

**E**dward Morgan Forster, popularly known as E.M. Forster, an English novelist, short story writer and essayist, used the phrase "Only Connect" in his novel "Howard's End", published in 1910. He used the phrase to articulate his belief in the moral necessity and challenge of connection between individuals despite the arbitrary boundaries by society. Following this phrase, the Bengal Foundation launched "Only Connect. Editions", a biannual, collaborative, group exhibition programme in September 2014.

This year, the experimental exhibition "Only Connect. Edition Three", has started from November 14 and will continue till December 3, at the Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct in Farm gate, Dhaka. Earlier, the first edition was held in September 2014 with five artists and the second one was with four artists' works in May 2015.

The exhibition aims to create a pitch for the investigation of experimentation. Through this demonstration, Bengal Foundation is giving an opportunity to artists under the age of 35, who live and work mainly in Bangladesh and who have little understanding of exhibiting or critically viewing their own works.

The third edition features the works of eight very diverse personalities and artists- Abir Shome, Ali Asgar, Debashish Chakrabarty, Md Ata Islam Khan Mojlish, Meherun Akter, Palash Bhattacharjee, Rafiqul Islam Shuvo, and Razib Datta. They were selected by an open call.

"We sent out press releases, posted online, made posters and then received applications or expressions of interest based on the open call. The artists submitted portfolios, art statements, and videos, whatever they wanted in response to the open call and we made a selection process based on the portfolios", says Sadia Rahman, Arts Programme Head and Deputy Director of Bengal Foundation.

There was no definite theme for the exhibition as it is a platform for giving different audiences the opportunity to engage with different ideas and outlines.

Abir Shome, an artist from the exhibition, whose artwork, titled as "I Remember Nothing", a mixed media ensemble, says that it is a fluent reaction attributed from his anxiety towards the thrust of blood of human beings from past until now. "The melancholy tale of hate, despair, oppression and holocaust has been depicted through my work which might raise a question to the viewers - 'how much brutality do we have to see in the future?' ", he says. As it is a mixed media, the installation consists of drawing, printmaking and a digital collage; he worked on it from 2013 to 2015. After that, through the open call procedure, he was selected for the experimental exhibition to demonstrate his project.

"I am overwhelmed and very happy to be a part of the show and from my point of view, it is a stimulating and an exceptional group show in Dhaka after a long time", says Shome, when asked about the initiative of Bengal Foundation. Also, he is very impressed with the feedback of the people.

## AN EXPERIMENTAL EXHIBITION

NILIMA JAHAN

PHOTOS: DAILY STAR-BENGAL ARTS PRECINCT



EXHIBITION



Another artist, Md Ata Islam Khan Mojlish, (without having any prior familiarity with art) has depicted the misery of the animals in our National Zoo. According to him, the visitors also do not care of the animals' wellbeing. He then expressed his feelings using Photoshop, and illustrated an exclusive work of art which he shared on Facebook first. After that, being inspired by his friends and well-wishers, he responded to the open call and was selected for the exhibition.

Of the other artists, Debashish Chakrabarty has sought to express his enthusiasm and fascination about the universe through his unique photographs. Meherun Akter has portrayed her art through the textile installation.

Last week, famous artists of Chittagong Dhalai Al Mamun and Dilara Begum Jolly had visited the exhibition. "I really enjoyed the works of the youngsters. Basically, the styles of paintings we used to accomplish earlier have changed now. There are many mediums of arts now-a-days and the young artists are using them to portray a variety of dimensions of life", says Dilara Begum Jolly.

The Bengal Foundation has also arranged an 'artists talk' which invited the questions and comments from the guests to speak to the artists individually. According to the artists and the visitors, this exhibition is not only a platform to express the art, but also a medium of learning so many things from the mingling of artistic personalities.

SHUTTERSTORIES



## BEAUTIFUL BHUTAN

While Bhutan is one of the smallest countries in the world, its cultural diversity and richness are profound. As such, strong emphasis is laid on promoting and preserving its unique culture. The country's pristine spirituality is what the locals bank on. Rejecting the idea of development being measured through materialistic ideas and indicators, they develop their body, mind and soul, along with their country, through the measuring of happiness and joy. Setting foot into the country, experiencing the beautiful Bhutan is no less than a spiritual journey for anyone.



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