The Power of the Human Spirit

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Shahabuddin's canvases are full of massive, dynamic figures. He appears to put magic in the impossible to depict the winning of the land in nine months the Liberation War of '71'.

The muscle bound limbs, torsos, and the fingers are alive with energy. He exaggerates, but this is with a purpose to make the images overlap one another, as the brush sweeps and glides to depict warriors at war with the occupiers.

Asked about his role in the fighting with the marauding Pakistan army, he says, "I fought the war in Comilla. I joined the freedom struggle in April 1971. I was in Dhaka when there was a crackdown in March. I was in Narsingdi, across Bahairab and headed for Agartala. I did go to Calcutta too – my aim was to study art there. I was 21 at that time. My paintings present the pulse of life of the struggle of the freedom movement. Incidentally, Khoka, the former mayor of Dhaka, was also with us. I was responsible for one platoon."



Angry Bull, oil on canvas.

Shahabuddin, completing his paintings in his Kolabagan five-storied building, goes on to say: "There were eleven sector commanders. The first was Shafiullah, the Second Commander covered Dhaka, Comilla and Faridpur. As a guerrilla fighter, we had to get food and water, and then pick up our