the story of rickshaw pullers from across Bangladesh who have each come to Dhaka to earn their families money to survive. Taking a closer look at the pullers' diverse backgrounds, the project intends to present the important moments of their lives. However, what makes Topu's work such a galvanizer is the presentation of the photographs. Bring placed on a brand new rickshaw that has been built and painted from scratch, the photographs received a more real, tactile essence; and thus giving the rickshaw puller's story a more careful insight. Similarly, Saikat Majumder's 'Life: Born in a Slum' is a startling collage of imageries taken during birth at a slum under harsh conditions of poverty, destitution and poor



Tanvir Murad Topu's project, titled 'City Wheeler' tells the story of rickshaw pullers from across Bangladesh.

medical conditions. On the contrary, Shah Sazzad's project 'Emon Jodi Hoto' puts together art and photography to create the recreate the fantasies of children. In Sazzad's words, he was inspired by the Khude Shilpi'r Khoje Art Competition where he saw children drawing their imaginations in the form of fairies, flying unicorns and other fictitious elements. He decided to put real characters in the backdrop of these paintings to give photography a refreshing new perspective. Sazzad's work was presented in a bioscope that brought forth the elements of illusion, entertainment and tradition and gives his project a feeling like no other.

But moving back, and coming to the making of these presentations, one cannot help but wonder what stirred photographers to be this creative and break away from the traditional modes of showcasing their work.

"Pathshala has always provided us a platform for free spirited thinking. Where most institutions follow a very stringent curriculum, Pathshala allows its students to design their own courses, and often these are implemented in accordance to feasibility. I think that's what makes this place so special and different from the rest," explained the proud graduate Tanvir Murad Topu. "At the end of our third year, each student is supposed to submit a final project, and in our batch, we decided to do something different. We submitted our project proposals and a willing committee discussed its prospects and feasibility with us. We each had ingenious ideas to showcase our work, and finally, the best and most feasible projects reached the gallery. It must be mentioned here that each final presentation depended largely on the student's will and whether he or she was ready to undertake the time and dedication required to see his or her work to the final day."

"We felt our photographs needed to break out of the frames, and should provide a more three-dimensional, real insight into the stories they conveyed. It would be interesting and entertaining at the same time," added Shah Sazzad. "My particular project deals with the confrontation of art and photography. I've used very local characters and blended them with the fantasies of children to create something fun and beautiful. When presented in a bioscope, this very aspect of imagination and entertainment is aptly expressed and framed pieces would probably not have been this effective."

Photography is still a very new concept in Bangladesh. Pathshala, being one of the few local institutions offering dedicated courses in photography and its various aspects has successfully to an extent promoted the practice in this region. However, often people are under the impression that creative processes as such require no training, and if institutionalised, may lose its imaginative niche.

"I disagree with such opinions," said Sazzad. "Creative processes often require the greatest discipline. Ideas cannot be taught, but the technicalities need to be learnt. Things like framing, lighting, composition, mood and timing are matters that need to be handled carefully, and can impact the results."

The fact remains there are still only a handful who opt for such an 'adventurous' and 'risky' lifestyle. Particularly, in case of female photographers, Bangladesh is yet a long way off. Although with changing