



Ronni Ahmmed's solo exhibition at Bengal Art Lounge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bengal Art Lounge has organised a solo exhibition of paintings, installations and video by Ronni Ahmmed. Mario Palma, Ambassador of the Republic of Italy in Bangladesh, and Shamsul Wares, Dean of Environmental Science and Design and Professor of Architecture at the University of Asia Pacific, jointly inaugurated the exhibition titled "Gods and Beasts" on September 12.

Renowned for his colourful depiction of imaginary worlds and fantastic creatures, Ronni Ahmmed has long been preoccupied with the mythical texts that serve as foundations to human civilisations. In a gallery space completely remodeled for the occasion, "Gods and Beasts" takes Ahmmed's inquiry a step further. The exhibition addresses many of the great religious and spiritual traditions that have crossed Bengal at one point or the other, in particular Buddhism, Hinduism

and Sufism. The viewer is plunged into frenzied depictions of religious scenes often rendered with a colour palette reminiscent of the American comic books of mid-20th century. Far from being an obstacle to accessing the superior meaning of these celebrated scenes, Ahmmed's "cosmic comic" aesthetics lays it bare.

In a poignant video work, the artist blends the mundane with images of war, famines and other of the worst man-made horrors. Taking on tragedy through the prism of the absurd, the video blurs any attempt of rational comprehension. It forces the viewer to delve into feelings, or intuitions, in a pursuit not dissimilar to the religious endeavor. "Gods and Beasts" browses through centuries of spiritual tradition with a fresh, new look. It takes the public into Ronni Ahmmed's visions, which he has developed with an authentic devotional approach.

The exhibition, open daily from 12-8pm, will continue until October 17.

Studio Ghibli named Asian Filmmaker of the Year at Busan



A still from "My Neighbor Totoro".

Venerable Japanese cartoon company Studio Ghibli has been named as Asian Film Maker of the Year by the Busan International Film Festival.

The festival will present its annual award at a ceremony during the upcoming festival (Oct 1-10) to be attended by chairman and producer Suzuki Toshio.

The festival plans to screen Miyazaki Hayao's "My Neighbor Totoro" (1988) in the Open Cinema section and Takahata Isao's "Only Yesterday" (1991) in the Wide Angle - Animation Showcase

section. Before the festival gets underway, the Busan Cinema Center will play a further 18 Ghibli titles in a special 'Spotlight on Studio Ghibli' section from September 21-27.

Most previous recipients of the prize have been individuals, including Andy Lau, Hou Hsiao-hsien and Yash Chopra, though an award to a company has one precedent. In 2005 the festival gave the award to Japanese public broadcaster NHK.

Ghibli was founded 30 years ago by directors Takahata Isao and

Miyazaki Hayao and has gone on to carve out an iconic position in Asian and world cinema, thanks to the distinctive hand drawn works of Miyazaki in particular, as well as its stances on environmental protection, peace, and the future of children.

Miyazaki won the Berlin festival's Golden Bear in 2001 and the 2002 animation Oscar with "Spirited Away". Isao also earned an Oscar nomination for 2013 film "The Tale of the Princess Kaguya".

Source: Variety



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADIT RUPON

Hanging out with Sushmita Sen "Dhaka has always given me a sense of belonging"

FAHMIM FERDOUS

At Unilever's launch of new shampoo brand TRESemme, after the audience had been applauding rather absent-mindedly through some lovely musical performances and three and a half sets of models putting up a riveting fashion show, anticipation was rising for the Miss Universe 1994 and Bollywood superstar Sushmita Sen - to grace the BICC Hall of Fame stage. Just before she appeared on stage, this correspondent and photographer were yanked from the audience to wait backstage, with promise of a close-up interview. And after we missed her captivating stage charm and her recital of a Tagore poem, we were told to wait a little longer as it was organisers' time to take selfies et al, as the clock went past 10:30pm. By the time we went in 15 minutes later, we had genuine concerns that she might be tired and not overly enthusiastic to attend to a reporter.

Surprise, surprise. "Chole aye bhai, chole aye, bhishon 'thoke' gechi!" (Come on brother, let's do this. It's been a long day!), said Sushmita in

a bewilderingly endearing voice as soon as we were introduced. "You spoke so fondly of Dhaka and your connection to it; what are you taking back from this trip?" I ask. "I have been to Dhaka three times now, and I cannot remember one time when I have not gone back with a feeling of (pauses) ... belonging," she replies. "Everything I do, good bad or ugly, they applaud it, like 'Amader meye,' ('Our own girl'). Tonight, I saw a lot of my generation, I saw seniors, but what's beautiful is I saw the newest generation, and they and I got to connect tonight. And that means one more generation of Bangladesh has a connection to me. And I will take that back with me."

We talk about her return to films, with "Nirbaak". "It was a scary call, at first. Srijit (Mukherjee) is an outrageously talented man, and when he told me the story, it took me two reads to understand the irony of the film -- because it's not a regular narrative. I'm so glad I did it, because after a while it gets tiring to express yourself with the right banners and running around the right trees; and when you give away 3-6 months of

your life, you want to know it will be worth it. Since I was a little girl, my father always made sure we were in touch with our roots. And he asked me to do one Bangla film, and I promised him I would. When it premiered, he watched it with me with tears of pride in his eyes."

Will she be seen on screen soon? She smiles and says "At this moment, no films. But there are brands I want to build, businesses I want to do, and ... I want to do films. But films that are no longer about chasing Friday to Friday. It's about giving you something that you can look back and say 'That's the Sushmita I love!' so I'm hoping to give you that."

As time runs out, the final question is about her daughters, who she has adopted and is raising as a single mother. "My daughters are doing very well. One is sixteen (Renée), but refuses to grow up from ten. And the other one (Alisah) is six, going on eight; she's an old soul. My hopes and dreams for them are simple. They have their own lives. I want to give them something rock solid to stand on, and then they're free to fly in any direction they want."

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EVEREST

Quiz Contest

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Everest is a 2015 British-American 3D biographical disaster drama and adventure thriller film directed by Baltasar Kormákur and written by William Nicholson and Simon Beaufoy. The film stars Jason Clarke, Josh Brolin, John Hawkes, Robin Wright, Michael Kelly, Sam Worthington, Keira Knightley, Emily Watson, and Jake Gyllenhaal.

The Daily Star together with Star Cineplex will host a quiz for the movie lovers in the Arts & Entertainment Section. So keep your eyes on this Newspaper.

EVEREST premieres in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Everest", a New Zealand-American 3D adventure, drama and thriller film, premiered in Dhaka on Thursday evening at Star Cineplex in the capital.

The film, directed by Baltasar Kormákur, stars Jason Clarke, Josh Brolin, John Hawkes, Robin Wright, Michael Kelly, Sam Worthington, Keira Knightley, Emily Watson and Jake Gyllenhaal.

"Everest" is based on the real events of the 1996 Mount Everest disaster, and depicts the survival attempts of two expedition groups.