

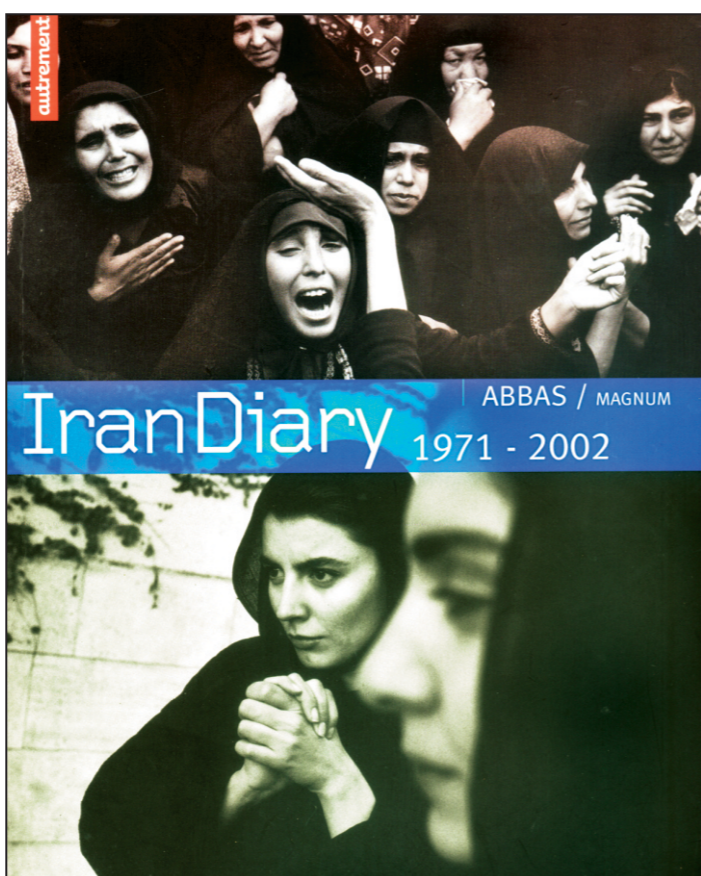
CULTURAL FEAST

Photography

Mind-whirling images from the land of Omar Khayyam

FAYZA HAQ

INTERNATIONALLY acclaimed photographer, Abbas, presented a talk on his country, along with slides, recently at the Bengal Gallery. The slides were based on his most recent book, Iran Diary...



The cover jacket of the book

Abbas, who has written various books, is born in Iran and works from Paris. Abbas is in self-exile since 1979, and has published world magazines. These include revolutions in the Biafra, Bangladesh, Ulster, Vietnam, the Middle East, Chile, Cuba and South Africa...

In his talk, Abbas said, "My work in Iran, begun in 1971, is an ongoing project. This is my Iran, 'Ispahan is half the world', as the saying goes. The sequencing in editing is in three parts."

At first, in the slide show, one saw women clad in black with children at a tomb; the Shah with his court, in full regalia, was replaced by the burning image of his effigy. Next one saw Khomeini's poster in a mammoth meeting at a university. A woman being trained in shooting replaced the image. The notion of avenging the martyrs' blood was then seen in the picture of a section of demonstrators beating shoes and

crying, "Why did you kill your own brother?" (This was in rhyme). This was followed by the image of burning of a sex-worker's corpse in a red light area. Then came the image of a pro-Shah woman being lynched.

At this juncture, Abbas said, "My duty as a photo-journalist has to be seen as someone concerned about what he saw in front of him and one who tried to remedy the situation in every possible and probable manner." In one of the slides, a woman who had fainted on the streets was seen being surrounded by photographers. Khomeini's arrival in France by a helicopter was then projected. This was accompanied by a scene of a large group of women welcoming Khomeini in a school, where he was later residing.

What one saw next was the US Embassy where diplomats were kept hostage after 1979. Corpses of the Shah and his courtiers were seen in the storage and the photo was taken three days after the revolution. Abbas commented here, "Every Iranian fled the SAVAK and the Shah regime. From being involved I became concerned, again." The photograph that followed was of an area that later became an ugly war ground. There was then the meeting of the Mujahedeen during Friday prayers in the streets of Iran. Images of Ashura and a funeral with wailing women were also focused on.

The slide show was indeed a powerful one.

Binodini impresses Kolkata crowd

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

As part of the Nandikar Theatre Festival in Kolkata, Shimul Yousuff recently performed Binodini, a Dhaka Theatre production, based on the autobiography of 19th century pioneer theatre activist Binodini Dasi.

Shubodh Ghosh, a local theatre activist of Kolkata, was one of the viewers of the show. According to Shubodh, Binodini had a wonderful impact on the audience. In a message sent to The Daily Star, Shubodh comments, "Renowned Bangladeshi stage actor Shimul has presented the autobiography of Binodini Dasi superbly on the stage. We find a quality juxtaposition of Nasiruddin Yousuff's directorial lines and Shimul's performance."

Shubodh added that renowned Indian cultural activists such as Habib Tanvir, Rudra Prasad



Shimul Yousuff in and as Binodini

Sengupta, Arun Mukherjee, Usha Ganguli, Bibhaskar Chakrobarty and others were present at the show and they praised Shimul's performance.

Small Screen

Telefilm Bhelki ready to be aired



Humayun Faridee in a scene from the film

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The tele-film Bhelki zeroes in on the darker side of life in Dhaka: the rise of crime, terrorism, rural migration to the city. With time Dhaka is becoming more prone to crimes of multi dimensional nature like homicide, terrorism, robbery etc. The over crowded population includes both drifters and influx of people from rural villages coming to the city with the hope to find and explore new ways of living. This has led to more crimes as unemployment and frustrations are taking over.

Apu and Topu are twins living in the city. They got married on the same day. The film follows their story as well as a few other characters.

Actors Humayun Faridee, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Intekhab Dinar, Tinni, Joy, Chumki, Shahed, Rumpa and Sadia play the central characters in the play. Javed M Khan Rumi is the playwright and director of the play. Toufique Ahmed is the music director.

Bhelki will be aired on ATN Bangla as part of the Eid-special programmes.

Seminar on short films

Focus on 'Networks Within'



Discussants at the seminar

ERSHAD KAMOL

The International Short and Independent Film Festival is held biennially. A key event in the festival is the Alamgir Kabir Memorial Lecture, an

international seminar on short film.

The latest lecture programme was held at Begum Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum, on December 27. The topic this year was 'Networks Within', presented by renowned

Indian short filmmaker Amar Kanwar.

Kanwar, in his paper, basically focused on the need for cohesion among the short filmmakers of the subcontinent. According to him, the short filmmakers of the subcontinent face common hurdles, such as political instability, obstacles created by the government and media aggression (mainstream cinema, television). "Short filmmakers should regularly exchange views and share the available facilities," said Kanwar.

Screening a few clippings from movies made by him, Kanwar in the seminar expressed the opinion that reality can be presented aesthetically in short films. He said that different combinations of time and space create a unique reality in a short film. Consequently the filmmakers must have a clear view of the nature of reality they are trying to create according to the demand of contemporary times.

After his presentation, Professor Ferdaus Azim, Mahmudul Hossain and Italian short filmmaker Fabrizio Ferrari made their comments on the topic. They also focused on the collaborative works of the short and independent filmmakers in the subcontinent.

The Alamgir Kabir Memorial Lecture was presided over by Hasnat Abdul Hai, the chairperson of the festival committee.

TV GUIDE

Table with TV schedule for various channels including BTv, CHANNEL-i, ATN BANGLA, ntv, and BBC WORLD. Includes a 'PICK OF THE DAY' section for Lux Channel-i Performance Award '04 and I Spy.