

REVIEW

A healthier source of entertainment - Clay Station Dhaka



The substantial lack of food-less recreation in our city is quite evident. The absence of nightlife and places to go for enjoyment has driven most of us inside our homes tied to our smart phones or tabs. We tend to be in search of healthier alternatives than simply the movies or on a shopping spree and that's exactly where Clay Station comes into play.

Clay Station Dhaka is an ideal place to rejuvenate your soul. This pottery studio is located at the heart of Banani overlooking the picturesque lake. Clay Station is a brain child of Syeda Sharmin Ahmed and cofounded by Abu Sayeed Chowdhury. This has been largely inspired by a studio they went to in the United States of America, a platform for people of all ages to sit back, relax and reawaken your inner soul. One does not need to be an expert in fine art to indulge playing with clay or create a keepsake. It's the thought and value that matters most while crafting something for your loved one.

Being a pioneer in creating a pottery studio has not been an easy one but it all began by venturing out to the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. "Clay Station Dhaka has been an idea growing in my mind since I came across a very similar studio in America. A mother can come here to bond with her child, a grandparent can create precious moments with the grandchildren, or even consider it as an excellent venue for date with your significant other," said Sharmin. "To begin with, I walked into the Ceramic Department of the Institute and shared my idea with those working there, and it was well appreciated among them. I asked them to join and that's how the journey of Clay Station began."

Ever since the doors opened in 23 September, 2016 there has been quite the curiosity among the populace to know what this is all about. Well, Clay Station is not a learning centre, it is better recognised as a recreational centre for relaxation and enjoyment but for those who are interested in learning pottery, and this is also an ideal venue for that since they also provide different courses



and lessons, designed by Robiul Hossain, the Ceramist. Distinctively, the learning programme is divided into types - Play with Clay, and Throw like a Pro.

'Play with Clay' is basically an intermediate lesson where the learner is given a ball of clay and pottery tools where they are asked to make something they envisioned or taught by the end of the hour, but it must be done free hand. On the other hand, 'Throw like a Pro' is a slightly

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intensive course requiring guidance, skills and technical expertise all of which is provided by the mentor present.

Like most business ventures, Clay Station had some hiccups as they started their journey. "While starting, we decided that our target audience would be the youth and at the same time we want to make this place accessible and affordable to people of all income groups. Lower income people should also be allowed to get a taste of this studio as I believe that recreation should be available to everyone," said Sharmin.

However, during sourcing she realised Bangladesh does not have a good supply of even the most basic of pottery ingredients like white clay. Finding a steady source of white clay and paint has been very difficult. What is abundantly available is the red clay found on riverbanks, which reduce the functionality as it cannot be painted on or used in high temperature. The only alternative was to import, even most basic ingredients and, that naturally led to a rise in price.

"I'm not happy with current pricing but to make the business sustainable, there was a hike in price but we are ready to take on the challenge," added Sharmin.

Clay Station is not any regular store you go to, promising you a charade of wonderful products. Rather, this is not a store at all. They sell their service to ensure that you create moments, to cherish for a lifetime and beyond.

By Mayesha Raidah

Photo courtesy: Clay Station

Clay Station Dhaka is conveniently located at House 28, Road 20, Block K, Banani, Dhaka 1213. Check out their website or Facebook page to know more about what they offer and the studio hours: www.claystation.com.bd, www.facebook.com/claystationdhaka

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