

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

**Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary**  
**Organiser:** Rabindra Academy  
**Venue:** Natmondol, Dhaka University  
**Date:** May 14  
**Time:** 6pm



**French Drama Festival**  
**Organiser:** Alliance Francaise de Dhaka and Natukay Theatre Group  
**Venue:** National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
**Date:** May 15-21  
**Time:** 5pm onward



**Fatih Akin Retrospective**  
**Organiser:** Dhaka University Film Society  
**Venue:** Auditorium, Goethe Institut, H-10, R-9 Dhanmondi  
**Date:** May 16-17  
**Time:** 3.30pm onwards



**Digital Photo Exhibition and Panel Discussion**  
**Title:** Chittagong My Love  
**Venue:** Auditorium, Goethe Institut, H-10, R-9 Dhanmondi  
**Date:** May 13  
**Time:** 6.30 pm-8 pm



# The cream of artistic talent

## Group show at Saju Gallery



Clockwise (from top-left): Artworks by Syed Abdullah Khalid, Mahmudul Haque, Shamsuddoha and Abdus Satter.

TAKIR HOSSAIN

Saju Art Gallery's Grand Group Art Exhibition this year features a variety of 130 artworks by 84 artists. The group includes both veteran and promising artists of the country. Works of greats like Quamrul Hassan, S.M. Sultan, Safiuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Kibria, Aminul Islam, Murtaja Baseer, Syed Jahangir, Samarjit Roy Chowdhury, Monirul Islam and Shamsul Islam Nizami are obvious attractions.

The gallery hosted its first grand group exhibition in 1977. Over the course of time, the exhibition has become an important fixture in the Dhaka art circuit. No private gallery has organised an exhibition on this scale up until now.

On display at this exhibition are the works of noteworthy participants, such as Abu Taher, Mahmudul Huque, Syed Abdullah Khalid, Shahid Kabir, Abdus Satter, Abdus Shakoor Shah, Abul

Barq Alvi and Anisuzzaman Anis, as well as post-Liberation War era artists like Mominul Reza, Ranjit Das, Jamal Ahmed, Shamsuddoha, Mohammad Eunos, Tajuddin Ahmed and Iftikhar Uddin Ahmed.

Monirul Islam is now immersed in oil and mixed media works. At the exhibition, his scribbles and warm colours bear a romantic and pensive look.

Mahmudul Haque's formal arrangement with forms and compositions are remarkable. He draws inspiration from nature and its various aspects. His compositions appear uneven and are engrossed with geometrical forms.

In recent times, Mominul Reza has been focusing on colour and form. At the exhibition, his blue, green compositions mingle with each other intimately.

Jamal Ahmed is well known for his realistic works. Recurring themes in his works are street children, rural people, fishermen, working women and marginalised communities. At the exhibition is a painting by Ahmed that depicts a woman walking along a beach with her child. Blue emerges at the backdrop of the painting.

Last year, one of the recognised Bangladeshi painters Tajuddin Ahmed migrated to Canada. Now he lives and works in Toronto. From the beginning, he has adored the creation of something novel and innovative, which is very close to the metropolitan community. He hails from Rokonpur under Laxmibazar, one of the historical parts of our Old Dhaka, an over-populated and very congested area. The place is also recognised for ancient buildings and architectural heritages. These images gave him an opportunity to closely observe the beloved city. The changing city, urban life, socio-economic structure, common people and their way of life tremendously affected his mind. All these things are meticulously used in his works.

Iftikhar Uddin Ahmed is another talented painter who now lives in Toronto. During a phase of his career, he was fascinated by rickshaws, wheels, prostitution, working people and life in Old Dhaka. At the exhibition, a broken rickshaw features in his painting where the wheel symbolises time.

Abdus Satter's forte is woodcut prints. At the exhibition, his "Natural Beauty" shows an attractive



woman posing with a flower. Murtaja Baseer's "Waiting" depicts a woman in a sari in search of something. Facial expression is the key aspect of the work.

Syed Abdullah Khalid is mainly a sculptor, but his paintings are also remarkable for their vivacious colours and soothing backgrounds. His works explore the flora and fauna in nature.

Nasim Ahmed Nadvi's theme is a broken bridge where coarse lines with a solid structure delineate architectural features. At the exhibition, his "The Shore at Night," an acrylic piece, gives an outstanding look of a beach. Black and white are predominant shades in the work.

Rokeya Sultana has worked in tempera. She likes the medium because of its translucent nature. Her emphasis is on unusual forms and subdued colours.

Farida Zaman's works usually depict riverine life in rural Bengal. At the exhibition, her work "Sufia's Dream" portrays a rural woman with some fish caught in a net.

Md. Abdul Aziz's watercolours have a sense of simplicity and tranquillity. His works are graceful with striking female figures and birds. At the exhibition his works feature a light yellow shade turning into orange. Simple, smooth and succinct in style, his "Girl with Bird" is one of finest works at the exhibition.

The exhibition ends on June 6.



# Colours of melancholia

## Swani Zubayer's latest album thrives on acoustic finesse

KARIM WAHEED

Swani Zubayer's latest album "Adbhut A(n)dhar Ek" (a Laser Vision production) is out. Like its predecessors, this album too highlights Zubayer's poetic, composing and vocal prowess -- all, except the last three songs, have been written and composed by him. As with several of his previous compositions, some of these songs bear that unmistakable trait of *ghazal*, but labelling them would perhaps be unwise. Deft use of *esraj*, *sitar*, *sarod*, *santoor*, *banshi*, violin and accordion create the ideal acoustic ambience.

This album stands out and further establishes Zubayer's command over his craft. Unlike his earlier albums, "Adbhut A(n)dhar Ek" highlights a profound sense of melancholy.

The artist addresses this: "Jara aundho shobcheye beshi aaj chokhey dekhey tara... (those who are blind, have the most persuasive vision today) -- Jibananda wrote this over half a century ago. Yet it seems very relevant, as if it's been written just now. I've borrowed the title ['Adbhut A(n)dhar Ek'] of that poem...The void Jibananda sensed in his time, I see reflections of that around me everyday, and it hurts me..."

The opening song, "Chaitay Janley," sets the mood. Nothing articulates melancholy better than *esraj*.



Cover of the album.

With a brilliantly executed *esraj* piece, the number begins and passes the torch to *sitar* and *santoor*. *Esraj* returns to wail of course, intermittently. As a vocalist, Zubayer explores the higher range with such subtlety and ease that one might not even notice the shift from his usual baritone.

The second song, "Ek Tomakey Dekhar," is an ode to the trend in *adunika* songs from early '80s -- violin and guitar reigning supreme. Zubayer's vocals glide over such laments as "Joto alo tumi-niley/Diye geley jotno korey rajjyer korun a(n)dhar..."

The third song, "Akash Chh(n)utey Cheye" picks up

where the opening number left off, and the fourth, "Adbhut A(n)dhar Ek," echoes the feel of the second.

The last three songs, composed by Lucky Akhand, bear the seasoned musician's signature style. Interestingly, these songs also articulate a radically different mindset. Zubayer shakes off the blues and croons optimistic notes. The theme: return to love. Sample: "Polatok ami bohu janopad ghurey/ Abar elam to mar kachhey phirey..."

Connoisseurs of traditional instruments e.g. *sitar*, *santoor* and *esraj* should find this album intriguing. On the whole, it is easy listening that also satisfies poetic interest.

# Kirtan festival in Mymensingh ends

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

A *kirtan* festival, titled 'Tarakbrahma Harinam Sangkirtan and Mahotshab', was recently held at the Raghunath Gure Akhra Temple in Mymensingh town. To mark the conclusion of the festival, a rally was brought out in the district town.

Raghunath Gure Akhra Temple Dharmotshab Celebration Committee organised the festival as part of its annual programme. Hundreds of devotees from in and outside the district joined the rally in a festive mood.

Baishnab Netai Das from Jhenidah, Prahalad Krishna Das from Narsingdi, Nanda Gopal Goswami from Manikganj, Suvash Goswami from Narayanganj and Haridas

Goswami from Jamalpur presented *Baghabata Path* at the celebration.

Aurchuta Nanda Sampradaya of Chittagong, Geeti Gobinda Sampradaya and Nanda Kishore Sampradaya of Satkhira, Ananda Mohan Sampradaya of Bagerhat, Nabadeep Sampradaya of Khulna, Maharpovo Sampradaya of Gopalganj and Jagatbandhu Sampradaya of Netrakona enthralled the devotees with their presentation of *Naamkirtan*.

Prodip Kumar Ghosh and Biplob Sarker, president and secretary of the celebration committee, expressed their satisfaction at the huge turnout of devotees throughout the festival. The devotees' positive response will encourage us to arrange such programmes in future, they added.

# Film world masses for topical Cannes fest

AFP, Cannes

Stars, fans and industry suits massed in the palm-lined city of Cannes for Wednesday's launch of its glitzy film festival, a mix of big-money and arthouse with a heavy topical tone this year.

As rain clouds gave way to bright sunshine, celebrity-spotters set up deck-chairs opposite the waterfront palace, the main hub of a festival which this year will probe subjects such as the financial crisis and the Iraq war.

Diggers shifted sand on the beach where industry reps set up tents to flog their films and workers prepared the palace steps to roll out the red carpet for the likes of Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett.

The two star actors of "Robin Hood", which started the 63rd festival Wednesday night, are among forces summoned to draw financial clout for the huge film fair, though critics judged this year's line-up less A-list than usual.

Instead, besides "Robin Hood" and Oliver Stone's "Wall Street 2" which screen out of competition, major arthouse and independent names dominate the billing, such as Iran's Abbas Kiarostami and Britain's Ken Loach.

Loach, who scooped the Golden Palm top prize at Cannes in 2006, made a late entry on Monday into this year's race with "Route Irish", a movie about security contractors in the Iraq war.

The only US film in competition for the Palm this year, "Fair Game" by "The Bourne Identity" director Doug Liman, looks at the former US government's bid to smear CIA agent Valerie Plame during the fallout from the invasion.

Among offerings from Asia, Africa

and Eastern Europe, several others take on big topical themes -- not least Oliver Stone's "Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps", which sees Michael Douglas reprise his 1987 role as corporate raider Gordon Gekko.

Kiarostami -- considered one of the world's finest directors -- presents his first film made outside his native Iran, where censorship has curbed his success. "Certified Copy" stars French actress Juliette Binoche and was shot in Italy.

Cannes 2010 will see premieres of films by Mexico's Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu and Japan's Takeshi Kitano. US comic filmmaker Woody Allen, 74, and New Wave icon Jean-Luc Godard, 79, add to the largely veteran line-up.

Critics have noted the lack of women directors. "I think that's a pity," said British actress Kristin Scott Thomas, host of Wednesday's gala opening.

But she added: "You don't choose a film because it's made by a woman, you choose it because it's good."

In the race for the Palm award on May 23, Asia has a strong showing, with two entries from South Korea "Poetry" by Lee Chang-dong and Im Sang-soo's "The Housemaid". China and Thailand are also represented.

Around 10,000 movie industry types, 4,500 press and thousands of film lovers and celebrity watchers are due at the festival, whose heady cocktail of commerce, glamour and art makes it the top film event of the year.

A volcanic ash cloud that threatened to keep visitors away appeared to have passed over by Tuesday after disrupting flights at nearby Nice airport. Cannes had also recovered from a freak storm last week that lashed the beachfront.



Cannes' Hotel Carlton is part of the 63rd Cannes Film Festival where stars, fans and industry suits have begun massing.

# Soha Ali Khan doesn't want to work with Sharmila Tagore

Soha Ali Khan is excited about her first film with her mother the ever-gorgeous Sharmila Tagore. The film is "Life Goes On". Surprisingly, working with her mother is something Soha doesn't want to do again in a hurry.

Says Soha, "It's my first film with mom. Hopefully, we won't have to face the camera in a hurry again. In spite of having years of experience playing her daughter, the experience of doing it for the camera just unnerved me."

This, in spite of the fact that Sharmila chose to be very restrained on the sets. "Normally when it comes to shooting, my mom is usually very hands-on. But this time she just let it be. She did take a keen interest in my clothes makeup, etc. But once we faced the camera she let the director Sangeeta Dutta do all the directing."

Soha listened to her mother about the clothes. "Because she has great taste. But it's so morbid I've become petrified about losing my mother after doing a film on a daughter



Soha Ali Khan with Sharmila Tagore

losing her mom." As for love, Soha isn't naming anyone. But she admits she's not single. "I'm seeing

someone. It's still in the early stages. And it's great fun." Source: Internet