

WHAT'S ON

**15th Dhaka International Film Festival**  
 Organiser: Rainbow Film Society  
 Venue: National Museum, AFD, EMK Center & Star Cineplex.  
 Date: January 12-20  
 Time: 3pm-6pm

**Solo Quilt Exhibition**  
 Title: Colours in Quilt  
 Artist: Jahan Firoz  
 Venue: Gallery Twenty One  
 Date: January 6-15  
 Time: 12 pm - 8 pm

**17th Solo Painting Exhibition**  
 Title: Eternal Bengal  
 Artist: Balodeb Adhikary  
 Venue: Zainul Gallery, FFA, DU  
 Date: Jan 08-14  
 Time: 11am-8pm

**Solo Painting Exhibition**  
 Title: My Dream World  
 Artist: Iranian Painter Sarah Hojjati  
 Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-7, Rd-13 (New), Dhanmondi  
 Date: Jan 8-20  
 Time: 3pm-8pm

**Freestyle for Homeless**  
 Music, Dance, Graffiti  
 Venue: Robindro Sarobar, Dhanmondi  
 Date: Jan 13  
 Time: 4pm

**Theatre**  
 Play: Konjush  
 Venue: Mahila Samity, Baily Road  
 Date: January 13  
 Time: 6:30 pm

# Appreciation of art is inherent in a person

In conversation with Jogen Chowdhury

ZAHANGIR ALOM

The ramifications of the partition of 1947 left grave feelings into the juvenile heart of internationally-acclaimed artist Jogen Chowdhury. The water, nature and culture of his birth-place (Faridpur, Bangladesh) had great impressions in his life. Later, the experiences, impressions and his childhood memories, and their intuitive connections on his childhood were reflected in his paintings and constituted his ideology, that were expressed through his "Reminiscence of a Dream" series in 30 paintings.

The master artist, currently a resident of India, recently received Zainul Sammanona 2016, conferred by Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka. In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the artist shared many facets of his life and art. Here's the first part of the interview.

"My paintings entail social, political and individual satire, exceptions, incongruence and decay. My artistic journey too follows thoughtful evolution in line with my attitudes, tendencies, likings and experiences. Satire is not the main thing of my paintings; rather my social consciousness and its subsequent rendition into diverse artistic expressions have characterised my works. I have an idiosyncratic attitude to create something new that is unknown and untouched by others. I am also conscious about technical elements like form, texture, structure, colour,



gesture, dramatisation, lyrical rhythms and poetic quality."  
 "We had no educational curriculum on art history while we were students at Govt. Art College, Calcutta. I chose life with its varied aspects and nature as my subjects to portray. I have great fondness towards Tagore's paintings. The great bard's paintings contain supernaturalism. He incorporated the essence of supernaturalism in reality. Later, I was determined to depict realistic forms infused

with elements like abstract and supernatural. The portrayal of bare reality was never my forte. Tagore excerpt "Roop-er Majhey Aroop" inspires me a lot. It captures the essence of infinity and transcendentalism in realism. I was a bit restless during my time in Paris and I depicted drawings, voluptuous figures while I portrayed figurative works like "Man on Sofa" or "Representative from the Hell", as representative of social exploiter."

"I cannot work without getting involved or interested. The divergence between European and Indian arts made me think creatively. Being creative is being modern. Like Abanindranath Tagore and Rabindranath Tagore, I followed the same spirit of embracing the Indian art rather than European ones. I do the modern works that does not represent the heritage only. Rather I take the essence from unique Indian heritage and do creative works being conscious of the contemporary aspects. Being creative is more important than just becoming an Indian. Social consciousness with openness is prerequisite to art. Transcendental quality will be incorporated automatically. Rigidity can never bear fruit."

"A surge of abstract paintings grew in 1950s and 1960s. People thought abstraction is the ultimate of art. I consciously avoided that idea. Rather, I depicted my drawings, ink on paper. In 1972, I exhibited my works in France. Later I exhibited my works in Delhi." Back in India after his time in France, Jogen Chowdhury worked as a textile

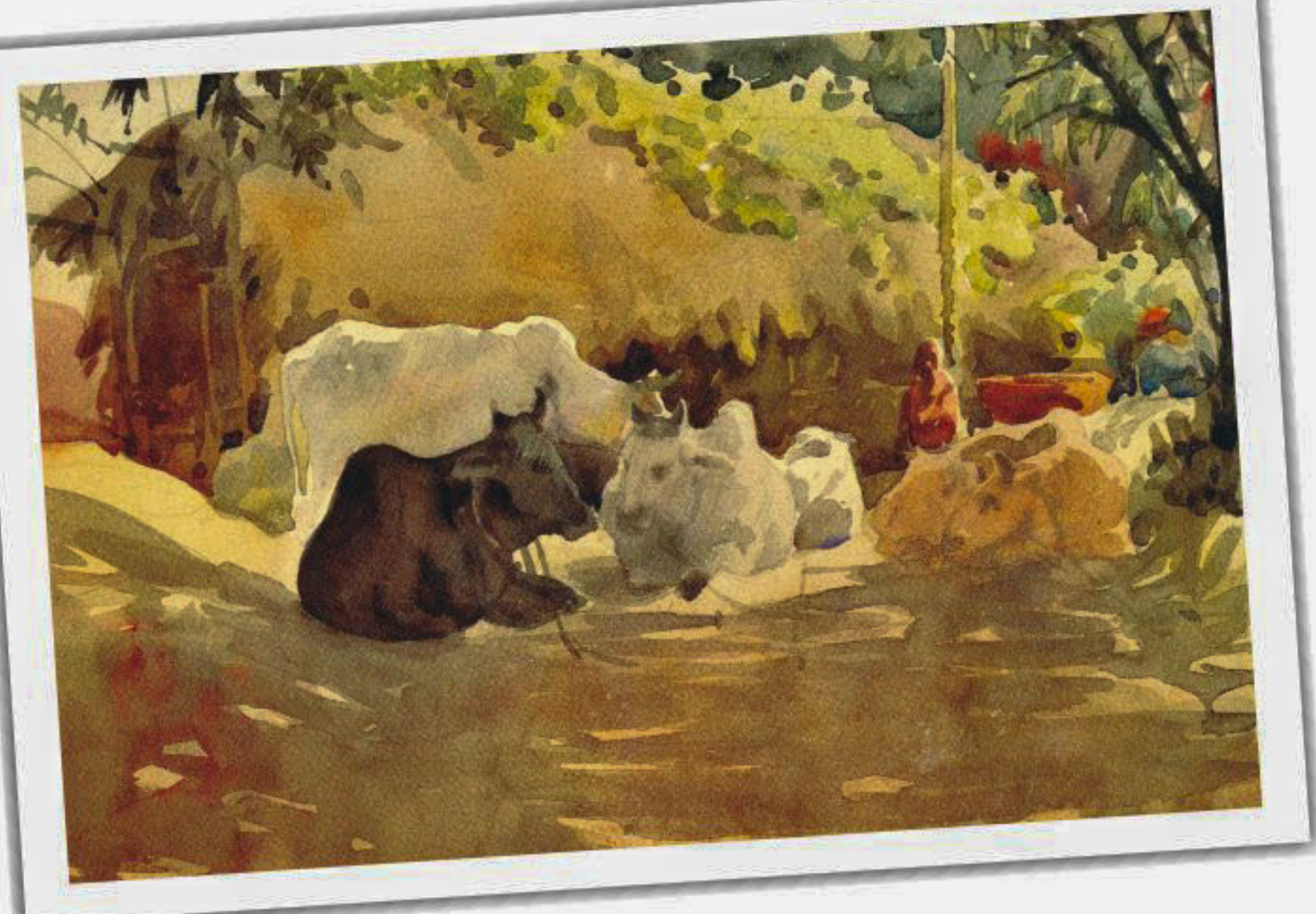
designer in Chennai and was later curator at Rashtrapati Bhavan for 15 years (1972-87).

Chowdhury made a strong statement against the Indian government's infamous state of Emergency (1975-77). His famous painting "Tiger in the Moonlight" is allegorical and mocking. Still, he admired Indira Gandhi. "She had a keen sense of aesthetics and took special interest in the art displayed at Rashtrapati Bhavan. When important guests like the Queen of England or the Shah of Iran visited, she personally chose the art to be displayed."

Chowdhury points to a satirical painting of a couple -- a potbellied politician and a voluptuous woman with bare breasts -- and says a scandal involving a politician from Odisha triggered it. "There is no fun in direct statements; the fun is in suggestion." Apparently, the politician's face is that of his attendant in Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Chowdhury has written extensively on art, on art understanding and aesthetics. In one of his essays on art appreciation, he drew a diamond and divided it into three parts. The uppermost portion depicted sensitive people -- such as Aurobindo, Tagore, and Einstein -- who understood art. The middle portion was for the average man with a bit of understanding of art.

"The majority of people like popular things, which is not wrong," he says. The third portion was meant for those who do not get art at all. "Appreciation of art is inherent in a person," he explains. "For those who don't get it, (art) education will just act as a cover-up."



## ANNA KENDRICK to play Santa Claus!

Anna Kendrick has occasionally participated in dramatic projects, like with "Cake" and "The Accountant", but she's primarily known as one of Hollywood's most notable comedic actresses. Although her appearances are usually in the PG-13 and R-rated realms, she's delved into kid-friendly territory before with her voice work in "Trolls". It looks like she may be continuing down that kind of path, as Disney has her in mind to play the female version of Santa Claus in an upcoming holiday movie.

Penned by "Miss Congeniality" writer Marc Lawrence, the movie -- which has the running title "Nicole" (a twist on Saint Nicholas), would see Kendrick playing Santa Claus' daughter, who "takes over the family business" after her dad retires and her brother gets cold feet with the job before he's supposed to take off on Christmas Eve. Lawrence is expected to direct the movie, Susanne Todd is attached as a producer and Louie Provost will oversee the project for Disney.

Santa Claus has been a beloved cultural figure for almost 200 years, meaning that movies involving or about him have been around since movie-making was created. It's difficult to come up with a completely original idea for the jolly red-suited man who flies around the world in one night to deliver presents to kids. There's even been a female Santa Claus before, played by Whoopi Goldberg in the 2001 TV movie "Call Me Claus". So the premise for "Nicole" isn't entirely brand-new. Still, the story sounds interesting, and with Anna Kendrick as the lead and the story coming from Disney, it's safe to say it will catch a lot of people's attentions.

But this isn't the only Santa Claus-centric movie Disney has in the works. "Dashing Through the Snow" is also in development, which will see Kevin Hart playing Santa Claus in a story about a workaholic father who's trying to repair his relationship with his son. As for Anna Kendrick, she will reprise her role as Beca Mitchell in "Pitch Perfect 3" later this year. However, if she's able to work out a deal with Disney, "Nicole" would be an excellent opportunity for Kendrick to become more recognisable to younger moviegoers.

Source: **Cinemablend**



A scene from "Hargaz".

### TRIBUTE TO A STALWART

## Selim Al Deen Memorial Fest begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To mark the ninth death anniversary of 'Natyacharya' Selim Al Deen, Swapnadal is organising a two-day memorial festival, beginning tomorrow, at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). This is the 15th edition of the festival organised by the dedicated theatre troupe. This year's Selim Al Deen Memorial Festival has been dedicated to the memory of Begumzadi Meherunnisa, the recently-deceased wife of the stalwart playwright.

The festival will begin with a procession from BSA premises to Savar's Jahangirnagar University, to place wreaths at the grave of Selim Al Deen. In the evening, Swapnadal will stage their play "Hargaz", a classic written by the eminent playwright, at BSA's Experimental Theatre Hall.

Selim Al Deen penned the play in 1992, based on an experience of a devastating tornado that struck the Hargaz area under Manikganj district in 1989. The play follows an aid team that arrives at the tornado-hit village. During the rescue operation, the protagonist of the play, Abid, finds himself in a surreal world. Among others, Zahid Ripon, Shonali Rahman, Md. Shakhawat Hossain and Rawnak Laboni are part of the cast.

On the second day of the festival, the troupe's recent production, Apurbo Kumar Kundo-written mono-drama "Helen Keller", based on the life of Helen Keller, the visually and audibly-impaired woman who became a global iconic figure of courage and confidence against all obstacles.

Both the plays have been directed by Selim Al Deen's student and Swapnadal chief Zahid Repon.

## NEWS bytes

### PETER DINKLAGE circling "Infinity War"



Are Tyrion Lannister and Tony Stark about to cross paths? Variety reports that "Game of Thrones" star Peter Dinklage is in early talks for a key role in Marvel's "Avengers: Infinity War".

Production on the seventh season of "Game of Thrones" recently wrapped. Since the schedule for the show has moved from a summer shoot to a fall shoot, Dinklage's schedule allowed him to board the latest "Avengers" pic which is expected to shoot sometime in early summer.

The plan is shoot the next two "Avengers" films ("Infinity War" and a yet untitled sequel) back-to-back. Sources indicate Dinklage is expected to appear in both.

Plot details are vague, other than the superhero team returning to face the Marvel mega-villain Thanos (voiced by Josh Brolin). Dinklage's role is also unknown as of yet.

After directing the last two installments in the "Captain America" franchise, Anthony and Joe Russo now take over the reigns of directing the "Avengers" franchise, with the previous two films pic directed by Joss Whedon. "Avengers: Infinity War" has a release date of May 4, 2018.

Source: **Variety**

## "Siddhantohinota" on Channel i

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Channel i will air romantic tele-film "Siddhantohinota", at 3:05pm today. Scripted by Pantho Shahriar and directed by Nayeem Imtiaz, the cast of the tele-film includes Farhana Mili, Arfan Nisho, Sarkar Opu, Ziaul Hasan Kishlu and more.

