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Ode to a forgotten Dhaka by NOBO



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Dhaka during the '70s and the '80s was very different from the city we know now. The earlier version of Dhaka was filled with modest homes, and open yards. The houses and streets were adorned with colourful and fragrant local flowers such as madhobilata, nayantara, and krishnachura — a scene which can rarely be found now.

In a mission to bring this floral beauty back to our city, two passionate people with a shared love of textile, art, and heritage, Mitia Saleh and Silmat Chisti, inaugurated their new venture, NOBO.

The inaugural exhibition was blessed by the gracious presence of Ruby Ghuznavi, who is a renowned name in the fashion and textile industry of Bangladesh. It was also attended by luminaries of the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh.

"I started with my own money to introduce natural dye craft in Bangladesh because I believed in it. I believe that NOBO's conviction to create a brand in Bangladesh will work because they believe in their vision," Ruby Ghuznavi said on the occasion.

NOBO, a Bengali word meaning new and trendy, perfectly describes the collection they display. Fine natural fabric is adorned with prints of local Bengali flowers the city once took for granted but which seem scanty now, such as alakananda, water lily, and aparajita.

The fabrics are not limited to traditional weaves such as Jamdani, but modern garments and designs are also available. They are either hand screened or digitally printed, boasting the florescent beauty of Bangladesh. With options for both bright colour contrasts and sober shades, there is something in store for everyone.

NOBO is a socially responsible business venture that strives to create a sustainable platform for displaying the craft of Bangladesh and restoring a heritage that seems to be vanishing. The venture focuses on reviving heritage and diminishing craftwork through aesthetics, continue local craftsmanship, and empower female artisans.

NOBO will essentially focus on catering to local retailers, boutiques, and fashion houses, as they follow a B2B business model. However, customers could walk into the exhibition and buy attires according to their will. The inaugural exhibition was held from 22 to 24 February, 2020 at Art Café, Gulshan.

NOBO is a journey from the present to the past, which celebrates traditional art, skilled artisans, and unique textiles. Depicting our heritage through vibrant colours and floral prints that synchronise harmoniously with the Dhaka that existed in the past, this exhibition was truly an ode to the forgotten Dhaka.

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