

EXHIBITION

Famous journalist and writer Tom Wolfe once said, "One belongs to New York instantly, one belongs to it as much in five minutes as in five years". He couldn't have been more right about the greatest city in the world. From the money making Wall Street to the hipster's paradise Brooklyn and the Bronx, the big apple offers a place for everybody.

THE BIG APPLE'S LOVE FOR ART

Text and Photos: APURBA JAHANGIR

As an art and culture enthusiast, New York kept me busy throughout my 15-day-trip. The tour included Broadway shows in the Ambassador Theatre, Jazz night at the 78 year old Village Vanguard and last but definitely not least, Museum of Modern Arts aka MOMA PS 1.



Though a lot could be written about both Broad Way shows and the Jazz Nights; MOMA PS 1 established a soft spot in my heart. This museum once held the greatest cinema of Bengali history, but more on that later.

On a bright sunny winter day, I started wandering towards the New York's Mecca for modern art, aka Brooklyn. I was accompanied by Mehedi Waheed, a student of New York University and a specialist on bohemian culture.

After a brief ride on the famous New York subway, we got out at the Court Square-23rd Street stop. After a double cheese omelette with a side of hash

browns at the Court Square Diner, a five minute stroll took us to 22-25 Jackson Ave, Long Island City, New York. In front of us was the first public school of New York. The school building now holds the astonishing pieces of modern art. In the year 2000, a collaboration took place between the City Council and the Museum of Modern Arts which made this public school an extension to MOMA's exocentric art series display. This part of the museum is proudly known as MOMA PS 1.

As we entered, we were welcomed by the sight of the marvellous displays. The museum was exhibiting many



famous contemporary artists -- Titus Kaphar, Halil Altindere, Math Bass, Simon Denny etc. The first exhibit that caught our eye was the IM Heung Soon's photo series 'Reincarnation'. The artist explored the ongoing process of modernisation and globalisation of Korea as seen through the eyes of older generations whose lives affected this momentous shift.

Next was Math Bass's 'Off the Clock'. Bass's paintings deployed a personal monolingual dictionary that centred on possible actions or transitional spaces: cigarettes emitting plumes of smoke; alligators emerging with mouths wide open; letters and punctuation marks twisted and overlapped; and archways,

staircases, and zigzags suggesting movement.

At the very end, the guide curiously asked us what country we were from. When he found out we were from Bangladesh, he smiled from ear to ear. He took us near an old projector, right next to the video art screen. Apparently Satyajit Ray's first film 'Pather Panchali' premiered through this projector. As a film buff and a fan of Ray's work, this doubled the worth of my trip. What we looked at was a little piece of history that created a new era for Bengali cinema.

New York is made of every corner of the world, and the MOMA PS1 will certainly give a sight of this multicultural city through art. ■



MAD GENIUS

ZAHA HADID (1950-2016)

She is nicknamed 'Queen of the curve' for her dynamic neo-futuristic buildings, stadiums, museums and industrial designs- all of which challenge the traditional form and geometry in architecture. Dame Zaha Hadid, an Iraqi born British architect, is considered the most successful female architect of all time. A brave and radical Hadid kept on excelling in a male-dominated profession and was the first woman to win the Pritzker Prize, a crowing achievement in the profession. She received the Stirling Prize in 2010 and 2011. In 2012, she was created a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire and in 2015 she became the first woman to be awarded the RIBA Gold Medal in her own right.



SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

“ I used to not like being called a 'woman architect': I'm an architect, not just a woman architect. Guys used to tap me on the head and say, 'You are okay for a girl.' But I see the incredible amount of need from other women for reassurance that it could be done, so I don't mind that at all.

Architecture is particularly difficult for women; there's no reason for it to be. I don't want to blame men or society, but I think it was for a long time, the clients were men, the building industry is all male.

As a woman, I'm expected to want everything to be nice and to be nice myself. A very English thing. I don't design nice buildings - I don't like them. I like architecture to have some raw, vital, earthy quality.

You have to really believe not only in yourself; you have to believe that the world is actually worth your sacrifices. ”

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINY QUOTES

STADIARY

WHY SUCH DISCRIMINATION?

The other day I went to a clothing store in Chandi Chawk. As I was about to leave after finishing my shopping, I found two foreign visitors bargaining with the shopkeeper. The shopkeepers were charging them double for the same fabric that some other lady bought from the shop. I intervened and asked the shopkeeper, "Why are you lying to them?" "It is just our way of earning some extra money," replied the shopkeeper shamelessly. After a heated conversation, they were finally able to buy the fabric at actual price. They thanked me politely. "Not only shopkeepers, but the drivers also tend to overcharge foreign tourists by as much as 200%," said one of them. I don't know why we have to have this price discrimination where they charge foreign visitors more than locals. We are known for our warm hospitality and this discriminatory behaviour is surely hurting the image of our country.

Tanzila Tahia
Dhanmondi, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR FILE

THE DECEIVER

The other day, when my friends and I were chatting in the park, a good looking and nicely dressed young man walked up to us. As he approached us, he took a moment to see all of our faces, and then he promptly put forward a paper with an address written on it. His face had an innocent look to it. "I am relatively new in Dhaka. I have been looking for this address for long but can not find it," he says in Barisal dialect. While struggling with a heavy backpack, he said "Can any of you please help me find the exact location?" As one of my friends knew the address, he replied, "It is just a ten minutes walk from here." Then he explained what direction was to be followed. But the boy kept requesting my friend to accompany him as he had already been through that lane a number of times. My friend agreed and left us to take him to the address. But little did we know that it was a trap to loot his expensive mobile phone. As they reached an empty street, all of a sudden a motorbike approached them. No sooner had the pillion man got off the bike, than the boy threw away his backpack and two of them started pouncing on my friend knocking him down on the ground. The driver too got off, beat my friend heavily and broke his legs before snatching his mobile. My friend was so seriously injured that he could not stand. Immediately after the incident, the three got away in full speed. Later on, my friend realised that it was all a setup. The boy was surely hired by someone who knew about the new phone beforehand.

Samiul Rajjul
North South University, Dhaka