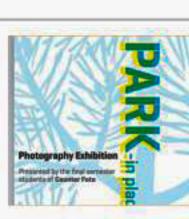




Exhibition
Title: LAL - An Ode to the Moon &
Menstrual Cycle
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Date: February 19 - 23
Details: Jatra Biroti's Facebook page



Book Fair Title: Ekushey Boi Mela 2019 Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan and Bangla Academy, Dhaka Date: February 1 — 28



Photography Exhibition
Title: PARK — In place for public
Venue: Counter Foto Mirpur Campus
Date: February 10 — March 10
Time: 10 am onwards

"We have to move forward, but with our heritage"

Kamal Ahmed

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

With a noteworthy singing career of seven national and international awards, Kamal Ahmed also holds the important position of Director of Programme at Bangladesh Betar, a cultural pillar of the country. Finding his comfort

zone in Rabindra Sangeet,
the ever-passionate musician keeps expanding his
repertoire. He has16
versatile albums of
different genres to
his credit. The
artiste talks to
The Daily Star

about his latest
albums, musical philosophy, and more.

Could you tell us about your latest projects?

This February, two of my albums were released under the banner of Laser Vision. Ekusher Swaralipi is a tribute to our International Mother Language Day, and to my knowledge, this might be the first album with all-original songs to commemorate the day. Adhora released on this Valentine's Day, and has contributions from the likes of Lucky Akhand, Kawser Ahmed Chowdhury and Moshiur Rahman.

Releasing two complete albums within a month is not easy. How is the response from the audience?

It's true that the current trend in the industry is to release one song at a time, with an accompanying music video. I, however, am not a believer of this methodology. With fewer songs released, the audience is basically deprived from a good



PHOTO: SHEIKH ENAM

amount of music. Both of the aforementioned albums have 12 songs each, and since my banner, Laser Vision, does not compromise on the quality of songs, the response is good. Of course, we do plan to release music videos as well.

What inspires you as a singer?
A sense of commitment towards my coun-

A sense of commitment towards my country and its music is what drives me. In 2016, my album, Mohakabber Kobi was released, which was a humble tribute to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Ganer Tori was released in the same year, which was a tribute to the Teen Kobi.

Bangladesh Betar has been a lighthouse for cultural activities in Bangladesh for decades. However, as we enter a new era of lightning-fast internet and unlimited accessibility, what is the institution doing to keep up?

We pride ourselves to be an institution which is unconditionally beside our heritage and culture. However, we have kept up with the changing times. From our analogue times to social media in the current era, we have maintained a great relationship with our listeners. We now interact with them through Facebook, and play songs according to requests there as well. We have to move forward, but with our heritage.

PORTRAIT OF A COVER ARTIST Naeem Ahmed

Naeem Hossain began his career as an architect, having graduated in that field of study from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. He went onto explore many avenues of design, including game, user-interface, product and others. Art, on the other hand, is a field that he is immensely passionate about. Currently a user-experience designer at a software firm, Naeem recently took up cover art and began making covers of books for the Ekushey Boi Mela in 2017. For this year's fair, Naeem has designed the covers of Attopochanimulok Rosh or Self-Deprecating Humor by Wahid Ibn Reza, Bamoner Chandrobilash by Anonto Rahat Rakib, Juddho by Ahsan Habib and Shobar Jonno Ubuntu by Nasir Khan Saikat. We caught up with him to find out more about his work.

SHABABA IQBAL

Tell us about the process you follow for the artwork while working on a book. My aim as a cover artist is to reflect the mood and tone of the book, keeping the title and text in mind. Readers should be able to understand how the cover complements the text once they have finished reading the book.

Who are some of your inspirations in the art community?

I am huge fan of Satyajit Ray. I am also inspired by the work of Sabyasachi Mistry, Ahsan Habib and Mehedi Haque. Many young and emerging artists today are also doing remarkably well.

Ekushey Boi Mela is certainly a busy season for cover artists, but how do you keep yourself occupied otherwise?

I am always sketching something or the other, be it book illustrations, story

boards or cartoons. However, I enjoy making art for myself the most.

How would you characterize your artworks and the messages you aim to portray through them?

I am pretty versatile as an artist, which

comes with its pros and cons. Even though my versatility gives me immense creative satisfaction and allows me to develop my skills in different platforms, maintaining specific messages or themes in my artworks proves to be difficult. What kind of hurdles have you faced as an artist, progressing through your career?

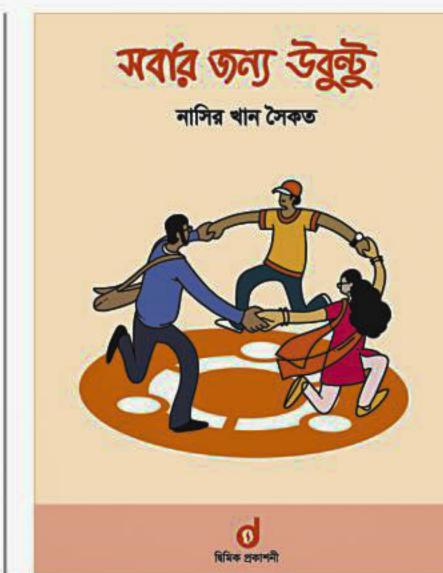
I face hurdles internally, in the sense that I do not push myself enough to reach my potential to the fullest and so, I think that I have not fully explored my capabilities as an artist yet. Otherwise, I believe that artists in Bangladesh today have plenty of ways to create their own opportunities.



PHOTO: COURTESY









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