



First solo exhibition by Mayesha Islam Abanti



1st - 4th August, 2025
Safiuddin Shilpalay, House 21A (1st floor)
Road 4, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205



Venue

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My name is Mayesha Islam Abanti. At first, I would like to illustrate what art truly means for me. It has been a shelter, my own safe space from chaos and my scope of healing. Since childhood, I would imagine a lot, I would use vibrant colours to paint my dreams. Growing up, I started falling sick, underwent multiple major surgeries, went through ICU many times and had to go through a life challenging battle. And that's when art took another form, it became therapeutic. It started to heal me. Most of my artworks portray emotions, i use warm and cool colours to paint the layers of emotions I feel ; grief, anger, hurt, shame, guilt, pity, bliss but most importantly, hope. I never lost hope, I never gave up on myself. The word Abanti means "Gift from God" and my baba gave me this sweet daak naam "Abanto".

I am currently studying LLB Law with Criminology at the University of Birmingham. I had been a victim of medical negligence that almost took my life. Therefore, I want to emerge in the legal world. So that I can fight for the voiceless people in my country. So that no healthcare system ever gets away with injustice. Through every hardship in life, I have found my solace in art and I will continue to love it with all my heart.



In this painting of the sea in a stormy setting, I made use of cool tones to express grief, agony, turmoil and the silence after disaster. How your body feels paralysed after a loss, a battle that scarred you for a lifetime. When you have a lot and nothing to say, at the same time.



This portrait titled “পরিনীতা”, illustrates the tale of a hindu woman. I used vermilion red to embody the boldness and valour a homemaker has to possess to protect her home. The vibrant blue strokes have been used to demonstrate the heft of gloom, injustice a woman often has to face in a patriarchal society.



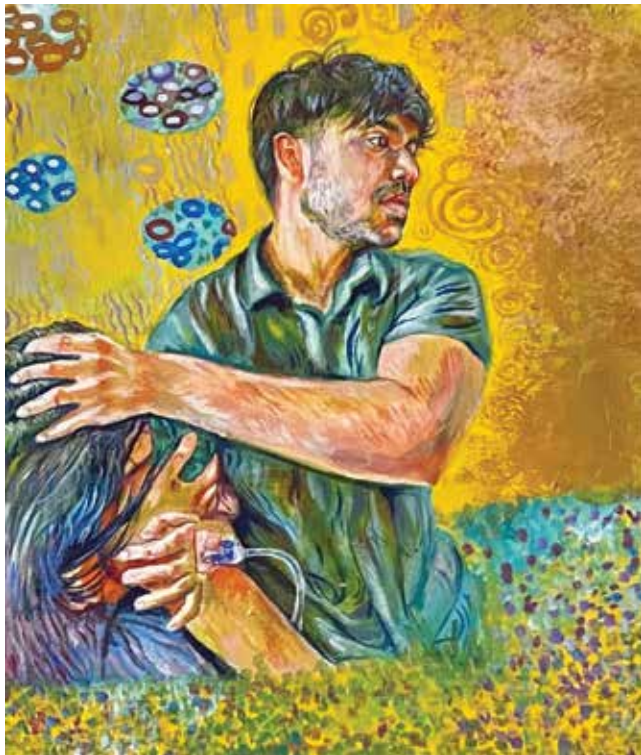
“Redded and snatched”, the portrait of a woman wearing a headscarf. The bold and loud red in this entire painting is an epitome of love and wrath. The colour of both love and anger is red. I have not just been in love, I have been redded, greened, blued, ragged, snatched, shattered in love. The tiny sunflowers on the headscarf is a symbolism of bleak of hope, bliss, calm in chaos and happiness within the hurt...To hurt and to heal.



I have a deep fondness for fish. As a child, I used to have pet fish in a tiny fish bowl and I would have different tales and imaginative stories about them. The swim - the freedom, the blues of the water - grand theatre and the red and yellow fish - hope and love. This painting has been made with oil paint on canvas.



In the painting titled “Spilling the tea”, I have tried to depict the life of a tea stall owner. Within the wisps of smoke of the tea kettle, exists the fables of so many people, variant colours and scattered laughters. The process of making tea to sharing sweetness with others is truly nothing but art.



This artwork done with acrylic depicts my lover, and I sitting on my sick bed and me leaning on him. I was inspired by the kiss, by Gustave Klimt. I also try to be creative by adding golden texture to epitomise a tree and smudged the paint like cherry blossom tree, which depicts eternal love.



This artwork was my final work for AS Level Art & Design. It's a self portrait where I was in the HDU (Highly Dependent Unit). I have gone through multiple different surgeries and terminal illnesses, this was my narration. I used the art style of Ahmed Nazir to illustrate the bones. The pain, grief and suffering that I contained in my bones have been expressed here.



Arnab and Alif sleeping on my sickbed beside me. In this piece, my brother and my cousin carried me to the hospital in a severely ill state. They would try to crack jokes to lighten up my mood. By midnight they were exhausted which caused them to fall asleep right there. The background was inspired by Ahmed Nazir's digital print "the war file" which portrays x rays of the brain. The artist uses x ray to depict the wounds of warriors. The internal damages caused by the war affects the entire body and in this piece he tried to symbolise the mental turmoil and torment bore by not just the combatants but also by civilians. I tried to illustrate the mental suffering of my brothers while they witnessed me go through excruciating physical pain.



This is a painting of my mother in the 1990s. She is the source of radiance and power in my life. In every powerless state, she has been my pillar. In every dark room, she has been my light. I am nothing without my mumma.



For this piece, I captured a couple in the Mandap (wedding altar). Transparency has been expressed both literally and metaphorically. The veil of the bride is see through and the transparent love, honesty and vulnerability attached with the marriage. I was inspired by Kanak's painting of lanterns. The lanterns symbolise the new sky of light and celebration for the couple.



This painting of my Nanumoni, who has always stayed with me whenever I got hospitalised is extremely close to my soul. She used to recite Qur'an beside my sickbed every morning. She is the heart of my heart, the soul of my soul.



9. This piece is so special to my heart. I captured this scene at the hospital while baba was doing breathing exercises using my spirometer which helps to recover after surgery. I had just been shifted to the cabin from ICU and still had all these things attached to my body. Baba was there till my birthday and had to come back to Bangladesh, the very same day because of work.

I applied Gustav Klimt's style in this artwork. The black cat is a symbol of my chronic illnesses, the background has tiny dark windows which portray all the negative emotions (fear, anxiety, grief, hopelessness) caged in our hearts. On the left side, the golden swirls epitomise the ray of hope and the light of yearning to see me recover. In 2022, I was put on ventilator in the ICU and Baba making use of the spirometer also is an epitome of the fighting spirit that I inherited from him. I have always just wanted to make this man proud who has given away his entire life to give us the life we have today. A little victory in the name of my old man, In Sha Allah, many more to come!



This portrait of my cousin Brototee Seraj, I call her “Brotpu”. She has been a huge part of my life since childhood and has witnessed me change through the seasons. She is just about to start a new chapter of her life and this is a token of love from me. This painting is done with acrylic on handmade paper.

In this charcoal artwork of my cousin Alif Seraj, who has always been my cheerleader. He has been with me at my worst times and has motivated me to become better in every shape and form. I wish him all the success in the world.



This painting is an abstract work of love. Holding the hand of the person with whom everything feels timeless and eternal. To be bound in an infinite invisible thread of yearning.



This is a painting of Baba and elder my brother when he was little. My brother A.R.Brohi Arnab, has been my best friend growing up. He is my protector, my shelter and my entire world. Since birth, he has never left my side. Every year whenever he came back to the country for vacations, he would just spend all of that time in carrying me to hospitals, watching movies in my cabin and putting me to sleep. I am incredibly grateful to have the best brother I could have ever asked for.



This is a charcoal artwork of Kehkashan Shorif, an O levels student, who has been a prominent part of this exhibition. She has done parts of art installations, painted the spirals and took heavy participation in social media marketing. Her creativity and passion towards art was a gift for the art exhibition itself. Her social networking abilities helped the art show gain widespread attention.

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