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BAHRAIN.OURS.YOURS.

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THEATRICAL WONDER Immersive installation SEE PAGE 2



YEAR OF THE RABBIT Community celebration SEE PAGE 3



SPRING OF CULTURE Events galore SEE PAGE 5



WALK FOR A CAUSE Aiding the blind SEE PAGE 7



NTERNATIONALLY renowned Bangladeshi artist Jahangir Hossain has returned to the kingdom for a second solo showcase featuring vibrant colours and fascinating figures depicting movement and the flow of

INTRIGUING: A visitor admiring the artwork

life. The 59-year-old first captivated art lovers with his *Hope of Life* exhibit at the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities Art Centre in November 2021, with the aim of sharing positivity and optimism with viewers who may have felt at a loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

His current exhibition, which runs until February 13, is entitled *Life in Motion* and



highlights the fluidity of life as well as the message of peace and cultural development.

"I am delighted to be back in Bahrain," said the freelance artist who is featuring an array of his paintings.

The exhibition is being held under the patronage of National Arts Council chairman Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, in association with the Bangladesh Embassy and Colours of the East art gallery, which is operated by Bahraini artist Abbas AlMosawi and organised by artist Mahdi Al Jallawi at the Mall of Dilmunia. • See pages 4-5 for more on the exhibit and artwork.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Jahangir showcasing his work to Shaikha Dwa bint Khalid Al Khalifa, along with Bangladesh Ambassador Muhammad Nazrul Islam and other guests.



THEATRE REPORT

LocalNews

By MAI AL-KHATIB CAMILLE mai@gdnmedia.bh

N AMERICAN creative group is lining up a nonnarrative performance installation to be experienced entirely through headphones, for the first time in the kingdom.

Members of the Theater Mitu Company, founded in 1997 by artistic director Rubén Polendo, are excited to showcase the *Utopian Hotline* at the Bahrain National Theatre.

Visitors will gather underneath a large projection screen and around a communal table at the Flexible Theatre - to send messages of hopes, dreams and desires and 'reimagine' their shared future.

The interstellar concept involves a group of performers musicalising these collected messages.

The group that promises the 'out-of-this-world experience' has been invited to the kingdom by the Enki Performing Arts Centre to be part of the Enki Performing Arts Forum. The visit is being supported by the US Embassy Bahrain and the Mid Atlantic Art Foundation.

"We are honoured to be guests and share our work with the audiences of Bahrain," said Rubén, who is also the director for this work and has been committed to challenging the parameters of theatre research and practice with Mitu for more than 20 years.

"We have had the great fortune of spending time in the Middle East and in the Gulf over the past few years; this includes Lebanon and the UAE," Rubén added. "We are incredibly excited to be presenting it in Bahrain." The performance is designed for limited DIFFERIT Uopian Hotine

COOL CONCEPT:

audience

Connecting with the

Future calling

audiences who will gather, not in the darkness of a traditional theatre, but underneath a 30-foot projection screen on a carpet and around a communal table.

It will make the audience question: 'Is anyone out there, is anyone listening and are we alone?' "In 1977, the US National

Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) launched the twin *Voyager* spacecrafts to try and answer these questions," explained Rubén.

"Aboard was the Golden Record, an artifact intended to communicate who and what we are. After 43 years and more than 13 billion miles, this proverbial message in a bottle is the farthest human-made object from Earth. If we were to send another message into the distant future, what message would we send? "To answer this, Theater Mitu created a public telephone hotline prompting people to leave messages for the future. These voicemails, along with messages from astronauts, astronomers, futurists and children make up the source material for the company's new work, *Utopian Hotline.*"

The voicemails make up the source material for a vinyl record and a live performance, created in partnership with SETI Institute, Arizona State University's Interplanetary Initiative, and Brooklyn Independent Middle School.

Four performers, connected to members of the audience through headphones, will transmit the collected messages.

"Together, they will acknowledge coming into a community as an inspiring action. An action that has consistently shaped this planet's future," he added. "An action that reaffirms that someone is listening, that we



During the showcase, which will be performed tomorrow at 7pm and 8.30pm and on Sunday at 7pm and 8.30pm, the audience will be asked to remove their shoes at the entrance. They will then

heater Mitu's

practice investigates transglobal performances, interdisciplinary collaborative models, the performativity of nonviolence, the geopolitics of objects, contemporary mythology, artist training, ritual and the sacred. Its considerable body of work has taken on a variety of forms such as developmental and production work with some of the world's leading theatrical innovators, research and pedagogical work with renowned universities and conservatories, engagement with nontheatrical communities and international trainings and research

choose a spot to sit on a comfortable pink carpet before strapping in for the ultimate galactic ride. For details on the company and the showcase, follow @theatermitu on Instagram.

initiatives with leaders in the field.

The non-profit organisation has earned a wide reputation for itself as an 'adventuresome and dynamic ensemble' of artists.

- Aside from Rubén, other members include:
- Justin Nestor (coartistic director)
- Denis Butkus
- (company member) ● Scott Spahr (company member)
- Michael Littig
- (company member)
- Monica Sanborn
- (company member) ● Ada Westfall (company
- member) • Shanga Parker (guest artist)
- Ryan Gamblin (guest artist)



Hopping along to the Year of the Rabbit 💓

By MAI AL-KHATIB CAMILLE dia.bl

EMBERS from the Chinese hopped into the Year of the Rabbit with a sparkling Spring Festival Carnival, featuring traditional dances, workshops and a martial arts display.

The event and gala dinner was set up by the Bahrain University Confucius Institute at Bahrain Polytechnic in Isa Town to celebrate the Chinese lunar New Year.

The Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival in China, is the most important time of year for family gatherings and one of the world's largest festivities to herald the entrance of spring.

According to Bahrain University Confucius Institute director Dr Qianwen Zhou, members of the community could not wait to commemorate the event in the kingdom.

"We really wanted to have a festival and many Chinese living in Bahrain, as well as people of different nationalities who love Chinese culture, attended it," said Dr Qianwen. "We showcased cultural activities and had stalls featuring Chinese businesses. It was supported by the Chinese Embassy in Bahrain and several Chinese companies."

Chinese Embassy chargé d'affaires Qin Liu was delighted to be at the festival along with invited guests and dignitaries.

"In the past three years, because of the pandemic, we were unable to get together to celebrate the Chinese Spring Festival," she told

GulfWeekly. "We enjoyed each other's company and were happy to see many of our Bahraini friends joining us as well. This is a very good time to get to know Chinese culture because this is the Year of the Rabbit, which means kindness, purity and agility."

Dr Qianwen

Each year represents a different animal and the cycle is repeated every 12 years. The 12 animals are the mouse,





CELEBRATION: The Third Bahrain Sea Scouts at the event

Members of the Third ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, Bahrain Sea Scouts, made up horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. were excited to attend. "The Year of the Rabbit indicates

that the New Year will be a good and

happy one," added Qin Liu. "We wish our friends from China and Bahrain all the best and good health in the Year of the Rabbit."

During the festival, people of different ages, nationalities and backgrounds visited stands including the Chinese language-learning table or the Tai Chi martial arts section, while others enjoyed the variety of workshops.

of nine youngsters aged 10 to 14 and their scout leaders, "We wanted to learn about a different culture and one of our leaders also studies at the Polytechnic," said Brazilian scout leader Francine Pinhal, 39, who is a chef at a food factory in Janabiyah. "We

wanted to join in their festivities." A group of women made fresh traditional dumplings for visitors to savour while 35-year-old Chinese businessman Bing You from Muharraq took part in the Lion Dance and showcased the traditional bamboo brush

calligraphy writing to visitors.

"Ancient Chinese students and masters used this brush before the invention of the pen," he said. "It ranges in size and everyone had a different style of writing using an array of

brush strokes." Three University of Bahrain students - Omar Abu Bakr, 19, pursuing electrical engineering, Sami Al Ashkar, 21, from computer engineering and Mohammed Ahmed, 19, who is doing computer science - showcased the dragon dance. Dancing dragons can vary

beverage). For more details, call 17115046. in size and length and are believed to bring luck to people. The longer the creature, the more luck it will bring, and if touched, it

LION DANCERS TO DAZZLE DINERS

USHER in the Year of the Rabbit with family and friends at re/ASIAN Cuisine's most

anticipated annual celebration at the Four

Savour an authentic feast while enjoying a

traditional Lion Dance show at the five-star

menu will include a selection of bespoke

"As the Year of The Rabbit, symbolising

peace and luck is celebrated with a fabulous

and authentic feast, the traditional Lion Dance

performers, who will arrive in Bahrain only for

this very special evening, will dazzle the guests

with their show," a restaurant spokesman said.

The celebration feast costs BD59 (exclusive of

dim sum, noodles and dumpling, and a live

restaurant tomorrow (26 January). The special

Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay.

performance.

means good fortune and prosperity will be coming up. The dance is accompanied by the intense and mesmerising rhythm of cymbals, gongs and the big drum.

The three friends are also part of the university's Chinese Club. "It's fun to hang out and get to know new people," said Omar from Hamad Town. "It's a vibe and



PICTURES: Hussain Almousawi



AT THE HELM: Chargé d'affaires Qin Liu

we had such a good time." Another folksy practice is the Chinese tea ceremony, which has been integral to Chinese culture for centuries. Chinese teacher and tea expert, Yanan Zhang, 31, from A'ali, demonstrated her knowledge of tea with a performance. "Tea was used as a medicine a long time ago and there are many benefits for the hot drink as well," she said.

In ancient China, tea represented elegance, harmony, friendliness and grace.

Yanan added that this was an auspicious day and that she was really happy other nationalities shared in the celebration.

"I am very happy when people want to learn about our culture and I wish everyone a Xīnnián kuàilè (Happy New Year)," Yanan said.



LocalNews



Coexistence on can

ART REPORT By MAI AL-KHATIB CAMILLE mai@gdnmedia.bh

RT lovers from all walks of life flocked to the Life in Motion exhibition by Bangladeshi artist Jahangir Hossain that boasts colourful creations in an array of figures and mediums.

The vibrant showcase was inaugurated by Shaikha Dwa bint Khalid Al Khalifa, a member of the National Art Council (NAC), on behalf of NAC chairman Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. Bangladesh Ambassador Muhammad Nazrul Islam and other ambassadors, dignitaries and invited guests were present.

"It's an honour to be here and to be the one opening the exhibition," said Shaikha. "The artwork is exceptional and the artist has used a range of materials and styles. Each one shows his spirit and there is something tying them all together, which is very unique. It clearly comes through his individuality and love for the art."

The talented painter has been expressing himself through colours, figures, lines and space since 1989. He has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Institute of Fine Art, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Ambassador Muhammad found Jahangir's work 'fascinating' and said his Western figurative style was mainly inspired by Oxford's Gallery in England.

"Life in Motion signifies





that the economy and life are being revived and going back to normal after the pandemic," he said. "His artwork features

different patterns of life, harmony and cultural diversity. He uses mixedmediums such as charcoal, acrylics and more to create









GRAND LAUNCH: Shaikha Dwa cuts the ribbon in the presence of Jahangir, fourth from left, and Bangladesh Ambassador Muhammad and other artists and dignitaries

landscapes of Bangladesh to rural people and women as

well as movement. He truly captured the essence of the exhibit's theme and I think people of Bahrain will love it."

Ambassador Muhammed was happy the exhibit was inaugurated by Shaikha Dwa.

"I'm also pleased that a few ambassadors and acting ambassadors, namely Algerian, Nepalese, Turkish, Sudanese, Philippines, Sri Lankan, Indian, Palestinian and Yemeni were present," he added.

"I'm thrilled that a significant crowd came for the opening."

Jahangir is known in the art world for his traditional work with modern techniques, having participated in more than 11 solo exhibitions and more than 39 group exhibitions, selling thousands of paintings in his home country as well as abroad. His paintings have been exhibited in various cities of Bangladesh as well

as the UK, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the UAE, Netherlands, Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand and India. He is inspired by relationships and connections with people and the environment in which we live.

Through his art, he aims to stimulate reflection on the human condition and the way in which we respond to the world around us, using motifs, for example, of mother and child as well as couples.

The intermingling of forms, whereby one figure dissolves into the flesh of the other, expresses how dependent we are on one another for love, nourishment and comfort. He also likes to combine realism with abstraction and is drawn to humanly figures and beautiful horses.

Jahangir's aim has always been to reflect emotions; hence, the figures are painted stylistically rather than

LocalNews



Vas



realistically.

For example, in the traditional themes and rural scene, the women fetching water in clothes boasting blue, red, yellow ochre, grey, umber and purple, are formed in stylistic strokes of swirls or as one photographer noted, 'leaking paint'.

"The way he used a leaking painting style; it really gives off a vibrant feeling," said photographer Nahid Sultana, 45, from Saar. "I am finding his work quite fascinating because of the colour palette and technique. I can see a lot of movement in his other artwork as well."

The exhibit runs until February 13 at Colours of the East at the Mall of Dilmunia, and the gallery is open from 10am to 10pm.

The artist will be holding three workshops in Bahrain. *For details, follow*

By NAMAN ARORA naman@gdnmedia.bh

THE 17th edition of Spring of Culture kicked off last weekend with a street theatre art performance by JOHNman BLANKO, with another street performing troupe set to dazzle crowds this weekend.

The Marlon Banda Show will feature live music alongside theatrical comedy and will usher in the second weekend of the festival.

The festival, which has more than 50 activities including performances, workshops, exhibitions, tours and film festivals lined up, kicked off on January 19, and will continue until the end of March.

"This year, we have made sure that the festival is part of the larger national vision to promote Bahrain as a centre for cultural production and as a space in which all cultures from around the world can find their commons," Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (Baca) president Shaikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa said during his remarks at the unveiling of this year's programme.

This coming weekend, the Marlon Banda Show, from Italy, will be entertaining passers-by at a number of venues.

Tomorrow (January 26), at 4pm, the troupe will bring their hilarious and explosive comical show to Al Liwan, followed by an 8pm show at Juffair Square.

On Friday (January 27) at 3pm, there will be a show at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club, where live music and theatrical comedy will come together, followed by two shows at The Avenues at 6pm and 8pm.

The final show of the

vivacious and engaging troupe will be at Qal'at Al Bahrain Site Museum on Saturday (January 28) at 5.30pm.

In addition, the Mohammed Bin Faris Band will be serenading audiences every Thursday at their Music Hall, starting at 8pm.

"Every Thursday evening, we set sail with the musical sounds of the Mohammed Bin Faris Band through the lyrical voyage telling the tales of a pearl diver's life, from festive melodies to working songs and farewell ballads," Baca said, in a

statement. Meanwhile there are two ongoing art exhibitions, including *The Living Sea* at Bahrain National Museum, open daily from 8am to 8pm and closed on Tuesday, as well as *Mutation* at the Albareh Art Gallery from 9am to 1.30pm and 4pm to 8pm from Saturday to Thursday.

COMIC DELIGHT: The

Marlon Banda during a

previous performance

The Living Sea exhibition presents the view of two friends – photographer and author Prince Hussain Aga Khan and award-winning underwater documentary director Simone Piccoli – on the extraordinary diversity of the underwater worlds of three countries – Tonga, Mexico and Egypt. It runs until March 9. In *Mutation*, artist Mohammed Almahdi explores the hybridisation of species seen in nature, delving into the idea of strange mixing and the unknown. His art reflects the intricate complexities of nature, capturing audience's attention and sparking thought and conversation. *Follow @springofculture on Instagram for details*.

PAINT ME **JOHN**man

BLANKO

in Riffa las



AWARD-WINNING MOVIE ON SCREEN

Bahrain Cinema Club

Wednesday, January 25, 7pm Film: The Hand of God (2021) Director: Paolo Sorrentino Duration: 2 hr 10 mins Cast: Filippo Scotti, Toni Servillo, Teresa Saponangelo, Marlon Joubert, Luisa Ranieri Plot: Set in 1980s Naples, Italy, The Hand of God follows Fabietto Schisa, a teenager with an eccentric family. It is a family full of daily dramas, laughter and love. The arrival of soccer legend Diego Maradona to join the Napoli football club is a catalyst in Fabietto's life and his coming-of-age is like no other. **Awards:** The Italian film was nominated for Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe awards. At the Venice Film Festival, it won the Grand Jury Award, Pasinetti Award for Best Film, Pasinetti Award for Best Actress and Marcello Mastroianni Award, while also being nominated for the Golden Lion Award for Best Film.

For details, call Huda Tabbara on 39682323.

Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY NAMAN ARORA

WHO YOUBONNABONNACALL?

British detective thriller series chronicling the adventures of a ghosthunting startup is set to be released on Friday, January 27. *Lockwood & Co.*, based on the books of the same name by Jonathan Stroud, will consist of

eight episodes. The spooky series tells the story of three operatives of a psychic detection agency - Lucy Carlyle (Ruby Stokes), Anthony Lockwood (Cameron Chapman), and George Karim (Ali Hadji-Heshmati).

It is set in an alternate London, where ghost hunters spend their nights engaging in deadly combat with the spirits of the dead.

Amongst the adult-staffed corporate ghost hunting agencies, the protagonist trio try to carve out an ethereal space for their spirited start-up.

At the helm and in the executive producer's chair is Joe Cornish. William McGregor and Catherine Morshead also direct alongside Joe.

The series was filmed in London in 2021 and 2022. *Lockwood & Co.* will be available

on *Netflix*, starting Friday.

BACHTYAR ALL

The Last Pomegranate Tree

NOTHING UNHOLY About this!

NGLISH musician Sam Smith is set to release Gloria, their fourth studio album, on Friday, January 27. So far, the singersongwriter's lead single from the album, Unholy, has topped charts in Australia, Austria, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK, and US. **Recorded in Los** Angeles, London and Jamaica, Sam worked with friends Jimmy Napes, Stargate and Ilya Salmanzadeh to create the album. With contributions from Los Hendrix, Max Martin and Calvin Harris. Sam calls it a 'coming of age' record, expressing a hope that it could become a beacon for listeners. Two more singles, Love Me More and Gimme, have

been released ahead of the album's release, earning praise from critics and fans.

The 13-track album is just over 33 minutes long and according to press statements, it will explore lies, passion, self-expression and imperfection.



Sam

SHAKING THE FAMILY

TREE

RAQI Kurdish writer Bachtyar Ali's The Last Pomegranate Tree, a look at the conflict in the area through the eyes of a father looking for his son, was released yesterday. The book. translated by Kareem Abdulrahman, is a blend of fact, fiction and mystical allegory, set in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's rule and Iraq's Kurdish conflict. Muzafar-i Subhdam, a peshmerga fighter,

has spent the last 21 years imprisoned in a desert yearning for his son, Saryas, who was only a few days old when Muzafar was captured. Upon his release, the father begins a frantic search, only to learn that Saryas was one of three identical boys who became enmeshed in each other's lives as war mutilated the region. A look at the recesses of



a terrifying historical moment, this philosophical journey of formidable depths interrogates the origins and consequences of atrocity.

Bachtyar is one of the most prolific modern-day writers from Iraqi Kurdistan, with more than 40 books of fiction, poetry and criticism under his belt, including 12 novels.

In 2017 he won the Nelly Sachs Prize, which has previously been presented to authors like Margaret Atwood, Javier Marías and Milan Kundera.

SportsWeekly

The top local and international sport news

Run for a cause

PEOPLE from across the kingdom will be lacing up their shoes and stepping out for a caring cause this Saturday to raise funds for the Friendship Society for the Blind, writes *Mai Al-Khatib Camille.*

The youth-led humanitarian non-governmental organisation Ayadi Relief had reached out to Dana Zubari, one of the Lettuce Run ladies group founders, to stage a charity walk to raise awareness about the Society's services and efforts to cater to the blind and the visually impaired community.

"Obviously, my answer was yes 'lett-uce' do this; no pun intended," said the social media icon who is a Tru Active fitness attire cofounder, Ironman finisher and triathlete.

The 2km walk, which starts at 9.30am, will be held at Al Estiqlal Jogging Park in Riffa and entry is BD5 for adults and children can participate for free.

"The walk is open to men, women and children," added Zubari.

"It will only be one hour of your day, and BD5 is not a huge number. However, the difference you are making to these blind children is immense as most of them come from underprivileged homes that cannot afford the extra costs to get the youngsters the best attention and the much-needed help.

"Some of the children's disabilities don't end with just being blind. Some cannot speak and some have

other forms of learning disabilities as well. So please join us as it will be a fun day to spend with your family while doing good for your community." The group's

goal is to raise

BD3,000 from the walk and 100 per cent of the proceeds

will be donated to the Society. The Friendship Society for the Blind, which was set up in 1981, founded a one-of-a-kind nursery in 1991 to enhance the capabilities of children with visual impairments, as



well as empower them with tools to aid them through challenges whilst growing up.

There are around 10 children at the nursery, aged three to six, and four certified teachers preparing them for all aspects of life.

According to Rabab Alaradhi, a teacher at the nursery,

I genuinely believe

if everyone just

helped out, even

for as little as one

hour of their week,

we would have

community.

such a flourishing

children are integrated into government schools after the age of six and educators make sure they are equipped with the skills they need and can read and write. Ayadi Relief - founded in 2013 to provide emergency aid,

education and social assistance, both locally and internationally, through a series of campaigns and initiatives - believes this walk is a good way to uplift and highlight the Society's efforts. "The event aims to raise awareness of the free services that the Friendship Society for the Blind provides to our community, both adults and children, with visual impairments and blindness,"

impairments and blindness," said Jumana Jaafar Alderazi, an Ayadi Relief project manager. "Proceeds raised will go

towards the rehabilitation, awareness and support services that the society provides." According to Zubari,

after completing the walk, participants can join them in heading to the Friendship Society for the Blind in Riffa for complimentary hot beverages and snacks.

"Ayadi Relief, the Friendship Society and I would love to see all your lovely faces there on Saturday," added Zubari. "I genuinely believe if everyone just helped out, even for as little as one hour of their week, we would have such a flourishing community."

For details, follow @ayadi_relief, @lettuce.run and @fsblind on Instagram.



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DALLAH



VORTHSTAR





Time Out

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

5

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number one single? WHO...recorded Alphabet Street, Gold and Cream?

WHAT...parts of the body are affected by nephritis?

WHERE...were the 1988 Olympic

games held? WHEN...was Four Weddings and

a Funeral released?

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So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

Darn Tough Sudoku

Last week's sudoku

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darn tough sudoku

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Leisure Solutions CROSSWORD BREAK: Across: 1 Misrepresent; 7 Realm; 8 Bliss; 9 Ill;

Last Week's

10 Intercede; 11 Incite; 12 Resist; 15 Embarrass; 17 Get; 18 Cause; 19 Least; 21 Adventitious Down: 1 Magnificence; 2 Era; 3 Remote; 4 Soberness; 5 Noise; 6 Ostentatious; 7 Relic; 10 Interfere; 13 Ingot; 14 Mallet; 16 Bound; 20 Art.

Who, What, Where, When: Michael Caine, Lung capacity, Hyde Park, 1869, Neville Chamberlain, Vitamin C, Utah, 1962.

Just So: Even Stephens; Few and far between; Hand to mouth; Nobel prize.

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