

THE KING of television romance

Mizanur Rahman Aryan gets candid

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

One of the most prolific young directors of our time, Mizanur Rahman Aryan had a great year with hits such as *Tumi Amari*, *Dekha Hobe Ki?* and *Sublet* under his belt. Aryan, who writes the scripts for his projects as well, has often times ventured out of his comfort zone and honed his directorial skills with a vast array of work. *The Daily Star* presents a candid interview with the king of romantic drama.

Thank you so much for your time. Could you tell us about your current projects?

As of now, I am working on two 75-minute telefilms – a love story featuring Apurba and Mehazabien, and a family drama with two phenomenal women, Aupee Karim and Nusrat Imrose Tisha. I will not disclose further details about them, but I am sure that the audience will like the projects.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Even though you are an expert in romantic tele-fictions, most of your stories have sad endings. Why is that?

Tell me, how many real-life love stories have successful and happy endings? In our lifetimes, we tend to have many unfulfilled love stories that remain with us as memories, and my stories are mere reflections of these memories. We never know what happens to the fictional characters in the stories, and that is what I find most intriguing.

In many of the tele-fictions made here, we see the same faces repeatedly. Why are directors not working with new actors in the industry?

There are many restrictions that we, as directors, have to work with. Firstly, the budget and script are presented to us in a way that we only have a few options to work with. In many cases, we cannot experiment with newer actors, since the producers will also have a say in the casting. Naturally, the makers would want a popular face in their project, as it increases the chances of the project being a hit. You will notice, for example, in the top 20 dramas in a year, 12-15 of them will feature the likes of Apurba and Afran Nisho. That being said, I have personally worked with many young and talented actors, including Yash Rohan, Manoj Kumar and Allen Shuvro, among others.

If you were given the freedom to work with any actor in Bangladesh, that you have not worked with before, who would it be?

If it is a middle-aged love story, I would work with Chanchal Chowdhury and Mahfuz Ahmed. If it is a family drama, I would love to cast Mosharraf Karim.

You have solidified yourself as a top-tier director for the TV industry in the country. Do you have any plans to make a film yet?

In fact, I do plan to release a film by next year! It will be a love story, and the talks for it are in the final stages. However, we have not finalised a cast yet. I hope to publish an official declaration soon.



PHOTO: COURTESY

DUST UNDER HER FEET launches in Bangladesh

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Sharbari Zohra Ahmed's debut novel *Dust Under Her Feet* (2019) had its Bangladeshi launching ceremony at the Department of English and Humanities of BRAC University, recently. This was a packed event, filled with students, writers and academics. Seema Amin, a lecturer in the department, began the conversation by commenting on the dialogical voices that people find in the novel's unusual setting -- a nightclub in 1940s Kolkata (then Calcutta). This was followed by a conversation between Aasha Mehreen Amin from *The Daily Star* and Sharbari, with the author shedding light on the theme, the setting

and the way that the story unfolds.

In the ensuing conversation with the audience, Sharbari brought to focus the largely untold story of the Asian front of World War II, where the Japanese, having already entered Burma, were on the threshold of Bengal. The advent of American soldiers in Kolkata has the added effect of the local population experiencing the rising imperial power, who, on the surface, were friendlier and more benign than the crusty British colonialists. This dramatic background provides an apt setting for the story. The combination of American soldiers, Bengali nightclub entertainers and the background of the war sparked the

audience's interest, and hopefully, the novel will have a good readership in Bangladesh.

The author also shed light on the vagaries of writing as a Bangladeshi-American woman in the US -- the kinds of expectations that publishers have, the difficulties of going beyond 'mangoes' and 'spices', as well as overcoming the prejudices faced by Muslims. To find a voice that is true to the writer's own interests is difficult enough, coupled with finding a platform that is willing to hear that voice. Coming to Dhaka from a tour of literary festivals in India, (New Delhi and Kolkata), and special book events in Bangalore and Kolkata

hosted by her publishers, Sharbari was very upbeat about the reception of writers like herself in the region. She has already started working on her second novel, while at the same time writing a screenplay based on *Dust Under Her Feet*.

Sharbari Zohra Ahmed is a successful writer and director, known for her plays *Aimee Undercover* (2008), *Raisins Not Virgins: Abdul* (2005) and *Duniya* (2009), a short story collection (published by Daily Star Books) *The Ocean of Mrs Nagai*, as well as being one of the co-authors of the TV series *Quantico*. The novel bears the stamp of her experience in theatre and television, and can easily be adapted into a film.



'Dilnawaz', a sufi dance production based on a short story by Rahatara Begum, was recently presented at Jatra Biroti, Banani. The production, choreographed by Canadian-Iranian artiste Sashar Zarif, featured artistes of Shadhona - A Center for Advancement of Southasian Culture.

PHOTO: COURTESY



Scene: Anisul Haque's solo art show underway in China

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Promising Bangladeshi artist Anisul Haque's second solo art exhibition, *Scene* is underway at X Space Art Space, Guyilang, Nanjing in China. Following the artists first solo exhibition, *Unfortunate Aspect of Humanity*, held at the School of Design Art Gallery, Nanjing University of the Arts, China held this January, *Scene* was inaugurated on December 6.

The current exhibition highlights different human identities based on religion, culture, nationality and more. "Though mankind is the best creation in this world, people are gradually losing their humane qualities, and gradually becoming violent to each other. That's



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why I create my artworks on the unfortunate aspects of humanity," says Anisul Haque.

"Sometimes we fail to think what would happen to others when we become inhumane to them. I believe that artists can help awaken the conscience of people against injustice. We all have to work together to keep peace and prosperity in the world," adds the artist.

Anisul Haque loves to work with contemporary stories focusing on contrasting themes like sufferings and redemption, grief and comfort. Taking porcelain as his forte, he continues to create sculptures that address social issues. "I combine ceramics with clothes to produce my works. The fabric's textures help me express the unpredictable aspects of the present-day world," says

Anisul Haque, who continues to explore newer themes, celebrating cultural solidarity.

The artist is currently pursuing his higher degree in Ceramic Art and Design at Nanjing University of the Arts in China. He completed both his BFA and MFA from the Department of Ceramics, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka.

This year, Anisul Haque has received several awards, including the Honourable Mention Award in the international art exhibition, *Celebrating Mother Language in the Light of Art*, held at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, and Shivan Cup Youth Ceramics Competition Excellent Award, held at Guangdong, China.

The exhibition is open till January 30, 2020.