WHAT'S ON

Aerial Photography
Photographer: Yann Arthus-Bertrand
Venue: National Parliament
Date: Dec 19-Feb 19

Painting Exhibition
Artist: Zeesun Haque
Venue: Drik Gallery, H-58, Rd-15A (New), Dhanmondi
Date: January 1-7
Time: 3-8pm

Bulbul Chowdhury Mela 2011
Venues: BSA Premises; Dhaka, Manikganj and Chittagong
Date: Jan 1-7

Solo Tapestry Exhibition
Artist: Tajul Islam
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-26, R-3, Dhanmondi
Date: Jan 3-14
Time: 12pm-8pm

Paintings of the Past
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka
Date: January 6-17
Time: 3-9pm (Mon-Thurs)
9am-12pm & 5-8pm (Fri & Sat)

Jugpurti Utshab 2010-11
Organiser: Fame School of Dance, Drama and Music
Venue: Theatre Institute, Chittagong; Date: Dec 31-Jan 4

Group Art Exhibition
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre
Date: January- 1-15
Time: 11am-6pm

Rooted Creativity 7
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H-275/F, Rd-16 (New), Dhanmondi
Date: Dec 31-Jan 9
Time: 12-8pm

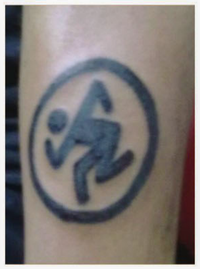
When Your Body is the Canvas

KARIM WAHEED

Buzz...buzz…First the noise, then the shock of my skin getting punctured. To be honest, the buzzing sound was more intimidating that the discomfort of needles going in. I was looking away. For as long as I can remember, I've had acute belonephobia (fear of needles). This was my way of confronting that fear. I'd thought long and hard. I wanted a tattoo, and I was finally getting one.

My tattoo artist is a self-taught prodigy. At 19, he has done 48 tattoos (of them, 8 large ones). Son of artist parents, drawing and painting obviously run in his blood. But to be a good tattoo artist you need to have killer skills. When someone is paying you to have his/her skin perforated, for an artwork that'll permanently remain on the skin (there is laser tattoo removal, but it's way more painful than getting a tattoo), there is no room for errors.

Sadman Touhid Olin claims to be first "real" tattooist in Bangladesh. There are few places in Dhaka that do tattoos, says Olin. "However, either the artists are not that good or they have very few designs they can execute." As any professional tattooist anywhere in the world would, Olin lets you decide what kind of tattoo you want; you can explain the design you have in mind or provide him with a particular image. He would make suggestions, if necessary, regarding the colours or the size or the part of your body where you want the tattoo, and make a draft. As he puts it, "It's your body, and this is permanent. Only you have the right to choose the design; don't let anyone tell you otherwise. I can only point out the limitations."



Inspired by shows (on TLC) like "Miami Ink" and "LA Ink", Olin -- at the age of 15 -- decided that he wanted to be a tattoo artist. After two years of online lessons, he was brave enough to do his first tattoo, and his cousin was brave enough to let him try his hand.

Olin's Tattoo Studio is off Panthopath, in Dhaka. It has a Facebook page: ol!ns tattoo Studio(dhaka). The tattoo machine, needles and ink are brought over from overseas. He opened a pack of fresh needles in front of me. A tattoo needle is actually a group of several small needles, called 'sharps', attached to a needle bar. Needles can be made in groups of 3, 5, 7 or more. Needle groups also come in different shapes such as round (for lining) and flat (for shading). The ink is alcohol based and non-toxic.

Before getting a tattoo, certain issues involving skin tone, thickness and tattoo pigments should be considered. Basic black, grey wash, green and red look best on brown/tanned skin, according to the artist. Shades like blue, yellow and orange that lose their sheen fast and fade are not recommended for South Asian skin. Then there's the age-old question of "how much would it hurt?" Though there is no perfect answer to that, as every individual's pain threshold is different, certain body parts absorb the needles better than others. Basically getting tattooed on places that contain the most muscle will be the easiest. Tattoos on areas of either high nerve concentration, or right over bone, like the ankle, will likely hurt more.

Olin started off with drawing a line -- with a rounder -- over the stencil. Once the outline was done, he cleaned excess ink. Then a flat set of needles was used for the shaded part.

More buzz…buzz…then I think the endorphins kicked in, or maybe it was the teenage artist's graceful manoeuvre; it became more of an irritation than pain. It was like getting scratched 50/60 times per second. I was over my phobia of needles; I looked at my right bicep where an image was emerging. The needle was penetrating the skin by about a millimetre and depositing drops of insoluble ink.

The Bangla word "ulki" indicates that tattoo is not an alien concept in this part of the world. According to Banglapedia, the Boiragis used to tattoo images of Radha and Krishna on their wrists. Santals, Oraons and Muriyas apparently got tattoos (usually sun, snakes, birds and circles) as part of their religious rituals. The indigenous method entailed puncturing the skin with a thorn or needle and applying pigment. In ancient times, sap of the *keshutia* leaves was used as ink. Once healed, the tattoo looked bluish green.

Tattoo, as a trend, is still far from mainstream in Bangladesh though. Stereotypes, like all people with tattoos are out of control or degenerates, couldn't be far from true. But because Bangladesh is still predominantly conservative, Olin has some ground rules. You must be at least 18 to get tattooed and can't have diabetes, allergies or rashes. Most of Olin's clients are students and musicians.

Ironically, the tattooist who'll complete his HSC this year, doesn't have a single tattoo. "I can't tattoo myself," he says. So, unless he comes across another skilled tattoo artist or goes abroad, Olin can't get inked.

It'd been an hour and a half. The buzzing had finally stopped. A spectacularly detailed jade scorpion, ready to sting, had emerged on my right bicep. I'm already contemplating my next tattoo.

Olin at his studio.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Shamogeet's Council and Gig

Singers of Shamogeet's central committee perform at the programme.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

AKRAM HOSEN MAMUN

With the slogan 'Jagi Milito Praney, Apon Shangskriti Shongramey', cultural organisation Shamogeet Shangskriti Prangon held its first council at Shoparjito Shadhinota Chattar, Dhaka University campus, on January 1.

Amal Akash, president of Shamogeet's newly formed Central Committee inaugurated the programme. At the first session of the programme, Professor Anu Muhammad and filmmaker Zaid Aziz remarked on Shamogeet's perspectives on culture. "I believe the driving force behind cultural activism should be a love for fellow human beings and our environment; and they must have the objective of developing a more humane society," said Muhammad.

Then, veteran Gano Sangeet singer Kamruddin Absar introduced eleven members of the newly formed Central Committee of Shamogeet.

At the second session of the programme, Charon, Srijon, Chitkaar, Leela, Kafil Ahmed, and Krishnakali rendered songs.

After the performance of Charon, Gano Sangeet artiste Kamruddin Absar's band Srijon played a couple of inspirational songs.

Chitkaar's performance, particularly Tuhin's acoustic drums, and the guitar riffs of Atanu Sarma and Rabbi, had the audience clapping and cheering. Poddo's singing and dancing proved to be appropriate manifestation of the anger and outrage in their lyrics. Members of Chitkaar also played with Kafil Ahmed who rendered a couple of songs including "Ghar Bhanga Ghora". Arup Rahee's band Leela performed "Nayok" and "Shonar Kishan".

Krishnakali rendered some of her popular numbers.

Members of Shamogeet's Rajshahi and Chittagong wings rendered songs while a group of Narayanganj based choreographers, known as Oikik, danced.

Highlight of the programme was a performance by a group of singers from Shamogeet's central committee. The audience literally got into the swing of their rendition of "Roder Ek Haat" and "Nacho, Nacho Re Mon". The group also performed two of their unreleased songs.

The programme ended with Shamogeet's politically charged and moving number, "Crossfire". Amal Akash called on the audience to work for a society that does not allow extra-judicial killings of its members.

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

ATN BANGLA
01:25 Cholochchitrer Galpo
03:45 Chotoder Prithibi
04:25 Banijjo Mela Protidin (Live)
06:20 Aladin
10:45 Bihongo Katha
12:30 Grameenphone Lead News

CHANNEL i
01:05 Ebong Cinemar Gaan
01:30 HridoyerS Gaan
03:10 Ahban
06:00 Magazine Programme: Rupantor
09:35 Fantastic Family Game Show
11:30 RC Travel On
12:00 Grameenphone Ajker Shangbadpotro

ntv
01:00 Shastha Protidin
03:15 Amader Anandabari
04:10 Janar Achhey Bolar Achhey
05:30 Apnar Jiggasha
06:45 Ogrojo
07:20 Sholoana Bangaliana
11:30 Music Jam

ETV
12:30 Ekushey Business
04:00 Drama
05:30 Street Magic
06:30 Desh Jurey
11:45 Baula Ontor
12:00 Banglalink Ekusher Raat

Rtv
10:45 Tarokalap
12:06 Protidin-er Gaan
02:30 Bangla Feature Film
05:30 Natok Thekey Gaan
11:45 Trade Talk

BANGLAVISION
09:05 Shudhui Gaan
03:05 Bangla Feature Film
09:05 Moner Katha
12:30 Cinemar Gaan

DESH TV
04:00 Desh Janopod
05:30 Durpath
06:25 Bajarey Notun
07:45 Hothat Ekdin
12:30 Total Sports

Boishakhi TV
07:30 Bhor Holo Bibhabori
10:30 Bangla Feature Film
08:45 Empty Pocket
11:50 Musical Programme

Diganta TV
12:30 Score Cards
03:30 World Round Up
08:05 Din Bodoler Dola
09:25 Chitra Bichitra
11:05 Jibon Japon
11:30 Arshinagar

Z Studio
08:30 A Woman in Winter
11:05 Addams Family Reunion
01:30 Cold Mountain
05:00 Friday the 13th Part VI
07:00 Scream 3
09:30 The Sum of All Fears

HBO
10:15 To Catch a Thief
12:30 Friday the 13th
02:30 The International
05:00 The Tale of Despereaux
07:00 Major League II
09:30 D-Tox
11:30 Treasure of the Four Crowns

Star World
10:30 Friends
11:00 Two And A Half Men
12:30 Burn Notice
02:30 MasterChef Australia
07:30 Koffee With Karan
09:30 The Bachelor

Discovery Channel
10:30 Destroyed in Seconds
11:00 Million 2 One
11:30 Alien Planet
01:30 Superswarms

BBC World
09:30 BBC World News
10:00 HARDtalk
11:00 World Business Report
01:15 Sport Today
06:00 GMT with George Alagiah
06:30 Mpact Asia with Mishal Husain

RADIO

abc radio FM 89.2
06:15 Choy Noy
09:30 Adik Odik
02:05 Oporajita
03:00 Duranto Bikeley
03:30 Adik Odik
04:30 Bhalo Theko Sange Theko

Radio Foorti
07:30 Hello Dhaka
10:00 Morning Express
12:00 My Time
01:00 No Tension
04:00 Dhaka Calling
09:00 Night Rider

RADIO TODAY FM 89.6
07:15 Good Morning Dhaka
01:00 Today's Adda
04:00 U Turn
08:00 Tobey Tai Hok
11:00 Raat Bhor Gaan

Moner Katha
On Banglavision at 09:05pm
Celebrity Talk Show
Host: Afsana Mimi

The Sum of All Fears
On Z Studio at 09:30pm
Genre: Action/ Thriller
Cast: Ben Affleck, Morgan Freeman

Shial Pondit
On Rtv at 10:00pm
Drama Serial
Cast: ATM Shamsuzzaman, Wahida Mallik Jolly

DRAMA SERIAL

ATN BANGLA
08:00pm Mokbul
10:55pm Nondini

Channel i
07:50pm Swapnobazar

ntv
06:15pm Manabzamin
09:45pm Dhupchhaya

Rtv
09:20pm Air Com

ETV
09:30pm Lolita

BANGLAVISION
09:45pm Fifty- Fifty

DESH TV
08:15pm Metamorphosis

NEWS BULLETIN

BTV
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am 2:00 pm.5:00 pm.8:00 pm. News (English) at 10:00am, 4:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).

CHANNEL-i
News (Bangla): 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 2:00 pm, 9:00 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am

ATN BANGLA
NEWS (Bangla): 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11:00 pm, 1:00 am, 4:00 am
01:00pm, 3:00pm, 04:00pm
News (English): 9:00 am, 6:00 pm.

BANGLAVISION
News (Bangla) at 7:30am. 1:30pm. 5:00pm. 7:15pm. 10:30pm.
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00am. 12:00am. 4:00pm.
News (English) at 6:00pm

Rtv
News (Bangla): 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm, 8:30 pm, 10:30 pm, 12:30 am

ntv
News (Bangla):7:30am, 12:02pm, 2:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:30pm, 1:00am

ETV
News (Bangla): 9:00am, 11:00 am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 11:00pm

TALK SHOW

ATN BANGLA
11:30pm Je Katha Keu Boleni

CHANNEL i
12:30pm Citycell Taroka Kathan

ntv
12:10am Ei Shomoy

Rtv
08:30pm Road To Democracy

Banglavision
10:10am Amar Ami

ETV
10:10pm O Bandhu Amar

DESH TV
11:45pm Shoja Kotha

Musical Bliss, from Dusk till Dawn

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Ustad Shahadat Hossain Khan, centre, on sarod (top) and Biplab Bhattacharya during a solo tabla lahora at the programme.

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Scarcely had the sunlight mingled into the lap of dusk on December 30, the second Lakkhyapar Classical Music Conference started at the convention centre of Narayanganj Club Limited. Eminent classical artiste Pandit Ram Kanai Das inaugurated the nightlong programme. The event featured classical Khayal and Thumri performances (both vocal and instrumental) by renowned and promising singers of the country and beyond.

Rezwan Ali, Asit Dey, Swarnamoy Chakrobarty, Writuporna Chakrobarty, Latifun Julio, Suparna Saha and Tapash Datta performed Khayal and Thumri set on different ragas. Mousumi Sengupta [of Kolkata] enthralled the audience with her Khayal performance at the event.

Ustad Shahadat Hossain Khan's symphony on sarod was remarkable. Satyajit Chakrobarty gave a sitar performance. Sabuj Ahmed played tabla *lahora*, Kamrul Ahmed performed a raga on banshi and Dipan Sarkar perfomed on the classical guitar at the event.

The highlight of the event was a sitar performance by Suprotik Sengupta and a one-and-a-half hour long tabla *lahora* performance by Biplab Bhattacharya [both from Kolkata]. At the end of Biplab Bhattacharya's tabla performance, the audience gave him a standing ovation.

Pinu Sen Das, Bijon Chowdhury, Bishwajit Notto, Ratan Kumar Das, Sanjiban Majumdar and Zakir Hossain on tabla; Debashish Karmakar, Sanjiban Sanyal, Shanto Ahmed and Motiar Hossain on harmonium; Shahjahan Saju and Sirajum Monir Sifat on tanpura instrumentally assisted the vocalists.

Asit Kumar was the coordinator of the conference; Kashem Jamal was the adviser.

Dhaka Art Centre celebrates its first anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Art Centre (DAC) celebrated its first anniversary on January 1 at the centre premises in Dhanmondi.

As part of the celebration programme, DAC inaugurated a printmaking studio titled Kibria Printmaking Studio. Noted painter Rafiqun Nabi inaugurated the studio. Ramendu Majumdar, chairman of the centre and trustees of the centre---Mustaque Ahmed, Anis Moquit, Nisar Hossain, Moshiul Azam Shajal were present at the inaugural session.

On the occasion of the founding anniversary, the centre has also organised two group exhibitions where promising painters Uttam Kumar Roy, Aowlad Hossain, Sohel Rana, Mithu Dey, Rashid Hasan Manik, Dewan Mizan and Tahmina Lisa's works are on display.

Nisar Hossain, Professor, Drawing and Painting Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka said about the group exhibition, "A few months ago, DAC organised a studio- based workshop where a number of talented painters participated. We wanted to keep the artists engrossed in creative works through the workshop. The painters' got an opportunity to use a common venue so that they could share their thoughts and working process. This is how we have planned it initially. The group exhibition is the outcome of the studio- based workshop, conducted by two noted painters Mohammad Eunus and Mohammad Iqbal."

Chandana Majumdar performed a solo musical programme at the inauguration.

DS Café

Noted actor-director Salauddin Lavlu was voted in as the celebrity of the month at DS Café. He will be on the hot seat and take your calls at The Daily Star office on Wednesday, January 5, between 4 and 5pm. Readers will have the opportunity to converse with him.

Call

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Letters Sealed with Tears

Manipuri Theatre premieres "Kohe Birangana"

JAMIL MAHMUD

Manipuri Theatre recently brought its new production "Kohe Birangana" to the stage. The premiere of the play was held at Studio Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, on December 30. Two more shows of the play were held the following day at the same venue. Young playwright-director Shuvashis Sinha, also chief of Manipuri Theatre, has written and directed the play based on Michael Madhusudan Dutt's "Birangana Kabya".

Madhusudan's "Birangana Kabya" features the agony of female characters from the epic "Mahabharat". "Birangana Kabya" has 11 verses, from which Shuvashis adapted four for his play. The play features stories of Shakuntala, Draupadi, Dushala and Jona.

The play is a narrative of letters written by these four characters to their respective husbands. The play starts with Shakuntala, who writes a moving letter to her husband Dushyanta, who has seemingly abandoned her.

Where Shuvashis highlights the grief of solitude through Shakuntala, he tries to depict a resentful woman as he narrates the story of Draupadi. In her letter to Arjun, Draupadi's unleashes jealousy and rage, as she is aware that Arjun is indulging in pleasures whereas she has been subjected to a life of difficulties.

The audience sees a wise and politically aware woman in Dushala, who writes to her husband Jayadratha. Jayadratha has become Arjun's adversary by killing the latter's son Abhimanyu. Arjun wants to take revenge. When Duhshala learns of this, she writes a letter to Jayadratha, telling him that he made a mistake by killing Abhimanyu.

The last act of the play features Jona's letter to her husband Needlhaja. After Arjun killed his son, Needlhaja signs a peace accord instead of avenging the death. A bereaved Dushala writes a letter rebuking her husband.

Shuvashis has written the play in a lyrical form known as *poyar*.

Jyoti Sinha played the four characters. It is a tough proposition for any actor to adapt four major literary characters in a single production with ease. Jyoti made a truly commendable effort to reach the zenith of the characters' emotions.

Other performers, who helped Jyoti in chorus, were Smriti Sinha, Shukla Sinha, Sunanda Sinha and Bhagyalokkhi Sinha.

Manipuri Theatre, which is based in Kamolganj, Maulvibazar, highlights Manipuri arts and culture through their productions.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

The play features stories of Shakuntala, Draupadi, Dushala and Jona -- characters from "Mahabharat".