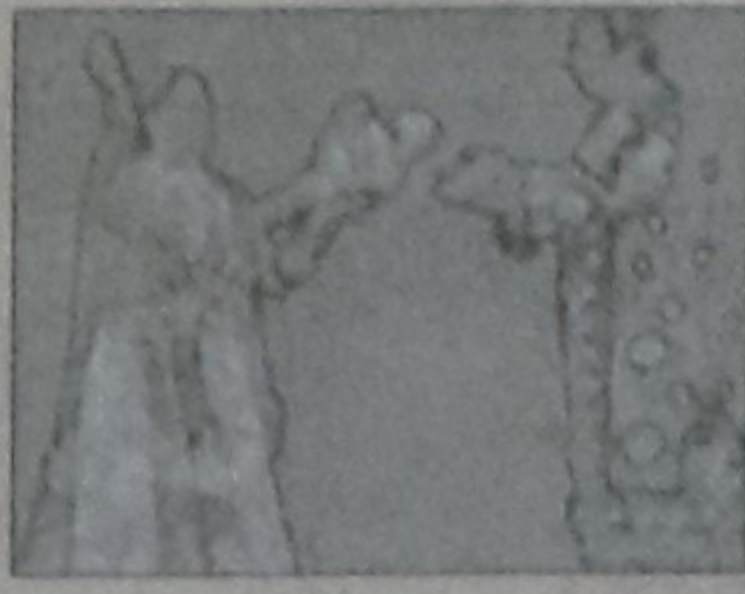


Weeklong Jatra Utsab

Organiser: Department of Theatre and Film, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA)
Venue: Experimental Theatre Stage, BSA
Date: March 18-24
Time: 6:30pm



Exhibition

On artworks from 1948 to 2008
Title: Contemporary Art of Bangladesh
Venue: Drik Gallery, House 58, Road 15A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: March 13-19
Time: 3pm-8pm



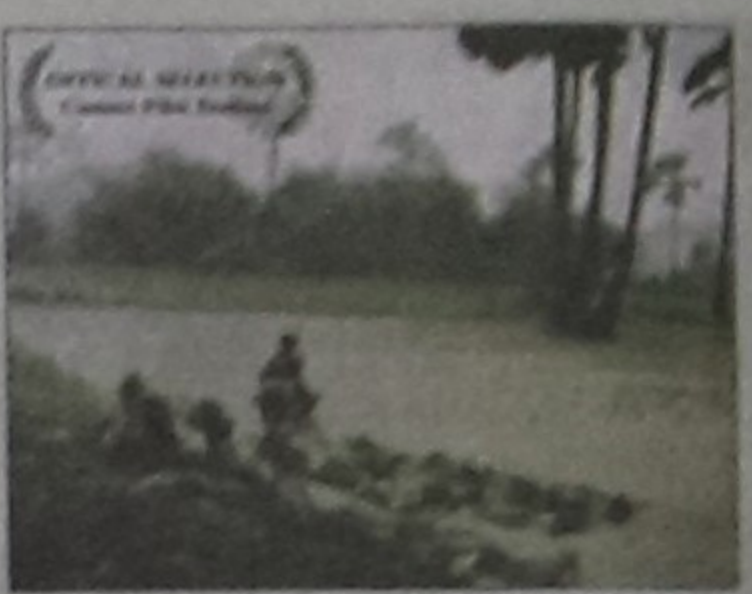
Film Screening (Premiere Show)

Title: Ujan Panthe
Venue: Goethe-Institut, House 10, Road 9, Dhanmondi
Date: March 19
Time: 06:00pm



Francophone Film Festival '08

Organiser: Alliance Francaise and Zahir Raihan Film Society
Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, Road 3, Dhanmondi
Date: March 16-25



Master Stroke

In conversation with Hamiduzzaman Khan

NIVEDITA RAITZ VON FRENTZ

"I've always been fond of, had the knack for watercolours," admits effacing Professor Hamiduzzaman Khan, whose solo exhibition is on at Galleri Kaya (House 20, Road 16, Sector 4, Uttara). Although he graduated in painting from the Institute of Fine Arts (DU), this aspect could not be wholeheartedly pursued once he started teaching there, switching to and specialising in sculpture. In this instance, it all began with a water-colour workshop organised by Kaya and one of Dhaka's luxury hotels. Praise from contemporaries Rafiqun Nabi and Samarjit Roy Chowdhury egged Hamid into launching the show, the result of twelve months' work.

Hamid's travels around Bangladesh -- to Habiganj and Mymensingh -- enabled him to capture amazing scenes. "I could feel the beauty of Bangladesh's waters; being on the river is quite a different experience." Initially he made numerous sketches, rocking in a boat on Habiganj's swollen monsoon lakes (*haor*), a time during which light conditions can change rapidly. The darkness of cloud cover is reflected in some hooded paintings, with Hamid expressing his immediate emotions. Drawing from his expertise of sculpting after sunset, these paintings symbolise "solid, massive form-filling, a concept of great importance to me."

Mymensingh's old Brahmaputra River, a trickle in winter, but hugely dangerous in the monsoon, and the lithe *kash* flowers, attracted Hamid to spend three days on a boat, fishing and painting.

An accident in the late '60s resulted in a head injury requiring plastic surgery. He travelled to the UK by cargo ship, reaching Dundee, Scotland in five weeks, a thoroughly pleasant journey, he found. Following the suturing of the gap in his skull in Edinburgh, Hamid convalesced for six months, visiting, among others, the British and Victoria & Albert Museums, and the Tate. The Constables he saw would later inspire his watercolours. More cultural insights were gleaned during his Parisian trip, where a retrospective Alberto Giacometti sculpture exhibition was to play a pivotal role in his development as a sculptor. Onwards to Rome, Michelangelo's and the Laocoon group of sculp-



Artworks by Professor Hamiduzzaman Khan



tures at St. Peter's drawing him like magnets. "They had a deep impact on me; sculpture is a truly powerful living exhibition."

Thus freshly infused, Hamid joined the sculpture department, Institute of Fine Arts. Declining a scholarship to further his talents in Shantiniketan, he chose Baroda for his Masters instead, where he "felt the atmosphere." At an exhibition held at Bombay's Taj art gallery celebrating the university's silver jubilee, Hamid's chosen sculpture caught legendary artist, Hussein's

eye by virtue of being free standing, the rest being on pedestals, the norm then. Hamid recalls spending an exciting hour with Hussein, who was impressed with his innovative style; his "derived, individual style" was highlighted in an Indian Express newspaper review. Immersing himself in sculpture, *Remembrance '71* was displayed at the Shilpakala's first national exhibition, bestowing upon him the national award, and establishing him in the field. The piece was featured in a book published by

Baroda University a few years ago. "I was thrilled to be one of two Bangladeshi artists chosen for the book."

Of his numerous achievements, Hamid considers his first substantial government commission in 1981, a 24-ft high geometric bird's family in front of the President's house, and his 12-ft bronze, *Hamla*, at Sylhet Cantonment to be special honours.

Today, Hamid prefers working with sheet metal, easier to handle for large fragments when making welded sculptures. Outdoor work being close to his heart, he wishes to have a garden exhibition later this year. His sculpture park in Savar is already a work in progress, where foreign sculptors could hold symposia, creating an interesting forum for local artists. Plans to have an oil and acrylic show shortly are also in the pipeline. Only last month, Hamid was appointed director of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh's, Gallery of Fine Art, which recently hosted visiting European artists. "The country's young buyers seem very promising for the future of Bangladeshi art," says the artist.

The exhibition at Galleri Kaya ends on March 21 2008.

The writer is a freelance contributor

Impressive profits from this year's Ekushey Boimela

JAMIL MAHMUD

This year the Bangla Academy sold books worth BDT 70 lakh in the month-long Amor Ekushey Granthamela. Last year, the total sale was BDT 43 lakh. "It could have been 20 lakh more, if we took necessary initiatives in due time," informed the Director General of Bangla Academy, Syed Muhammad Shahed at a press conference held yesterday. He also spoke on several other issues related to the Granthamela.

According to the publication houses, the total sale at the book fair is about BDT 20 crore, but according to our assessment it should be nearly BDT 35 crore," said Syed Muhammad Shahed.

This year, nearly 3500 new books were published during the month-long book fair. Initially the fair started with 352 stalls but the authority had to set up more stalls to accommodate more participants. Towards the end the total number of stalls reached to 379 including 22 stalls for the Little Magazines.

The authority also took several necessary steps to avoid unexpected rush of visitors, like installing two entrances and a separate exit. Several food stalls were set up at the adjacent Suhrawardy Udyan.

Due to a rapid increase in the number of publication houses as well as readers, the authority seeks to expand the venue in future.

World Children and Youth Theatre Day

Liaquat Ali Lucky on the current state of Children's Theatre in Bangladesh

ERSHAD KAMOL

To observe the 'World Children and Youth Theatre Day', Peoples Theatre Association (PTA), the local representative of ASSITEJ, a global network of theatre for children and young people, has arranged a daylong programme tomorrow (March 20).

The event will begin at 9am at the Hare Krishna Kishumkoli High School at Kolakopa, Nawabganj. In the evening 150 member troupes of PTA will take part in a cultural programme that will include discussion, mime, dance, circus, and drama. The 'World Children and Youth Theatre Day' programme will be inaugurated by theatre personality Liaquat Ali Lucky, secretary general of PTA. The Daily Star spoke with Lucky.

According to Lucky, "Established in 1965, ASSITEJ links thousands of theatre organisations and individuals through national centres in more than 70 countries. ASSITEJ declared March 20 as the 'World Children and Youth Theatre Day' in 2000. As a member of ASSITEJ, we have been observing the day since 2001. This year we have chalked out a major arrangement."

"Our activities have been highly appreciated by ASSITEJ. This year ASSITEJ is presenting our 'World Children and Youth Theatre Day' celebration of 2006 on the Internet," said Lucky.



Liaquat Ali Lucky

On the reason behind selecting the venue at Nawabganj for the inaugural programme, Lucky, said, "For the last few months we have been initiating several workshops on children's theatre at Nawabganj. So we decided to inaugurate the festival there. I believe, it will boost the children's theatre activities outside Dhaka."

Liaquat Ali Lucky has been active in promoting and providing patronage to children's theatre activities in Bangladesh for the last two decades. He is the representative of Asian countries at the six-member International Children and Youth Committee of International Amateur Theatre Association (IATA). Lucky said, "Being a member of the committee, I have certain ideas concerning the children's and youth theatre trend. I'm trying to incorporate the latest programmes in Bangladesh."

"We have developed about ten college-based theatre troupes in Dhaka. By the end of this year, 20 more colleges will be added in the programme. We will include these troupes in the Children's Theatre Festival that we hold every June. Moreover, we have been regularly staging plays for children. These types of theatre productions have received a huge positive response at the school level. We are also planning to stage plays for children at the Mahila Samity Stage, to familiarise the young ones with the current theatre trends in Bangladesh."

Seminar on "Images of women in TV commercials"

AUREEN AHSAN

A seminar titled "Images of women in TV commercials" was held at the CIRDAP auditorium on March 17. The seminar was organised by Center for Development Communication with the support of Oxfam-GB Bangladesh. Noted media personality Muhammad Jahangir hosted the seminar.

Professor Saurav Sikder of University of Dhaka, presented the main speech at the seminar along with a slide show featuring clips from different TV advertisements that often objectify women. He said that media policies regarding this issue should be precise. "Workshops and training programmes for ad makers are also necessary, so that the image of woman is not demeaned in the commercial," he said. Professor Sikder added, "It is very important to keep in mind the impact these ads have on the children. A young, impressionable mind can be highly influenced by what is being shown on TV."

Professor Sikder further explained the different steps of



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Professor Geeti Ara Nasreen, Mostafa Sarwar Farooki, Muhammad Jahangir and Rubaba Dowla Matin at the seminar

their project that included analysis of the TV commercials, survey of the audience and suggestions from the analysts. He also appealed to the viewers and ad makers to come forward to placate the gender inequalities in our society.

Popular ad maker and TV play director Mostafa Sarwar Farooki; Rubaba Dowla Matin, head of brands, GP and Professor Geeti Ara Nasreen also spoke at the seminar. They presented their views on the topic and discussed the different

aspects of ad making and the way women are viewed in our society. An open discussion was also held at the end of the seminar.

A seminar on the same topic was previously arranged in Rajshahi and Chittagong.

Plight of the marginalised depicted in street plays



Members of Bhumihin Samiti perform in street plays at the event

PHOTO: STAR

MAINUL HASSAN

Nijera Kori, an NGO organised a two-day long street theatre festival at the Rabindra Sarobar open stage in Dhanmondi that started from March 17.

Titled "Natokey Amra Jiboner Katha Boli", the event was the fourth festival by the organisation in Dhaka. Previously the organisation held theatre festivals in 1991, 2001 and in 2005.

At the festival, members of Bhumihin Samiti

(in the Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Chittagong divisions), an associate of Nijera Kori, staged street plays featuring bold social messages.

The plays were based on facts, featuring the hardship of the underprivileged.

"The plays are depictions of our lives," said Ariful, a participant from Kushtia. A day labourer by profession, Ariful has been a member of the Bhumihin Samiti for the last ten years.

Expressing his views, Hanif Mian, a farmer from Comilla said, "It is very important that everyone understands the everyday hardship of

the poor. Through theatre we try to generate awareness on the issue."

Yakub, a member of the Dhaka wing of the Bhumihin Samiti said, "Everyday, the underprivileged and marginalised are denied of their rights. Very often they fall victim to social, educational and other kinds of discrimination. Through these street plays we try to highlight these issues."

On the first day two plays were staged. Bhumihin Samiti Dhaka staged the play *Ei Khancha Bhangtey Hobey*. The play follows the story of Najma. Daughter of a farmer, Najma, is married off at an early age but is divorced by her husband, as her poor father is unable to pay the dowry. When she returns home her father isn't able to support her. Najma moves to Dhaka and gets a job at a garment factory. The naive young women eventually falls victim to human trafficking.

The other play staged that day was *Dokhina Hawa* by the Khulna office of the Samiti.

The play depicts the tragic story of the farmers in Khulna who fall victims to the local shrimp industry. The local hatchery owners often store huge amount of seawater illegally, as it is necessary for shrimp. In the long run the higher concentration of salt in the water affects the nutrients in the soil and farmers face heavy losses.

Apart from staging plays, members of the Bhumihin Samiti also presented *gano sangeet* -- *Shoshoner jinjir bhangbo mora*, *Tomader shurjo shapath shoyto holo*, *Muktir shongram cholbey* and more.

On the second day of the festival two plays -- *Roktey Bona Dhan* by Bhumihin Samiti Chittagong and *Jibon Judhu* by Bhumihin Samiti Rajshahi -- were staged at the venue.