



KAZI MAYA

Whenever I find something beautiful, I end up going back to the works of my father to judge that beauty. No matter how much others like his paintings, no matter how much his works have been appreciated and collected by others, it is perhaps only me in this whole world who has been influenced by his works so.

Then again, if someone asks me if I love his paintings, I don't think I can answer the question clearly. It's not a subject that I know well. I do not know what to say, except expressing the feeling of liking them. Fragments of colours, shapes, brushstrokes, shadows—all these are accumulated cultural elements that penetrated deep into my psyche long before I started uttering my first words. I

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can at least say that I've grown up with them, though I'm definitely not made or created by them. However, if there is a filter between the beauty of this world and myself, then that is still my father's brushstrokes.

In analysing his works briefly, I should say that the impression that I get from his oil paintings and watercolours are quite different. Though it is obvious that both have been painted by Kazi Ghyasuddin,

there are differences of shapes and colours, the materials used and the process applied, and so the impression and depth that we get from them are bound to be dissimilar.

My father says that in Bangladesh his paintings are seen distinctly as works of Japanese style, while in Japan these are perceived as 'exotic'. I know both the countries (born and raised in Japan and I know Bangladesh through occasional visits) and my personal feeling is that paintings obviously tilt more towards the latter. The seeping colours of his watercolours and the shades reflected in his oil paintings remind me of the landscapes of Bangladesh I saw long ago when I was young, but that feel as if I saw them only yesterday.

In his oil paintings, white always occupies a prominent place. Although in some cases it might look like blue or red may seem to be the dominant colour, a closer and careful glance would definitely reveal the presence of white. It might be a point, a line, or even a character. When I was a child, I thought all those white touches scattered on the screen were snow. So, I used to say that it's always snowing in my father's paintings.

Obviously, the climate in Bangladesh is tropical and snowfall doesn't exist. I only noticed my mistake much later when I visited Bangladesh in winter. When I was younger and in school, visits to Bangladesh took place in the summer and the only image of the country that was firmly imprinted in my mind was that it was hot. Until I visited once around New Year's Day. What my eyes perceived had as

snow was fog or mist.

The morning after my arrival when I opened the front door of our house, all I could see was a white sheet covering everything. It was my first experience of fog, fog so dense that I could not see anything a metre ahead of me. The cloudy vision stirred my imagination and made me imagine the story unfolding behind the white screen. From then on, the whiteness in father's oil paintings have always reminded me of the fog that morning.

The presence of white in his oil paintings is always narrative. His watercolours, where multiple colours get exposed, remind me of the water of Bangladesh. They bring back the memories of rain and of rice fields that I saw during monsoon, of holding my father's hand on a walk just after it had stopped pouring on a rainy day.

The dusty road covered in muddy water had turned dark red like bricks. The tree leaves had turned lush again, illuminated in the sunlight gathering in the water drops. The smell of the soil, the grass and the animals soaked in rainwater had struck me as not unpleasant. For a person who grew up in the concrete surroundings of Tokyo, all this had seemed unusually refreshing. The accumulated rainwater in the lush rice field had turned the place into a lake. Mingled with the soil, the sight of the spreading muddy water spreading had seemed shockingly beautiful.

A man on a boat had been crossing the water, his figure standing steadily on the boat. I could not take my eyes off him, his

Thoughts about my father's PAINTINGS



presence in such surroundings surprised me. Certainly, he was not there to catch fish. What on earth was he doing on that boat?

When I see the watercolour paintings of my father now, I remember that scene. The blending of colours is certainly the boundary between the sky, the water and the trees in that precise moment.

I feel that my father's abstract paintings can only find their true meaning in the memory of each person who appreciates them. Such is the effect of his paintings. I just happened to have plenty of time and experience with the painter. What he, himself, and other people find in his blending of colours and shades, I cannot even imagine. I would like to ask if I get a chance.

Kazi Maya is a model and writer. Follow her work at www.kazimaya.com.