Thinking Studio

Just the beginning

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THE journey of an architecture student exists not only in his creative imagination or in the narrow alcoves of his surroundings but, put simply, in every molecule of air that he or she inhales. Lines are their alphabets, spaces their canvas, and devotion, understanding and imagination are their tools. With the help of all these in combination, the blooming architects tell their story. 'Creation' would be the wrong word to describe their achievements. It is perhaps more appropriate to say that in every step of their journey the students analyze, understand and discover.



The second year of design studio, of the Bachelor of Architecture program at BRAC University deals with the knowledge of ergonomics, dimension and movements of a vehicle, placement of a proper kitchen in a small house as well as other functional spaces that are investigated throughout the year. This year, Salauddin Ahmed who is a practicing architect and part time academician taught second half of the second year design studio. On the very first day, our teacher named our studio 'The Thinking Studio'.

First, we were asked to take a personal tour of own body and the envelope that wraps us. We were also asked to understand our own thoughts and our surroundings, through a different set of eyes, so as to absorb not just knowledge but emotions that help us communicate with others with an emphatic gaze. Instead of just learning the ergonomic dimensions we were told to discover them, visualize them from a personal point of view and understand them by asking 'How' and 'Why'.

We started off with rigorous analytical drawings and expressions of these drawings through a given media. We ventured through ourselves, analyzed the movements of a car, a doorway system and even an urban threshold. In the end, all these were put to the test when we were introduced to our final project of the semesteran Exhibition Gallery. Each design had to be supported by a chosen concept. The proposed site already housed a given structure within which we had to design the gallery and its supporting functions. We tried to understand the essence of the particular space that we were about to design.

The objectives of this studio were slowly coming to light. Our studio critic wanted to open our eyes to the endless possibilities that lay before an architect. We displayed our entire semester's work in an *open-house exhibition* on April 15 and 16 in BRAC University's architecture department.

The university's vice-chancellor, Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, inaugurated the exhibition. Guest critics included Ziauddin Khan, an urban designer, Ronny Ahmed, an artist, Mithu [Architect] and Amity Kundu, an architect.

This was a great opportunity for the entire batch to show their work not just to the university but also to the general public. Visitors included students and faculties from other universities besides our parents of course.

The four months of 'thinking studio' has not just opened our eyes but taught us to think and imparted a rather important lesson. Now we know it is just the beginning!

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