

# Exception to the rule

## Group show at Art & Soul Gallery

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

SIX young artists, Uttam Kumar Roy, Mohammad Wahiduzzaman, Nusrat Jahan Nazlee, Syed Mohammad Shamim, Shyamal Roy Chowdhury and Arif Al Karim Bhuiyan, going by the name "Exception", recently launched their fourth group show. Inaugurating the exhibition on April 20 at the Art & Soul Gallery, Professor Abdus Shakoor Shah praised the group's individual styles and lauded their achievement of four exhibitions in the span of one calendar year.

"Exception" was formed back in 1999 when the artists attended a six month long workshop at Gallery Tone, run by Khaled Mahmud Mithu and Kanak Champa. "We were drawn to each other and felt very much like a team," says Mohammad Wahiduzzaman, the most vocal group member. There is a feeling of mutual confidence and a shared commitment to promote art; the name was adopted jointly.

Uttam Kumar Roy, another member of the group, started painting in 1996 and had his first exhibition three years later. He has a preference for oils, as this medium enables him to work at his own leisurely pace. Uttam's paintings are dominated by spiders and webs in geometric patterns, which are symbolic of mankind's repression by society. Having a botany background, he has also done a series on the ozone layer.

Painting came naturally to Wahiduzzaman, whose talent was encouraged in childhood, leading up to his first exhibition at Gallery Tone. He is usually inspired by a key word, resulting in a particular series of acrylic on paper. For the current show, the artist has used 'family' (*shongshar*) as his central dogma, representing trust, understanding and inner crises of individuals coming together, using mathematical symbols to 'put life in a frame'.

Nusrat Jahan Nazlee is self-taught and had her first solo exhibition at Gallery Tone in 1995. Initially working in oil, Nazlee's medium of choice is now acrylic. Flowers in various forms



Friendly (L) by Nusrat Jahan Nazlee and a painting by Shyamal Roy Chowdhury

and colours lie at the heart of her work. "Life is complicated enough and my flowers represent a simplistic view, they match my lifestyle. Of course, there will always be problems." To Nusrat, recognition in one's own country comes high on the wish list. She feels that talented Bangladeshi artists are much more appreciated abroad than at home.

Like some of his fellow group members, Syed Mohammad Shamim also studied art at the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts, starting in 1992. He held his first solo exhibition in 2005. He is partial to the flexibility of mixed media, the various textures appealing to his style. Shamim concentrates on the bucolic themes of nature, village life, boats and rivers in his pieces entitled "In Search of Peace" (*Shantir Khojey*). Shamim is not bound by the norms



of colour; he likes to experiment with colour and works from memory using the fronds of a coconut branch, instead of a brush.

Shyamal Roy Chowdhury is currently a student at Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata. Shyamal has previously painted a dolls series and does more abstract work now. Arif Al Karim Bhuiyan's landscapes were also part of the exhibition.

"Exception" has come a long way since their first show at the Zainul Gallery almost exactly a year ago, a second hot on its heels in Chittagong. The third exhibition took place at the Academy of Fine Art, Kolkata, earlier this year. The artists waxed lyrical about their Kolkata effort and the fantastic response from viewers, critics and artists alike. Notable persona from the cultural arena, artists

Shuva Prasanna and Ramlal Dhar, author Taslima Nasreen and poet Belal Chowdhury were among those who attended. The group feels that there should be more such cross-border interaction.

Wahiduzzaman feels the exchange of views between group members with very different rationales brings them closer, making a positive contribution to their innate styles. This association is particularly appreciated when a member has a solo exhibition; they can always rely on someone for help with catalogues, galleries, publicity. "Exception" intends to donate proceeds from future exhibitions to relief work in cases of natural disasters.

The exhibition is on till March 29.

## Sohana Saba: Actress on the rise

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

When Sohana Saba made her entry in the cultural arena as a dancer, she hardly knew that there was more in store for her. After receiving the Meril Prothom Alo Award '06 recently, a teary eyed Saba told the packed audience, "Although I had practised a 'thank you' speech in front of the mirror ever since I started dreaming of becoming a star, right now I'm speechless." She won the award for her role in the movie *Aaina*.

Initially Saba took to modelling and within a short time she entered filmdom. Actor-director Kabori was on the look out for a new face for her movie *Aaina*. Saba seemed to fit the role perfectly. The young actress proved her skills through her work. Very soon she was selected for her second movie by Morshedul Islam. The film *Khelaghar* was much appreciated by film enthusiasts and Saba received warm response for her portrayal in the lead role. In an exclusive interview with *The Daily Star* (TDS) the talented actress talks about her flourishing movie career:

**TDS:** What was your reaction after winning the Meril-Prothom Alo award?

**Saba:** I consider myself extremely lucky to receive such a positive response from the moviegoers. Meril Prothom Alo Award is a recognition of my work and the feeling is simply out of the world. At the same time, it calls for added responsibilities. I have to be selective when choosing roles.

**TDS:** How did your career in the media start?

**Saba:** Initially I used to perform as a dancer. That made way for me to do a few TV commercials and eventually I started acting in TV plays. The offer to do movies came as a surprise to me.

**TDS:** Do you have plans to be regular in movies?

**Saba:** I am not quite sure. I do wish to continue working in quality movies where I can get opportunities to make a mark. I want to nurture the image that movies like *Aaina* and *Khelaghar* have created for me.

**TDS:** What about acting in TV plays? Will you continue it at the



same time?

**Saba:** Of course. One memorable movie role can make you immortal. But you can always be in touch with the contemporary audience through TV plays. Which is why I'm interested to work in both mediums.

**TDS:** You've gotten married recently?

**Saba:** I've gotten married to director-playwright Murad Parvez.

**TDS:** It's often said that the quality of our movies have deteriorated in recent years. Do you agree?

**Saba:** Good and bad movies were always there. Lately, many

young and talented filmmakers are coming up with interesting projects. But at the same time, I strongly believe that if the audience remain reluctant to watch movies in theatres, the situation won't improve. I believe that only 'wishing' for better movies won't help. Our movie industry has to be encouraged and supported at the same time.

**TDS:** Tell us about your future plans.

**Saba:** I want to do something significant. But first I plan to complete my education. I want to do memorable roles for which viewers will remember me for time to come.

## ALL TIME GREATS

# Ritwik Ghatak: Unmistakable Bengali brilliance

It was only after his death at age fifty in 1976 that Ritwik Kumar Ghatak has come to be regarded as one of the greatest figures in Indian cinema. His brilliant and abrasive films are among the most revolutionary achievements in contemporary Indian art. Ghatak was truly an original filmmaker with no cinematic predecessors. The product of an early involvement in politics and people's theatre, Ghatak, as a filmmaker, was bent on wedding his political activism with cultural content as he fashioned popular forms -- melodrama, songs, dances -- into appropriate vehicles for radical political expression.

Ghatak was born on November 4, 1925, in Zindabahr, Dhaka. By and large his films revolve around the experience of being uprooted from the idyllic rural milieu of East Bengal and the cultural trauma of Partition (1947). His films are heavily influenced by his personal experiences of Partition.

Ghatak came of age during the convulsions of the 1940s -- World War II, the terrible "man-made famine" (1944), the communal violence that followed Independence (1947), and especially the partition of Bengal, which obsessed him all his life. His subjects are almost invariably chosen from among the uprooted and the dispossessed: parentless children, homeless families, disoriented refugees, and the petit bourgeoisie, economically broken by their exile. Yet, there is a glimmer of hope in even the darkest moments.

An artist across many mediums, Ghatak wrote, performed in, directed and produced numerous plays on the stage and on the streets for the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). He later formed his own theatre group, Group Theatre, following differences with IPTA.

It was the massive size of the film-going audience, rather than a love for the cinema, that Ghatak claims made him interested in cinema. Ghatak's work in the cinema itself never settled into any certain genre. "My first film was called a picaresque episodic film along the lines of the eighteenth century Spanish novel *Gil Blas De Santillane*"; the second was called a film of documentary approach; the next was a melodrama, and the fourth, nothing at all, just no film," he once said.

Ghatak's first film *Nagorik* was about a young man's



search for a job and the erosion of his optimism and idealism as his family sinks into abject poverty and his love affair too turns sour. The film was completed in 1953 but in fact released posthumously in 1977. Satyajit Ray once said, "Had *Nagorik* been released before his *Pather Panchali* (released in 1955), *Nagorik* would have been

accepted as the first alternative Bangla film."

Ghatak made *Ajantrik* (1958) about a taxi driver in a small town in Bihar and his old Chevrolet jalopy. An assortment of passengers gives the film a wider frame of reference and provided situations of drama, humour and irony.

*Meghey Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Komal Gandhar* (1961) and *Subarnarekha* (1962) form a trilogy around the socio-economic implications of Partition.

In *Meghe Dhaka Tara* the protagonist Nita is the bread-earner in a refugee family of five. Everyone exploits her and the strain proves too much. She succumbs to tuberculosis. The film reaches its highpoint as the dying Nita cries out "I want to live...", the camera pans across the mountains accentuating the indifference and eternity of nature even as the echo reverberates over the shot. Ghatak followed it up with *Komal Gandhar* concerning two rival touring theatre companies in Bengal and *Subarnarekha*, a unusual film using melodrama and coincidence as a form rather than mechanical reality.

Ghatak also had a brief stint as vice principal of the Film And Television Institute of India (Pune), a time he recalled as a "happy experience". However his next film *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam* (1973) was on the life and eventual disintegration of a fishing community living by the river Titash. The film was completed after many problems at the shooting stage including his collapse due to tuberculosis and was a commercial failure.

Ghatak made one more film before his death *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo* (1974) the most autobiographical and allegorical of his films. He himself played the main role of Nilkanta -- an alcoholic intellectual -- and the film is remembered for his stunning use of the wide-angle lens to most potent effect.

Incredibly, in a memorial lecture on Ghatak, given after his death, Satyajit Ray had this to say, "As a filmmaker and artist Ritwik was a Bengali to the core, much more of a Bengali than myself. For me that is the last word about him, and that is his most valuable and distinctive characteristic."

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent

## Photographer Munem Wasif selected for Joop Swart Masterclass Grant '07

Talented young Bangladeshi photographer Munem Wasif has been selected for the prestigious 14th Annual World Press Photo Joop Swart Masterclass Grant 2007, says a press release. A high profiled international jury has selected him as one of the participants among best 12 young photographers (Under age 30) of the world for 2007.

These 12 photographers will come together with a group of masters and will get a world-class workshop for their best photojournalistic works, from November 3-8, 2007 in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Wasif has also won two bronze prizes in The 3rd China International Press Photo Contest 2007 and 1st Prize in Contemporary Issues in Polish Press Photo Contest 2007. He is currently working for Drik News, an International



A photograph by Munem Wasif

## TV GUIDE

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

### News Bulletin

#### BTV

News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.

News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.

News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.

Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).

#### CHANNEL-i

News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15 am.

#### ATN BANGLA

News (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 10:00am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11pm. News (English) 8:20am, 7:00pm. Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 a.m, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00pm, 8:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

#### CHANNEL 1

News (Bangla) at 8:00am, 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 6:30pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm, 12:30am

#### BANGLAVISION

News (Bangla) at 8:00am, 2:00pm, 6:00pm, 7:15pm, 10:30pm. News Headlines (Bangla) at 9:00pm. News Headlines (English) at 9:05pm

#### BTV

09:05 Shomapti  
11:40 Shotorupa  
12:05 Ma O Shishur Kotha  
12:30 Swapno Shonar Gaon  
01:30 Shukhi Poribar  
02:15 Children's Drama  
02:40 Esho Gaan Shikhi  
03:05 Cartoon  
04:00 Ekal Shekal  
04:30 Bansuri  
05:05 Documentary Programme  
05:30 Doctor Jokhon Durey  
07:00 Sangeta  
08:35 Protidin Bangladesh  
08:40 Drama Serial: the week: Atondro Prohori

#### ATN Bangla

08:15 Aiker Shangbad Potro  
08:30 Talk show  
09:15 ATN Commentary Box  
10:30 Talk Show  
11:05 Aj Kaal Porshu  
12:15 Bangla Feature Film  
03:45 Shundor Jiboner Jonno  
04:20 Cooking Programme  
05:10 Amader Joto Kotha  
05:40 Islamic Programme  
06:20 TV Serial: Mugly  
08:00 Drama Serial: Shokal Shondha  
08:45 Drama: Koto Chena Koto Ochena  
09:20 Drama Serial: Chhayamukh

#### CHANNEL-i

08:30 Shokaler Gaan  
09:30 Shabab Potre Bangladesh

09:50 Tritomatra  
12:30 Citycell Tarokakathan  
01:05 Ebong Cinemar Gaan  
01:30 Shangbad Potery Bangladesh  
01:45 Public Reaction  
02:40 Tritomatray Agni  
03:05 Hridoye Mati O Manush  
04:05 Cricatish Bishwacup Special  
04:50 Sa Re Ga Ma  
05:30 Muktiudho Protidin  
06:00 Aktel sms Doradori  
06:20 Amar Chhobi  
07:50 Channel i Krishi Podok 2007  
08:20 Drama Serial: Ferari  
09:35 Bharanto Nabik  
10:00 Drama Serial: Nishidho Bonobhumi

#### Channel 1

08:40 Shuprobhath Bangladesh  
09:30 Chokhi Mele Dekhi  
10:30 Bangla Feature Film  
03:30 Drama Serial: Society  
04:00 Drama Serial: Nokol Poshakh  
04:30 Baker Pathay  
05:15 Gollachhut  
06:45 Ithasher Path Dhorey  
07:00 Bagan Bilash  
08:15 Drama Serial: Society  
09:00 Drama Serial: Nokol Poshakh  
09:30 The One  
09:30 Boishakhi  
09:00 Cartoon  
09:25 Documentary

PICK OF THE DAY



**Channel-i Krishi Padak 2007**  
On Channel-i at 7:50pm  
Honouring Kartik Pramanik for his contribution to tree plantation

**American Idol**  
On Star World at 8:30pm  
Talent Hunt  
Host: Ryan Seacrest

10:30 Programme 11:00 Drama 12:05 Talkshow 12:05 Documentary 12:30 Programme 13:30 Cartoon 01:30 Musical Programme 04:00 Talk show 05:00 Superman 05:30 Hoi Choi Hurrah 06:00 Hello Cricket 07:15 Kemon Kore Holo 07:35 Harano Diner Gaan 08:00 Tarar Aloy 09:17 Drama	10:10 Swapno Chura 10:40 Dasher Pathay Drama Serial: Chaitali Jochhonay Eka Meyeti 11:10 Cinebit Shada Kalo 11:40 Nanan Ranger Din Guli 02:40 Drama Serial: Krishno Pokho 03:10 Drama Serial: Dokhinayon 04:15 Sportsvision 05:00 Children's Programme 05:40 Diner Sheshey 06:25 Shurer Bhubon 06:45 Bishwa Cup Protidin 08:15 Drama Serial:	08:55 Dokhinayon 09:10 Bhokab Article Thirty Nine 10:30 A Lover's Revenge 12:15 Diamonds Are Forever 02:15 Edison 03:55 Her Minor Thing 05:30 My Favorite Martian 07:10 Jiminy Glick In La La Wood 08:40 Into The Blue 10:30 Noel 12:10 On Her Majesty's Secret Service 04:45 Maid Of Honor 06:30 Patient 14	<b>STAR PLUS</b> 10:00 V Trailers - Star Plus 10:30 Aladdin 11:00 That's So Raven 11:30 V Trailers - Star Plus 11:30 Bolly V - Star Plus 12:25 Kasturi 12:25 Bolly V - Star Plus 04:00 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby 08:30 Karam Apnaa Apnaa 09:00 Kasautii Zindagii Kay 09:30 Meri Awaz Ko Mil Gayi Roshni 10:00 Kasturi 10:30 Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii 11:00 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi Kayamath 12:00 Paraya Dhan 11:30 American Idol 11:30 Heroes 12:30 Grey's Anatomy 01:30 Third Watch 02:30 Oprah Winfrey Show 03:30 The Bold And The Beautiful 04:00 General Hospital 05:00 Fashion House 06:00 Less Than Perfect 06:30 The Simpsons 07:00 Cheers 07:30 Friends Sr 8 08:00 Seinfeld 08:30 American Idol 10:30 Crumbs 11:00 8 Simple Rules 11:30 Fashion House <b>DISCOVERY CHANNEL</b> 10:30 Drama On Discovery
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