

THE 'BANGI' WAY OF DOING THINGS

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



Some members of Studio Bangi.



It is very common for one to misconstrue what the ideal 'office life' is. We all quite instinctively think white shirts, blue ties, formal shoes, and a suffocating air of seriousness and to some extent boredom following you around throughout the day. While some offices will help somewhat remove that misconception, one office, if any, that will successfully change your mind completely is Studio Bangi- and in the name itself, you know.

Studio Bangi is primarily a creative design studio.

The reason to why such a name was selected also has a story behind it. "Back when I was in university, this was used as a derogatory term. But primarily it means 'bangali'. I don't understand why it was used so negatively. I wanted to shed some positive light on the term, and so we kept the name for the studio. We are all 'bangis', after all," says Salzar Rahman, Co-Founder and Director of Studio Bangi.

It is next to impossible to limit them to one single area of design. Their members are all experienced in their own fields- architecture, interior design, animation, video editing, cinematography, music and more, while they are constantly learning new techniques and skills from each other. "I think all art is linked to each other," says Salzar. "We can design an interior, a music video, or even a wedding card; it will all require a lot of effort and a lot of creativity. What studying 5 years of architecture has taught me is how to approach any design. So the concept for any creative work and the approach is the same."

The end of his studies in Architecture was where his unique ideas began cooking themselves up in his mind. "I always felt like architects were too closed in their boxes. Our courses at university are very open to other fields of art, from design, to photography, to filmmaking. So I wanted to use all that I learned into whatever I did" he says.

He took a year off, after a couple of

exhibitions at Drik Gallery and Bengal Art Gallery of his art works- mainly sketches, when Co-founder of Studio Bangi and friend of Salzar, Mogno, who Salzar joined later, began the School of Everything Else (SEE). SEE was interested in all that is there in the realms of Art & Science, which pretty much covers everything, and subjects that appear beyond these fields. After SEE, Salzar went on to do some more work in different fields, before Studio Bangi was established. "I wanted to do some more work with animation and videos. A friend of mine asked me to make an intro video for Amar Desh Amar Graam, after which I worked on my graphic novel called The No Man's Land Project," he says. After a good reception of the novel, the band members of Nemesis, also friends of Salzar, approached Salzar to do a cover art for their then upcoming album- Tritio Jaatra. "But I was persistent on making a music video too. After some poking and prodding, they gave me the project. And thus, Mogno and I began Studio Bangi, along with Zohad, from Nemesis, and Shawon." Eventually, Mogno left the group for personal reasons, while the group now consists of Salzar himself as director, Zohad as sound specialist, Shawon as 3D animator, Shaiq as cinematographer, Shehzad Chowdhury, founder of Leela, also as cinematographer, Farah and Zareen

as architects, Mahreen as manager, along with many others.

Studio Bangi, even though plays 'hard to get' with their fans, releasing quality videos and work every once in a while, still has quite a portfolio worth every praise. Their music video of the song *Kobe* by Nemesis brought about a very different approach to the industry as animation work was first stylishly introduced. The diverse group of creatives went on to designing the famous Jatra Biroti rooftop lounge; they have done stop motion advertisements for various products such as Surf Excel and Cell Bazaar. Their video advertisement for Airtel was a hit amongst the youth of the country, along with their work for Bkash. Their recent Mother's Day video went viral on the Facebook newsfeed on Mother's Day and after. They are currently working on a boarding school in Sylhet and a video advertisement for Cats Eye. "Architect Zareen Hossain is joining us for the designing of the boarding school in Jafong, Sylhet." They are also beginning 'Bangi-Tech' which fuses art and technology.

"I joined this place because I believe in my creativity. And so do they. This place helps others give birth to new dreams," says Shaiq Ahmed. "I don't have a formal degree in cinematography. But Studio Bangi has given me the opportunity to learn before I stepped into it. Apart from

just that, I'm getting to learn every other thing. While we all work in our specialised areas, we have opportunity to learn from the others."

Walking into the office, you will instantly feel like you are joining a new family. Smiles will greet you, as you walk from room to room and explore art and its wonders. A bright blue wall has a drawing of a large whale, drawn with chalk. The sketchbooks lying around can keep your gaze locked for a good few seconds before some one comes and shares some unique ideas with you, as if you too share this beautiful bond.

"I have to give credit to Salzar. He has successfully brought a bunch of crazy people bursting at the seam with ideas and creativity and he has thrown them into one room and gotten work out of all of us. We have become a family. Our clients become our family, our friends who stop by become a part of it. And working here doesn't feel like work too. Whatever we do, we do with all our heart," says Shawon, who can never look away from the screen for hours when working.

Truly, this office, no matter what the current stereotype dictates, is the ideal one. Where one can come in, discuss, brainstorm, draw, sing, paint, and use all the energy available to create magic, and create it together- as one big Bangi family. ■

STAR PEOPLE

EXHIBITION

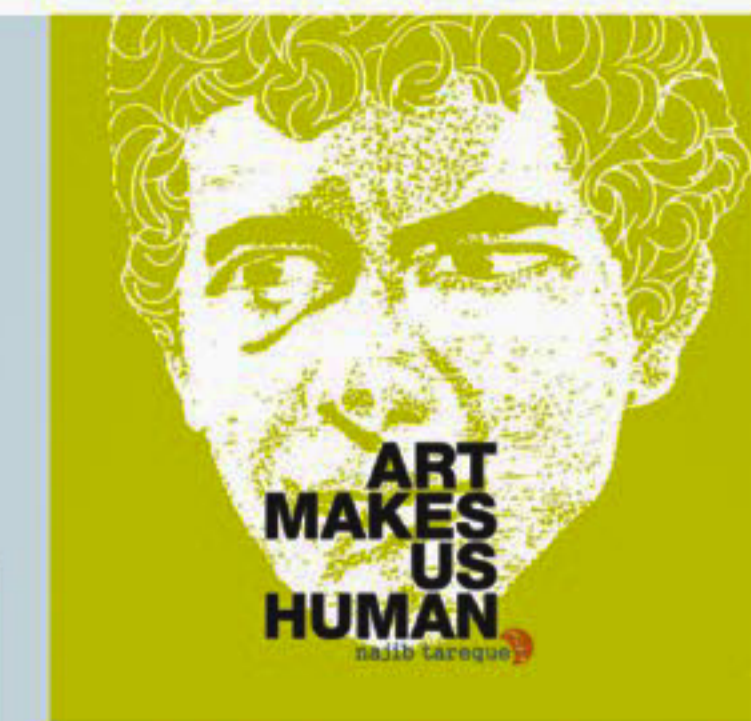
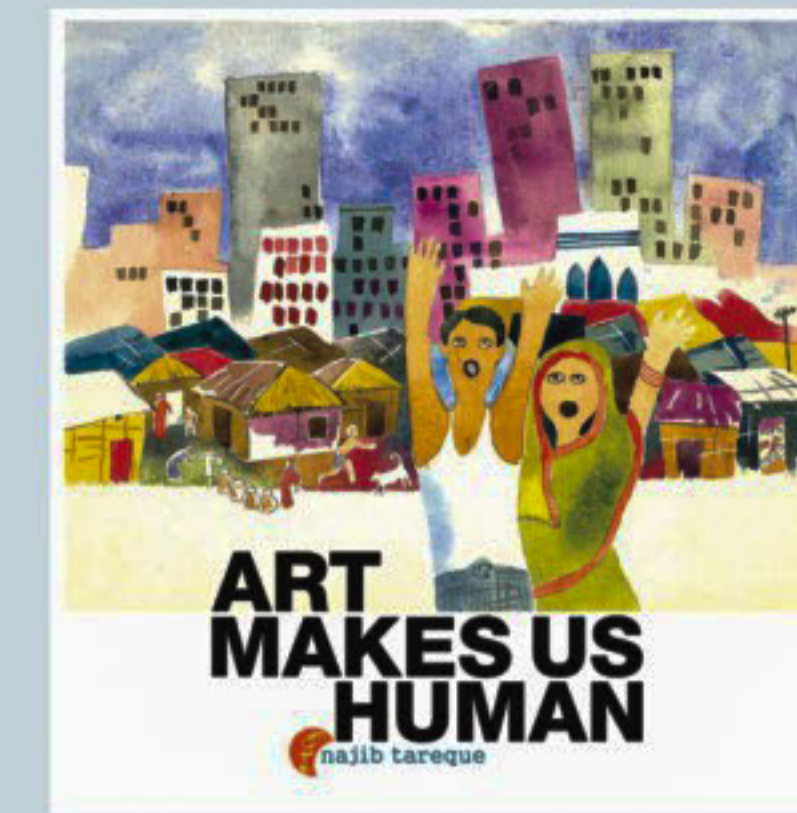
With more than 1000 artworks, artist Nazib Tareque is striving to take our traditional art to a large scale market through his online venture titled 'Art Makes Us Human'.

This first of its kind online project in the country is Tareque's attempt to boost our willingness to explore and discover art around us. Tareque believes that in today's world enjoying a piece of art or even an entire exhibition should be just a click away. In our opinion, these kinds of exhibitions will surely allow art lovers the opportunity to get a more intimate view of different forms of art. "We should utilise the vastness and availability of online media as a platform," says Tareque.

This 10-day online art project, which began on May 15, includes both a physical exhibition, currently being held at Studio 6/6 in the city's Mohammadpur area, and a digital version on Instagram, where more than 1000 artworks have been posted under the title.

Tareque always played with the idea of having an online art gallery, even in the late nineties when organising online exhibitions or having an online gallery could have been seen as an absurd concept to many. But he never stopped believing in the idea that we don't need a physical gallery or corporate sponsors to promote art. With such a goal in mind, Tareque became one of the founding members of Jolrong, one of the first online art galleries in South Asia.

"The series is part of a conceptual art project which brings forward a notion that remains invisible to us as of yet," says his daughter, Taiara Farhana Tareque, who also works as a curator of this exhibition. "The artist used many of his previously drawn illustrations for various books, newspapers and magazines. With illustrations surrounding our everyday lives, art really does seem to make us human. Images which shape our very existence are profoundly invisible with elements which stick to our brain and make us who we are."



A DIGITAL GYPSY

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA

PHOTOS: COURTESY



Tareque has had quite an illustrious life as an artist. After graduating from the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, he became the former chief artist of both Daily Jugantor and Daily Janakantha. The artist was also the former Brand Marketing Consultant of Standard Chartered Bank. Since 1987, he has been part of various group and solo exhibitions both in the country and abroad. Among his solo exhibitions, a few were purely online based.

He felt that his compiled work needed to be under a single umbrella. Thus prodding him to choose the online medium.

But what could seem ironic is that someone who initially did not approve of the idea of even owning a

smartphone is conducting such a large scale project by using the social media platform.

"I was always kind of against jumping on the smart phone bandwagon," he says. "I always had a basic phone with simple features - if my phone has the call and text options, I am good to go."

But that changed when one of his friends gifted him a smartphone last year. In the beginning, he was a little reluctant to use it. However, gradually, he began to feel comfortable operating Facebook on his phone, and posting pictures online. "Seeing my interest in sharing pictures, my daughter introduced me to Instagram and showed me how this platform could be used to display my artwork."

What is he planning next? "I have two to three projects in my mind, it will take another few years to upload all of them online," he says with a laugh, reflecting on the amount of artwork he has created over the years.

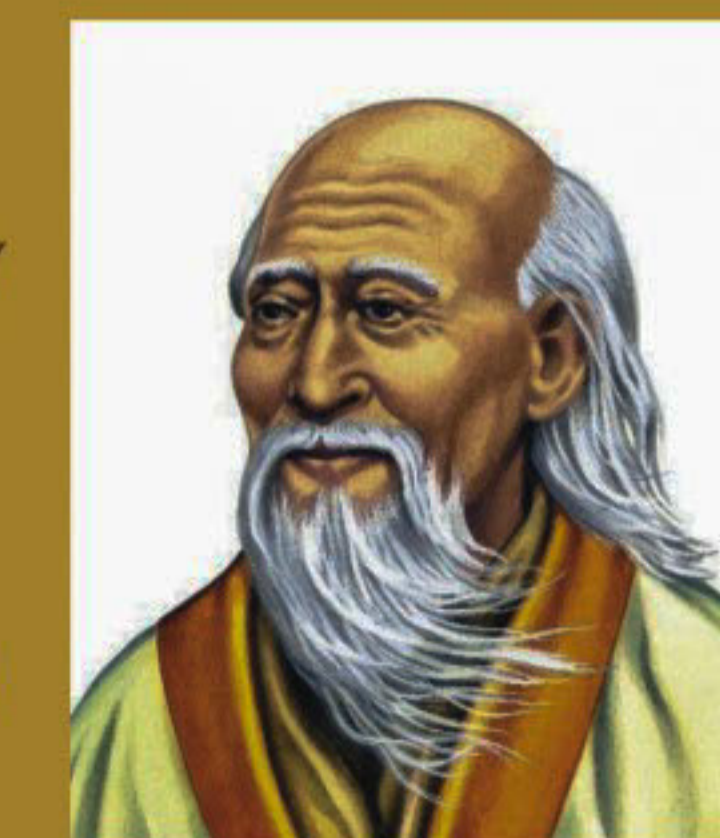
On a concluding note, Tareque stresses that he believes that with the help of the online media, the need for sponsors to fund art could slowly become obsolete. "I don't know why we have to run to sponsors to fund our work so that we can exhibit them, when we already have such a big platform surrounding us. An artist's duty is to take art to its admirer, and reach as many people as possible. Through this exhibition, I have been attempting to do just that." ■

PEARLS OF WISDOM



"A LEADER IS ONE WHO KNOWS THE WAY, GOES THE WAY AND SHOWS THE WAY."

JOHN C MAXWELL
American Author and speaker



"A LEADER IS BEST WHEN PEOPLE BARELY KNOW HE EXISTS, WHEN HIS WORK IS DONE, HIS AIM FULFILLED, THEY WILL SAY; WE DID IT OURSELVES."

LAO TZU
Ancient Chinese philosopher



"DO NOT FOLLOW THE CROWD, LET THE CROWD FOLLOW YOU."

MARGARET THATCHER
British Stateswoman and politician