

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Sculpture Exhibition
 Title: Sensibility Objectified
 Sculptor: Sarbari Roy Chowdhury
 Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
 Date: June 26-July 5
 Time: 12-8pm



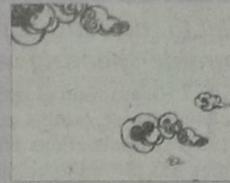
5th Int'l Children's Art Biennale
 Organiser: Bangladesh Shishu Academy
 Venue: Auditorium of Bangladesh Shishu Academy
 Date: June 21-July 5
 Time: 11am-6pm



Fete de la Musique
 Organiser: Alliance Francaise of Dhaka (AFD)
 Venue: La Galerie, AFD, 26, Mirpur Rd, Dhanmondi
 Date: June 21-July 2
 Time: 6:30pm onwards



Exhibition
 Title: Barhasar Aro Kichhu Gaan
 Organiser: Nitya Uphar
 Venue: Gallery Nitya Uphar, 4th floor, Aziz Co-operative Super Market, Shahbagh
 Inauguration: June 27
 Time: 10am-8pm



Dwelling in the old and new

In conversation with Monirul Islam



Black Tulip

TAKIR HOSSAIN

"Colour, tone and texture can be transformed according to location and moment. I think place/location is one of the most dominant aspects in any artist's life," says Monirul Islam, famed Madrid-based Bangladeshi painter. Islam is currently in Dhaka.

The artist likes to work in different mediums. But print is his favourite, and he excels in the medium. "An artist should enjoy his/her creative freedom. An able artist can work in several mediums. There shouldn't be a set medium for an artist, and the method to articulate an artistic vision should depend on his/her mood and temperament. The practice of art differs from one individual to another, nation to nation, and period to period. This concept can be understood from Picasso's paintings. His style of drawing, lines, figures, movements -- all constitute his signature style. Picasso worked in different mediums, such as painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics and

printmaking. But his personal style was consistent," said Islam.

The seasoned artist considers pure colour to be the most effective way to express emotions and sensitivity. He believes that colour approaches the soul directly and is able to induce profound emotions in the viewer. Islam applies his colours meticulously, in thin layers, and reduces the texture of the paint to its most minimal expression. In the early '70s, he established a personal abstract language and maintains that style.

In 1969, when Monir was only 27 years old, he went to Spain on a scholarship. For nine months, during his studying days there, Islam worked on murals and frescos and won an award from the Spanish government. This allowed him to stay in Madrid for another year. During that period, he studied Goya's paintings (of the Black period) and tried to comprehend the significance of light, colour and composition.

After settling in Spain, the artist has been using paper as a medium. "Paper has a mystical quality. It

gives my works a different appeal and look. After I started making my own paper, it gave my work a certain distinctness. During my early years in Spain, I did many watercolours, which mainly focused on the bucolic beauty of Bangladesh. I couldn't get over missing Bangladesh. My childhood, my teenage years -- significant stages of my life involve Bangladesh. I enjoyed reminiscing, and this led to a number of memorable works," Islam recalled.

Each time an exhibition ends, the artist shakes his old ideas and starts fresh from the scratch. He sets on a new venture. The inspiration comes from various sources. Imagination and impression dominate his works.

In his leisure, the veteran artist enjoys watching movies, and attends exhibitions -- featuring classic art as well as to contemporary works. Velázquez, Goya, de Vinci, Michael Angelo and other master painters continue to inspire him. Islam often finds himself fascinated with the interplay of light, colours, figures, compositions, lines and themes in their works.



Oil on canvas Monirul Islam in Toledo, Spain.

Of fond memories and golden oldies

Album featuring classical music by Ferdausi Rahman launched

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

It was a memorable day for renowned singer Ferdausi Rahman and the admirers of her music; on June 27 (the day before her birthday) the artiste's first album of classical music, titled "Piya Ghar Aaye" was launched at Chhayanaut Sanskriti Bhaban. The event also included the launch of another album -- "Bhalobasho Mor Gaan" by Rahman's niece Dr. Nashid Kamal.

Daughter of the legendary folk singer Abbasuddin Ahmed, Ferdausi Rahman's musical voyage began at the tender age of six. She trained in classical music under famed gurus, including Ustad Munir Hussain, Ustad Md. Hussain Khuro, Ustad Gul Md. Khan; Ustad Munshi Raisuddin; Ustad Quader Zamiree, Ustad Nazakat Ali and Ustad Salam Ali Khan. For six decades Rahman has enthralled her audience with her opulent repertoire of songs which include Adhunik, Nazrul Sangeet, Ghazals, Bhawaiya, Bhatiali and classical music.

"Piya Ghar Aaye" features three Khayals in Raaga Lalit (usually performed in the morning), Raaga Kalavati (performed late at night) and Raaga Yaman (an evening tune). The album also includes a Thumri in Raaga Tilang.

"Bhalobasho Mor Gaan" features twelve popular songs -- popularised by Ferdausi Rahman -- recorded by Nashid Kamal. The CDs have been produced under the banner of Laser Vision.

Chief guest at the event, former Chief Justice Mustafa Kamal (father of Nashid Kamal) unveiled the two albums. Eminent musician Azad

Rahman; lyricist Md. Rafiquzzaman; artiste-researcher Mustafa Zaman Abbasi; managing director of Impress Telefilm Ltd and Channel I, Faridur Reza Sagor and chairman of Laser Vision Arifur Rahman spoke on the occasion. Noted author Imdadul Haq Milon anchored the programme.

Asked about his musical knowledge by Milon, the chief guest Mustafa Kamal said, "Surer bhobon-e ashur-er agomon," (advent of a demon in the world of music). Then he politely admitted, "I know and understand music well. I accompanied my father at performances, attended by thousands of music enthusiasts including icons like Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Haq; Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardi and Khwaja Nazimuddin."

Azad Rahman, a former teacher of Chhayanaut, emphasised on the need to practice classical music. He said, "Nothing comes out of nothing. Every sphere or art originates from a foundation. Classical music is the foundation of all genres and every musician should practice it."

Nashid Kamal said, "I had long desired to sing my aunt's songs and today I'm ecstatic to present this album as my gift on her birthday."

Ferdausi Rahman was visibly moved. Virtuoso artiste Mustafa Zaman Abbasi (Rahman's brother) rendered "Jakhon robo na ami," "Ei kotha mon-e rekho" (a Tagore song) and "O ki o bondhu kaja bhromora rey." Nashid Kamal performed "Jeno ekmutho Rajanigandha," "Jaler chhaya jaler chhaya," "Lajja amar sonar kancha" and more.



Ferdausi Rahman (left) and Nashid Kamal at the programme.

BET Awards celebrate Michael Jackson

The star-studded BET Awards got under way without "the greatest star in the world," Joe Jackson, father of the late Michael Jackson, said on Sunday night.

"I wish the world had recognised him when he were living," Joe Jackson told CNN outside the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California.

"Right now he's bigger than ever. But I wish he was here to see all this, to hear all this," Joe Jackson said.

When asked about circumstances surrounding his son's death, he said, "I have a lot of concerns but I can't get into that...I don't like what happened."

The awards opened with a fleet-footed New Edition, with Bobby Brown, performing an energised version of the Jackson 5 hit "The Love You Save," to raucous praise.

Host Jamie Foxx wore a red, leather "Billie Jean" jacket for his opening monologue and did his best to imitate Jackson's moonwalk across the floor.

In addition to Foxx, presenter Jeremy Piven mixed praise for Jackson with comic relief.

"If it wasn't for Michael Jackson,



Jamie Foxx channels Michael Jackson at the BET Awards

people like Justin Timberlake would be selling curly fries in the valley," the actor said. "I mean that with love."

This year's performers included, Beyonce, Keyshia Cole and R&B artist Nayo who performed a hard-hitting tribute to the 1990s with appearances

by acts Keith Sweat, Guy and Bell Biv Devoe.

Near the end of the show, Michael Jackson's sister Janet Jackson spoke holding back tears: "My entire family wanted to be here tonight. It was just too painful. To you Michael is an icon.

To us Michael is family. And he will forever live in all of our hearts."

The presenters included the past and present Uhura of "Star Trek": Zoe Saldana, who starred in the film, and Michelle Nichols of the TV show.

The show also honoured the soulful Ohio trio, The O'Jays, who were presented the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Among the award winners, Atlanta, Georgia-based singer Keri Hilson, who was nominated in four categories, received best new artiste and Beyonce won best female artiste.

Debra L. Lee, chairman and chief executive officer of Black Entertainment Television, said Jackson's death both saddened and energised the awards organizers.

"When we heard the news of Michael Jackson's passing we knew immediately we'd have to change the nature of this show," she said.

"We put the show together in a matter of three or four days. It's truly been a labour of love for us," Lee said.

Source: CNN

Oscars expand best film category

The best picture shortlist at the 2010 Oscars will be 10 films instead of the customary five, it has been announced.

Official organisers have said the move will recognise a wider range of films and include "more populist movies."

It is the first time since 1943 that 10 films will be in the running and has been called "a return to the past".

At this year's ceremony, a 10-strong shortlist would likely have featured box office smash "The Dark Knight" and Ben Stiller comedy "Tropic Thunder."

Audiences and many critics felt that the latest Batman epic, which won a posthumous best supporting actor award for Heath Ledger, should have been included among this year's best picture nominees.

But Academy president Sid Ganis said the film "did not come up" in discussions about expanding the category.

Following last year's ceremony, the show's

producers advised the Academy that efforts were needed to bring the show to a wider audience.

It is believed that if the best picture category were to feature more box office hits, television ratings would improve in 2010.

However the idea of splitting the 10 films into dramas and comedies -- in a move similar to the Golden Globes -- was rejected.

"It's about the best picture, not the best something picture. It's a singular honour," said Ganis.

But he added that comedies could eventually benefit from the broadening of the best picture list.

Assurances have been made that the 2010 Academy Awards ceremony, which will take place on March 7, will not be longer due to 10 shortlisted films.

The contenders will be revealed when the Oscar nominations are announced on February 2, 2010.

Source: BBC



Photo: Star

Hanif Mohammad, an enlisted singer of Bangladesh Betar (radio) and Bangladesh Television, performs at a cultural programme recently. The programme was arranged by Sargam Sangskritik Shampraday to celebrate the season of monsoon.

Evan Rachel Wood, Alan Cumming join Spider-Man

AP, New York

Evan Rachel Wood and Alan Cumming have joined the cast of "Spider-Man Turn Off the Dark," the upcoming Broadway musical about the famous web-slinger.

Wood will portray Peter Parker's girlfriend, Mary Jane Watson, while Cumming takes on the role of Norman Osborn, also known as the villainous Green Goblin.

The musical, directed by Julie Taymor, begins preview performances February 25, 2010, at the Hilton Theatre.

An opening date will be announced later -- as will the actor who will play Spider-Man.

"Spider-Man" will feature a score by Bono and The Edge of U2.

Taymor was the creative force behind "The Lion King," Disney's long-running musical, now in its second decade on Broadway. She will co-write the "Spider-Man" book with Glen Berger.

Taymor worked with Wood on the film "Across the Universe" and with Cumming on "The Tempest" and "Titus," both screen adaptations of Shakespeare plays.

"Evan is unique: she is a young actress with incredible depth for both serious and comic drama in films and theatre, and on top of that, she has an extraordinary lyrical voice," Taymor said. As for Cumming, the director added, "He has such range and such charisma as a performer that I feel his Green Goblin will bring many surprises that will move and entertain us."

The story for the musical was inspired by the Marvel comic books hero -- who's also inspired three hit movies -- and will include the story of his origins as well as new material.



Other members of the show's production team include set designer George Tsypin, who did the sets for "The Little Mermaid" on Broadway; costume designer Eiko Ishioka; lighting designer Donald Holder of "The Lion King" and sound designer Jonathan Deans who has worked for Cirque du Soleil.