

Not by design

In conversation with Aneela Haque

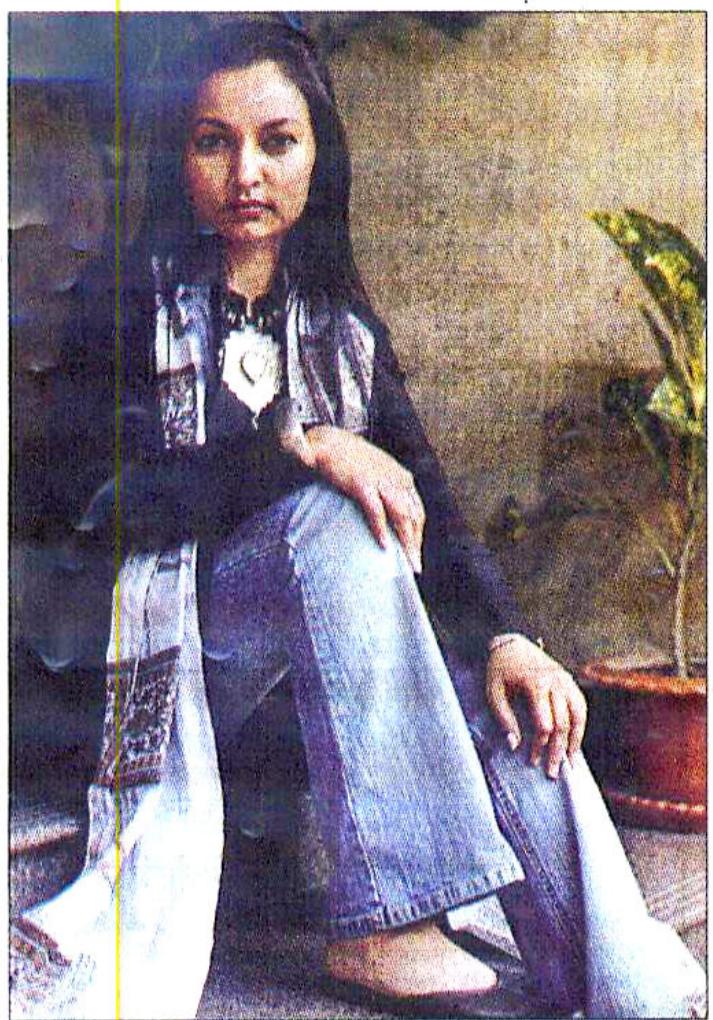
NIVEDITA RAITZ VON FRENTZ

INSPIRATION is momentary. Children inspire me; compliments inspire me; they help me stay positive. You build your own inspiration and inspire those around you. Perseverance is very important if you want to achieve anything in life." She describes herself as a "positive bomb" and certainly, bubbly fashion designer, Aneela Haque lives up to that reputation!

Convent school educated, Aneela led a conservative life, but that did not prevent her from having a wide range of interests, from Indian classical music to art. Born into a culturally oriented family, Aneela's passion for Urdu poetry and ghazals stemmed from her father. "Poetry and music are also an inspiration. I get carried away, get lost in the emotion". From her mother, she inherited a love of Bengali literary classics by Sarat Chandra, Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath.

Aneela was always keen that fashion studies figured in her future, but was caught in the "female dichotomy" dilemma. Persuaded by her brother, Aneela's parents let her study abroad. Her final destination was to be the specialised Stephens College in Missouri, an all-women, fashion, performing and fine arts college. "You could feel theatre, dance, music, on the campus. It was too arty, just brilliant!"

Initially registering for a fashion degree, Aneela changed her major to fine arts. She has been painting since she was eight, mostly without



Aneela Haque

guidance, but remembers taking lessons from the late Anwar Jahan. Her sketching and oil painting techniques were honed by calligrapher Saiful Islam of the Cezanne Art School. To broaden her hori-

zons, Aneela spent a summer at the Paris branch of the Parsons School of Design and also visited the main New York campus before returning to Dhaka in 1991.

Soon after, Aneela fell into advertising work on children's issues with UNICEF. This paved the way to working with BRAC. More freelance work followed and a further feather in Aneela's cap was an assignment for Nobel Laureate, Professor Mohammad Yunus, for high profile meetings with Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela. Exposure to different development agencies and her mentor, UNICEF's Dr Sharad Sapra were the catalysts for starting her own advertising agency, "with fashion on the side". So, *AnDes* came into being in 1995.

Graphic design and unusual scripts on fabric make the "Aneela brand identity" incredibly strong. "I've transposed my travel experience, romance and poetry onto fabric. I introduced the concept of mix and match". Materials are bought locally, browsing in Chandni Chowk or directly from weavers. Her pioneering work of transcribing excerpts of Tagore's romantic poems and Jibanananda Das' nature poems on fabric is very distinctive. Substantial training is involved and Aneela is indignant at the theft of some of her block-cut designs; now, all work is done in-house.

While she continues working on international UNICEF projects, with her designing work gaining the upper hand, Aneela concentrated less on advertising. *AnDes* is a major undertaking, with three shops at the Radisson Hotel, at

Rangs Anam Plaza in Dhanmondi and at Z N Tower in Gulshan 1. With so much going on, Aneela's painting fell by the wayside. "I've poured my heart into fashion; the art is my canvas."

Travelling is an integral part of her life and Aneela has picked up fashion tips from all over the world. In 1994, she held her first solo exhibition at the Shilpakala Academy, exhibiting parts of her diary, "Travel Journal". Works in mixed media, oil, drawings and photos were on display.

The fashion show calendar has been hectic over the years. She participated twice in the exclusive "Paris Comes to Dhaka" show, most recently earlier this year. In 2006, she helped the SAARC Women's Association raise money for visually impaired children through a solo effort. She has also been a regular at the "Bridal Asia" fashion show, a popular event for contemporary designers.

Amazingly, Aneela is a black belt in karate and the school is like a second home; she is grateful to her karate mentor, Sensei Kais. "Wado karate is my guide, my stabiliser; it helps me to be a better crisis manager and reflect in solitude." The latter is her biggest strength. She has also taken a leaf out of Khalil Gibran's *The Prophet* to help her achieve life's balance.

Rehieved in fashion she does not have to worry about corruption, Aneela is still sore about the copycat work, destroying the myth that imitation is the best form of flattery.

The writer is a freelance contributor

ALL TIME GREATS

Rainer Werner Fassbinder: A truly (and repeatedly) dangerous filmmaker

Rainer Werner Fassbinder, one of the most important representatives of the New German Cinema, was a filmmaker prolific to the point of being a workaholic. From 1969 to 1982 he directed over 40 productions, most of them feature films, a few TV specials and one huge 931-minute TV mini-series *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. These films were nearly all written or adapted for the screen by Fassbinder himself. He was also the art director of most of his early films, editor or co-editor of a lot of them, and acted in nine of his films as well as for other directors.

His films give an incisive picture of the post-war Germany, at first through ironic and nearly plot-less deconstructions of Hollywood genre cinema with a formally experimental and astute provocative political edge, remaining relevant to urban life in contemporary times and human relationships. Some of the films are also endowed with a decidedly dark and sardonic sense of humour.

There are three distinct phases to his career. The first ten or so movies (1969-1971) were an extension of his work in the theatre, shot with an almost always-static camera and with deliberately unnaturalistic dialogue. The second phase is the one that brought him international attention, with films that use victims to explore how deep-rooted prejudices about race, sex, sexual orientation, politics and class are inherent in society, while also tackling his trademark subject of the everyday fascism of family life and friendship. The final batch of films, from around 1977 until his death, were more varied.

Two of the best works of earlier period are *Beware of a Holy Whore* and *The American Soldier*, the former a dark comedy, the latter quite possibly the best of his gangster films.

In 1971 Fassbinder met Douglas Sirk, and the second cycle of his work was initiated. After *The Merchant of Four Seasons* came *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant*. The latter works remarkably well as an exposé of the lies that relationships can

be founded on, especially the lies in those idealised cinematic representations of relationships people often take for truth. It also says a lot about the way individuals let themselves be abused by others in the hope of gaining their love, or out of fear of being alone.



Following *Martha*, his Sirkian abstraction on the cruelty of a bourgeois marriage, and the famous immigrant drama *Fear Eats the Soul*, came *Fox and his Friends*. The film is notable for its then controversial but now revelatory presentation of gay relationships to be not that different from straight ones.

In *A Year with 13 Moons* tells the story of a transsexual, Elvira / Erwin, and uses strange lighting effects and often fragmented and dark compositions. The film is considered to be one of Fassbinder's most experimental films, and is a harsh and sincere investigation of minority urban life.

His biggest international success, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, came in 1978 centring on women in World War II and its aftermath. The film offers careful analysis of the social make-up of those years in terms of dissidence and the changing and unchanging nature of Germany through that period.

Fassbinder's seething politics was never far from view in all his films; he hated liberal compromises.

His masterpiece *Berlin Alexanderplatz* shows, through great performances, cinematography and direction, how a man through his personal faults and an unmerciful society is unable to fulfil himself.

Shortly after finishing *Querelle*, Fassbinder was found dead in his Munich apartment. It was not, as had been reported, suicide, but his suicidal lifestyle had finally caught up with him -- cocaine and alcohol abuse in particular had caused his heart to fail at the age of 37.

Fassbinder remains a remarkable figure for both his unwavering commitment to a socially aware cinema and his rare capacity to use the packaging, the form and, to some degree, the content of Hollywood cinema to produce passionate artistic and political statements. Fassbinder was that rarity -- a truly (and repeatedly) dangerous filmmaker.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent

ON AIR

PICK OF THE DAY



Dolls House
On ATN Bangla at 11:30pm
Drama Serial
Cast: Bonna Mirza, Intikhab Dinar



The Office
On Star World at 9:30pm
TV Series
Cast: Steve Carell, Jenna Fischer

STAR WORLD	10:10 <i>Desher Pathay</i>	11:30 <i>Bahu Thi</i>
10:40 <i>Drama Serial: El Shob</i>	12:00 <i>Kayamat</i>	12:00 <i>Karam Apna Apna</i>
11:05 <i>Documentary Programme</i>	11:40 <i>Nana Ranger Din Gull</i>	11:45 <i>Beauty And The Geek</i>
01:00 <i>Drama Serial: Mohanogor</i>	01:00 <i>Apna Jiyasho</i>	12:30 <i>Ugly Betty</i>
02:30 <i>Vokab</i>	02:30 <i>Shobhad Protidin</i>	12:30 <i>Boston Legal</i>
02:40 <i>Drama Serial: Shesh Odhay</i>	03:15 <i>Cookery Show</i>	01:30 <i>Fashion House</i>
03:15 <i>Cookery Show</i>	04:15 <i>Citycell Diner And Sheshey</i>	02:30 <i>The Ellen Degeneres Show</i>
04:30 <i>Apna Jiyasho</i>	04:30 <i>Shobhad Protidin</i>	03:30 <i>The Bold And The Beautiful</i>
05:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	05:30 <i>General Hospital</i>	04:00 <i>Law & Order: S.V.U.</i>
06:25 <i>Musical Programme</i>	06:25 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	05:00 <i>Scrubs</i>
06:25 <i>Drama Serial: Mohanogor</i>	06:25 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	06:30 <i>The Simpsons</i>
09:05 <i>X Crime</i>	06:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	07:30 <i>My Wife And Kids</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	07:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	08:30 <i>How I Met Your Mother</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	07:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	09:00 <i>My Name Is Earl</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	08:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	09:30 <i>The Office (Us)</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	08:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	10:00 <i>Two & A Half Men</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	09:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	10:30 <i>The Jane Show</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	09:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	11:00 <i>Crisis Angel Mindfreak</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	10:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	11:00 <i>Most Daring</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	10:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:00 <i>Frankenstein</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	11:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:00 <i>The Wedding Date</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	11:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:00 <i>Kaaneuri Char Ghar Ki</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	12:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:00 <i>Walking The Bible</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	12:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:30 <i>Frankenstein</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	13:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:30 <i>Big Bang</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	13:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	13:00 <i>The Death Adder Duet</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	14:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	05:30 <i>I Didn't Know That</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	14:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	06:00 <i>Kings of the Pantanal</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	15:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	12:30 <i>Walking The Bible</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	15:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	06:30 <i>Dive To Tiger Central</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	16:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	07:30 <i>Huge Moves</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	16:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	08:30 <i>Frontline Of Construction</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	17:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	10:30 <i>Inside Jerusalem</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	17:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	11:30 <i>Holiest</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	18:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	11:30 <i>Ice Hotels</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	18:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	11:30 <i>Ice Hotels</i>
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12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	31:30 <i>Islamic Programme</i>	11:30 <i>Ice Hotels</i>
12:00 <i>Shongbad Protidin</i>	32:00 <i>Islamic Programme</i</i>	