

# Shedding light on contemporary South Asian Art and beyond

## Dhaka Art Summit 2018 in the offing

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Dhaka is all set once again to become the true hub of South Asian and Global art as the fourth edition of the Dhaka Art Summit (DAS) 2018 is in the offing. DAS, considered the world's largest platform of South Asian Art, begins on February 2 at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA). Organised by the Samdani Art Foundation (SAF) in official partnership with BSA and supported by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Information, the National Tourism Board, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, and in association with Bangladesh National Museum, this year the festival expands to nine days (February 2-10) and has a plethora of activities, including art exhibition, performance pavilion, panel discussion, critical writing ensemble, educational pavilion, film screening, book launch, award programme, guided tour and children's workshop. Here is a glimpse of all the happenings, while a detailed programme guide can be downloaded from dhakaartsummit.org.

A press conference was held yesterday in this regard at the National Art Gallery auditorium of BSA, where Rajeeb Samdani, Founder and Trustee of SAF, Nadia Samdani, Founder of DAS, Liaquat Ali Lucky, Director General of BSA and Moniruzzaman, Director of the Department of Fine Art of BSA, and Samad Choudhury, Director of Golden Harvest that is sponsoring the prestigious summit, were present at the press meet.

With its exclusive efforts, DAS 2018, for the first time, aims to widen its focus to create new connections between South, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean belt, highlighting the dynamic evolution of art in contemporary South Asia, reviving historical inter-Asian modes of exchange, providing an unprecedented focus on lesser-known art histories of Sri Lanka and cultures flattened out by national building activities in the region, an in-depth examination of exhibition histories in South Asia, reviving the glorious journey of Asian Art

Biennale Bangladesh (AABB), and for the first time an engagement with Iran and Turkey.

Over 300 artists from 35 countries will be featured in 10 curated exhibitions, led by chief curator Diana Campbell Betancourt, also the artistic director of SAF. Over 120 speakers from all over the world will participate in 16 panel discussions and two symposiums that strive to ground future developments of art in South Asia within the region's rich, yet lesser-known, past. The summit is open to all.

To rediscover the journey of AABB, DAS will showcase the original artworks with photos, videos and documents of first five edition of AABB at the summit.

opportunities provided by the programme to reach a varied audience. This time 55 international organisations are partnering with DAS 2018.

The local art critics and cultural journalists and enthusiasts will have a unique opportunity to mingle with their international counterparts to take part in the critical writing ensembles that will address some of the burning questions driving indigenous thinking in the arts and related fields today. 'Sovereign Words: Facing the Tempest of a Globalised Arts History' is a project proposed by Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA). Involving newly commissioned texts, a residency in Bangladesh focused on indigenous



Moniruzzaman, Rajeeb Samdani, Liaquat Ali Lucky, Nadia Samdani and Samad Chowdhury at the press conference.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The programme will also host the first ever education pavilion, designed by the winner of the inaugural Samdani Architecture Award, Maksudul Karim. With the aim of recalibrating how we think about art and architecture, it features interdisciplinary workshops with participants from renowned global institutes.

As part of the partnership with Microsoft Bangladesh, the educational elements of DAS 2018's programme will be live streamed to classrooms and universities nationally, maximizing the summit's outreach and ensuring the

methodologies, public discussions during DAS, and a publication, the ensembles come to life through the practice of indigenous artists, poets, activists and curators from across four continents, as well as through discussions and presentations with non-indigenous peers. 'Sovereign Words' is part of OCA's long-term commitment to the strengthening of critical writing within and across communities of the world. This edition is realised with the support of Arts Council Australia, Artspace, and OCA.



PHOTO: STAR

## THE WEEKENDER

### Fahmida Nabi's love for gardening

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

The mesmerising vocals of Fahmida Nabi earned her the National Film Award in 2007, and the singer remains highly active and just as popular in the music scene today. Outside the recording studio, the singer is a passionate individual with a zest for life, which she illustrates in a recent chat with The Daily Star.

**What is your favourite weekend getaway?**

FN: It's the nursery. I love gardening, and I am not afraid of getting my hands dirty. I don't really have a favourite, as every season yields its own floral beauty. My house is currently undergoing some renovation and my involvement is very hands-on, whether it's doing electric work, painting,

planting, and even construction.

**What are you working on right now?**

FN: I am currently working on music videos for three songs. Next month on Valentine's day, I have a special surprise for my listeners. Bappa (Mazumdar) and I will join together for a new song, after seven long years.

**Who are your favourite musicians?**

FN: Bappa Mazumdar is doing good music, as well as Ronny and Sajib Das. But I appreciate any musician that works systematically.

**Have you made any resolutions for this year?**

FN: Every day we have to rebuild ourselves. We must learn from the mistakes we make, and fix what's broken. I have always been a dreamer, but this year, I hope to be more grounded in reality.

# Black Widow standalone film gains momentum

Black Widow has been an important player in the Marvel Cinematic Universe since she was introduced in 2010's "Iron Man 2". However, unlike fellow Avengers teammates like Iron Man, Captain America and Thor, Scarlett Johansson's Natasha Romanoff has never had the opportunity to star in her own movie, instead either being a supporting character or part of an ensemble. But that may finally change, as Marvel has reportedly hired a screenwriter to pen a "Black Widow" standalone movie.

According to The Wrap, Marvel has hired Jac Schaffer to write the movie. No story details were revealed in the report, but evidently Marvel is now committed to seeing its resident superspy finally venture out on her own. Schaffer made her feature film screenwriting debut with 2009's "TiMER", which she also directed. Since then, she's written the 2014 Blacklist-recognized "The Shower" (which Anne Hathaway will star in and produce), the upcoming "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" remake "Nasty Women" and the Disney short "Olaf's Frozen Adventure".

Although a Black Widow movie has been a topic of discussion for years, this is the first time that it finally looks like it might become a reality. Last year, Scarlett Johansson said that



she's talked with Marvel Studios head Kevin Feige about making a standalone adventure for the former S.H.I.E.L.D. agent-turned-Avenger-turned-fugitive, and they both agreed that she deserves her own story, but it's all a matter of timing. Kevin Feige later said that Black Widow was one of the characters that Marvel Studios is "creatively and emotionally" committed to giving solo movie attention to in Phase Four. Although Marvel hasn't unveiled an official Phase Four slate yet, so far "Spider-Man: Homecoming 2" and "Guardians of the Galaxy 3" are the only movies that have been officially announced for post-"Avengers 4".

When Black Widow was last spotted, in "Captain America: Civil War", she had gone on the run from the US government after helping Captain America and Winter Soldier escape to track down Helmut Zemo. It's unclear if the Black Widow movie would be set in the present day period, or if it would turn back the clock and show us one of her missions as a spy, be it for S.H.I.E.L.D. or the KGB. Either way, given how popular Black Widow is both in the comics and the movies, it's better late than never that the MCU has decided it's worth exploring what her own story would look like.

Scarlett Johansson will be back in action as Natasha Romanoff on May 4 for "Avengers: Infinity War", and also return for "Avengers 4" on May 3, 2019.

Source: Cinemablend



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

# Another big break for Shanu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shanare Devi Shanu's first big break came when she was crowned winner on the first season of Lux Superstar. In the years that followed, she enjoyed a steady stream of success on the small screen, but the actor is reaching a new milestone this year. Shanu will don a lead role for a film directed by Khijir Hayat Khan, titled "Mr. Bangladesh."

During the final week of this month, the entire filming crew will take off for Cox's Bazaar to shoot the first segment of the film. Shanu is elated for her first ever film role, saying, "This is hopefully a new beginning, and I am very excited to do this."

Shanu has been a popular face on television for over ten years now, and her versatile career spans modeling and dancing, but it is of some wonder that the actor has not been seen on film sooner. Shanu dispelled these queries saying that many offers had come her way, but she did not find them appealing enough.

Thus her first venture is bound to create big expectations. The actor stated that the film tackles some big issues in the world today: "The narrative is about religious extremism and its ties to terrorism," she said.

# Youth TV show "Hello Check" launched

## A new initiative by BBC Media Action

A CORRESPONDENT

A new TV programme focusing on how the youth see today's world, is set to air beginning tomorrow on ATN Bangla. "Hello Check", a production of international media development organization BBC Media Action, was launched yesterday.

Four presenters of the show – Atoshi, Basma, Abir, Farhan – have

traveled across the country looking to find answers to questions like what is important to the youth and how they want to shape their identity in society. They have traveled to the women entrepreneur operating a photo studio in Faridpur or youth sending nano-satellites to space, bringing forward their stories of success. Along with that are interesting social experiments challenging norms of the soci-

ety.

"Hello Check", which airs Saturdays at 9pm and repeats at 8:45am on Sundays, aims to give youth from all over the country a platform to share their ideas and thoughts.

A press conference and MoU signing was held yesterday at the BFDC Floor 8 to launch the programme. ATN Bangla and ATN News chairman Mahfuzur Rahman chaired the programme, where

Deputy Director of the IEM unit of Family planning Zakia Akhter, ATN Bangla programme department advisor Nawazish Ali Khan and BBC Media Action's country director Richard Lacey.

"Hello Check" has been produced by BBC Media Action with support from Rutgers, a Netherlands-based international centre of expertise on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Sweden-based Ikea Foundation.



Mahfuzur Rahman, Richard Lacey and Zakia Akhter (seated, front) with the hosts of the show at the launch ceremony.