

THOUGHTS ON A ROLLER COASTER



RABITA SALEH

Being an adrenaline junkie sometimes leads my life to be measured in a string of roller coasters. Yet, I'm not one of those daredevils who are all "rush all the time with no nervousness". The emotional roller coaster I go through while actually riding a real one is quite the experience, and it all starts with getting in line.

THE BEGINNING OF THE LINE

You've joined what seems like the endless line to your roller coaster. On the way to the line, you looked up at the highest dive the coaster goes through, tried to talk yourself out of this madness, and then trudged on through because you spot two 10-year olds in the line looking exceptionally nonchalant.

THE END OF THE LINE

You see people who just finished their ride hobbling off the car, some looking distinctly greener in the face than when they had gone on. Your heart starts picking up its pace, and you wonder if letting the people behind you go on before you might be a good idea. You suddenly hear the scream of terror from the direction of the car that just started its ride, signifying that those people have just experienced the 300-foot drop that you've also signed up for. The errant thoughts of bolting are becoming a real possibility now.

STRAPPING IN

You've battled your cowardice till this point, and are now seated on the car of doom. *Is this harness secure enough? Should I have taken my glasses off? Or written a note to my loved ones perhaps?* That's when the harness suddenly

locks in place, signifying that any moment you're going to start moving. *Oh no. What have I done?!*

MOUNTING

You begin ascending right from the get go. As you look forward, all you can see is a seemingly infinite track, and the sky beyond that. You keep on ascending, and ascending, and ascending. The fact that every inch that you're covering now is one that you'll also have to descend is constantly running through your mind. *There's no way this is STILL going up. Why am I doing this to myself again? Just, why?*

THE DROP

The car has stopped ascending. In fact, it has stopped moving altogether. You can see a lot more when you look forward now compared to just a few seconds ago. Suspended nearly 100 metres above the ground, you can see people looking like ants scurrying below you. Some are joining the very line that you were in barely 20 minutes ago. That was a simpler life.

Suddenly the car moves, and then you feel the characteristic butterflies in your stomach. You yell for your life as two of the most thrilling minutes of your life begin.

THE RIDE

You're yelling at the top of your lungs. As you take wild turns at nearly 100 kmph, rise and drop and spin all around, all you can think is that this right here is the best feeling in the world.

END OF THE TRACK

Your eyes are watering, your hair is all over the place, and your body feels like you have been through a tornado, but the only thought in your head is "Woah! Let's go again!"

Struggles of being a young artist in Bangladesh

AFSARA KHAN

What could be better than finally completing school and chasing your dream career? Everyone wants to, but sadly that is often not possible. Although becoming successful and established in any profession is arduous and challenging, being an artist or a fine arts student in Bangladesh has its own unique struggles. Here a few of the problems they face regularly:

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parents want what's best for us, but they can't help but be a little sceptical when it comes to supporting their children pursue a career as an artist. They want you to get a job which is more financially rewarding, secure, and is considered more respectable by our society's standards. Most parents tend to see their children's artistic talents as merely a hobby, a topic only to be brought up when showing off their kids to the 'pasher baarir bhaabi' and comparing them to 'omuk bhai er chele/meye'.

LACK OF RESOURCES

I myself had chosen Art and Design as a subject for my A levels and to my misfortune, there weren't many art teachers to choose from when it came to private teachers for coaching classes. I personally found them rather unprofessional and ended up not getting the required guidance which made sitting for the exam quite difficult. You can't really find any resources to get yourself through the exams and get a decent score because most of the information on the internet is geared towards foreign students and their curriculums.

THE 'GIFT ME YOUR ART' DILEMMA

Friends and family (or basically anyone who comes to know about your art skills) ask you to just give them your art for free or with negligible compensation for all your hard work. This can be quite infuriating and embarrassing since in most cases, they make these requests in very public settings and all you can do is nod your head unwillingly to avoid an awkward situation, while you die a little inside. They also happen to think it is their right to keep asking you to do things for them that require artistic or creative abilities, not taking into account the time and labour that goes into it. You are bound to oblige to these requests, otherwise your 'hobby' is deemed useless.

DIFFICULTY FINDING ART SUPPLIES

It is practically impossible to find professional quality art supplies here as the majority of the materials found in art supply stores are unpredictable in quality. There isn't enough variety in the brands of paint, paper, brushes, etc. You might occasionally have the misfortune of wading through traffic to get to these faraway stores in order to buy those expensive tubes of paint, only to take them home and realise that they have expired and are hence unusable.

Even after all these struggles, the young artist smiles and paints away, it's all worth it because they're getting to do what they love.

Afsara spends most of her time drawing Pepe in various color combinations while singing along to EDEN. Do not bother her at [facebook.com/afsaraakhan](https://www.facebook.com/afsaraakhan)

