

AN ARCHITECT'S ARCHIVE

An architect, a singer and a director, Enamul Kabir Nirjhor is a man of many talents. With his creative mind and innovative works, he has enamored the nation for decades. Principal Architect of SYSTEM architects and Founder of GAANSHALA, Nirjhor has opened up about his passion and profession in a recent interview with 'Star Showbiz'.

How would you like to introduce yourself from a professional perspective?

My first and foremost identity is as a human being. I have always aspired to mold myself as an innovative entity. When it comes to passion and profession I will of course call myself an architect first. And I believe, the work of architecture is not limited to building infrastructures only, it influences many other aspects of the daily life and the society. To me architecture is a philosophy, an inspiration. I had my hands on photography, art, graphics designing, writing, set designing and many other skills. But now I focus only on three fields which I have distinct reasons behind. Firstly, I am an architect and through this profession I am working for the people. Second on my list comes producing and directing films. Cinema is my means of blurting out any truth to the world without hesitation. I am working on two films now. My third focus is on singing. Being a creative person, singing is the dose of refreshment my mind and emotion yearns regularly.

If you go back, what gave birth to the innovative person you are today? Where was the beginning?

It's hard to point out where it all started from. The denotation of the word creativity takes turn along with time, era and generation. But what remains common is the impact. In 1971, during the war, we were refugees. My younger brother could not have a single meal without fish. The situation made me learn to make a fish-net all by myself, probably the first creative lesson it was that I gave to myself. Doing something for people is also a form of art, innovation. Currently, I am working on a project which revolves around the pure thought and belief of the young generation and aims to tie all of them with this same perspective in a single string. This venture has spread its branches from Dhaka to Kolkata and Mumbai already.

Are these ventures related to architecture only?

No, all we do there is exercise our thoughts, our emotions. In Mumbai it all started when some Indian architects, upon seeing some of my works, got impressed and invited us over – we built a very good rapport over time. We started exercising inspirational architecture there – a form of architecture working not only for commercial purposes but also fulfilling responsibilities towards the society. The place is named EKNC (Enamul Kabir Nirjhor Collaboration). Some very entertaining projects are in-process there.

From knitting a fish-net to architecture – how did you come across the pathway?

My dream was to provide people with what they are deprived of. While studying in BUET, some of my juniors and fellow friends used to fail due to lack of proper guidance. So giving them time and showing them the right direction became my ultimate motto for those days. Later when I was working in a press and brushing up my photography and graphic designing skills, I opened an art gallery for the middle-class society in Central Road because there was no such place for them in the city back then. I tried incorporating my interest and expertise as an interior designer on restaurants too, giving rise to some concepts quite different from the usual red-carpet, dimmed light ones. *White Castle* was my very first work followed by many other including the very first theatre and dine-in under the same roof. *Nina Kabbo* is one of my creations which I designed keeping in mind my earnest desire to become a poet. *Nina Kabbo* struck the Indian architect with whom now I am working as a partner in Mumbai.

How would you define the future of architecture in our country?

There have been many ups and downs. We, as a nation went through drastic reformations. Days have changed now. Real Estate companies are building sky-scrappers but people have lost interconnections amidst the thick walls. Architects need to be clear who they are working for and what they are working for. Clients must understand the value of this art in their life. Architecture has a big impact on people's lives. The sooner they'll realize it, the better they'll live. We have currently presented the issue to our honourable Prime Minister and looking forward to her response regarding the matter.

By Sushmita Sruti Choudhury

