Collecting Treasures

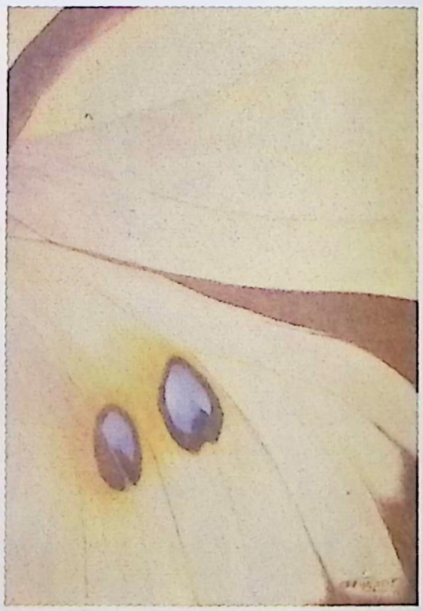
TAKIR HOSSAIN

The role of the art collector has always been significant for the survival of art for how would artists survive if not for the patronage of the art lover? Even the great art museums of the world would not be as imposing as they are, most of them having been built on donations from individual collectors. To acknowledge the contributions of collectors, Bengal Art Lounge in Gulshan has started a new series of exhibitions of private collections titled "Ways of Seeing". The series is an insight into the world of collecting and the taste and zeal that compels art enthusiasts to buy art. The aim of the sequence is to nurture art appreciation, which is the first step in creating a sustainable and lively art scenario. The gallery has commenced the series with a selection of works from the collection of Durjoy Rahman Joy, managing director of Winners Creations Ltd and owner of a private gallery, GalleryWinners.

The focus of the exhibition is on eminent painters from Bangladesh. The exposition is dedicated to the memory of late artist Aminul Islam, several of whose early works are on display at the exhibition. The exhibition also includes the works of Quamrul Hassan, Safiuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Kibria, Abdur Razzaque, Murtaja Baseer, Samarjit Roy Chowdhury, Rafiqun Nabi, Monirul Islam, Mahmudul Haque, Shahabuddin Ahmed and others.



Samarjit Roy Chowdhury, *Composition*, oil on canvas, 168x107cm, 1996.



Murtaja Baseer, *Wings*, oil on canvas, 181x120cm, 2005.

Joy started collecting paintings in the early 1990s. Ever since then he keeps some criteria in mind—quality, historical and philosophical aspect of the artwork and its aesthetic value. He enjoys visiting art galleries, art carnivals, and museums when he travels, to become familiar with the art and the art movement of those places. The collector has tried to blend culture and time with his collection. Most of his works have historical and anthological value. Joy's collection has an extraordinary trait in that he collects the series of works of his preferred artists. The largest collection includes the artworks of contemporary Bangladeshi master painters, great Indian masters and western contemporary artists. Along with his wife, Dr Sania Ahsan, Joy has created a strong and comprehensive collection of works. His collection now exceeds 800 works of art.

The avid collector says, "I always believe that I buy a piece because I like it, not because anyone else tells me to. It speaks to me. I can't just glance at this work— I have to listen to it. It stimulates me, attracts me. Art should not be considered an investment but purely a hobby. If a collector gives his attention while collecting the work, in most cases viewers of the work will definitely appreciate its value. I always feel that the effort involved in collecting and the pleasure of owning major works by important artists is very satisfying. Though the Bangladesh art market is underpriced, seeing art as a future investment takes away all the fun of acquiring a work."

Several artworks of Mohammad Kibria are included at the show. The painter is considered an