

# FROM FRANCE WITH LOVE

The Embassy of France in Bangladesh has hosted an exhibition at the Residence de France in Dhaka on the 26th of March, 2016 to pay homage to the country and its people while celebrating the National Independence Day. With a welcome speech from the French ambassador, H.E. Sophie Aubert embraced the guests and briefed them on the occasion. As the chief guest, the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Asaduzzaman Noor shared a few cordial words, followed by the two guest artists- Bipasha Hayat and Ratnashwar Sutradhwar, who shed light on the individual characteristics towards their contemporary paintings that enriched the walls of the residence. The evening came to an end with a healthy dose of socializing, leaving the guests gratified. Not only was the experience enjoyed by the art lovers, it was also rejoiced by the guests for the fact that France chose to celebrate Bangladesh.

## COVER STORY



BIPASHA HAYAT



DURJOY RAHMAN



RATNASHWAR SUTRADHWAR

**H.E. SOPHIE AUBERT** (*French Ambassador to Bangladesh*)  
Could you please enlighten us on behalf of the French Embassy to elaborate on the initiative taken to commemorate the Independence Day of Bangladesh?  
This is an act to pay homage to Bangladesh, as France has been an ally of Bangladesh since 1971. This event is to celebrate the vibrant and interesting artistic community of the nation. This will also help improve the cultural rela-



H.E. SOPHIE AUBERT

tions between the two countries, which have been strengthening ever since France has supported to give a voice and raise awareness in favour of the Bangladesh Liberation War. As we the French people would not add up to France without our history, heritage, writers and artists, I feel it is the same for Bangladesh too. Both our cultures are an expression of our identity. I am excited for arranging this crowd to celebrate the 26th of March and share our respect for the motherland.

**ASADUZZAMAN NOOR**  
As the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs, could you kindly share your thoughts on this occasion?  
I am familiar with Bipasha's work, but it's the first time I have seen Ratnashwar's work. I don't believe I am entitled to comment on the depth of their art, but the fact that the French ambassador took the initiative to gather the two artists along with the reputable guests, deserves much appreciation. It is a



ASADUZZAMAN NOOR MP

matter of pride that we can uphold our artists' selections to the international diplomatic community in Dhaka. Many a times, for different reasons, the expatriates are unable to indulge in the promising artwork of Bangladesh, thereby missing out on the true meaning of Bangladeshi art. Therefore, this opportunity is a rather positive one. It is a great assortment of two different art forms from the painters. One is very abstract, while the other is quite subjective. Thereby we can

experience a variety of art under the same roof.

**BIPASHA HAYAT**  
As a participating artist, could you please tell us about your feelings regarding this collaborative art exhibition?

I am truly fascinated. The fact that a foreign ambassador took the initiative to celebrate our Independence Day is a matter of pride which deserves much appreciation. I am also obliged to Mr. Durjoy Rahman for implementing the idea to represent Bangladeshi contemporary art to the international audience through our paintings. Overall, this initiative further adds to the joy of our patriotism. I will be overjoyed if my artwork communicates with the audience and touches them.

**RATNASHWAR SUTRADHWAR**  
As another participating artist, what are your thoughts on this occasion?

This is a great experience. I got exposure from my last exhibition, based on which I was invited to this one. A lot of the paintings are from the days when I was completing my masters and are rather experimental. I am delighted to exhibit my work and communicate my message to the diplomatic community of Dhaka. Rarely did I have the opportunity to present my work to an audience such as today's, due to their security issues, but I am glad I got a chance and wish to do so in the future as well.

**DURJOY RAHMAN**  
How did the idea for such an interesting occasion come about and what role did you have to play?

The idea was proposed from the French embassy. They wanted to conduct an exhibition on Independence Day honouring the nationals. I was asked for two preferred artists, and as a collector of art myself, I suggested that Bipasha and Ratnashwar could be a diverse combination. One male, one female, each with their distinctive painting style. Bipasha's work derives inspiration from her childhood memories and archaeological sites, whereas Ratna's work is inspired by anti-war movement. I just helped them facilitate the event.

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By Rafi Hossain & Minam Haque

