

## WHAT'S ON



Painting Exhibition  
Bangabandhu Bangladesh  
Organiser: BSA & Samat  
Sonargaon  
Venue: National Art Gallery, BSA  
Date: March 4-17  
Time: 11am-8pm



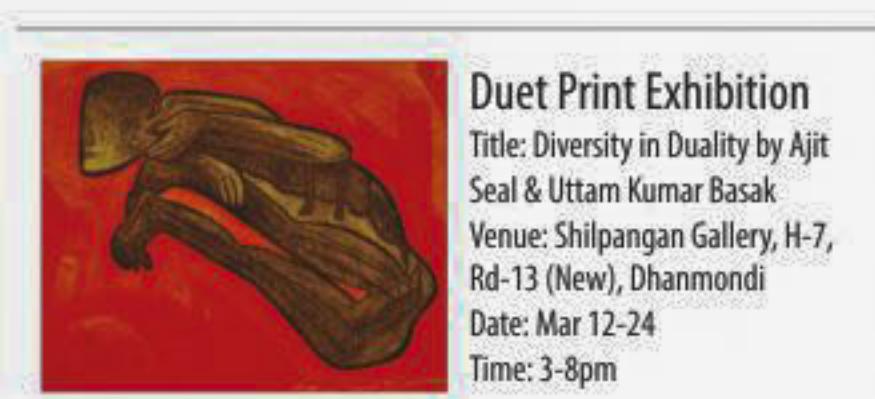
Contemporary Art  
Exhibition  
Title: An Abstract Affair  
Artist: Mohammad Eunus  
Venue: EDGE Gallery  
Date: Mar 18-31  
Time: 10am-8pm



Photography Exhibition  
Title: London 1971: Unsung Heroes  
of the Bangladesh Liberation War  
Venue: British Council  
Date: March 3-11



Solo Painting Exhibition  
Title: Journey & Images  
Artist: Ranjit Das  
Venue: Galleri Kaya  
Date: March 12-25  
Time: 11am-8pm



Duet Print Exhibition  
Title: Diversity in Duality by Ajit  
Seal & Uttam Kumar Basak  
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-7,  
Rd-13 (New), Dhanmondi  
Date: Mar 12-24  
Time: 3-8pm



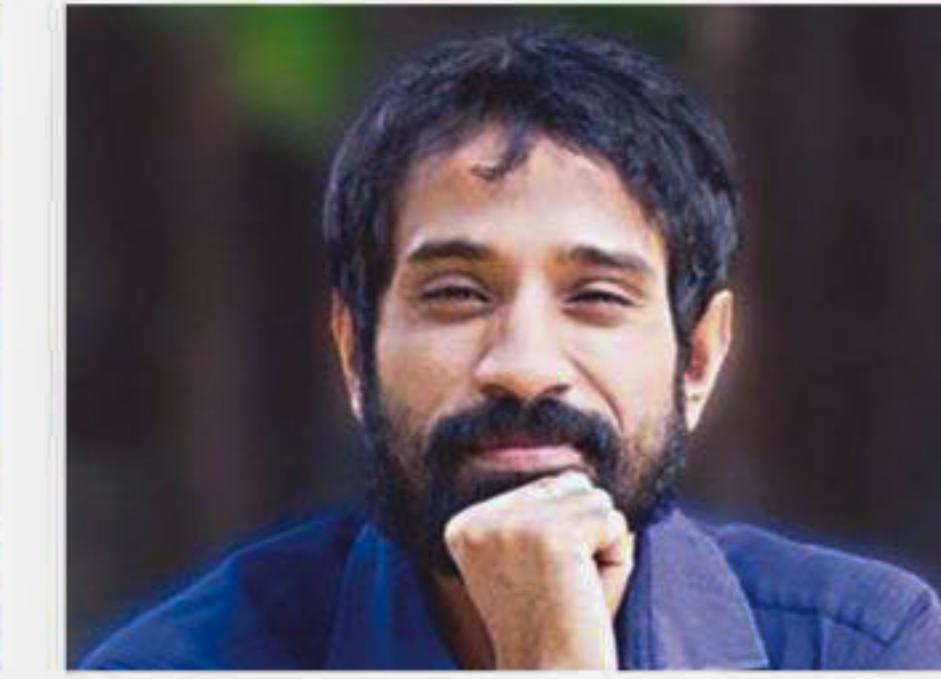
Photography Exhibition  
Title: Here, For Now  
Artist: Hadi Uddin Ahmed  
Venue: Kala Kendra,  
Mohammadpur  
Date: Feb 25-Mar 22  
Time: 5pm-8pm



Chanchal Chowdhury



Iresh Zaker



Animesh Aich



Sabnam Faria

# Misir Ali coming to the big screen

## Jaya venturing into film production with Humayun Ahmed's "Debi"

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Even after five years of his demise, Humayun Ahmed was arguably the biggest-selling writer at the Ekushey Book Fair, a testament to his popularity as a storyteller; and to anyone who claims to be a fan of Humayun's novels, Misir Ali is a character as close to their heart as Himu. An eccentric psychologist solving mysteries driven by pure logic, Misir Ali is of the most significant fictional characters in contemporary Bangla literature, and now he is coming to the big screen in what promises to be a power-packed affair.

"Debi", the first Misir Ali novel, is being adapted into a film by Anam Biswas, featuring a powerhouse cast of Chanchal Chowdhury, Jaya Ahsan, Iresh Zaker, Animesh Aich and Sabnam Faria. While the name Anam Biswas may not sound familiar, fans will probably be assured to know that he is one of the writers of "Aynabaji", and a creative force to be reckoned with name among industry insiders. The film will be the first production of Jaya Ahsan's production house C to Cinema, and Jaya has already secured a National Film Grant for the project.

"I wanted to begin my film production with a classic, and that is why I chose this" Jaya told The Daily Star. "Genre-specific films are not common in our country, so I wanted to also have a film that adheres to a specific genre. This is going to be a mystery film," she added.

"Anam has adapted the story for the screen and written the dialogues. He is a capable director, and I felt he can do justice to the story."

Chanchal Chowdhury, high off the critical and massive commercial success of "Aynabaji", will play Misir Ali in the film. Jaya will be portraying the character of Ranu, with Animesh Aich essaying the role of her husband, Anis. Iresh Zaker plays Ahmed Saber, opposite Sabnam Faria as Nilu. "The casting was the director's decision; I helped him with it," Jaya added.



Jaya Ahsan

Anam Biswas remains cautiously excited about the project. "We have only done the screenplay so far, I don't know where this film will eventually end up taking us. That will be a journey that the actors and the whole team take together, and we reach somewhere good," he told The Daily Star. "Millions of people have read Misir Ali, and they all have their own mental images of the character. That is the critical part. We will of course have our own interpretation. We don't have too many iconic characters in our con-

temporary literature, and I feel like we need them ... maybe a 'heroic' character. So that is something we will be trying. Now, the characters and the story will come out through the actors. So that also remains to be seen how that takes shape."

About the casting choices, Anam shared a core principle that he followed. "I tried to find actors who have the essence of the characters in them. It's not easy to find actors who perfectly match the characters. You cannot get characterizations like Ben Kingsley

as Gandhi (referring to Richard Attenborough's 1982 biopic 'Gandhi' that won Oscars for Attenborough and Kingsley, as well as Best Picture), but we tried to find actors who resonate the characters."

Chanchal Chowdhury, meanwhile, says it is a huge challenge to be taking on such an assignment. "After the success of 'Aynabaji', I initially did not want to do any films unless it's an exceptional work. I played six characters in that film, and those images are still in people's minds, so I wanted to take a hiatus from the big screen until those images sort of faded. But when I was offered this role, it was hard to pass on, because it is such an iconic character, and if you let go of something like this you don't know when you will get something like this again. I had read 'Debi' and its sequel 'Nishithini' multiple times but it was a long time ago. Misir Ali is one of my most favourite fictional characters. So I took my time, but I could not say no to such an exciting opportunity as an actor. And now that I have, it is a challenge and also a bit of a pressure, for two reasons: firstly because it is the character of Misir Ali, and also because it is my follow-up to 'Aynabaji'. So I am really looking forward to it."

The film is ready to go on floors later this month, but Jaya doesn't have a release date in mind. "This is the first film for my production house, and I don't want to plan too far ahead. But I hope to finish the filming in one lot, maybe with a break," she informed.

There have been previous adaptations of Misir Ali on TV and theatre, though. Theatre troupe Bahubachan adapted "Debi" for a stage play in 1994, and then again in 2008. The first television appearance of Misir Ali was with "Onnobhubon", in which Abul Hayat played the character. Animesh Aich, who is playing a major role in this film, had directed two TV plays based on Misir Ali novels – "Brihonnola" and "Nishad" for ntv, in which Shatabdi Wadud and Shahriar Shubho played the character.



# THE MATRIX

## reboot in the works

**Michael B Jordan could star**

Because everything old is new again, Warner Bros. is currently readying a reboot of one of the greatest action movies ever made: "The Matrix". The Hollywood Reporter reports that the studio is in the early stages of developing a reboot of the groundbreaking 1999 action sci-fi film. The studio is in talks with screenwriter Zak Penn to pen a treatment as they work out exactly how this reboot might work, and they already have their eye on Michael B Jordan as their potential leading man.

The report notes that the involvement of the Wachowski siblings is unknown at the moment. Sisters Lana and Lily Wachowski wrote and directed the first Matrix movie and, spurred by its commercial and critical success, got the backing from Warner Bros. to write and direct a pair of wildly ambitious sequels that were shot back-to-back, "The Matrix Reloaded" and "The Matrix Revolutions" weren't as well received either by audiences or critics, but the Wachowskis had refused to simply rehash the plot of the first film in its follow-ups, resulting in a pair of films that, while divisive, were certainly different.

THR notes that Warner Bros. would want the Wachowski siblings – who most recently helmed the feature "Jupiter Ascending" – and are currently focused on their Netflix series "Sense8" – to at least give their blessing, but a potential wrench is thrown into the equation in the form of producer Joel Silver, who helped put the original trilogy together. THR reports that Silver and the Wachowskis apparently have "a strained relationship," and while Silver wants to be involved in this reboot, the studio sees the blessing of the Wachowski siblings as more important to the fans than the involvement of the producer.

Rumours had surfaced a few years ago that the Wachowskis were considering crafting a new trilogy of Matrix movies, but those rumblings never materialised into anything.

# Living a childhood dream

SAMANNOY GHOSH, back from Bangkok

ABC Radio, the popular FM Radio station of the country, recently became the first radio station of the country to be an overseas radio partner of an major international concert, when they partnered for the Guns 'n' Roses Live in Bangkok concert on February 28. As part of the partnership, the radio station ran a campaign to take six listeners to enjoy the concert live. Samanoy Ghosh, Creative Strategy Manager at ABC Radio who facilitated the partnership, writes about the experience of watching one of the biggest rock acts of all time live.

It was merely a chance that I had taken, when I had knocked the PR agents of IMC Live, with no expectations of actually being successful. But it was their positive response that had motivated the little boy in me, who grew up singing the likes of Sweet Child O'mine and Welcome to The Jungle in front of the TV and on the radio, to keep pushing and not lose hope. And then somewhere between singing and screaming in

front the TV as child to actually seeing them live, I had made the deal of a lifetime which fueled my journey, along with six other lucky people, towards Guns 'n' Roses, live in Bangkok.

It was surreal, watching all of our childhood idols like Axl Rose singing our favourites like November Rain and Don't Cry, Slash jamming intros of legends like Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd and even the theme of the famous movie 'The Godfather' to begin their own songs, was the taste of paradise we've all had only dreamed of as children.

The journey itself began with the whole team of ABC Radio (including the six lucky winners) flying to Bangkok in a rush as no one could hardly contain the excitement of witnessing their childhood music idols right in front of our eyes. Arriving a little late at the venue, we were kind of confused whether the songs we're hearing from afar were by any opening band or the legends themselves, but as soon as we entered, there he was, my idol, my dream Axl Rose yelling 'You know where you are?' That was when it finally sank in that my dream had taken the shape of reality.

And then the songs that sounded like our childhood and teenage euphoria kept playing on one by one, just that this time we could actually witness and feel the energy of Axl Rose's powerful voice, Slash's spine-chilling guitar tunes, with Duff McKagan breathing life into it all with his breathtaking bass-lines in front of our eyes. Our childhood was right there in front of our eyes as we smiled, cried, jumped, shrieked and did all that we could to contain the inexpressible joy of seeing Guns 'n' Roses so close and upfront.

Even the guitar pick thrown into the crowd by Duff McKagan was caught by one of our team members. Singing and dancing to our all-time favourite tunes the show came to an end with Paradise City, giving us a memory so extravagant that we shall live it over and over again in our minds for as long as we live, seeing Axl and Slash standing neck to neck after almost 20 long years was indeed a once in a lifetime opportunity, which I am lucky, I made possible not only for myself, six other crazy fans, ABC Radio FM89.2, the radio industry, and most importantly, for Bangladesh!

Jennifer Aniston will star in the independent teen comedy "Dumplin'" with Anne Fletcher directing.

Variety first reported in 2015 that Disney acquired the movie rights preemptively prior to publication of Julie Murphy's Texas-set novel with Michael Costigan producing. Disney decided not to go ahead with the project.

The story centers on a confident teen girl – named Dumplin' by her former beauty queen mom (Aniston) – taking a job at the local fast-food joint. She meets a former jock whom she likes and he seems to like her back, but when she begins to doubt herself, she sets out to take back her confidence by entering a beauty pageant and gaining respect for her mother.

Kristin Hahn wrote the adaptation and will produce along with Costigan, who will produce under his COTA Films production company. Costigan was an exec producer on "Brokeback Mountain"; his producing credits include "Stoker", "Out of the Furnace", and the upcoming "Ghost in the Shell".

Fletcher specializes in adult-themed comedies with directing credits on "Hot Pursuit", "The Guilt Trip", "The Proposal" and "27 Dresses".

Aniston most recently starred in "Office Christmas Party" and "Horrible Bosses 2".

Source: Variety



G'n'R members at the Bangkok concert.