

IDENTITY

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PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

BREAKING THE TRADITIONAL MOULD

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PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



In a three-day event titled ID-Clash, transgender performers from Europe and Latin America along with representatives of the *hijra* community from Bangladesh showcase different concepts for living and stages of transformations through narration, writing, video projections, songs and stage performance.

It is an event that attempts to challenge the traditional woman to man spectrum. It addresses the lifestyle of people who consider their identity to fall outside of two distinct and limited identities of masculine and feminine.

The name of the event itself announces the dilemma that the transgender people face regarding their identity. They feel different, because they don't conform to the binary biological aspects of gender identity of being a male or a female. They often discover themselves living in an alien body and suffer from a sense of dislocation because they don't quite meet society's expectations of the gender role assigned to them at birth. The event is about those people who believe in the countless possibilities and models of gender self-definition that exist, when they deny to fit into the societal role of woman or man.

Organised by the Goethe-Institute Bangladesh, in association with Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (BSA), this international performance art and installation show took place at the Plaza premise of BSA's exhibition building from November 5 to 7 that held the audience in awe with its brilliant content.

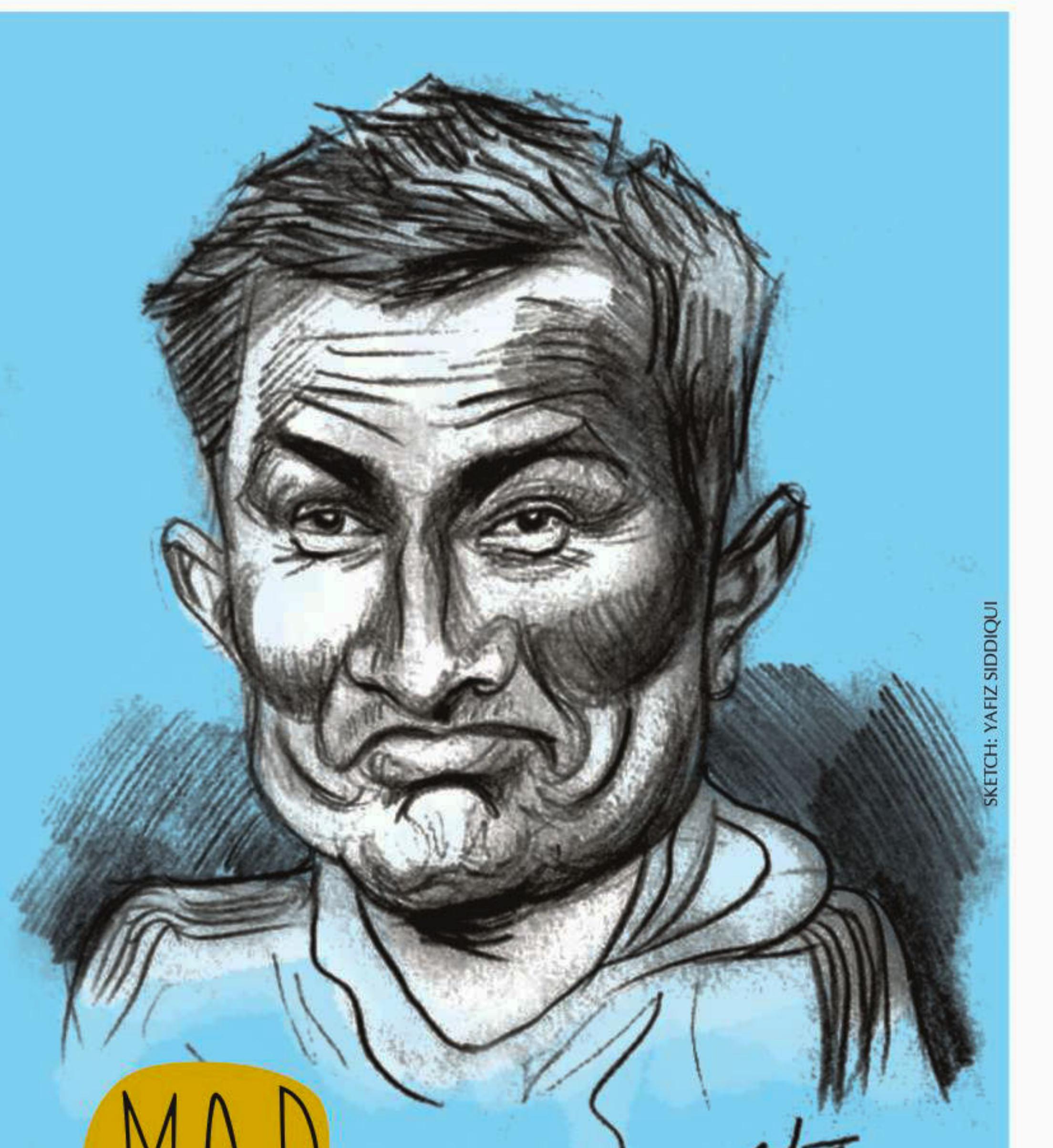
Annonya, a Bangladeshi NGO worker and Katha, an artiste of Shilpkala Academy along with German artistes Michelle Niwicho, Melissa Marie Garcia Noriega and Greta Pimenta were the key performers.

An initiative of an international project, the idea of ID-clash was born back in 2010 when Angela Grünert, the then director of the Goethe-Institute in Bangladesh invited Angie Hiesl and Roland Kaiser to organise a workshop on sexual identity as part of the Rainbow festival. She also made an intercultural communication between the German performance artistes and the community of hijras, or "third gender" which sparked the idea for a project that involves artistes from both of these areas.

Judith Mirschberger, the new director of Goethe-Institute has continued to support the project furthermore. At present it runs with support from the Nationals Performance Netz, Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and a number of other cultural departments of the German federal state.

The attitudes toward people who don't fit into the traditional mould have made remarkable advances in the last few years around the world including Europe. In fact, hospitable havens and niches have developed as a result of the public debate about equality and social acceptance. Yet the individual lifestyles of transgender people living in Europe face discrimination, marginalisation and hostility on a daily basis. On the other hand the lifestyle of the hijras in southern Asia follows the century-old mythological tradition, yet their survival is shaped by the taboos and social prejudice.

The event, thus works as an anti-discrimination framework that helps to ensure transgender protection. The performances in Id-Clash have given an opportunity to the audience to encounter people who do not identify with gender role-standards.



SKETCH: YARZ SIDDIQUI

JOSÉ MOURINHO

Born on January 26, 1963

José Mário dos Santos Mourinho Félix OIH, popularly known as José Mourinho, is a Portuguese football manager, former football player and currently working as the manager of English club Chelsea. After studying sports science in Technical University of Lisbon and attending coaching courses in Britain, Mourinho began his career in professional football as a player in the Portuguese Second Division. His controversial attitude and comments have grabbed media attention a few times, nevertheless, a number of players, coaches, and commentators consider him one of the greatest and most successful managers in the world.

“THE WORLD IS SO COMPETITIVE, AGGRESSIVE, CONSUMIVE, SELFISH AND DURING THE TIME WE SPEND HERE WE MUST BE ALL BUT THAT.

Football is a game about feelings and intelligence.

THE ONLY THING THAT WE CANNOT CONTROL IS OUR SUPPORTERS.

The negative side of football. The negative side of our society. People sometimes go to football and bring to it the negative aspects of our society. ”

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINY QUOTES

Last Friday, I met some of my childhood friends after a long time. As it was the weekend we decided to meet at the Chandrima Uddyan, a place that is close to my home. As soon as we got together, we got much discussing various issues. All on a sudden, a street child, aged between 5-6 years old, came to us and begged for some money. Lost in our conversation, we did not pay any attention to him. When he noticed that we were talking about our studies, he smartly said in English, "Sir, please give me some money. I have been starving since yesterday. I have a little sister at home who is crying for food. Please help me by giving some money." Hearing his words spoken in such accuracy and confidence, we became astonished. One of my friends asked him how he could speak such good English. He replied that a student of the University of Dhaka had taught him these lines. As there are many foreigners in Dhaka city and they don't understand Bengali, it is a better mode of communication to approach them for money. He also added that the foreigners give much more amount of money than we do. Being happy with his answers, we offered him one hundred taka to buy food for him as well as his family. After that he left the place with the money. But we kept talking about him for a long time.

Habibur Rahman
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka

THE SMART ROOTLESS BOY



PHOTO: STAR FILE

AN HONEST MISTAKE

The other day I accompanied a friend of mine to a restaurant in Dhanmondi. We went there during the lunch hour, so we had to face a big queue there and it took us around half an hour to get to the cash counter. We placed our order, paid for the food and took the changes. Feeling tired we didn't bother to count the cash which we received and returned to our table being unaware that the cashier had given him less than what we were supposed to receive. He probably wouldn't have realised this till a long time afterward, if we did not need to order some more food and discovered that we had lesser amount of money in our hands. The amount was not very significant but the cashier apologised profusely and returned the money right away. My friend was dumbfounded by the honesty of the cashier.

Selina Alam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka