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CHOBIMELA SHUNNO

Frozen Song: An exhibition inspired by architect Bashirul Haq



"Frozen Song" is inspired by Bashirul Haq, the architect of DrikPath Bhubon. PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

Labiba Kabir

Happening now at the newly opened DrikPath Bhobon at Panthapath, "Chobi Mela Shunno" has successfully created a space for artists, thinkers, activists, and visionaries in self-reflective, experimental processes. "Frozen Song", an exhibition of the festival, depicts the diversity and transformation of Drik and Pathshala. It is inspired by Bashirul Haq, the architect of DrikPath Bhobon.

Haq's work, the materials he worked with, and the inspirations behind his architecture play an integral role in this exhibition, curated by Najmun Nahar Keya. His work with wood, light and shadow, wind, metal, and glass are elements the artists of "Frozen Song" worked with.



The exhibition features multigenerational artists from different art practices. "I wanted the artists to tell their stories in their own words. But at the same time, I did not want them to be from the same generation and same discipline. I was conscious about the gender balance as well," says Keya.

Artists Dilara Begum Jolly, Efat Razowana Reya, Jewel A Rob, Promotesh Das Pulak, and Reaz Rahman collectively share interests in historical memories, light, space, and the visionary language of modern architecture.

Jolly touches upon themes of gender, trauma and the female body. In "Departed Soul", Jolly talks about her visit to Mahamaya Dalim Bhaban, a building in Chattogram that was primarily used as a torture centre during 1971. At that time, several families were living at Mahamaya, on rent.

However, a number of the chambers were unoccupied. One of those was used as a torture cell. The hollow apartment spoke to Jolly of another creation story for the present. Her other work, "As the Body Speaks", features materials from used quilts, blouses, and petticoats. "I was inspired by my reflection on the direct and indirect experience of the body, under layers of coverings. This led me to arrive at this gestural, performative, almost ritualistic method of needlework, rendering the processual engagement extremely meditative and visceral, to say the least," says the artist.

In "Reflection of Desire", Reya blurs the hovering sky with the path to be traversed. The reflection of desires in images flit on the walls of the mansion, letting its rays light up the future of the building. Her multidisciplinary art practices inspire her to explore the local and global context of modernity and post-modernity, in terms of her own experience, place, and history.

Rob, a visual artist and independent curator, depicts personal experiences ranging from socio-economic issues to political crisis, food politics, genocide, and social movements through the lens of magic realism. "Democracy: Line to Nowhere!" is a recent work from Jewel's ongoing drawing series "Demo-Crazy". The emergence of the series was from the restless political situations, strategies and its culminations all over the map. "These conflicts have strong symbolic influence on the rationally-constructed lives around us. Although we look safe within the walls of our homes, wars and struggles and upheavals continue to reach us through newspapers, television, and the Internet," says the artist.

Pulak's "Dark Tales" is a kinetic sculpture that draws on photographs collected of melancholic memories of social, political, and catastrophic events, put together and held up against the light, creating an ambience, as these events are reflected through shadows onto the wall.

Rahman, another multidisciplinary visual artist, created "Beginning with the End". His site-specific installation is inspired by the theme, "Shunno" (zero), and the very last project of Haq. A sphere in the back of the building made of wooden sticks placed in various heights represent an infinite form, signifying the architect's journey ending with DrikPath Bhubon, but leading on to new activities. The transformed elements displayed on the wall are a site-specific expression of architectural creation. "Frozen Song" will be open to all till February 21, from 11 am to 8 pm at "Chobi Mela Shunno".