

BOARDING PASS
BY SHEEMA HOSSAIN



BONIFACIO

A Corsican holiday

The first thing I think of when I look back at my recent trip to the Corsican town of Bonifacio is the wind — my hair was flying all over the place.

This is a windy place, confirmed our host at the bed and breakfast, who was driving us to the city centre from our hotel. He had left mainland France in favour of this gorgeous island, which was also the birthplace of Napoleon.

"The people are nicer here", he said. So far, this had proved to be true. Our hotel was in a quiet village away from the town, and he himself offered to drive us there in the morning for our sightseeing.

Sightseeing meant going on full tourist mode. We took a train up a hill, which deposited us near a historic cemetery in the old town. Apart from the incredible views of the ocean, there were the winding streets running through the old town, oozing the charm of a bygone era.

Perhaps the most impressive was the Staircase of the King of Aragon. A steep staircase cut into a cliff from the 15th century, there is a legend that says it was built in only one night!

Standing at the top, I could see the stairs plummeting down the high cliff, to the crashing waves of the ocean below. A very real fear of heights kept my sister and me from venturing downwards.

Lunchtime — or any meal for that matter — is serious business in France. When we arrived on the previous day, our travels made us miss lunch, so that late in the afternoon, we wandered around the beach near our bed and breakfast, and found a cafe serving food. We had a salad with reduced balsamic vinegar and toasted pine nuts, followed by chocolate crepes, all the while sitting on benches, with our bare feet resting on the sand.

For dinner, we hiked up a small hill. It was the closest restaurant to our hotel. Most guests bring a car, but since we did not, walking was our only option, which, later that night, turned out to be a blessing.

It was dark when we started back for our hotel after dinner, and not a single light, artificial or otherwise, could be seen on the road. It was pitch dark.

Below us was the road illuminated by our phone torches, above us were only big trees and a million stars. As we walked down the hill in the cool night air, we realised that this was one of the very few times in our lives that we had seen the night as it truly is.

Photo: Sheema Hossain



نربط الكويت بالعالم
Linking Kuwait
To The World



LS SUGGESTS

An artist's oasis

"And when things get tough, this is what you should do. Make good art"

— Neil Gaiman, *Make Good Art*

We are all aware of the extensive contributions made by Dhaka University in upholding the traditions and safeguarding the essence of Bengali culture. The moment one enters the campus, history is seen written on its walls for all of posterity. The Charukola campus is an equal bearer of such cultural markings.

The Faculty of Fine Arts, Charukola, situated in Shahbagh, is the branch of Dhaka University which deviates from all the complexities of science. It caters to art lovers in general and students who wish to pursue arts. It is stunning to see a well renowned institution to have such an active field of arts with an attractive reputation despite current society's obsession with more technical subjects.

The students of Charukala learn the skills required in making the perfect portrait. Starting from basic outlines and shapes, the students learn to master techniques of mosaic, oil painting, acrylics, abstract styles of expression, and many more. However, their learning and experience is not confined within the walls of the classrooms but rather the entire world is their oyster.

Charukola teaches its students the basic ABCs and the students have the freedom to use these basics to make their own visual poetry and express their thoughts and ideas. Taking inspiration from all around, the creative outcome of these students has awe-inspiring potential and cater to both traditional and contemporary art styles.

Many things contribute to the welcoming and amiable ambience of the campus. Other than the praiseworthy architecture of the building itself, the Charukola campus is quite attractive. The aura of the place resembles a free-spirit ambience where people of different

personalities gather over a cup of tea to get creative.

As the cliché goes, in any art institution you are bound to see someone sketching away with traditional equipment. Well, the same goes for Charukola. Either individually or in groups, students partake in mastering the techniques of expression. However, one does not have to be a student of Dhaka University to visit such aesthetically pleasing places to get the creative juices flowing. The campus is open for all to indulge in.

One cannot talk about Charukola and ignore the spectacular folk art and eye-catching sculptures. The vibrant colours and bold figures of the graffiti and pastoral art capture the entirety of Bengali rural society and is a reflection of the Bengali society itself.

The sculptures in the campus will be a nightmare for anyone who has pediophobia, the bloodcurdling fear of mannequins and dolls. But once the fear is overcome, the sculptures are rather unique and outstanding. The sculptures appear almost as a 'tableau vivant' or a living picture.

The hyper-realistic sculptures, appear to resemble mostly children and can carry whatever meaning depending on how one sees and interprets them. For some students and visitors, there is something particularly eerie about three blue sculptures placed under a tree.

Even today, there is not enough discourse about art and appropriate appreciation of folk art. Above that, artists today are overlooked in society and in the work field. Despite all the pre-existing notions, Charukola strives to create a space for young artists to explore their creative side and hold on to the folk art which we are starting to lose sight of.

By Puja Sarkar

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed