

It started with a simple deal. "I said them, you help us conserve the animals and your environment, that are facing endangerment and we will help you earn back your loss," says Shahriar Caesar Rahman, Founder and Manager of Mro Tortoise Guardian Programme, Principle Researcher, Manager and Founder of The Bangladesh Python Project, and a passionate animal welfare activist.

With this simple deal, not only was Shahriar successful in starting up the conservation of animals and the environment in a remote tribal area in Chittagong, but also highlight a cultural heritage of ours that may sometimes have gone unnoticed. Through this initiative, Shahriar gave back to the Mro community by enabling them to make and sell their own designed jewellery and other accessories. After striking up another deal with well-known local brand Jatra, Shahriar has managed to already make

area of interest. It's has only 10% to do with animals, and 90% to do with social sciences. "If you want to save wildlife, you have to work in every sector collectively. There's economics, earth science, environmental science, botanical science, everything involved. You have to understand all of it. And when they would hunt these animals and cut the trees, they did it without understanding the adverse effects. I had to explain all of these

and his team are being able to save two separate things from going into extinction. When the first order was made for 1,600 necklaces, baskets and bracelets, the products were very haphazardly made. "They didn't believe us at first. They didn't think it would work. So they didn't really pay much attention to the things they were making. When the products were sold and we got the money, I went to them myself and handed them what

kind of belt-like skirt, which we transform into a bag, keeping their design and handiwork intact," says Atti, a designer for Jatra. "They also have a water pitcher made of dried gourd skin, which we have transformed into a lamp, keeping the initial design as traditional as possible. These products are so well in demand that we're planning on making some more products with their designs- like using the bead necklaces as bag handles or belts."

Thoilok Mro, father of one of the girls who work in manufacturing these products, is very happy with the arrangement. "We're making good profit. We have formed a committee, to whom we collect and give the money. We keep some of it for our own families, and the rest we use together to develop our area and committee further." Some of the money that they save for themselves also goes into buying raw material for the products, and manufacturing each product

## FOR A BETTER WORLD

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



Shahriar Caesar Rahman

these valuable pieces of our own culture a big hit for customers.

"Hunting animals and cutting up trees were their main source of income and food. Not only was that affecting our environment gravely, it was also endangering some very precious species, for example the rare tortoises in their area. I had to promise them an alternate income if I needed their help to conserve the very animals they hunt and eat. I thought this was a great way to promote a part of our own culture," says Shahriar.

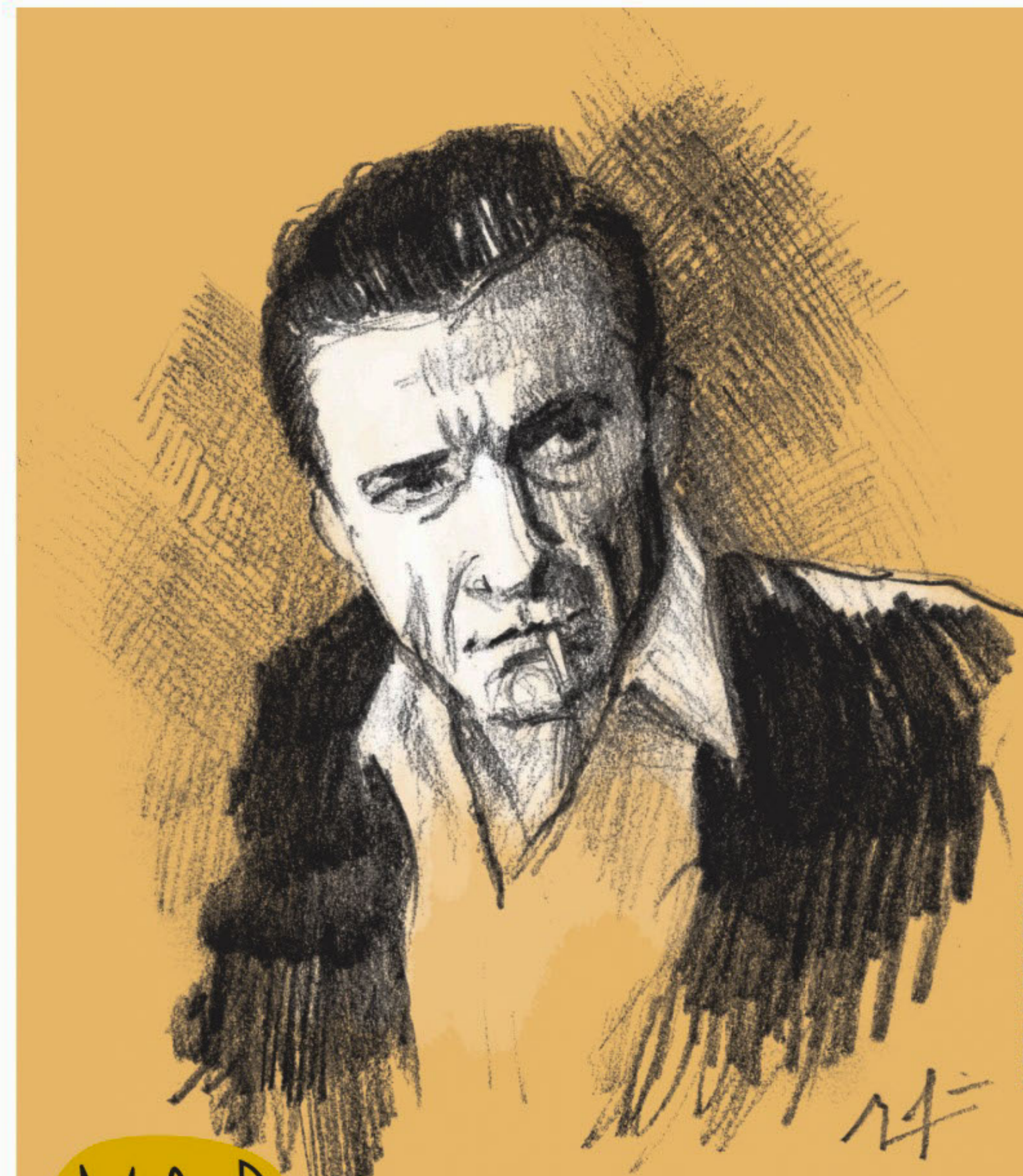
According to Shahriar, wildlife is a vast

thoroughly to them before they would agree to help," says Shahriar. After explaining to them that they were, in fact, killing the very environment they are living in, they agreed to conserve and help in any way they can. "The crafts that they are making are also becoming extinct. People, apart for themselves, don't know about their different forms of arts and crafts and they are now dying out," he says. With this initiative itself, Shahriar

they earned. And then they finally chose to believe me. They are a very good people, and not complicated, they live simply too. They just have a very hard time trusting others, but I finally managed to win them over," smiles Shahriar.

Jatra's own designers also add some of their own flair to the designs. "We leave the jewellery exactly as they are. But we add some innovation to other products. For example, the women wear a particular

### ENDEAVOUR



MAD GENIUS

### JOHNNY "J.R." CASH

February 26, 1932 – September 12, 2003

American singer-songwriter, guitarist, actor and, author, Johnny Cash was also popularly known as Man in Black for the protest song that he had written and released on his 1971 album of the same name. His unique on-stage costuming in black as a sign of protesting against racism, oppression on poor by wealthy politicians and Vietnam War was another reason behind this name. Be it country music, Rock and Roll, blues, folk or gospel Johnny Cash proved himself in every genre, in fact he was widely deemed as one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century.

"I was wearing black clothes almost from the beginning. I feel comfortable in black. I felt like black looked good onstage, that it was attractive, so I started wearing it all the time.

You've got to know your limitations. I don't know what your limitations are. I found out what mine were when I was twelve. I found out that there weren't too many I imitations, if I did it my way.

God gives us life and takes us away as He sees fit.

Success is having to worry about every damn thing in the world, except money."

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINYQUOTES

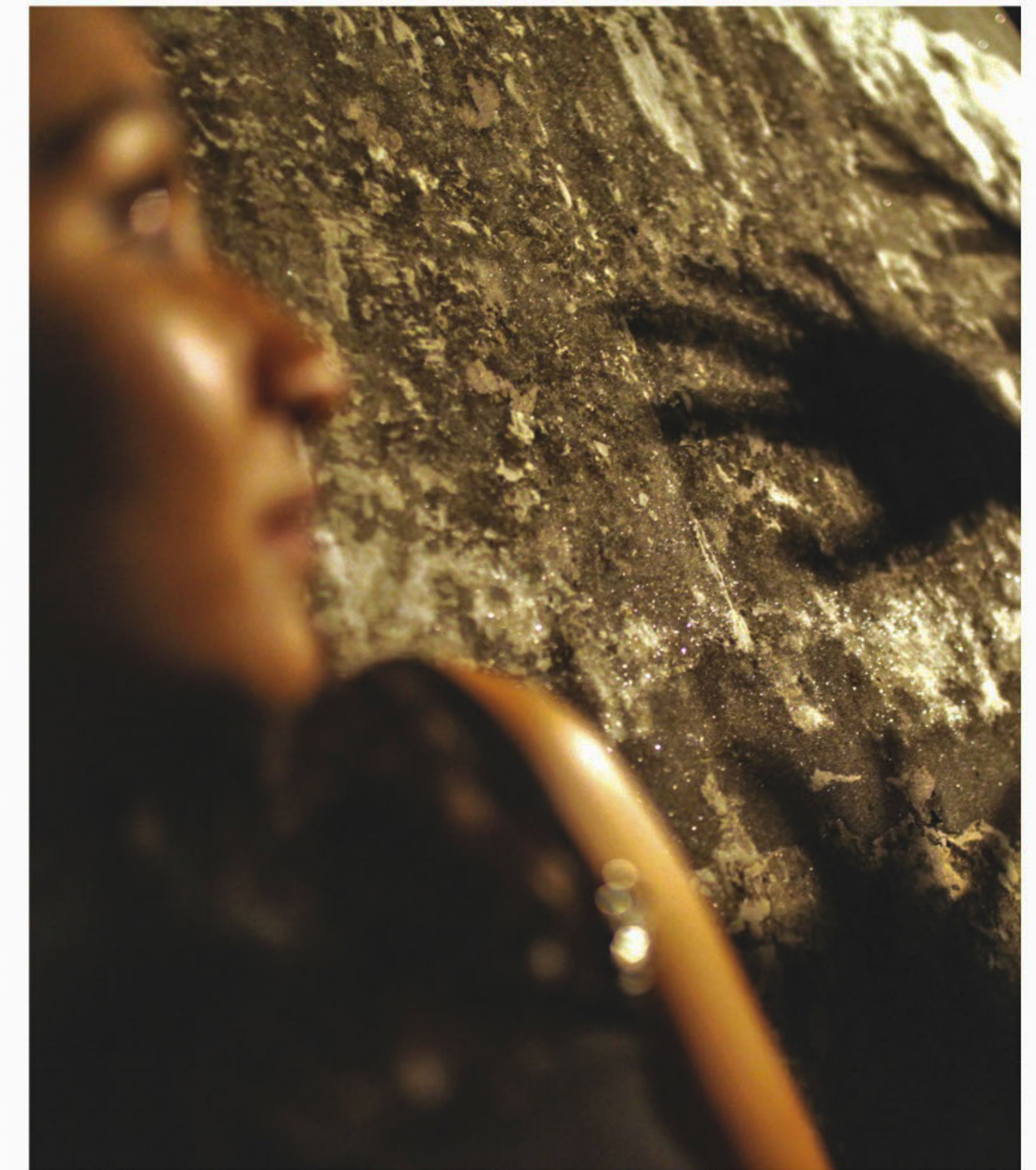


PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

## HIDING THE SCARS

I came across a video in the internet the other day which showed how to cover blackeyes and bruises with makeup. To my horror I realised it was for those who were facing domestic violence. The video was very disturbing in the sense that the person applying the makeup on herself wasn't even able to talk properly. This barbarism isn't uncommon even today. The problem is we don't know what the laws are and where to go, whom to talk to be it getting hit by our husband's bottle of alcohol or facing the horror while walking home from the workplace in the middle of the night. Even if we do reach the proper authority, sometimes not having a strong voice leaves us unheard. You do have to realise that you are a human being and you deserve healthy life. If there is a child in the scene things become more complicated but again the child doesn't deserve such a life either. It is very easy to type these words then to face the horrors everyday. You should realise that layers of makeup will be able to cover your bruises today, tomorrow and the day after but hiding the scar behind our makeup is never a solution.

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