



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADDI RUPON

Art itself is more powerful than THE ARTIST

-- Monirul Islam

ZAHANGIR ALOM

People often say they don't understand what an artist depicts. Internationally-acclaimed artist Monirul Islam says art, aesthetics and emotion are basic things of life: "Life is a canvas and it is the artists who portray the various aspects and elements of life into it. Understanding art is a process that incorporates many things. It doesn't happen all of a sudden in someone."

Monirul Islam works on diverse media, including print, etching, watercolour, acrylic and oil both at home and abroad. The artist has been living in Spain for several decades.

"In my childhood, I never saw any original artwork or even art materials; but I had a latent intuition to do something creative. While I was in class seven, my artistic journey started with a big painting. Nature attracted me; I depicted many paintings delineating nature and its elements in those days. I had been in Kishoreganj until I was 22," the artist adds.

Subtle lines and a harmonious colour

balance between space and composition is an important aspect in his works. The artist fondly uses little doodles, lyrical lines, dots, tiny motifs and symbols. Applying meticulous colours in thin layers and reducing the texture of the paint to its most minimal expression, Monirul Islam established a personal abstract language in the early '70s.

"The main object for any painting is creating space. It is easy to fill up a canvas with subject, but difficult to leave empty space. Minimisation is important in art. The Europeans always term our works as curry painting -- full of spices," mentions the artist.

The artist's nostalgic childhood days had a great influence on his being an artist. While he was at the College of Art and Crafts (now Faculty of Fine Art of Dhaka University) in 1961, he would complete 4/5 watercolours in a day. Hundreds of watercolours are kept preserved in his drawers till date.

"I would go to Rayer Bazar, Kawran Bazar and other places to complete the work. Kawran Bazar was then a hub of potters. My classmate and friend, actor Tele Samad would

accompany me. My teacher Mustafa Monwar has a fantastic drawing hand. He would say watercolour is like poetry and oil painting is like novel. Watercolour was a study media in Europe. Master painters like Turner and

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Rembrandt applied it for colour references and quick sketches. Later, it became a major art media. At the beginning of 60s, our teachers Mohammad Kibria, Safiuddin Ahmed, Abdul Baset and others brought modern

painting to the Dhaka Art College. Our art college is one of the best art colleges of the world regarding such a space, greenery, architecture and design," says the artist.

Anything new drives Monirul Islam's artistic realm. He uses espresso coffee, marble and brick dust, burnt ground rice and other natural colours and pigments to experiment and develop new features to his artworks.

"My artistic fantasy plays with many unfinished works scattered in my studio. They seem to grow with my dreams spreading their wings. I dream of depicting what I cherish; but I don't know if I'll make it. This unquenchable thirst is a prerequisite for any artist to move forward. Art itself is much more powerful than the artist," asserts the artist.

In closing, he says "Art is meaningless and someone may say it has no importance and value; but in every inch of life it is of immense value. Art, culture, literature and education are necessary to nourish the soul. The art of talking, cooking, eating, dressing, behaving and above all, art for teasing sensuousness encircles our life."



WHAT'S ON

Photo Exhibition
Title: Too young to wed
Photo journalist: Stephanie Sinclair
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Francaise, Dhamondi
Date: 17th April-30th April,
Time: (3pm-9pm)

Sara Painting Exhibition
Artist: Sukumar Paul
Venue: Gallery Chitrag, Rd-6, H-4, Dhamondi
Date: Apr 24-May 1
Time: 10am-8pm

Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: Notation, Reconstructed
Artist: Kazi Ghiyasuddin
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts
Date: April 18-May 26
Time: 12pm-8pm

Group Art Exhibition
Title: Serigraphy Watercolor Print
Venue: Monobhumi Art Space, Sahara Tropical Centre, 218, Elephant Road
Date: April 10-24
Time: 3-9pm

Solo Art Exhibition
Dust to Dust
Artist: Mahbubur Rahman
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge
Date: Apr 11-May 2
Time: 12pm-8pm

Photography Exhibition
Title: From Kabul to Kolkata: of Belonging, Memories and Identity
Organiser: Goethe Institut and Drik
Venue: Drik Gallery
Date: April 24-May 6
Time: 3pm-8pm

Who Cooked the Coke?

Super Chef Episode 2 airs tonight



OSAMA RAHMAN

If last week's episode was anything to go by, then this year's competition may turn out to be one of the most intense ever seen. By now, few of the participants have been eliminated, some have been selected and a waiting list has also been discussed. With even fewer spots to grab than before, expect the participants to go all out this week. They will all have to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors and try to top those who manage to secure the aprons.

Last week, Nadim was the toast of the town. His take on the yakitori was much appreciated by the judge. In fact, it was later described as being near-perfect, and such a praise has already marked out Nadim as the one to look out for. Will this week bring forth Nadim's first real challenger? However, to say

Nadim is free of challengers is stretching it. Anyone who receives the apron or has the chance of receiving the apron is a direct challenger for the crown. This competition, at least initially, is more like T20 than a Test match; winners are dictated by the day and not by form. In fact, you could be consistent 9 out of 10 times, but it's that tenth time that will spell the end for you.

This week, expect plenty of drama. Some of the classics from this week must be that one participant who refuses to understand why this competition invites amateurs. In fact, he raises the question that how can an amateur be expected to cook and prepare an entire dish with only 30 minutes preparation time. Well, that is one of the qualities of the Super Chef. This week, another important question is thrown up; is one born a Super Chef or nurtured into

it? We'll let the viewers decide on that.

If it isn't for tantrum-throwing participants, then there are times this week when the judges themselves get flustered. It's a tough job to be honest, but it makes for great TV viewing. In the immortal words of chef Tazammul, executive chef of Watercess Restaurant, "Did you cook this coke?" find out the answer to this hilarious question tonight on ntv sharp at 9pm. But before you head off, see if you can answer our weekly quiz question. You stand to win tremendous gift hampers, courtesy of Rupchanda!

QUIZ QUESTION:

Q) What is the most significant essence of Diane sauce?

- a) Sweet taste
- b) Chili paste
- c) Creamy flavour
- d) Garlic flavour

Send your answers to superchef2015quiz@gmail.com or sms the correct answer to 6969. Simply write SC (Space) Answer (A/B/C/D).

Congratulations to the winners of last week's quiz: Molie, Sayedun Nahar, Ananna, Shamima and Rezwana!

"I learn from every role I play"

... Bijori Barkatullah

A COPRESPONDENT

Bijori Barkatullah is an actress, model, singer and dancer. She has been in the media for over two decades. She started to act from 1993, with "Shukher Chharpotro," directed by her father, Mohammad Barkatullah. In an interview with The Daily Star, she spoke about her works and experiences.

What are you doing these days?

Bijori: I am working in selective series and TV plays these days. I am currently doing two drama serials. In one I have completed the 13th episode and in the other the 52nd episode. I also did a tele-film for Tagore birth anniversary on 25 Baishakh.

What made you choose to be a part of the media?

Bijori: It was not a choice, rather my background that brought me here. Both my parents were actors. My mother even acted during the time she was carrying me. Of course, it was mandatory for me to complete my education. When I graduated from Dhaka University, I had the option to pursue further studies. But I never did, because most importantly, I learn from every role I play.

The best compliment you have received...

Bijori: Well, everything is a compliment; even what a person says to undermine you, should be taken as a compliment. That way you will not get complacent. A child, smiling at you in recognition is also a compliment. An actor should accept all kinds of feedback as a compliment.

Do your personal and professional lives ever collide?

Bijori: It would be a lie to say that it has never conflicted. As a wife, as a mother and as a professional actor, it is most important to strike a balance.

There are lots of things that I had to give up because of my family, but I don't regret it. I learnt from my parents. I have seen how they dealt with their professional lives, as they are both media personalities.

What is your dynamics with your fans?

Bijori: If you are in this profession you will definitely come across fans. There's one incident that I remember most, and I guess I will never forget it. In a shopping mall at Kolkata. Out of the blue a lady comes up to me and says "You are Bijori the actress from Bangladesh! You remind me of my daughter." She hugged me in the middle of the mall - a complete stranger. And then she took a picture with me. I was taken aback for a moment because it was not my country and a complete stranger was hugging me, but it's a special memory now.

