

Students rebel against autocracy through cartoons at Drik

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Dhaka: Drik Art Gallery, situated at Panthapath in the capital, on August 16, unveiled an art exhibition named “Cartoon Ey Bidroho”—meaning Rebellion in Cartoons—on the recent victory of the students against an autocratic government regime and the revival of political cartoons.

Students and artists participated in the exhibition, expressed their views on the topic through various artworks. Drik carefully curated the submissions of the students as well as artists and afterwards displayed the works in the exhibition.

Art has long been recognised as a universal language that transcends words. For students, it serves as an invaluable outlet to explore, understand and express their complex emotions. Through the vibrant strokes of a brush, the delicate curves of a pencil or the rhythmic beats

of a drum, young minds find art as a powerful medium to express their inner world.

Throughout history, art has been a catalyst for rebellion. From the satirical prints of William Hogarth to the anti-war posters of the 20th century, artists have used their work to challenge authority and inspire resistance.

Similarly, at the exhibition at Drik, each hand drawn art piece represents emotions the students went through during the movement that ended on August 5, 2024. The feelings initially were mostly rage, despair, sorrow and hatred, as depicted from the artworks. The participants expressed their feelings in vast creativity and colours. Some artworks contained the boiling blood of the martyred students while others mocked the autocratic regime of the recently fallen government.

In the artworks, the students portrayed their slogans used during the recent protest. They had also infused internet memes in their artwork, which emphasized the depth of each artwork and the stories behind them. They drew some of the unfortunate and intense moments of the protest which resonated the deep trauma they have experienced during the protest. Through this exhibition, the students finally got a platform to express their feelings visually through art.

At its core, artworks on revolution serve as mirrors which reflect the ills of the society that its members suffer from. Such artworks force viewers to confront uncomfortable truths, question false assumptions and empathise with people who are oppressed. These mediums expose the dark experiences of humans and spark conversations that lead to meaningful change.

The students expressed their feelings on the autocracy of the former government through artworks not only at the exhibition but also on the streets by painting on the roadside walls across the country. They also expressed their joy of victory through colours. Thereby, the beginning of a new generational change was expressed through art.

It may be mentioned here the weeklong art exhibition at Drik will run till August 23, 2024.