



# INFORMAL

Painting Exhibition by

**SYED ZAHID IQBAL**

8 March - 5 April, 2016

Everyday 5 - 9 pm

কলা কেন্দ্র

**KALA KENDRA**  
a non-profit space for art

1/11, Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur  
Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh  
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Curated by Wakilur Rahman & Kehkasha Sabah

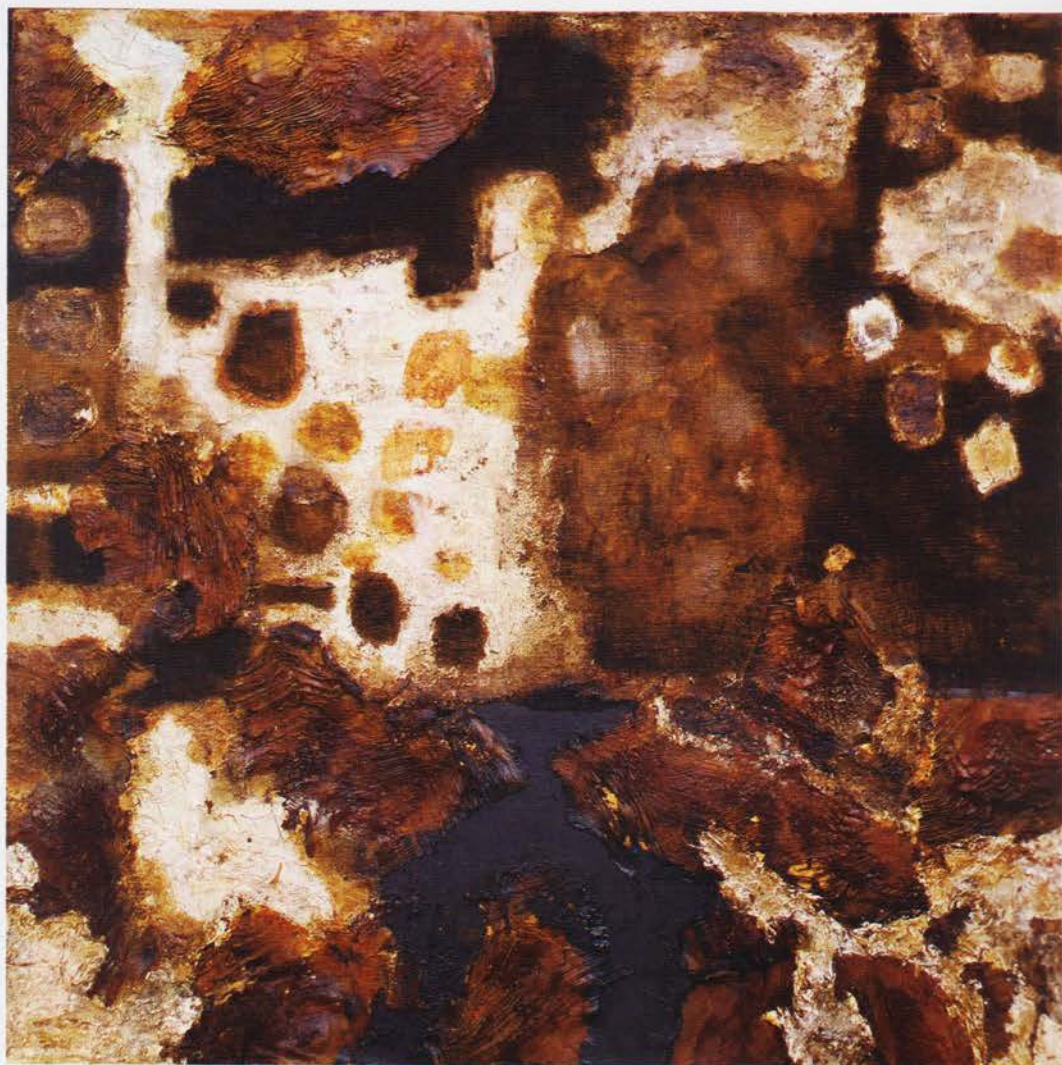


Image of nature 1, mixed media, 122 x 122 cm, 2002

### **Materiality as a point of Departure**

Mustafa Zaman

Artist, writer and editor of Depart

Abstraction as a language has become recognizable through a number of well known profiles in this clime. One of them has undoubtedly accomplished its goal using gesture-heavy picture plain, and its exponents were once known as the prime movers of the visual equivalent of Modernity which sought to redefine the art of Bangladesh beginning in the early 1960s. Murtaja Baseer, Mohammad Kibria et al, especially the latter for his persistence, remained at the apex of the movement which made "textured surface" a mainstay in the transmission of art as objects of contemplation. Such works, though came heavily laden with actual or make-believe texture, also often displayed a tendency to turn the entire ecosystem of a painting into a misty haze, as is the case with many a post-Kibria abstractionist. As a counterpoint of such transcendental image-making process one may choose to device each work as plain tangible surface – one which looks more like a solid object than serving as a window through which an indefinable image with a simulated depth of field appears. Zahid, a young abstractionist, does just that by practically introducing half-hidden, half-recognizable materials onto the surface of the work to initiate a retreat to objecthood.

Yet in the final analysis, Zahid's objects are presented as an "image" to affect our vision. His image works as a playful encounter plunging one as it does into an undecided area of "visual field" where absence and presence as well as imageness and objecthood are

## Zahid's art of Informal surfaces

- Kehkasha Sabah

Artists have their own process or acts when they felt bound to create art. Some artist never preoccupied with a thought of art making, they like to play with their materials for instance. Sometimes their works remain an informal act but have some important factors. Artist Syed Zahid Iqbal has this kind of chemistry while playing with lots of unrefined materials and his excavated experiences. His presented artworks would hardly seems painterly finish to us as they have rough, volatile and abstract superficiality. Zahid's idea, working process and art presentation qualitatively pursue a kind of virtue, where he access to some materials from his subconscious or unconscious mind as part of his creative process. To be more precise Zahid's virtue is 'informality', which made his wall hanged paintings to act more like an object on a viewer space.

Zahid's 'Informality' in art had been practicing by some artists since Post WW2. If we look back on history of art, we can see this practice was coined as 'Arte Informale' movement and was paralleled with Abstract Expressionism, Lyrical abstraction, Automaticism and Arte Povera movements. Informal art or Tachism, evolve with the artists who wish to express materials reality like a hypnotic or trancelike state, recording their train of mental associations without censorship or attempts at formal exposition. Zahid's paintings are likely attempts about the absence of premeditated structure, conception or approach than a mere casual, loosened or relaxed art procedure.

I believe the most useful way to understand Zahid's works is not in terms of its formal evolution but in terms of thematic content and their materials essence. And the informal qualities of his paintings are significant not in themselves but as part of the work's expressive message. Zahid's approach to a canvas is dramatic: Pasting paper, lime, bitumen, cement, sand or stitching fabric, canvas, jute or hammering nails, iron on wood, plywood to prepare his primary surfaces. Meanwhile, the surface became a major part of Zahid's painting. Then he starts to work with other raw materials, glued found objects- pieces from metallic scraps, straw, coconut shell, barks or leaves, draw lines or forms or erase some forms with pouring colors, bitumen or lacquer. Sometimes he starts to puncture or drilled his canvas to achieve free expressions of his materials. And oftentimes he burn or torch the surface of different materials to introduce distortions of form. Zahid create a painting as a lack or absence of form itself – a non-formal or un-formulated – and not a simple reduction of formality or formality. Zahid's works are important for us, as his assembling materials challenge our assumptions about the obligatory flatness of restrained abstraction.

Zahid as a contemporary artist, we can ask some questions on his art. Does Zahid's paintings express the social, political, cultural and spiritual experience of our own time? How his paintings trails on the contemporaneity as they are fully concern about their materiality and abstraction? Or, is it too necessary to drag out some rational connection of an artists who himself wants to be irrational or wants to lose the formal behavior of his paintings to achieve some spiritual language of own? So, it will be loitering for us to look for any story or content in Zahid's work. Rather his materiality bespeaks many things which are profoundly made his works identical. For instance, Zahid has post graduated in painting from Faculty of fine arts when figuration or academic taste was highly priorities for artists establishment but from his studentship time he ignored that aesthetics and like to follow his taste, unique working process and own language for his art's establishment. He has some connection between culture and nature in his work. His choosing of earthly color palette (shades of brown, gamboge yellow, green, cobalt blue, ash and black) and assembled (organic and raw) materials shows he might has an inspiration from our nature, landscape or cityscapes. But like conventions of pictorial composition Zahid ignored the traditional abstraction in favor of the literal materiality of a thing. His used material has an existence of its own and as a artist he required to use these existential energy from the materials. By extending and exploring the limits of the materiality of a painting, he ignored the extended preservations thoughts of them rather he like to challenge us with an enormous rough surface with its fragility and vulnerability to nature over time. This idea gives shape a rationality to understand us the disorder of post-atomic



Image 2, mixed on canvas. 31 x 31 cm, 2016

contemporary culture.

Zahid's works are art of informal surfaces, he explore the possibilities of materials gesture, signage and emotion as the basis of communication. His surfaces thrive to present vernacular taste & spirituality to us. His painting gives us spaces to think, we tend to calculate them in our tangible realities, sometimes they do fill our enigma, sometime they leave a mysterious mark on our mind and remain it's informality with a tremendous sensuous feeling likely to hearing a kind of beautiful music. If we think, music is a patterns of sound, Zahid's works are patterns of some ungoverned materials and their righteous spirits. As if, his performative, expressionistic and experimental ways with materials he tries to emits the senses he absorb from his surroundings. His informal surfaces of the paintings transcends senses to us, the senses of ethical weight and burden of living.

## Syed Zahid Iqbal

Born in 1972 Born in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Present Position: Freelance artist



### Education

1997: M.F.A (Drawing & Painting) Institute of Fine Art, University of Dhaka.

2012: Scholarship, support stipend form can serrat (canserrat@jazzivins.com) for art Residency, Barcelona Spain

### Award

2016: Grand Prize, Kahal International Art Fair, organized by Kahal Art Group & Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

### Exhibition

2016: 'Informal' 2nd solo painting exhibition at Kalakendra, Dhaka, Bangladesh

2015: 21st national art exhibition at Bangladesh shilpakala academy

2014: Asian art biennale at Bangladesh shilpakala Academy

2014: 'APPOINTMENT' group art exhibition of 2 countries. Germany & Bangladesh; Shilpangan gallery

2014: 'KAHAL' Japan Bangladesh international exchange exhibition at the art complex center of Tokyo, Japan

2013: 20th national art exhibition at shilpakala academy .Dhaka Bangladesh

2012: Participated at 'Dhaka art summit- 1' at Shilpakala academy, Samdani art foundation .Dhaka Bangladesh

2012: Blue mountain scape a mural art exhibition at Can-serrat el Bruk, Barcelona Spain

2009: "Triangle" Bangladesh, Group Art Exhibition at Imago-Dei Art Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal.

2009: "Water and Art" Exhibition, Organized by "Triangle" Bangladesh at Kathmandu, Nepal.

2007: 1st Solo Art Exhibition, Chuwa Gallery, Ginza, Tokyo, Japan.

2007: 17th National Art Exhibition, Organized by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

2005: Contemporary Artist 4 Exhibition, Chuwa Gallery, Ginza, Tokyo, Japan.

1995 till now artist have participated all most all National and Asian art exhibitions and yearly exhibitions in Faculty of fine arts. From 1993 he has also participated in different group exhibitions and workshops in Bangladesh, Japan and India.

Collection: The Pan Pacific Hotel Sonargaon, Hotel Sheraton and different Private Home and Abroad.

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Cover, Burning life, mixed on canvas, 122 x 183 cm, 2011

Back Cover, Burning life 3, mixed on box board, 61 x 47 cm, 2013

### Acknowledgement

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Nissar Hossain, Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka held the speech on the opening occasion.

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### অনাড়ম্বর

ওয়াকিলুর রহমান

কাপড়, ক্যানভাস, কাঠ, প্লাইউড, কাগজ, বোর্ড, টিন-

সেলাই করে, পেডেক ঠুকে, আঠা, তেল, রঙ, আলকাতরা/ পিচ দিয়ে, সিমেন্ট, চুন সুড়কি ঢেলে; ছিদ্র করে, বিকৃত করে, ঐকে, গড়িয়ে, ঘষে, মুছে, পুড়িয়ে-

চকচকে, খসখসে, পোড়া পোড়া, অসমতল, ফাটাফাটা, ছবির উপরিতল বা চামড়া তৈরি-

একেবারে ব্যক্তিগত ভাষা, স্বাধীন অভিব্যক্তি; সর্বজনীন ব্যাখ্যা নেই, গল্প নেই, অপরিষ্কৃত,

জ্যামিতি নাই, ফর্ম আছে/নাই, রেখা আছে/নাই, রঙ আছে তবে রঙিন নয়, পোড়া রঙ অথবা পুড়ে পুড়ে রঙ যেন বাড়, বৃষ্টি, তাপে তৈরি-

ছবির গুরু ও শেষ অভিজ্ঞতা নির্ভর-

আমরাও এ শিল্পের মুখোমুখি হই, ইন্দ্রিয় গুলি সজাগ হয়ে ওঠে, ভাবিত হই, বুঝতে চাই, মেলাতে চাই- কখনও মেলে, কখনও মেলে না-

দৃশ্য শিল্পের ধারাবাহিক ইতিহাসে, শিল্প ও শিল্পীর রোমাঞ্চকর সম্পর্কে এ ধরনের ক্রিয়া, চর্চা ও উপস্থাপনা অবসম্ভাবী ভাবেই এসেছে-

জাহিদের শিল্প কর্ম ব্যক্তি অভিজ্ঞতা লব্ধ, ইন্দ্রিয় নির্ভর অভিজ্ঞতার মুখোমুখি করায়।

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