



La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Pavilion of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at the 58th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia

"THIRST"

Bangladesh is planning to hold in the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia for the third time, and set up a pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019. The artistic project takes into account one of the central issues of Bangladesh and many other countries of the world: the emerging water crisis and what the crisis entails.

The exhibition, appropriately titled THIRST, expects to focus on one of the problems that most affects Bangladesh: the crisis of fresh water. Although this country is rich in water resources, it has to fight seasonal problem of drought; the withdrawal of water in the upstream of many rivers, on which India has erected dams; groundwater pollution and scarcity of drinking water in many areas. Although there are hundreds of rivers crisscrossing Bangladesh, with fifty four rivers sharing common flows with India, it continues to experience water supply problems because of drying up of water flow, salinity and blockages created by dams and sluice gates. Other problems of ecological, agricultural, industrial, urban and political nature that are reflections of the socio-economic and industrial development of the country also add to the seriousness of the water crisis. In recent years the Government of Bangladesh has launched a series of humanitarian interventions and urban plans aimed at solving the problem in the shortest time possible, especially with the construction of deeper wells to access groundwater. Despite this, millions of people, especially in rural areas and in the poorest sections of the population, still have little access to clean water sources.

However, Bangladesh, a country afflicted by this and many other problems, is experiencing steady growth in its agricultural, industrial and communication sectors. Its consistent GDP growth of 6.5 to 7.5% over the last decade is giving it stability. Coupled with this, the country is also witnessing extraordinary artistic developments. In recent years, a growing number of artists have entered the international scene with exhibitions, workshops and performance based art shows of highly innovative, and, in many cases, playful and provocative nature. They are showing the latest trends in our art which reflect, along with an aesthetic content, concerns about ecology, politics and society as well as various rights issues including those that are concerned with gender, race, ethnicity and the marginalized groups such as internal refugees.

In general, the art of Bangladesh is characterized by a rich visual language, which is also open to external influences and the variety of suggestions that come from the real world. Every artist finds in the reality that surrounds him/her a particular source of inspiration which is derived both from nature and from its rich cultural heritage to which people from rural and urban settings and belonging to four religions have contributed over centuries. The reality of Bangladesh has always shaped its artistic productions, which, in turn, have worked as sources of cathartic release of the emotions, feelings and sensibilities that have been at odds with that reality. In other words, art seeks to represent the phenomenal experience, purified from the

negativities of social, economic and political life. Reality, in other words, is symbolically reconstructed without giving away the artists' right to question and critique it.

It is this awareness of art both as an aesthetic expression and a social, political and cultural critique -- which has engaged our artists over the last few decades -- that comes to fore in the exhibition Bangladesh is planning to hold in the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia

A number of artists, considered to be the most representative of the new art trends in Bangladesh will be present. They will individually and collectively interpret the theme of 'Thirst' which goes beyond the merely physical to branch out into many territories—intellectual, artistic and so on. Along with them there will be two great interpreters of the Italian artistic tradition who, in turn, face the theme 'Thirst' in their own way. Although each artist has different linguistic characteristics, they travel essentially the same path and take on the task of interpreting the phenomenal reality, in this case the emerging water crisis, purified of its associated negativities but without losing sight of the core concerns. The creative contribution of the artists who deal with this difficult subject recognizes, in symbolic or metaphorical terms, the life-saving and therapeutic properties of water in its proper and regular use. As water is able to eradicate impurities from any organism, so the creative experiences of this exhibition expect to purify and sublimate the phenomenal world from any negative connotation and transform it into something else: the work of art. The thirst for pure water that people feel is not only a physical requirement, but also becomes an expression of a thirst for life or knowledge. The exhibition will also highlight the thirst that women of Bangladesh feel for equality, respect and the freedom to be their own and on their own. An exemplary contribution of Bangladeshi women to social development is not simply their entering the field of work in increasing numbers every year, but many village women's daily struggle to collect pure drinking water to keep their families healthy and happy. With this project we would show that, despite many adversities, Bangladesh is pursuing a new artistic tradition that displays its affinity with the modern and postmodern trends elsewhere in the world. Bangladesh has a strong and vital art that celebrates life. There are many creative experiences that, between nature and tradition, transform our everyday experiences into something magical and mysterious – something like the life-giving and healing power of pure water, which is capable of quenching the thirst of humanity, transmitting to it the message of hope.

Viviana Vannucci

Exhibition: Pavilion of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Project: 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia

Title: "Thirst"

Opening: at 17:30, on 10th May 2019

Date: from 10th May to 23th November 2019

Venue: Zenobio Palace – First floor - Dorsoduro 2596 –

Commissioner: Mr Liaquad Ali Lucky

Curators: Mr Mokhlesur Rahman and Miss Viviana Vannucci

Press Contacts:

Milvia Aversa

+39 3383131595

milvia.averna@ideeinforma.it