



Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts presents

SOLO PAINTING EXHIBITION by

Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed

Urban Delight





Urban Delight کازی احمد
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City of Festival-05
Mixed Media on Canvas 180 X 180 cm 2008

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Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts

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চিত্রকর সালাহউদ্দিন বিমূর্তধারার কাজে পারদর্শী ও দক্ষতা অর্জন করেছেন। রং ব্যবহারেও তাঁর বিশিষ্টতা আছে। উজ্জ্বল লাল কিংবা নীল ব্যবহার করে তিনি তাঁর সৃষ্টিগুচ্ছে নবমাত্রা সঞ্চারণ করেন।

গত শতাব্দীর আশির দশকের শেষ পর্যায় থেকে তিনি এ দেশের চিত্রানুরাগীদের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ করেন। পরবর্তীকালে তাঁর সৃষ্টি নানা ধরনের নিরীক্ষার মধ্য দিয়ে চিত্র অর্জন করে এবং নিজস্ব চিত্রভাষা নির্মাণে তিনি সমর্থ হন।

বেঙ্গল গ্যালারি অব ফাইন আর্টস্ আয়োজিত নগর আনন্দ প্রদর্শনীর সৃজনে কাজী সালাহউদ্দিনের নগর ভাবনার প্রতিফলন আছে। নগরের নানা দিক তাঁর চিত্রপটে উজ্জ্বলভাবে ধরা পড়েছে।

নগরই হচ্ছে একটি দেশের প্রাণকেন্দ্র। নগরের বৈচিত্র্যময় ভবনসমূহের স্থাপত্যশৈলীসহ নানা অনুষঙ্গ তাঁর হৃদয় অন্তর কাঠামোর সঙ্গে মিশে আছে। তিনি অঙ্কন করেছেন ও চয়ন করে নিয়েছেন নগরের আনন্দের সূক্ষ্মাতিসূক্ষ্ম বিষয়। আনন্দের নানা বিষয় ও দিক তাঁর চিত্রাবলির উপজীব্য বিষয় বলে এই চিত্রসমূহের রং উজ্জ্বল, নয়ন সুখকর। তাঁর সৃষ্টি হয়ে ওঠে অতল জলের আস্থানের মতো গভীরসঞ্চরী। সেজন্য এই প্রদর্শনীর চিত্রগুচ্ছে নগরায়ন, নগর জীবনের অনুষঙ্গ কিংবা নাগরিকতার বিচ্ছুরণ সমৃদ্ধ শুধু নয়, হয়ে উঠেছে নগর জীবনেরও উজ্জ্বল প্রতিচ্ছবি।

- বেঙ্গল গ্যালারি অব ফাইন আর্টস্

Striking an Upbeat Note

- Mustafa Zaman

In a world polarised between the developed and the underdeveloped celebration of urbanism runs the risk of arousing emotions contrary to the enthusiasm some feel around the very concept of development and growth. Others may even resent the process of urbanisation citing the problematics of urban life -- particularly the transgressions that accompany it in this part of the world. In this particular show, Salahuddin Ahmed has more or less distanced himself from such antagonistic sentiments. Yet his choice of phrase in naming this show may remind one of the voluminous tome written by a Frenchman named Dominique Lapierre, which takes us back to the uneasiness around the concept of cities.

The book in question was never meant to be a vehicle for undermining the inhabitants' aspiration for a better life in a city where resources were appallingly scarce. In *The City of Joy*, Dominique -- the author -- comes off as a transmitter of empathy from the nether world of Kolkata, the locus of his actions and interpretations. But the book can also be perceived as a guide to gritty realities, the kinds that authorities are keen to disregard. It is because of this that for the people in this subcontinent the brace of words that make up the title of the book can never be fully rescued from the irony that it finally got attached to.

The portrayal of urban reality by a representative of the developed world accompanied due amount of authorial compassion, yet the fact remains that most cities in this clime have already plunged into veritable chaos. Which is of course a result of the vain attempts to muster the momentum as well as the might to fit into the development template prescribed by the West, the

author of global progress. From this standpoint, the 'joy' vis-à-vis the cities in this part of the world seems too entwined with the illusion of progress to be able to retain the capacity to stand for actual state of mind.

Salahuddin is out to dislodge that truth, and succeeds to a certain extent. He reorients himself to transcend the real and plumbs deep into himself to hit upon the perennial source of delight -- the human mind, an instrument for imagining the unimaginable, an embodiment of defense, or an antidote of sorts against the mutating paradox, which is today's socio-political reality. Likewise, in his art, reality, the collectively constructed yet seemingly unfathomable domain, is subjected to visual ploys that the artist has developed over the last 15 or so years. The configuration of the city of Dhaka, where he lives and works, has been transmuted into vortexes of fragmented colour fields. The ineffaceable signs of ecstasy in the exteriorized forms help the viewer detect a sense of belonging on the part of the artist, something that may escape the understanding of many a modernist weighed down by the sense of alienation and angst.

Urban Delight, the rubric, under which Salahuddin brings together an array of paintings, echoing the Frenchman's book title, shows unyielding loyalty to the artist's spirited expression. Through the mediation of the mental hue he characterises the real, sometimes to speak a language that takes its cue from a rapturous gaze, and at others, to spell out the precariousness of the world we live in.

But each time, the shapes and lines, which the artist employs with certain dexterity, come together to

uphold the spirit that draws its strength from the brio built around the concept of the picaresque and the polyphonic assembly of colours.

In the majority of the pieces critical considerations are pushed to the back seat, courtesy of the upbeat expression, to make way for the artist's true agenda, which is laying claim to the mental space mostly untainted by incidents that defines the recent day reality. If the pathologies of time were his guide, the artist would have set out to map the city of his inhabitation using an entirely different method.

Instead, Salahuddin writes a carnivalesque saga in myriad chapters. Dividing his oeuvre in a number of series, mostly to reach an emotional altitude -- a high -- which in some paintings spurs an explosion of sorts almost defying the sheer physicality of the paintings, as is the case in the series aptly titled 'Dematerialising the City'. Salahuddin is at his most economical in this batch of works, a trait that helps to bring out the Abstract Expressionist in him. Some of the pieces almost attain a mystical dimension courtesy of the fog-like veil that shrouds the picture plains, blurring the usual contours and colours.

As an inhabitant of Old Dhaka, he is deep into the swirl of things that are centered on the inhabitants' unwavering jest for life. Taking the cue from that collective spirit most paintings give off an overwhelming sense of joy, which at times lead up to an emotional spillover. In 'The City of Festival' series the extraneous materials interact with the plastic plain of the canvas to heighten this feeling of superfluity. Yet these are his most inert of all compositions.

The series 'Image of the City', his most iconoclastic attempt, has been conceived as ominous signs -- or so it seems, because a sense of foreboding permeates most of these pieces. Each painting is built around the concept of wreckage and clutters -- a mass that mostly occupies the lower part of the canvas and is crowned by a strange, solitary form. These forms -- either a lump, or a geometric structure, or even a truncated sun -- ominously preside over a landscape in the verge of disintegration. With these the artist seems inclined to bring into an otherwise rationally conceived, temperate space a sense of time and trepidation. This is an added hue to his present oeuvre. One that first made its appearance way back in the late 1990s.

As defamiliarisation remains one of his goals, Salahuddin's network of lines, agglomeration of forms and colour plains translate, for the most part, into formal arrangements akin to aerial views. Whether these views are conceived as an apotheosis, or a projection of one's state of mind, seems irrelevant in the end, as his intention is to unfurl a world full of objects of pleasurable contemplation.

Contrary to the "forms of things unknown", Shakespeare's metaphysical formulation, Salahuddin brings into view forms that are within the grasp of our knowledge; yet, they hold considerable potential for inciting human emotion. Straddling a line between the real and the constructed in a measured way, the artist, in this show, is bent on plotting a continuity through the means of an abstractness, which is brought to bear upon what lies without. He is a painter who would rather paint the reality than lying in bare for all to see.



City of Joy-08 | Mixed Media on Paper | 16 X 16 cm | 2008



Rhythm of a City -06 Fabric & Acrylic on Paper , 42 X 42 cm 2008



Urbanization-60 Oil on Canvas 120 X 60 cm 2009



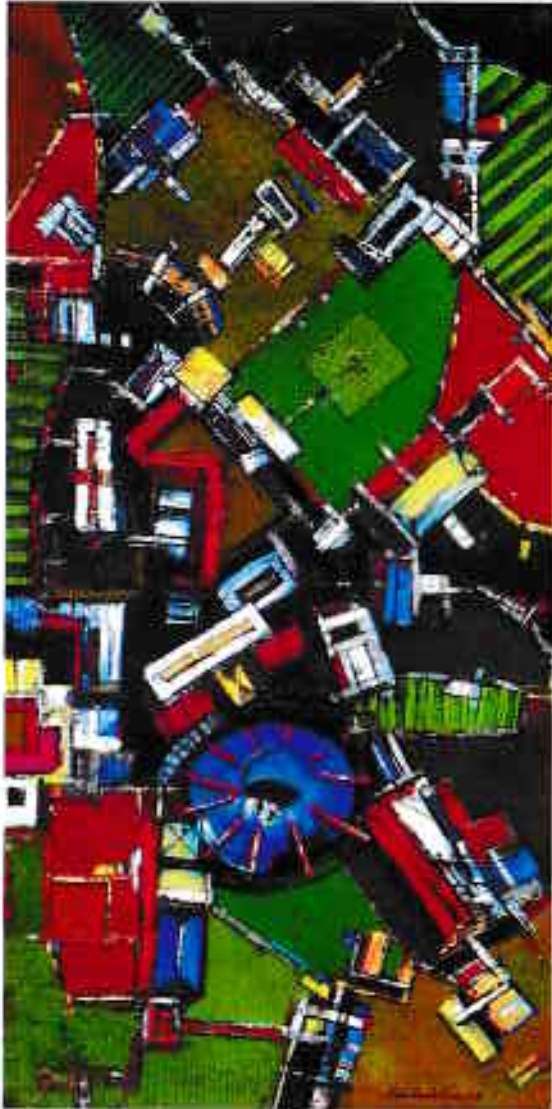
Urbanization-60



Urbanization-35 Oil on Paper 105 X 38 cm 2007



Urbanization-64 Oil on Canvas 120 X 60 cm 2009



Urbanization-63 Oil on Canvas 120 X 60 cm 2009



Rhythm of a City -07 Fabric & Acrylic on Paper 42 X 42 cm 2008



Rhythm of a City -10 Fabric and Acrylic on Paper 42 X 42 cm 2008



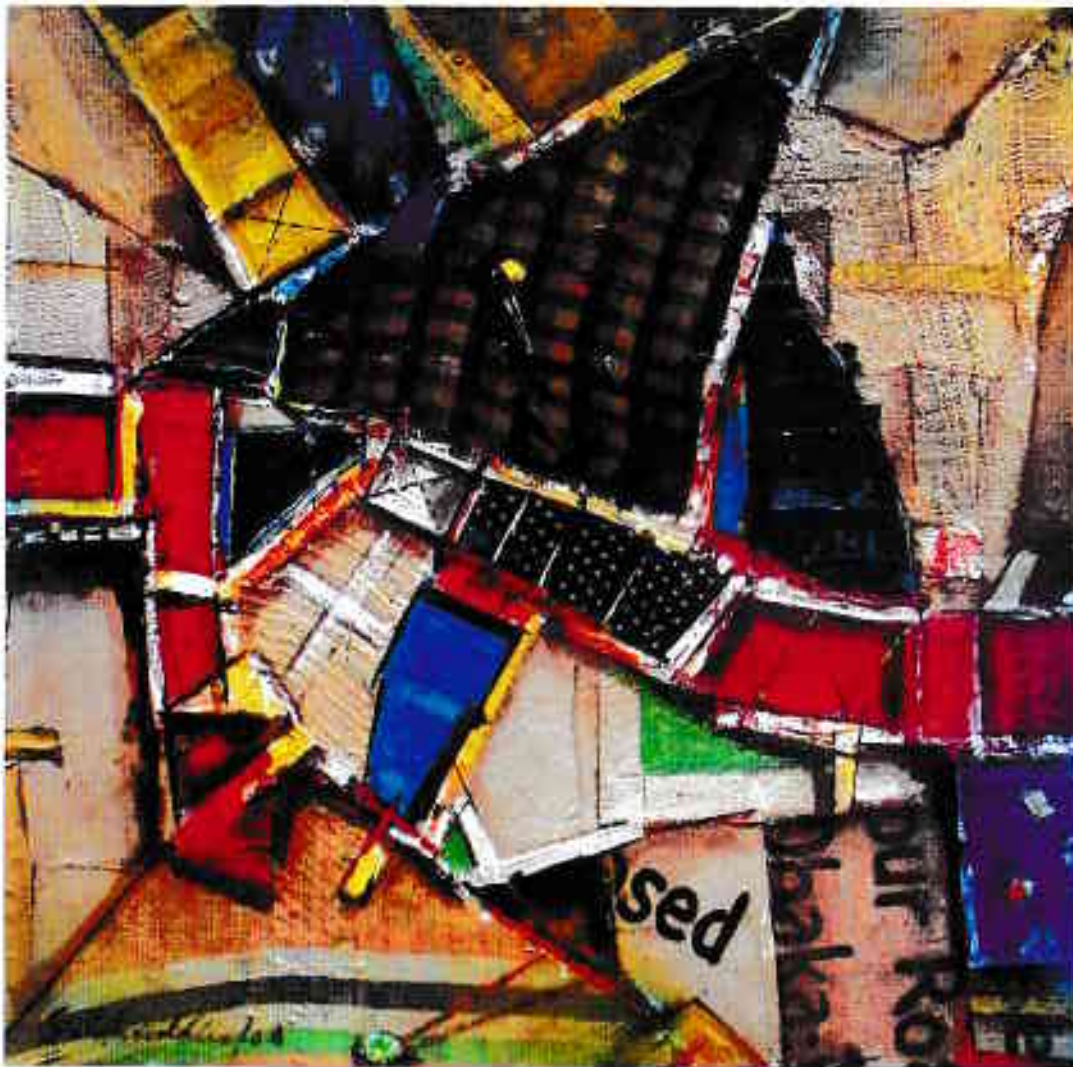
Sheer Chaos-64 D.J. on Canvas . 130 X 120 cm . 2000



Sheer Chaos-05 . Oil on Canvas . 120 X 120 cm . 2009



Rhythm of a City -13 Fabric and Acrylic on Paper 42 X 42 cm 2008



Rhythm of a City -15 Fabric and Acrylic on Paper 42 X 42 cm 2008



Rhythm of a City -11 Fabric and Acrylic on Paper 42 X 42 cm 2008



Urbanization-30 Oil on Paper , 105 X 38 cm , 2007



Urban Image-07 Mixed Media on Paper 64 X 19 cm 2008



Urban Image-08 Mixed Media on Paper 64 X 19 cm 2008



Urban Image-10 Mixed Media on Paper 64 X 19 cm 2008



Urbanization-68 Oil on Canvas 120 X 60 cm 2009



Mega City-1 Mixed Media on Board 180 X 120 cm 2009



Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed

b. 1963, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Education

1986 : MSS, International Relations, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Solo Exhibitions

- 2009 : Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2007 : Bangladesh Gallery, Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh, Kolkata, India
2006 : Nomad Centre & Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan
Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2005 : Jehangir Art Gallery Mumbai, India
Hamial Ari Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
2004 : Spitalfields Gallery, London, UK
La Gallery, Alliance Franchise, Dhaka
Hilton Beijing Gallery, Beijing, China
Art Association of Harrisburg pa, USA
2003 : Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka
2002 : Chuwa Gallery Ginza, Tokyo, Japan
2001 : Seas Art Studios and Gallery, Adelaide, Australia
La Galleria, Alliance Franchise, Dhaka
Birla Academy of Arts and Culture, Kolkata, India
2000 : Art Konsault, New Delhi, India
Solo Miniature Painting Exhibition, Alliance Française, Dhaka
1999 : Gallery 21, Dhaka
1998 : Tourist Service Center; Kathmandu, Nepal
Shajahan Art Gallery New Delhi, India
1997 : Indian Cultural Center Gallery, Dhaka
Alliance Française, Dhaka
1995 : Zanul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka
1994 : La Gallery, Dhaka
1993 : Alliance Française, Dhaka
1987 : TSC, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Major Group Exhibitions

- 1993-08 : 6th - 13th Asian Art Biennial Bangladesh, organized by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 1992-05 : 10th & 16th National Art Exhibition, organized by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 2004 : 5th Art Now Asia, Las Vegas Art Museum, Las Vegas, USA
- 2003-04 : 8th & 9th Art Mirai International Art Exhibition, Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 2003 : Orient Color and Shape in Jakarta
- 2000-03 : 6th & 7th International Biennial of Miniature Art, Yugoslavia
- 2002 : 25th, 26th & 27th Anniversary International Miniature Art Show, MASE, USA
- 2002 : 2nd Biennial of Contemporary Painting of the Islamic World, Tehran, Iran
- 1997-02 : 64th, 65th & 66th Miniature Painters Sculptures and Grover's Society of Washington DC, USA
- 1996-02 : 12th, 17th, 19th & 20th Annual juried Miniature Art Exhibition, Long Island, USA
- 2001-02 : 4th & 5th International Exhibition of Miniature and Small Pictures, SAMAF, France
- 2002 : 39th Annual Lake Oswego Festival the Arts International Miniature Art Show, USA
- 2001 : 1st Contemporary Young Artists Exhibition from Bangladesh, Chuwa Gallery, Ginza, Tokyo, Japan
- 2000 : Paper Mill Playhouse International Miniature Art Exhibition, NY, USA
- 2000 : Contemporary Art from Bangladesh Exhibition in China
- 1999 : 'Sonar Bangladesh' at Art day, New Delhi, India
- 1998 : 1st Tone International Miniature Art Exhibition, Dhaka
- 1998 : 30th Painters Exhibition from Bangladesh, Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Japan
- 1995-97 : 10th & 12th Georgia Miniature Art Inc, USA

- 1995 : 2nd Tone National Miniature Art Competition Dhaka
- 1988 : 8th Young Artist's Art Exhibition, organized by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 1987 : Victory Day Art Exhibition, organized by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka

Workshops

- 1999 : India-Bangladesh Art Camp, Organized by Kolkata Nandanik, India
- 1995 : Metal Workshop, Conducted by Suzanne Benton at Institute of Fine Arts (presently Faculty of Fine Arts) University of Dhaka
- 1989 : Art History and Art Appreciation Course, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Dhaka

Awards

- 2008 : Honorable Mention Award, 13th Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2002 : Honorable Mention Award, 69th Miniature Painters, Sculptures and Grover's Society of Washington DC, USA
- 2000 : 2nd Prize in Abstract and Surrealism, 25th Anniversary International Miniature Art Show, HASF, USA
- 1998 : Honorable Mention Award, 65th Miniature Painters, Sculptures And Grover's Society of Washington DC, USA
- 1998 : 2nd Prize in Abstract Art and Surrealism, 1st Tone International Miniature Art Exhibition, Bangladesh
- 1997 : 1st Prize in Abstract Art, 12th Georgia Miniature Art Inc, USA
- 1996 : 4th Prize, 12th Annual Juried Miniature Art Exhibition, Long Island, USA
- 1995 : Honorable Mention Award, 10th Georgia Miniature Art Society Inc, USA

Present position

Freelance Artist

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