

<p><b>Spring Festival</b> Title: Poush-Faguner Mela Venue: Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi Date: January 31 – February 2 Time: 3 pm – 8 pm</p>	<p><b>Live Art Show</b> Title: Dhaka Live Art Biennale Venue: University of Dhaka Date: Jan 21 – Feb 14 Time: 10 am – 8 pm</p>	<p><b>Exhibition</b> Title: LAL - An Ode to the Moon &amp; Menstrual Cycle Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani Date: February 19 - 23 Details: www.facebook.com/jatrabirotiworld</p>	<p><b>Book Fair</b> Title: Ekushey Boi Mela 2019 Venue: Bangla Academy, Dhaka Date: Feb 1 – 28 Time: 3 pm – 8:30 pm</p>	<p><b>Theatre Festival</b> Title: Jatiyo Patho Natya Utshab 2019 Venue: Central Shaheed Minar Date: Jan 31 – Feb 7 Time: 4 pm onwards</p>
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Some of the Bangladeshi and foreign poets present at this year's Jatiya Kabita Utshab. PHOTO: STAR

## PORTRAIT OF A COVER ARTIST

# RAZIB DATTA

Among the contemporary book cover designers, poet and visual artist Razib Datta stands out for his unique approach. His styles may appear simple but they portray deeper and often politically charged expressions. An avid reader from a young age, Razib Datta designed covers for the Little Magazine at Chittagong University before coming to Dhaka in 2012 to work on small projects. His professional journey began in full swing from 2014. The Boi Mela is a particularly busy occasion for the talented artist. We caught up with him to find out more about his work.

**PRİYANKA CHOWDHURY**  
Do your designs depend upon the content you are working with?  
Most of my designs are for people I know, so, I have an idea about their style. However, for novels, I definitely ask about the story to get an idea. I like designing covers for poetry books; I think that there is a sense of freedom to that.  
You use the digital medium as opposed to painting the covers by hand. What are the perks of using that platform?  
Using the digital medium does not give the same effects as painting the covers by hand, but it is better for editing.  
Who are some of your favourite cover artists?  
I really admire Dhurba Esh. He became a book cover artist when no one had the courage to take it up as a profession. I also like the works of Sabyasachi Hazra, Sabyasachi Mistry and Tirtha. Artists from Kolkata like Hiron Mitra and Krishnendu Chaki are also brilliant.



PHOTO: COURTESY

What are your thoughts on the current state of cover artists in Bangladesh?  
We have many designers in the market now. I think the prospects are good, especially for children's books. Ikri Mikri regularly publishes books for children. Four-colour books are expensive and also take time to work on. Although I am optimistic about the opportunities for book cover artists, this field of work needs more professionalism.



# JATIYA KABITA UTSHAB concludes today

MINAM HAQ

For Bangladeshis, the quintessential month of linguistics marked by February 1, starts with the eloquence of poetry. Nestled with the essence of patriotic pride, the 33rd installment of the two-day Jatiya Kabita Utshab began yesterday, with a ceremony that was held at the premises of University of Dhaka Central Library. Organised by the Jatiya Kabita Parishad, this year's motto is *Bangalir Joy Kabitar Joy*. This one of a kind festival began in 1987 with different slogans every year, addressing issues surrounding social oppression. The audience along with the local and international poets paid homage to our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, Patua Kamrul Hasan as well as the martyrs of the Language Movement at the beginning. The event went on with the singing of the National Anthem along with the hoisting of the Bangladeshi flag.



The ceremony began with the singing of the National Anthem along with the hoisting of the Bangladeshi flag. PHOTO: STAR

Prominent poet Asad Chowdhury inaugurated the festival with his welcome speech. "Jatiya Kabita Parishad opposes the ideology of fundamentalism," he mentioned. "The victory of the Bengalis is the victory of poetry." The guest speakers further addressed the power of poetry and how it could give a voice to the voiceless. Dr Mohammad Samad, President, Jatiya Kabita Parishad, presided over the event, in the

presence of the General Secretary of Jatiya Kabita Parishad, Tariq Sujat, festival convener Rabiul Hussain and poet Ruby Rahman, who acknowledged the proclamation. At this year's festival, renowned poet Habibullah Sirajee is scheduled to be honoured today for his immense contribution to the field of poetry.

Many foreign poets from Turkey, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, India, Nepal, Spain, China, Malaysia, Congo and Uruguay are also attending the festival. The two-day event has been divided between poetry recitations, musical performances and discussion sessions, along with an exhibition at the poetry book stalls. The open to all festival ends today.



The chairman of STAR Cineplex, Mahboob Rahman (left), was the guest on the 50th episode of the show. PHOTO: COURTESY

## ETV's 'Behind the Story' completes 50 episodes

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

ETV's weekly show, *Behind the Story*, aired its 50th episode yesterday. It is anchored by Shawqat Salahuddin and produced by Enamul Haq. Eminent cultural personalities and celebrities feature on the show every week. The likes of actor Jaya Ahsan, singer Kona and musician Kabir Bulbul have appeared as guests on the show. The chairman of STAR Cineplex, Mahboob Rahman, was the guest on the 50th episode of the show. The audience can catch the repeat telecast of that episode at 1:30 pm today.

## Naziha Amin's 'Kesh' on the walls of Drik

MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

Artist Naziha Amin's first ever exhibition titled, *Kesh* (Hair), recently concluded at Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi. She studied Fashion Design at Shanto Mariam University and was an art teacher in an English medium school for six years. She left the job to pursue what she felt was her true calling and is now a full-time artist who dedicates herself to commission illustrations, mainly for underground death metal bands and her own personal artworks.



PHOTO: SHANTO LAWRENCE COSTA

After a few failed attempts in organising group shows, Naziha focused on creating a body of work for her own solo exhibition for the last two years. *Kesh* included 45 paintings and assemblages in a variety of media including acrylic, oils, watercolour, ink, colour pencils as well as ribbons, Christmas ornaments and Styrofoam. A major influence in Naziha's life and art is her husband, a musician, who has encouraged her to

continue her artistic pursuits at every step of the way. Naziha said that she does not go by traditional themes of artworks in depicting moods through colours. Standing in front of a painting of her and her husband, she mentioned that the artwork signifies one of the happiest moments of her life, even though it is depicted in dark and dull colours.

Pointing to subtle, red colour pencil marks in an otherwise black and white painting, she said, "The exact moment at which inspiration struck for this image, I didn't have anything other than a red pencil around me and I had to get it out." These words reflected her current expressionistic style. Naziha started as a psychedelic artist from where she veered into

surrealism. She further spoke about her ongoing series titled, *Existential Horror*. "When making stab-like marks on the canvas didn't feel like enough, I began adding materials on the surface to bring a new dimension to my expression," she said. She describes her artworks and style as "hyper-expressionistic."

She also mentioned that she chose the title *Kesh* for her solo exhibition because her hair is an inherited part of her identity. It is often a tangled chaotic mess, combed to perfection at times, ever growing, adapting, changing and evolving. Walking through the gallery felt almost like taking a journey through her visual diary. From paintings on tiny canvases to larger ones, there were artworks which were bright, colourful and simple as well as those which had more intense, raw and dark themes. All the pieces were ultimately threaded together to present the artist's transgressions between her many moods and styles.

# Second edition of D'LAB underway

ZAHANGIR ALOM

The second edition of Dhaka Live Art Biennale (D'LAB) was inaugurated at Bakultala, Faculty of Fine Art (FFA), University of Dhaka (DU) on January 31. Liaquat Ali Lucky, DG, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, inaugurated the biennale. Bangladeshi artist Sanjid Mahmud opened the performance part, shedding light on the concept of "Relation between human and object, which don't have live."



PHOTO: COURTESY

The exhibition on the D'LAB 2017 edition was also opened at Zainul Gallery, FFA, DU on the same day. Anisuzzaman Rubel designed the show. Back ART Foundation (BAF) has organised the biennale. Shubho Saha, President of BAF and Founder Director, D'LAB, delivered the welcome address, focusing on the history

of D'LAB, its future plan of archiving local live art and the initiation to establish an academy of live art in Bangladesh. He also shared his vision on the possibility of performance art in Bangladesh as a newly practiced medium.

Naveed Akber, Director, EMK Center, spoke about their interest in D'LAB. Nazia Andaleeb Preema, an advisory director of D'LAB and the founder of Bangladesh Creative Forum, spoke about how she became

involved with D'LAB and felt proud of it. Dagmar I. Glausnitzer-Smith, a German performance artist and senior lecturer at the Kingston University, London, spoke on behalf of the D'LAB international artists.

Thanking the organisers and wishing it continued success, she said, "I am fascinated to see the huge arrangement of D'LAB and what I have liked most is its rich cultural exchange programme."

Renowned artist Abul Barq Alvi, also a professor at the Department of Printmaking, FFA, DU, expressed his satisfaction on seeing the success of the event, as a good number of artists have participated in the biennale and interacted with the vibrant scene of Bangladeshi art and culture.

Liaquat Ali Lucky spoke about the artists' involvement in performance, experiences and new experiments, referring to the grand arrangement of the Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh. Suggesting the inclusion of other performances in it, he described D'LAB as the biggest performance art festival in Bangladesh, making a

promise to support it in the future.

D'LAB exhibition on Back Art's annual public art project called, "Urban HOURS 1, 2 and 3" was inaugurated yesterday at Courtyard, EDGE Gallery in Dhanmondi. Shubho O Saha is the project curator and Emran Sohel is the designer.

Educational workshops, featuring performance artists as well as people from different disciplines are happening at the event.

Local live art like *Gajeer Poter Gaan*, *Saap Khela*, *Haat Safai*, *Banor Nach* and a puppet workshop by Jolputul are some of the many attractions of the biennale, which will be displayed at Chhobir Haat on February 6.

D'LAB's closing ceremony will be held at EMK Center where theatre troupe Prachyanat and the workshop participants will perform together on February 14.