



LS EDITOR'S NOTE

# Confessions of a serotonin junkie

I am really old, almost at the age where I will need a cane stick to walk, so when I saw the bioscope man with his khartal — that wooden clapper instrument which has discs or plates that produce a clinking sound when clapped together — strum-



ming a catchy tune; the dormant child in me just leapt out.

I begged him for a show, though flabbergasted and entirely reluctant, he made me stoop to the low bioscope height, and started singing his catchy song that lures children to see the waterfalls of Darjeeling, tigers in the Sundarbans, sky scrapers of

New York, and heroes of Bangladesh's liberation war. My heart skipped a beat and danced in joy, more so as my cousin and partner in crime since crib days, was right there sitting beside me, with both of us tapping our heads and feet in tune with the beats.

Obviously, I could not continue through the entire performance; my poor knees were screaming revolt but those 45 seconds left me ecstatic. And all this happened at the celebration of the glorious 70 years of the Faculty of Fine Art (FFA), University of Dhaka, coupled with the Zainul Utsab 2018. Along with hundreds of artists, teachers, students and alumni poured into their alma mater to join the jubilant reunion and we were attendees at the celebration of a landmark. All the eight departments of FFA, together with the country's finest artisans were displaying and selling artwork and crafts at stalls at the Zainul Fair that continued till December 29.

I happened to accidentally stumble upon the exhibition on Christmas, while I was heading towards the Prince of Wales Bakery in Laxmibazar for their famous cake. Although the cake was a big disappointment, the exhibition was rejuvenating.

The Charukola grounds were, as usual, buzzing with life, and the energy was contagious; colours so vibrant that almost

immediately, you could feel the spike in your serotonin level. The paper crafts, the brass dolls and antique pieces, the wooden horses and elephants of Sonargaon — all kept me busy. I was drawn by the unique calendar, drawn and signed by famous artist Shakoor himself. But I was most impressed with the work of the sculpture department, and totally floored by the serigraphy portfolios of Sheikh Afzal, Shishir Bhattacharya, and Rafiqun Nabi.

Like children hitting a jackpot in a treasure hunt, my cousin and I were flying on cloud nine with all our buys, and as cherry on the cake, we were invited by Shishir Bhattacharjee (Shishir-da) for a cup of tea at the rooftop of the teacher's lounge. The beautiful roof top was surrounded by trees and shaded by their green foliage; it had a beautiful little garden nurtured by artist and dean of the faculty, Nisar Hossain.

The mood and ambience were perfectly lazy and happy and with striped squirrels and cacophonous birds roaming the grounds like celebrities; Shishir-da's lively conversation along with a warm cup of canteen tea was indeed a perfect dose to pacify my old bones and keep the child in me animated.

— RBR

Photo: Nasira B. Mansoor

