

WHAT'S ON

Print Exhibition
Artist: Biren Shome
Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, Dhanmondi
Date: June 28-July 24
Time: 3-8pm



Painting Exhibition
Title: Passion for Blue
Artist: Gopal Chandra Saha
Venue: Institute of Asian Creatives, Gulshan-2
Date: July 5-15
Time: 12pm-8pm



Group Prints Exhibition
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge
Date: July 5-Aug 10
Time: 12pm-8pm



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Whistle
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-7, R-13, Dhanmondi
Date: July 5-14
Time: 12-8pm



Group Exhibition
Marking Ten-Year Journey of Galleri Kaya
Title: Glimpses
Venue: H-20, Rd-16, Sec-4, Uttara
Date: June 21-July 20
Time: 11am-7:30pm



NEWS bytes

Rossetti Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece for sale

"Proserpine" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, one of the defining images of the Pre-Raphaelite era, is to be auctioned at Sotheby's in London in November. The drawing, in coloured chalks, comes to the market for the first time in more than 40 years and is expected to fetch up to £1.8 million.

The chalk drawing is among five versions of the image in existence, including three in oil and a water-colour replica. The picture was last seen on the art market in 1970 when it was sold by the Stone Gallery in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

No details are available regarding its current owner. "Proserpine" was begun in 1878, and acquired by William Graham, the MP for Glasgow, in 1880. Graham was Rossetti's chief patron, eventually owning 35 of the artist's works.



Facets unknown

Murtaja Baseer reminisces on his father Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah

TAKIR HOSSAIN

Murtaja Baseer, one of the most distinguished painters of our country, has made an immense contribution to the enrichment of our art. Baseer is the son of Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, an outstanding scholar and linguist. The artist recalls his relationship with his father, his father's reaction to Baseer's decision of pursuing art and more.

Yesterday (July 13) marked the 44th death anniversary of Shahidullah.

"People think that Dr. Shahidullah was against my decision to become, but that is not right. He disagreed but never stood in the way. My father said in explanation: 'When I was living in Paris, I witnessed the life of a painter haunted by poverty and meted out inhuman treatment by his fellow countrymen. The life of an artist is never easy. So, I do not want you to embrace this troubled fate. First, you should complete your education and then go for art. In fact, I would rather you go to Aligarh,'" says Baseer.

Says the artist, "Initially my objective was not to become a painter. I was closely engaged to a political party and I tried to go by the party's rules. The Communist Party ordered me to work towards a political organisation. I got admitted to art school. When I was a student of class nine, I became a member of the Student Federation. Then I did many portraits of Marx, Engles, Lenin, Stalin and other renowned leftists. When my father saw that I wished to be admitted to art school, he asked me to go to Shantiniketan. But I did not agree with him. One one day he gave me money for admission and called me to his library. There was a mahogany cabinet where he kept valuable books. There were two books,



which had colourful photographs of the Louvre Museum. That cabinet was always locked. I liked those two books, especially the nude paintings in them. I was taken aback when my father handed over the books which were priceless aesthetically.

"My father sent me to Italy in 1956 for higher education in art. On my return home in 1959, I prepared for a solo exhibition in Karachi. My father was in the Urdu Development Board then. He invited the then Education Minister Habibur Rahman to inaugurate my exhibition and wrote

on the invitation card, "Introducing my son, Murtaja Baseer - Artist". American Friends of the Middle East arranged the exhibition.

"In Florence, Italy, I was included in an exhibition of nine painters from East Pakistan in 1957. A review was published in the Pakistan Observer, where I was referred to as 'Murtaja Rashid'. My father immediately wrote a letter to the editor of Pakistan Observer pointing out that my name had been spelt wrong. In the letter, he appreciated my works and wrote out my correct name. Afterwards, I changed my name to 'Murtaja Baseer'. My father was very displeased with me. When he wrote to me, he addressed me as A.K.M. Bashirullah alias Murtaja Baseer. He hardly used Murtaja Baseer. Fortunately, he always treated me as an artist.

"When my father visited our ancestral home in Chobbish Pargana (West Bengal), I requested him to buy some tubes of colours which he bought for me. In 1961, I was living in Lahore and requested him to send some canvases for me. He was kind enough to send those canvases to me as well. Often he asked me to come back to Dhaka and settle down.

"At the end of 1961, I came back to Dhaka and did a solo exhibition, organised by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. On that occasion, Bangla Academy organised a seminar on 'Modern Man and Modern Art'. The chief orator was A.K. Brohi and my father attended the programme. During a conversation Brohi asked my father to comment on me as a modern painter. My father confessed, 'My son is as complicated as modern art is to me.'

"That night my father came to my room and said, 'Art should be a thing of beauty as I had seen in the galleries of Paris. Why do your works

look bizarre? However, I have to admit that one of your paintings called Dead Lizard really fascinated me.' I explained to my father that this 'dead lizard' represented our decadent society. 'You and I both are meta-physical.' My father agreed with my opinion.

"My father was hospitalised in 1968, when I was making a mural for the State Bank of Pakistan. My mother had died and I became detached from life and unable to immerse myself in my work. Every day I went to the hospital to look after my father. He wanted to know about my work. When my father heard that I could not concentrate on my work as I was affected by my mother's sudden death, he told me to forget that chapter of my life and carry on with my work.

"One day, Dr. Enamul Haque came to the hospital and my father introduced me to him. Dr. Enamul Haque told him, 'I know him very well.' My father laughed and said, 'Yes, my son has now become a famous man.'

"I had drawn lots of portraits of my father, of which he was completely unaware. When my father was admitted to the hospital we had no idea that he would be dying within two weeks. Before leaving for the hospital, he suddenly put on an 'achkan' and a fez cap and asked me to do his portrait.

Portraits are supposed to be forbidden in our religion. He said, "There is nothing forbidden in this regard in our Holy book. If the painting puts you in a foul mood or places any wicked impression on your mind, then it is certainly wrong. Such paintings are not even aesthetic in any way.' When my deeply religious father made this statement, portraits were not encouraged in the Muslim world and no faces were seen on a postal stamp. Now that trend has changed."

It's True!



The first "Festival du film de Cannes" was hosted in 1947, where films from sixteen countries were presented. At that time the principle of equality was introduced, with a jury made up of only one representative per country. The festival is now held at the Palais des Festivals, expressly constructed for the occasion, although for its 1949 inaugural the roof was unfinished and blew off during a storm. The festival was not held in 1948 and 1950 on account of budgetary problems. In 1955, the Palme d'Or was created, replacing the Grand Prix du Festival which had been given until that year. In 1959, the Marché du Film (Film Market) was founded, giving the festival a commercial character and facilitating exchanges between sellers and buyers in the film industry.

IN CONVERSATION

"Art should not be manipulated with forced convictions"... Bonna Mirza

A CORRESPONDENT

A complete actress in every regard, Bonna Mirza is capable of dissolving into any character she portrays. Beginning with theatre, she soon became a popular face on TV. She has appeared on the silver screen as well.

Having been involved in acting for around two decades, do you find any similarities in acting for TV plays and the stage?

Bonna: Not really. They are entirely separate. In TV plays, there are chances for correction -- a shot is taken repeatedly until it is satisfactory. But in theatre, there is no second chance. Also the style, the language, the pattern are so different. The only possible similarity is that we have to act. However, both are two different worlds. I can watch myself on TV, although I admit I don't do it that often. In theatre one doesn't get that chance.

How do you find time for both theatre and TV plays?

Bonna: Theatre is done on a monthly basis, like a show per month. It's tough to manage time. And TV drama shootings are there almost every day.

So how do you manage to find free time?

Bonna: After all that it is difficult, but yes, I do. In my free time, I do nothing special; listen to music or browse the internet.

What inspires you most?

Bonna: Nothing in specific. I believe one has to find that inspiration from within oneself.

Do you think TV plays and theatre should always be for social change or can it be for pure entertainment?

Bonna: Not necessarily. I don't think

there should always be a need for social commitment. Art has a life of its own, and should not be manipulated with forced convictions or commitments. In any case, the final creation should not be affected because it is confined in a commitment.

How do you think the scene in TV plays has changed over the years?

Bonna: Everything has changed; society's attitude, outlook. So it is only obvious that the prospect of drama has changed. But it is nothing sudden. A subtle, gradual change has taken place in this sector. For example, the women portrayed on TV these days are much more independent. They are making their own choices. A kind of social acceptance to this has developed as well.



A discussion on a research book titled "Bangla Jonoprio Uponnyasher Dhara" (The chronology of popular Bengali novel), written by Dr. Rakibul Hasan was held recently at VIP Lounge, National Press Club, Dhaka. Media house Ghashful organised the event. Presided over by Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, other discussants at the event included poet Belal Chowdhury, Professor Shafiuddin Ahmed, Emdadul Haque Milon and Ata Sarker. The keynote paper was presented by Professor Dr. Shahid Iqbal of Rajshahi University. The author of the book also spoke about his book. Nasrin Akter delivered the welcome address on behalf of Ghashful.

Raindrops inspire melody Cultural show on rainy season in Bogra

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Amra Ko'jon Shilpi Gosthi, a noted cultural organisation of Bogra, arranged a monsoon-based cultural programme titled "Borsha Mongol" at its office in Pouro High School campus of Bogra town on Tuesday evening.

A discussion was held on monsoon, presided over by the organisation's president and dramatist Abdus Samad Polash. Professor Mahmuda Begum, Shirin Majid and Tandra Bhattacharyay delivered speeches. Mahbub Hasan Shohel and Tanjila Selim emceed the event.

The musical programme began with the song "Jhoro Jhoro Mukhorod Badal Diney" by young artiste of the organisation Tanbin Troyee, followed by melodious



Young artistes perform a dance.

renditions of songs of the rainy season, by Taposhi Ray, Shirin Majid and Tandha Bhattacharjya.

Later, the artistes of the organisation staged a dance performance to conclude the programme.

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Basic photography course in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet Photographic Society (SPS) and Pathsala, Dhaka jointly organised a 10-day basic photography course recently. Professor Md. Abdul Aziz, Vice-Chancellor, MU, handed over certificates to the 20 amateur photographers who participated in the workshop. SPS president Md. Saiful Islam chaired the function.

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