The Perfor

NADER RAHMAN

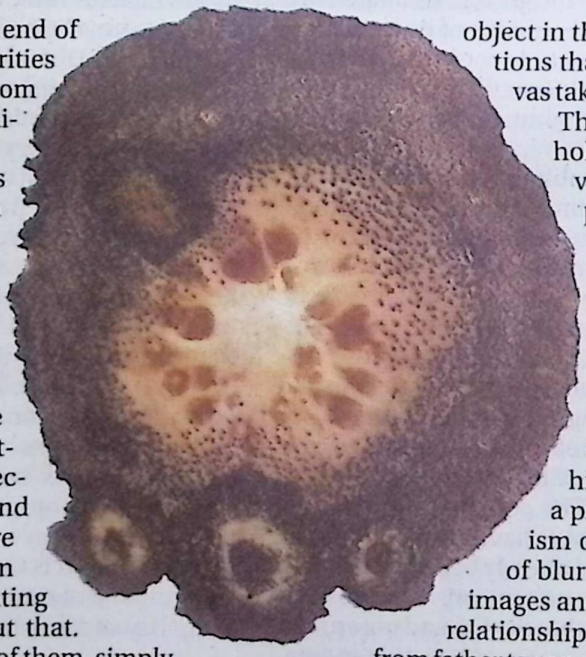
Mohammed Fokhrul Islam's exhibition at Alliance Francaise is an intriguing look into the mind of the artist. We have come to expect a lot from Fokhrul Islam's art and he has delivered time and time again, from international exhibitions with fantastic critical responses to dozens of group exhibitions where he has stood above the crowd, his tumultuous works are visceral pleasures but not for the faint hearted. While his current exhibition may be his 18th solo attempt, there is also a strong feeling of repetition with this body of work. A feeling that one does not usually associate with his work. His current exhibition seems quite similar to his last one at Shomotot, towards the end of last year, but while there are similarities he also carries on seamlessly from where he finished off in his last exhibition.



Mohammad Fokhrul Islam



Walking into the room one is greeted with the sight of what an exhibition must look like in heaven. Immaculately white, bathed in halo like light; white frames cover seemingly every inch of the walls. The rows of white frames hold within them deep and dark works which from a distance appear as cancerous forms on spotlessly white walls. On closer inspection the true detail and craft behind his work is exposed. His images are tough to digest and for the layman they may come across as intimidating while in fact they are anything but that. They are large and one feels in awe of them, simply because the shapes, forms and landscapes expressed are seemingly not of this earth. His work on the lighter canvasses are easier to deal with, soft, supple shades of pale white are mixed with the lightest of browns and are accompanied with a circle in the centre of the canvas. The circle, which could have been the center of the painting, is relegated to an object in the background as the perforations that over the middle of the canvas take center stage.



The small almost star shaped holes appear in most of his canvasses and the perforations play an important part in the experience of his exhibition. In Salman Rushdie's epic Midnight's Children, the first chapter is fittingly called the perforated sheet. The sheet refers to the story of how the protagonists grandfather medically treated his wife to be, through a hole in a plain white sheet. The symbolism of the perforated sheet is that of blurred remembrances, fractured images and relationships. The fractured relationships in the novel are passed down from father to son and in a way the fractured