

Mohammad Eunos:

A Soul Searching Soul

by Mustapha Khalid Palash

An insertion of a still-life titled 'Still Standing' in a national daily, perhaps in the year 1977, attracted attention of many like me. Being a student of the 9th grade, I saw it and still can visualize the painting that won the Zainul Award among the students of the then Dhaka Art College. That painting, though very implicitly, symbolized the war-ruined newly born Bangladesh further shattered by the sociopolitical conditions of that time. Six years after its independence the nation saw several radical changes happening in the social and political arena when Mohammad Eunos passed out with distinction from the only fine arts school of that time, and echoed the devastating condition of the society through his 'Still Standing' painting. The statement of that painting was nothing but restating the valor that, under any circumstance, Bengal as a nation thrives. Today it may seem very easy to exert the protest against the odds in the society but at that particular time such atrocities weren't at all allowed by the autocratic rulers. However, Eunos managed to do that much indirectly that we could apprehend today. As a matter of fact in the 70s, our culture, politics, ethics, perhaps all facets were in a perplexing mode as the newly born nation was made parentless even before it could cross its infancy. Being a product of such a critical period, Eunos could easily jump over to a comparatively better situation in the 80s.





Pleasure in Broken Forms 2

As other brilliant young artists in his early days, Eunus showed his acquisitiveness towards the interplay of landscape-nature with light-shadows. His water colours were vibrant with minimal interventions and can be marked as the finest works in this medium. Eunus has fostered himself through a perfect process of practice and never intended to skip the steps. This might have been the reason for his steady growth to reach the pinnacle. In the course of time, like all successful artists, Eunus devotes himself to different stages to reach the apex. He exerts his efforts religiously in producing paintings and works simultaneously on several of them. This is quite unique for an artist shifting his thoughts from one to another in a given frame of time. This indicates Eunus' meticulousness in perceiving life and finally putting them into his works. As mentioned earlier, Eunus' journey of almost four decades is covered with several experimentations and styles, and his withdrawal from the illustrating imagery in art put him in the cluster of 'Abstractionist'. He liberated himself from what he started with and excelled with the abstractions.

Unlike 'Fauvism' where the colours are being deliberately altered in contrary to the reality or unlike 'Cubism' where the forms are being geometricized, his abstractions are not conspicuous; they are of their own without any reference to the reality, defying any partial abstractions. It has been mentioned that Eunus has gone through several experimentations throughout his career but never fumbled to reach the way he wanted to express himself through his works. His consistent experimentations are just the steps set one after another in order to rise to a destination where he ultimately belongs.

Eunus considers himself as an Abstract Expressionist and believes that it's a subject of research and through experimentation one can achieve the goal of accomplishment. Though his thoughts are always submerged in the elements of nature but his expressions tend to defy imitating the outer shell of the reality, rather he tries to grasp the inner soul of the elements and represents them on to the canvases. Being attracted by the nature and its cosmic elements, Eunus depicts the inner thoughts and beauty with their own forms, textures, lines and colours. The conflict and harmony of nature and of the universe excites Eunus to avoid preparing the base drawings or layouts for his works; instead he starts his dialogue with his paintings in a more dialectic manner. His expressions are the derivatives of his memoir that he



Blue Touch



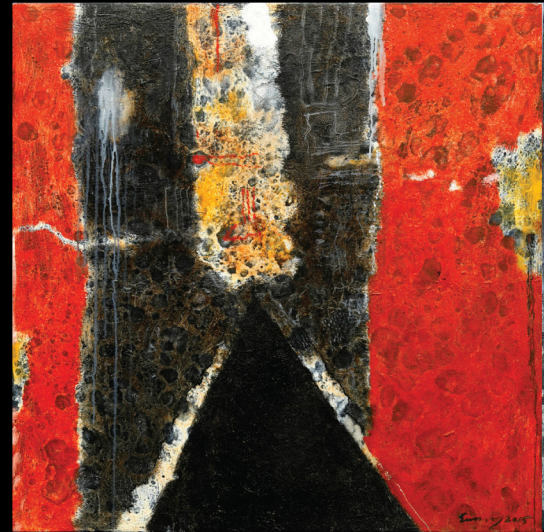
Composition 16



Story of a Wall 3

Composition with red & black

face



collects from nature time to time; sometimes he governs the colours and sometimes he lets the colours take precedence over him, thus searching the meaning of the colours prevailing in the nature. To him painting is a journey to reach a destination through an unsolicited route and to gain new experiences in the course of such a voyage. Such notions are explicit in his paintings as he adopts several layers, some of which slowly become transparent and visible. His 'Wall' series paintings are the perfect depictions of such characters where the newly built clean walls in the course of time turn into a different visual element, embodying the weathering effects and lack of maintenance. These effects truly elucidate the continuing changes in the society. His technique of applying abrupt colours and then trying to discover the solutions is a singular way of how he handles his paintings.

As Eunus pursued his endeavors through methodical manners, he believes that the basic grammar is a must to become a good painter and to break the grammar itself. His works are divine and devoid of the mundanities that finally ensures the spiritual philosophies in his paintings. Like others, Eunus has created his own domain where he could create a character which differentiates him from others. In his domain he has vouched his very own modalities and techniques through which he postulates the beauty out of dreadfulness.





Dark image

Composition 10



Being trained in Japan during his post-graduation, Eunus has never been trapped by the Japanese style; rather he could grab the essence of his training there and employed his own feelings and emotions through colours and forms.

Eunus' paintings are abstract like classical music or modern poetry where he rejects the external aesthetics and reveals the inner soul of the elements. Attempting to emulate children's drawings is also another specialty of Eunus where he, not literally, blindfolds his eyes and plunges his conscious mind into the unconscious inner naivety of childhood.

Ever unsatisfied with his works, Eunus allows the audience to stimulate themselves with their own thoughts so that they can redefine his paintings in their own way. In many cases Eunus, being socially responsive, has done few works where he showed his commitment and capacities as a citizen of the society, obviously by his own language of abstractionism. His works are mostly non descriptive and they are mostly emotion driven. He derives the emotional essences from real life's odds and depicts them on the canvas with his own style.

Eunus, in his creations, is honest, creative, patient, self-esteemed and secular and keeps remembering that great paintings are not the reproduction of any famous works, but rather the continuous quest to



Red Composition 2



Pleasure in Broken forms 7



Pleasure in Broken forms 9

create one's own style. His recent style depicts brilliant colours bringing out the articulation of forms in different pellucid layers. As mentioned earlier, Eunus is an experimentalist not only with forms but also in using varied materials in his paintings; hence he excels himself to a height artists can only desire for.

His own techniques resume from preparing the canvas then applying colours, thick and thin, sometimes adding the debris or found materials, with scratches on it. He never stops as long he finds it at least acceptable according to him. His thirst for making a perfect dialogue between his conscious and the canvas sometimes compels him to destroy his own work to begin from thereon with a new patch of colours. The process continues till he receives a message from his works that it is what he wants. As an experimentalist, in the 90s Eunus did quite a number of collage works and in recent days he resumed doing more collages with different materials like corrugated boards and fabrics.

Mohammad Eunus' efforts are worth mentioning for the future generations as it indicates that consistent and sincere journey is the prima facie for any person, whether creative or not, to achieve the inner goal set by one's conscious. Therefore, the word 'success' to him is only a logical consequence of the propagated journey. ●

