

In conversation with Emily Hughes

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Arranged by British Council Bangladesh, *Drawing Words* is an exhibition that features ten illustrators from across the UK, whose works play an important role in the contemporary British picture book illustration sector. One of the most impressive exhibits in the project was from illustrator and writer Emily Hughes' *Wild*, a truly stunning piece of art in the mold of a children's book. Her book, *Nana Shaped Like a Banana*, won second prize in the 2012 Macmillan Children's Book Awards. *The Daily Star* presents to you an exclusive interview of the Hawaii-born illustrator on the exhibition, her works, and more. Thank you for your time. *'Drawing Words' has received a lot of praise for its presentation and the fact that it highlights*



From the book 'Wild', by Emily Hughes



Thank you very much for your words. Absolutely, children's books have to be read by adults, as they are the ones who will be ultimately conveying the stories to them. People think that it is easy to make a children's book, and quite frankly, it is the opposite. The aim of a book, for me, is not to increase 'literacy' per se, but to build a social connection. These books are often passed from one generation to another, so the it has to have a level of longevity as well.

What is the most important aspect of being a children's illustrator or writer?

One of the quotes that I use frequently is, "Don't dumb it down for children." The work has to be entertaining, but at the same time, has to be very honest. Children can often sense injustice better than adults can, but at the same time, I feel bad that they have so little power over their surroundings.

Do you have any advice for upcoming writers and illustrators?

Even though I am not that confident about my writing as of yet, I'll say that if you don't read books, don't write books! (Laughs) It is not as easy as we sometimes think it is. For illustrators, I feel like a lot of creativity is needed, and one needs to stop drawing directly from real-life subjects and focus on their inner creativity. Only then will the art be distinguishable.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSEHD

work for children. How was your experience in Bangladesh, while your time here for the exhibition?

This was my first time in the country, and I must say that I loved it very much. The people are very welcoming here, and Dhaka has a certain charm to it – there is always something happening when I look out of the car window. *Drawing Words* has indeed been a special exhibition; we had an equally good response when it was

held in Cox's Bazaar and Dhaka. Since the exhibition is geared towards children, it had to be geared towards narratives and expression, and we had to be mindful of that.

You are both the author and illustrator of 'Wild', a book which has been highly praised. Could you tell us more about it? *Wild* is about a girl who was found in the forest, and has green hair. She knows nothing but nature from birth—she

was taught to talk by birds, to eat by bears, and to play by foxes. She is later found by some humans, who perplex her as they look the same, but act vastly different from her. There is not much text in the book, the story is paved by the illustrations.

'Wild', has some gorgeous illustrations that make adults, as well as children, want to read it. Do you think children's books can be both for children and adults?

Celebrating Abdullah Al Mamun on his 77th birth anniversary

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Abdullah Al Mamun was a stalwart in the fields of theatre, television and cinema in Bangladesh. Marking his 77th birth anniversary, renowned theatre troupe Theatre has organised a two-day programme at the National Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), to rejoice and discuss the works and life of the maestro.

In order to make the event, which will run today and tomorrow, memorable, Theatre will stage Abdullah Al Mamun's much acclaimed play, *Meraj Fokirer Ma*. The play will be staged today twice, for the 198th and 199th time at the National Theatre Hall of BSA, at 5 pm and 7 pm, respectively. Tomorrow, the play will be staged at the Seminar Hall of BSA at 4:30 pm for the 200th time. Three actors from the play – Ferdausi Majumdar, Ramendu Majumdar and Maruf Kabir, will be presented with crests tomorrow as well.



From the play 'Meraj Fokirer Ma'

Masum Reza's 'Nityapuran' makes a century today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

There are certain plays, when staged, leave a mark on the audience. It makes them coming back for more. One such play, which has been enthralling the viewers over the years, is *Nityapuran*.

A production of *Desh Natok*, two shows -- the 99th and 100th -- are scheduled to take place today at the Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) at 4 pm and 7 pm respectively. The shows have been named *Bridhangoli Bishorjone Shotoratri*.

Playwright and director of *Nityapuran*, Masum Reza will take to the stage and act after 24 years. He will don the role of

Dronacharya. Despite being occupied with writing and directing, Masum Reza is enthusiastic to take part in the play as an actor today, as it will mark the 100th show, a milestone worth remembering.

On the other hand, actors Bonna Mirza, Naznin Hasan, Chumki, Shushoma Sharker and Shirin Khan Moni, are all delighted to be a part of the play during such a significant moment. The actors are avid admirers of theatre, and feel gratified to be a part of the fraternity.

According to *Desh Natok*, a seminar will be held today at 10 am regarding *Nityapuran* at BSA.



Singer Taylor Swift was recently named the world's highest-paid entertainer, closely followed by Kylie Jenner and Kanye West. The 29-year-old pop star, hot off her 2018 'Reputation' tour and album, earned an estimated \$185 million to take the No 1 spot. Swift also topped the list in 2016 after her best-selling '1989' tour and album.

SOURCE: REUTERS

The Daily Star

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