

CULTURAL FEAST

Exhibition

Title: Kickin' Up Dust (featuring Australian contemporary indigenous cultural festivals on photographs)

Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts

Time: February 28-March 18, from 12pm to 8pm

Title: Faces

Artist: Arham ul Huq Chowdhury

Venue: Essentials, House 20, road 24, Block K, Bonani

Date: March 03-11, from 10am to 6pm

Title: Endangered Mind of five years

Artist: Uttam Kumar Roy

Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka

Date: March 01-07, From 11am to 8pm

Folk Festival

Title: Lokokrushipha Mela O Lokojo Utshab 2005

Organiser: Ministry of Cultural Affairs

Venue: Sonargaon at Narayanganj

Date: February 25-March 17

Play

Title: Shubha Lagan

Story: The Proposal by Anton Chekhov

Group: Chekhov Theatre

Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture, House 510, Road 7, Dhanmondi

Date: March 27, at 5:00pm

Film Screening

Title: I Gaidai Retrospective

Organiser: Dhaka Film Society

Venue: Russian Centre of Science and Culture, House 510, Road 7, Dhanmondi

Date: March 06-07

Schedule

March 06

04:00pm Kidnapping Caucasian Style
06:00pm Operation Eye And Other Adventures of Surik

March 07

04:00pm The Diamond Arm
06:00pm Evan Vasilovich Changes His Profession

Solo Exhibition

Title: Paint and Pixel

Artist: Nazia Andaleeb Preema

Venue: La Gallery, Alliance Francaise

Date: March 03-14, From 9am to 12pm and 5pm to 8pm

Discussion Programme

Title: Changing views with Playwrights and directors

Organiser: TheatreWala

Venue: Shilpkala Academy

Date: March 04, at 10am

Book Launch

Title: The Vultures Are Everywhere

Writer: Makbul Manjur

Venue: Omni Books, House 4G, Road 104, Gulshan 02, Dhaka

Date: March 02, at 6pm

Music Festival

Title: International Music Festival, Bangladesh 2005

Organiser: UNESCO, Centre for Education Creative and Performing Arts

Venue: Bangladesh National Museum Auditorium

Date: March 02-04

Saying farewell to Ekushey Book Fair '05

NOVERA DEEPIKA

THE closing ceremony of Ekushey Book Fair 2005 was held at the Bangla Academy premises on February 28. With the declaration of the winner stalls for the most artistic design, the fair wrapped up leaving the book-lovers both satisfied and discontented.

In the closing ceremony, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman handed over crests and certificates to the representatives of publishing houses. Names of the best stalls for both this and last year were declared. Somoy Prokashon won the first prize for this year while Agami and Ananya Prokashani secured the second and third places. For the year 2004 Mizan Library won the first position, Somoy Prokashon and Ananya won the second place jointly while Shikha Prokashoni won the third one.

Chairman of Bangla Academy Professor Wakil Ahmed, Director



People gather around the best awarded stall Somoy Prokashon at the Ekushey Book Fair '05

General Abul Kalam Manjur Murshed and the secretary member of the Ekushey Book Fair Committee Muhammad Nurul Huda spoke on the occasion. Begum Selima Rahman cited the special corner for children's books and the five squares named after the five language martyrs Salam, Rafique, Barkat, Jabbar and Shafiq as the additional attractions of this year's fair. She also appreciated the trend of launching books formally at the fair.

About 319 publishers participated in this year's fair while the number of stalls was 465. Begum Selima Rahman claimed that this was the biggest and most organised Ekushey Book Fair so far. The total number of published books during the fair, which is more than 1000, is also the biggest in the history of Ekushey Book Fair, according to her.

AKM Tarequl Islam Ronni of Somoy Prokashon said, "This is the third time our stall won the first prize. While designing the stall we always keep it in mind that the design must attract readers because of its artistic appeal. And as a publisher we publish various types of books ranging from fictions to essays and research works."

A visitor to the fair commented, "The fair was disciplined. However, the tight security and the people in uniforms detracted from the fair. Nevertheless, we come here and will eagerly await next February because this is the only book fair that gives us the chance to get so many books on varied subjects and get the opportunity to meet our favourite authors."

Exhibition

Little fingers use paint-brush for a cause

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

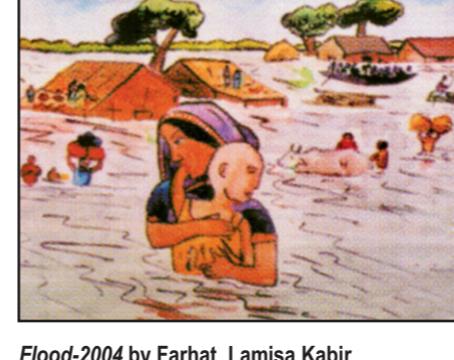
Children's art, uninhibited and joyous, is gaining popularity in our country. A large number of children now participate in the numerous local and international art competitions. This enthusiasm is not only limited to the urban children, the young ones from rural areas are also becoming involved in art. Art comes naturally to children. The young ones paint because they enjoy

colours. Through art, they also can express their innermost feelings.

Child artists recently participated at the Children's 4th Painting Exhibition at the Drik Gallery. Artist Md Abu Salim organised the exhibition starting from February 25 to March 1. The unique selling proposition of this exhibition was that it was for a philanthropic cause. These paintings were sold at Taka 500 each and all the proceeds would be donated to Dhaka Shishu Hospital.

This exhibition has been devoted to Shilpacharya Zaniul Abedin, who once said "I often say a colour is stunning but a face is lovelier than that; more beautiful than a pretty face is an untainted mind or character. Appreciation for and involvement with art are necessary for nurturing character and mind." Many parents nowadays are adhering to this belief and encouraging their children to draw, sketch and paint. This trend is becoming perceptible even among the middle and lower-middle class families in our country.

The age of the participants in this art exhibition ranged from 4 to 16. Subject-wise these paintings and sketches were pretty diverse, such as



Flood-2004 by Farhat Lamisa Kabir

Dhaka City by Shafat Rahman Sad, Victory Day by Alveera A. Montaz, Autumn by Faiza Ibrahim and My Village by Abrar Rahman. Some of these paintings dealt with sensitive and poignant issues like the atrocities during the Liberation War in 1971, working children and natural calamity, such as Genocide '71 by Syed M. Aleef Hassan, Child by Humayra Haroon and Flood '04 by Tashifa Tasneem.

Liberation '71 by Azwad H.Syed

After Ray, Foxx eyes singing career

AP, New York

Jamie Foxx's Oscar win has solidified him as one of Hollywood's A-list actors. But what he really wants to be is a chart-topping singer.

Foxx, who nabbed an Academy Award on Sunday night for his uncanny portrayal of Ray Charles in Ray, is working on an album for J Records, home to Alicia Keys, Mario and Rod Stewart. One of the producers on the album, Rich Harrison, said it is a mixture of R&B and hip-hop. "Foxx is an incredible singer and piano player," Harrison said. "I think the public is ready for a couple of albums from this guy."

The public wasn't ready when

Foxx released the album Peep in 1994. His success as a comedian did not cross over to the romantic soul.

Besides, Foxx already has had some musical success. It was his voice on the No. 1 song Slow Jamz, with Kanye West and Twista. All three were nominated for a Grammy for the smash hit.



Arjo Cholochitro recently arranged an art competition for children in Rangamati, says a press release. The chief guest of the event was the chairman of the Parbottya Zila Ancholik Parishad, Jyotirindro Bodhipriyo, Lalma. M. Gearing, country-representative of Unicef was the special guest. Shumit Kumar Dewan and renowned artiste Konok Champa Chakma were also present at the event.

In conversation

Minu talks about elements of performing arts



A colourful dance recital by the students of Pallavi

KAVITA CHARANJI

There are strong spiritual and aesthetic elements in the performing arts. As every artiste—be it in sculpture, architecture, painting, dance music—will testify, there is more to the arts than mere technical excellence. Minu Haque is one artiste whose passionate commitment to popularising Odissi makes her a well-known figure in the dance world.

Minu's enthusiasm for Odissi has translated into two organisations—Nityadharma and Pallavi. The former, established in 2001, organises cultural programmes and undertakes research in dance. Minu is Nityadharma's convenor. "Our aim is to explore and revive the dance heritage of Bengal. We hope to make a strong impact in the cultural arena. This is captured in our slogan: In quest of an indigenous dance heritage," asserts Minu.

Among Nityadharma's milestones is a dance performance in December 2003, at the renowned Nandikar (a Kolkata-based drama group) drama festival. "Every year Nandikar features Bangladeshi drama groups. This was the first time that they took a dance group from Bangladesh to a Nandikar drama festival," maintains Minu. The festival featured a variety of dances— Odissi, Bharatnatyam, folk, fusion, classical, modern, Manipuri, and Kathak.

There are other firsts, such as a three-day dance festival in 2002 at the National Museum. The participants in the festival were several institutions, classical dancers as well indigenous dancers such as Chakmas, Santals and Garos.

Minu's second organisation, Pallavi Indian Classical Dance School, runs Odissi classes. Established in 1997, Pallavi is the first school for Odissi in Bangladesh. "Teaching is my passion," maintains Minu, dance choreographer and teacher at Pallavi.

And what about the future? One plan is to introduce Yoga in dance. Minu's other aim is to encourage her students to be full fledged artistes. As she says, all her classical dance classes have yoga-based exercises. To integrate Yoga and dance further, she plans to run special classes. "Yoga

in dance is for everyone, not just dancers. Even if one doesn't do Yoga one can try," asserts Minu.

Her recipe for success: patience and hard work. "If you regularly practice Odissi dance, you can reach anywhere," she says.

Nityadharma has planned a festival this year end. Every month, in addition, the organisation holds dance shows to promote this art form. Minu has not neglected the marginalised sections of society. "We do not ignore the social aspect," says Minu. Nityadharma runs classes gratis for five-six children from the underprivileged section and also holds lectures and seminars with artistes for the physically challenged and underprivileged.

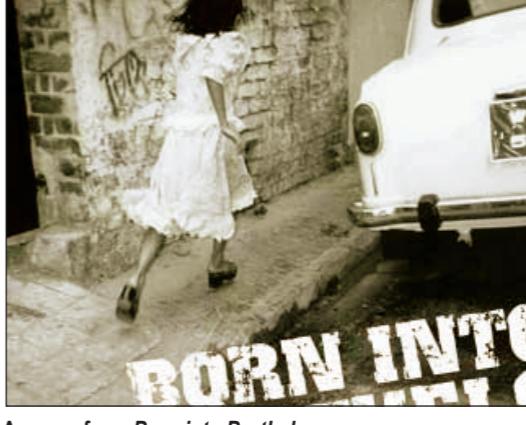
Minu has had a long innings in the world of Odissi dance. Between 1988 and 1995 she trained under two well-known practitioners of this genre Sunny Mahapatra and Ipsita Behura from India.

However, there are miles to go for Minu. Here's hoping that she will succeed in her mission to promote the graceful dance form of Odissi.



Minu Haque

Indian documentary gets recognition at Oscars



A scene from Born into Brothels

The Oscars, handed out in distant Hollywood, reverberated in the squalid lanes of Kolkata's biggest brothel as a group of children of prostitutes on Monday celebrated the triumph of a film made on them in the best documentary category.

British-born photographer Zana Briski's Born into Brothels documents the life of eight children of sex workers in Sonagachi brothel and their struggle for upliftment through creativity.

Briski began studying the lives of the sex workers of Sonagachi in 1998 but eventually became more interested in the lives of their children.

She paved the way for the flowering of the children's creativity by handing basic cameras to the 10 most curious

boys and girls and asking them to go out and shoot pictures.

The children's struggle, joy and talent with their cameras inspired Briski and American co-director Ross Kauffman to produce a documentary. Alongside, the pictures taken by the children toured the world in exhibitions and raised almost US \$100,000—the money earmarked for their education.

"The film has changed our lives. We owe so much to Zana aunty," said Puja, a 14-year-old impish girl who showed journalists a book compiled with their photographs. Puja, who uses only one name, said on Briski's insistence many of her friends and other children had enrolled in schools and were pursuing vocational courses. "I've begun taking computer classes," she said.

Briski has helped many boys like Abhijit Das and Manik Das to go to school and think of a life beyond the squalor of the brothels they were born into.

"I can speak in English now. Zana aunty sent me to an English medium school," Abhijit Das, 15, said in his halting English.

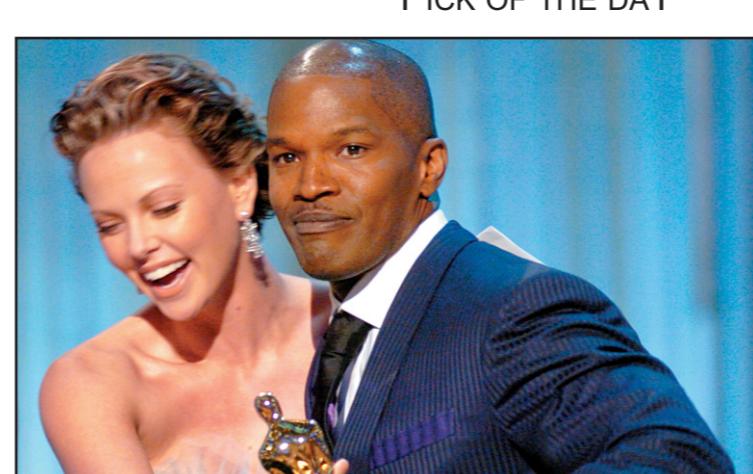
The children said they woke up early last Monday to catch the Oscars live on television. Once their film won the award, sweets were distributed and pleasantries exchanged. Briski also called Puja on her mobile to inquire about them and pass on the news of the Oscars win.

However, the umbrella organisation of sex workers in eastern India said it was disappointed the filmmakers had kept them in the dark. "No one told us that a documentary was being made on the lives of the children of sex workers. We are not unhappy about that, but we wish a balanced view was presented. Also, we want collective uplift of the children and not only of a few individuals," said Minal Dutta, secretary of the sex workers' group.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



77th Annual Academy Awards

On Star Movies at 6:00pm Academy Awards for outstanding film achievements of 2004 were presented on February 27 at the Kodak Theatre at Hollywood & Highland.

Popular Comedian of Hollywood Chris Rock hosted the show. Star Movies will telecast the recorded version of the four-hour-show.