

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Photo Exhibition
On the occasion of 60th birth anniversary of Werner Herzog
Title: Film Must be Physical
Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, H 10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi
Date: Sep 16- Oct 8



Photography Exhibition
Title: India
Photographer: Raghu Rai (India)
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: September 7-13
Time: 11am-7pm



Theatre
Play: Raarang
Troupe: Aranyak Natyadal
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Shippakala Academy
Date: September 11
Time: 8pm



Iranian Film Festival
Film: Gabbeh
Director: Mohsen Makhmalbaf
Venue: Alamgir Kabir Film Centre, 62 Science Laboratory Road
Date: September 11
Time: 5pm



Raghu Rai's philosophy of photography

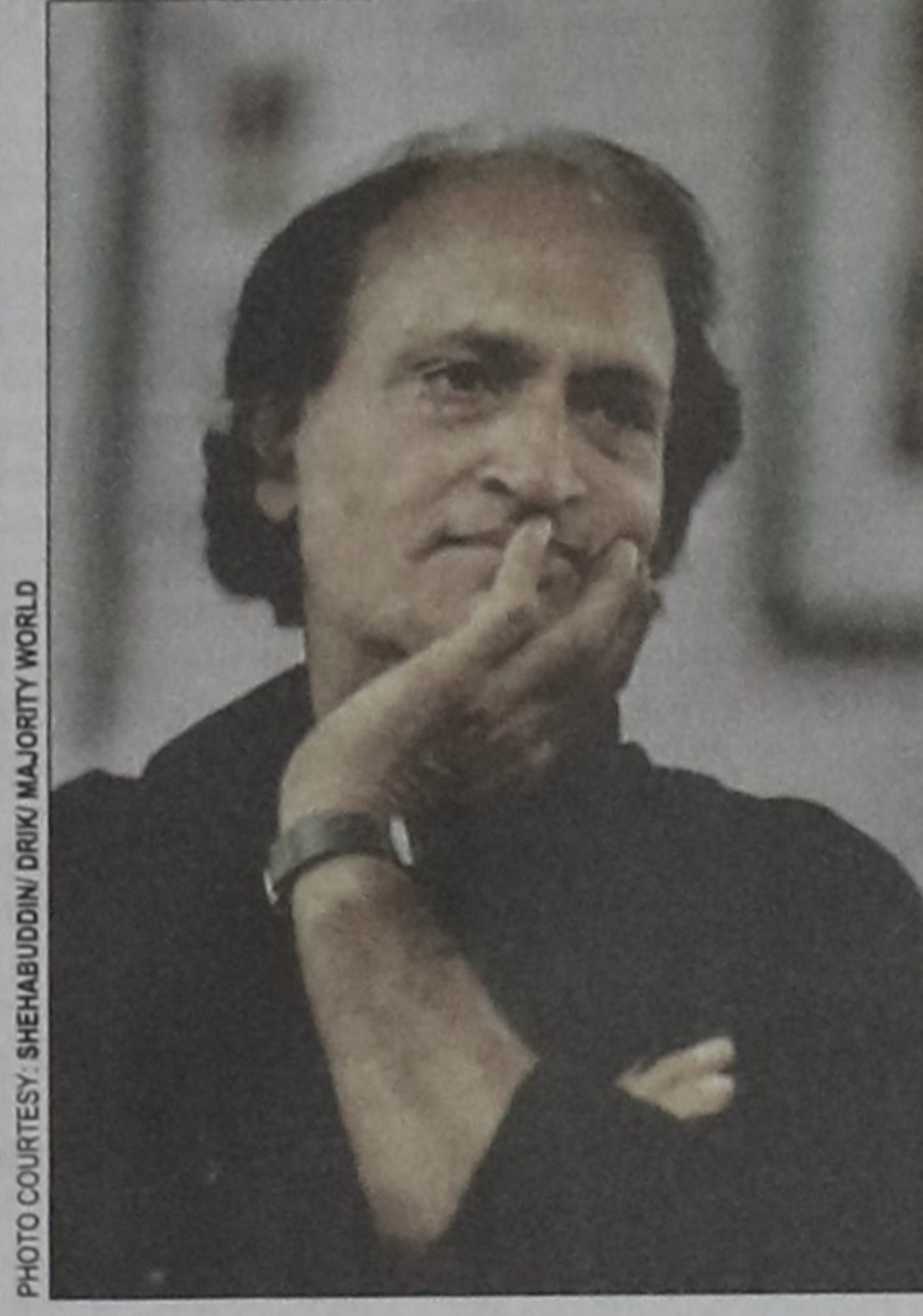


PHOTO COURTESY: SHEHABUDDIN/DRINK MAJORITY WORLD

A photograph by Rai.

JAMIL MAHMUD

"They say a good photograph is worth a thousand words. But a thousand words can be a lot of noise. How about some silence -- a moment in space which is non-negotiable."

-- Raghu Rai, Magnum Photos

As part of Drik's 20th anniversary celebration, a solo exhibition titled "India" featuring veteran Indian photographer Raghu Rai's works is being held at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhanmondi.

Noted economist Professor Anu Muhammad inaugurated the exhibition on September 7 via video-conferencing as he is currently hospitalised. Among others, director of Drik, Dr. Shahidul Alam and artist Dhali Al Mamoon were present at the inauguration.

Over 50 photographs -- both colour and black and white -- are on display at the exhibition. The images narrate individual stories, fragments of the vast

Indian canvas. Sharing his views on the theme of the exhibition, Rai said, "The experience of India is horizontal, it doesn't begin from anywhere, nor does it end anywhere. It is the panoramic experience that allows me to photograph the throbbing of several energies on one given canvas."

Rai is considered the foremost photographer in India, excelling in social, political and cultural themes. He started professional photography in 1965 at the age of 23 and is a recipient of India's highest civilian award "Padmashree" (1971). He joined Magnum Photos in 1977.

Rai has specialised in extensive coverage of India over the last 18 years. He has produced 20 books, including "Raghu Rai's Delhi," "The Sikhs," "Taj Mahal," "Tibet in Exile," "Indira Gandhi" and "Mother Teresa."

"The emergence of the unseen and revelation of the unknown leaves me amazed! The experience becomes a 'Darshan.' What a country of mine!" said Rai.

The exhibition at Bengal Gallery is a chance to

experience Rai's philosophy of photography, in particular aesthetics. It is also an opportunity to witness some spectacular moments immortalised by a master photographer.

Rai's photographs suggest that he has travelled almost every nook and corner of India. His kaleidoscope journey saw a group of wrestlers under the Howrah Bridge in Kolkata, as well as a boisterous Sikh wedding in Punjab. In between Rai's lens has captured moments in Rajasthan, Ahmedabad, Jaisalmer, Delhi, Kashmir and other places. Notably, his photos avoided the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, and depict the tranquil life outside city limits.

"I have tried to portray the multi-cultural India that is rather unfamiliar to viewers in other countries," said Rai at the inaugural of his Dhaka exhibition.

Rai also took part in an open forum on September 7 at Drik Gallery. He discussed on his latest book "Delhi in Contrasts and Confluences" and answered questions from the audience.

The exhibition will continue till September 13.

Amitabh Reza contemplating making a film

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Though Amitabh Reza is one of the pioneers who changed the face of Bangladeshi TV commercials, he considers himself a "fiction (TV plays, films) director".

TVCs directed by Reza for Grameenphone, Banglalink, Citycell, Labaid and more have gone on to become hugely popular. The Banglalink commercial with the catch phrase "Oi din ki aar asey" was nominated for the Global Mobile Award 2007 in 'Making Difference in People's Life' category.

Reza's latest works include ads for the cell phone sets recently launched by Grameenphone, Warid and a drama serial titled "Ichche Holo" on DeshTV.

The Daily Star recently caught up with the busy director.

"I prefer fiction, yes, but when you take ad making seriously, you're not left with time for much else," says Reza. "However, my heart is with filmmaking."

Reza won a Meril-Prothom Alo Award (2008) for best TV director for the play "Ekti Phone Kora Jabe Please?". "I like urban settings, stories and characters and this reflects in my works," he says.

Major changes in the medium -- TV play -- over the years, according to the director: "The plays and serial aired on BTV back in the day had powerful stories and bold concepts. Cinematography was one of the decisive factors then."

"Now cinematography or the 'language' is stronger. Besides, the viewers have way more options now. Several TV channels, countless shows and serials... This takes away the impact of individual programmes."

On changes in ad making: "Concepts are much better and polished. Entrepreneurs are getting smarter. They want to communicate with the consumers intelligently. Obviously, the output, commercials appear slick."

Reza has been contemplating making a film. He has shortlisted three stories (all by Reza) and hopes to start filming next year. The filmmaker has decided to call the project "Nitu".



Amitabh Reza at work.

PHOTO: STAR
An art competition marking International Literacy Day was held at the premises of DC office, Faridpur on September 7. Children from different schools of the town participated in the competition. Deputy Commissioner Helaluddin Ahmed was present as the chief guest on the occasion.



Adho Megh: Rajiv Rahman's new album released

NUSRAT JAHAN PRITOM

Rajiv Rahman aka "Double R" has released his exclusive mixed album "Adho Megh" on September 4. The album features 10 artistes -- Rupom, Jhumur, Oni, Nil Kontho, Sylvia, Skibkhan, Armen, Baawia, et al. Most of these artistes are involved with a lot of group and mixed album projects like "Maya," "Disciples," "Double R on the Beat," "Re/Evolution," "Impact" and "Desi MC". Laser Vision distributes the album in Bangladesh.

"Adho Megh," the title song of Double R's latest album, is a romantic serenade. Other songs featured in the album include "Keno Ridoye". Double R is the music director and composer. He has also rendered some of the songs. Double R started his musical career early. "My mother was a Tagore singer; she was a student of Chhayanaut. Besides teaching at an English medium school, she also used



Rajiv Rahman

to run a music school. My father is a litterateur and has his own organisation called "Shiri Shishu Sahitya Kendra". I was always inspired by them," said the musician via e-mail.

In 2004, Double R set up his own recording studio called Warfare Recording Studio, also known as Double R Production.

After albums like, Stoic Bliss' "Kolponar Bairey,"

"Double R on the Beat," Cosmics' "Baapre Baap," and his own "Mon Bhabhe Tare," Double R Production has become a familiar name.

In 1999, Rajiv first worked on a mixed album called "Maya" -- as a lyricist, composer, singer and guitarist. "That was the very first Bengali group project done in the USA, and after the success of "Maya," in 2000, we made the second mixed

album, titled "Maya-2".

Double R works extensively with all genres of music but he is also noted as one of the few avid promoters of Bangla hip-hop. He has worked with groups like Stoic Bliss, Impact and Dvs.

"Since it's a mixed Album, I've tried to include and incorporate as many genres as I could, like R&B, hip-hop, mellow rock, classical, modern and pop," Double R said.

After he released his solo album "Mon Bhabhe Tare" in April this year, he went back to the US and hopes to return after Eid.

"Since I have been working with lot of genres, I was able to catch people's attention... And since I've been getting a lot of favourable feedback, I'll continue working and will try to come up with fresh, new sounds. Without my fans, I would be nowhere."

The writer is a freelance contributor

Chavez walks Venice red carpet with Oliver Stone

AP, Venice

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez received a movie star welcome Monday at the Venice Film Festival, where he walked the red carpet with director Oliver Stone for the premiere of the documentary "South of the Border."

Hundreds of admirers, some chanting "president, president," gathered outside of the Casino for the leader's arrival. A few held up Venezuelan flags and a banner in Spanish that read "Welcome, president."

Chavez threw a flower into the crowd and touched his heart, and at one point took a photographer's camera to snap a picture himself. Security outside the Casino was tightened in advance of his arrival, with military police checking bags.

Chavez praised Stone's work for depicting what he said were improvements made across Latin America.

"Rebirth is happening in Latin America, and Stone went to look for it and he found it," Chavez told reporters. "With his cameras and his genius, he's captured a good part of that rebirth."

Stone says "South of the Border" is meant to illustrate "the sweeping changes" in South America in recent years as a direct counterpoint to what he sees as Chavez's depiction as a dictator by U.S. and European media.

Stone spent extensive time with Chavez for the 75-minute documentary, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival on Monday, and also interviewed the leaders of Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Cuba and Paraguay, whom Stone said "are on the same page" as Chavez.

"He's a guy you should meet and get to know... He's the star of the movie," Stone said in an interview before the premiere.

Stone said he wanted to illustrate changes that put in power in many South American countries leaders who represent the majority of their populations, a movement exemplified by Chavez. He cited Bolivian President Evo Morales, the first Native American to be elected president, and Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a well-known trade unionist.

"If you look now, there are seven presidents, eight countries with Chile, that are really moving away from the Washington consensus control," Stone said. "But in America, they don't get that story."

Stone was invited to Venezuela to meet Chavez for the

first time during the Venezuelan leader's aborted rescue mission of Colombian hostages held by FARC rebels. Stone said the Chavez he met was different than some U.S. media depictions.

He returned in January to interview Chavez, and continued on to four other countries to interview Chavez's allies, with Cuban and Ecuadorean leaders joining him in Paraguay.

Stone is best known for his dramas, but he also has made four documentaries, including "Comandante," the 2003 documentary based on a meeting with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, which the director says in many ways led him to Chavez.

Chavez's critics accuse him of growing increasingly authoritarian while sidelining key opponents and trying to

clamp down on the private media.

Opponents also say Chavez's international crusade against U.S. influence is misguided, and accuse him of ignoring problems at home ranging from rampant crime to corruption.

The movie's screenwriter is Tariq Ali, the British-Pakistani historian who most recently wrote "Pirates of the Caribbean: Axis of Hope," and it was produced by Fernando Sulichin. Stone also was advised by economist Mark Weisbrot of the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

"South of the Border" was shown out of competition at the Venice Film Festival, which ends Saturday with the awarding of the Golden Lion.



Venezuelan's President Hugo Chavez (centre right) with U.S. filmmaker Oliver Stone (centre left) at the screening of the film "South of the Border" at the 66th edition of the Venice Film Festival on September 7, 2009.