quality as an artiste. What I do is out of sheer practice and perseverance. I feel that I don't have the spontaneity like other good actors. I have a feeling that I can't perform even one tenth of what I really wanted.

What is your philosophy of life?

My major goal is to lead a peaceful family life. I am content with whatever I have.

Any weird experience in out-door shooting?

We have to maintain different bags of costume for different plays. When we go outside we take the necessary costumes from these bags. Once, I had to rush to a shooting spot carrying whatever I could lay my hands on. I brought out my costume, which was supposed to be a *Pajama Panjabe* but to my utter surprise I found that instead it was my wife's costume bag. Guess what happened

Breakthrough performance I have a good number of breakthrough performances. I believe the artistes have turning points in their careers when they might change track. I think my performances in *Joniki Jwale*, *Zera Point*, *Bidirno smriti* album, *Dipto bashona*, *Tar rahashayam* hashi, *Housewife* and many more are the most noteworthy.

Dream role I played the famous character of freedom fighter, *Rumi* in the play *Ekatturer Dinguli* by litterateur *Jahanara Imam*, which was my dream role. I played the role of a physically challenged boy in the play *Katha Chhilo* that was adapted from the Oscar-winning movie *Rainman*. In the play *Hathodai* I played the character of *Shylock* in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. All of these plays were my breakthrough performances.

Pratiti's musical concert on rainy days

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

CULTURAL organisation, Pratiti arranged a cultural programme *Badal Meghe Madol Baje* to celebrate the monsoon. The programme, held at the Shishu Academy auditorium recently, depicted rain and the onset of the monsoon through songs, dances and recitation.

The singers of Pratiti, led by Mansura Begum, gave a passable performance. The ladies in blue sarees and the men in ash panjebes reflected the effects of the rainy season portrayed superbly on the back screen. The microphones were also decorated with jasmines. However, the background lighting of the stage needed care.

Songs like *Badho lo jhulonia*, *Shrabono jhulayate* and *Hridoye mondri* remained in the memory as they were presented in an innovative way. The song *Aji jharo jharo mukhoro badol dinay* was rendered in a slow pace by Mansura Begum, but simultaneously when sung in chorus it was in a fast rhythm.

The recitation of Bhaswar Bondyapadhyaya with his baritone voice enthralled the audience. But some felt that it was a run of the mill performance by him.

With the song *Khoro bayo baye*, the dancers of Nrityanchhan led by Shibli Mohammad and Shamim Ara Neepa performed. The sound effects of storm and waves in the background were appreciable. While the dancers performed in dim light their white *ornas* (scarves) had a fluorescent effect in the



Artistes of Pratiti rendering a chorus

dark background. Their dynamic movements with boisterous steps were artistic.

It is always a great pleasure to watch talented

dancers like Shibli and Neepa on stage. However, young talents should be given a chance to perform in the lead roles so as to avoid monotony.

Tutul's painting exhibition for the flood affected

ERSHAD KAMOL

A fortnight long solo painting exhibition titled *Painting for Flood Aid* by Tutul Ahmed is on from August 10 to August 23. The venue is the UNICEF Gallery at Hotel Sheraton Annex.

In the exhibition of 18 canvases, Tutul, an ex-student of the Institute of Fine Arts, tells the story of the downtrodden people who live in sub-human conditions. Through some bright colours like red, yellow, blue, black, burnt sienna, gouache and green, Tutul has successfully presented the tormented inner life of the silent majority of the country. In each painting, he has created the environments with abstract motifs surrounding the visible silent silhouette background.

The interrelationship between man and nature is very important in Tutul's work. In his canvases, he has reflected the unexpressed emotion of man through the nature elements. Tutul has used both water colour and oil for his painting.

The most interesting canvases in the exhibition are *Red Sky Series* and *Childhood Series*. In the three pieces of the *Red*

sky series, Tutul has created a red sky, a yellow moon and a gouache landscape in three different expressions. Through the symbolic red sky, Tutul's work depicts that if we express all of our thoughts on this evil society, even the sky will become red—a colour symbolically representing danger.

In the *Childhood Series*, the canvas—*Childhood-1*, Tutul has used simple soft colours for a beautiful small house. However, for the frame of the house he has used bright burnt sienna colour. *Childhood-2* also represents the happy childhood memories of a downtrodden man who has hit on hard times.

The other painting series were *Images, Nature, Moon, Man and Nature*. In each painting he has tried to reflect the emotion of the city dwellers in natural surroundings. Through some warm as well as bright colours he has portrayed the elements of nature on the canvases.



One painting from the Red Sky series

TV GUIDE

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTW

07:30 Bangladesher Hridoy

09:00 Olympic

12:15 Shongbad Potrer Pata

Thekey

12:30 Shasthya Tothya

01:05 Magazine Programme:

Shopota Dinga

02:05 Khele Khele Com-

puter

02:30 Hija Tomal

03:05 Shukhi Paribar

03:35 Gito Bitan

04:00 Nitol Tata Football

07:05 Bhalo To Thakun

07:30 Mortal Combat

Conquest

08:25 Protidin Bangladesh

08:35 Athens Olympic 2004

highlights

10:35 Kamon Aaachhen

10:00 Choley Jay

10:00 Drama Serial: Gunai

Bibi

11:15 Talk Show: Annodishiti

11:50 Drama Serial: Betu

Niranjan

11:50 Musical Programme

Bangla Feature Film:

Mohon Mala

03:45 Uro Cola Saat Rang

04:20 Shapla Shaluk

05:10 Motamot

05:45 Islamjee Sawal O

Jawab

08:00 Gondhoraz Samsung

08:30 Drama Serial: Khowab

09:00 Drama Serial: Shu

Patron Shondhane

09:30 Drama Serial: New

Files

10:30 Face to Face Live

ntv

08:00 Aajker Shakal

08:30 Kobitaalap

09:00 Shanglap

09:30 Expedition Animal

Kingdom

10:02 Zoo Adventure

10:30 Aarshinagar

11:00 Close Up Juke Box

12:00 Chithi Pelam

12:30 Ajj Durepore and

AjyCell Teraka kathon

01:00 Ebon Cinemar Gaan

01:30 Public Reaction

01:45 Bangla Film: Garibon

Ahokon

04:00 Banglar Gaan

04:30 Poribesh Porikrama

05:00 Sa Re Ga Ma

05:35 Jonopoder Khobor

05:45 Gaaner Operae

06:10 Music Plus

06:45 Gillette World Sports

07:55 RCT Travel On

08:25 Drama Serial: Kichhu