

অংশ বিশেষ

পলাশ ভট্টাচার্য্য

কিউরেটর: শার্মিলি রহমান
১০ - ২৪ নভেম্বর, ২০২৩
কলাকেন্দ্র



Open door, mixed media installation, 2023

Life recast in bits and pieces

Palash Bhattachajee has undergone a notable shift in his artistic journey, transitioning from academically focused print-making toward multi-media, experimental art-practice via a close encounter with performance art activism. Therefore, his striated oeuvre is informed by the traces and tendencies acquired through exploration along his forward-looking artistic trajectory.

Palash, takes critical interest in closely reading filmic genres and their performative idioms. The photo/videographic style and the eclectic selection of objects in his works are heavily influenced by the cerebral matrix of contrapuntal, non-narrative aspect of deconstructed story-telling adopted from global cinema. Objects serve as signs or nostalgic reference to events or ideas that remained seared in memory; books, microphones coupled with restless or rhythmic movements of hands have time and again reappeared in his works. These elements not only attest to the mundane, the everyday but paradoxically provide an almost innocuous backdrop to Palash's profound yet seemingly dispassionate observations on modern life, materially reincarnated within the sensorium of visual-auditory-tactile elements and visceral tones that went into making his works. Palash is not condemned to the past, he seizes every passing opportune moment to insightfully imagine, "one's sense of being in a given place." Palash's repertoire reads much like a meditation on "what exists but exceeds any full grasp."

About "Of Fragments":

The vast arsenal of embodied experientiality he calls into action emerge 're-materialized' on photographic surfaces/screens in the form digitally encoded simulation. The virtual corporeality thus constructed becomes the stuff of a parallel reality which is based more on transposition or replacement of identity than on similarity or representation. In a spirit of suspension of disbelief, the audience is trans(tele)ported to the claustrophobic world of a series of digital photographs entitled "Insomni-Lucid Sleep" where the 'characters', partially defamiliarized with the help of props, stage a performative 're-enactment' of straddling a threshold between light and dark, metaphorically indicating knowing without seeing, as the Bangla title roughly translates, " I can see with eyes shut during sleeplessness". Or, where the video projection of a night bulb turns into a lodestar, eternally failing to show any path of resolution to the meaningless absurdities of life.

"Open door"/ "Closed door" deeply resonate with Edward Casey's words,

"… each of us is pitched on a thousand edges—edges on which we shake and tremble even as we pretend to go about our lives undisturbed… we are ourselves creatures of exposed edges."

The artist watches from within the protective bounds of the walls the tumultuous storm raging outside, reminiscent of lives being whisked away, displaced by the wind of change. In contrast, the interior reverberates with images and sounds emanating from a screen, part of an odiously calculated performance gaslighting a populace into squeamish submission. Counteracting which is another irreverent act of scratching and deflating a balloon, echoing the futility of any subversive act under the regime of control and surveillance, thus 'exposing' our 'edges' of vulnerability. As our lives continue to be governed by forces of nature or power, this again finds representation in the physical installation which accompanies "Open door".

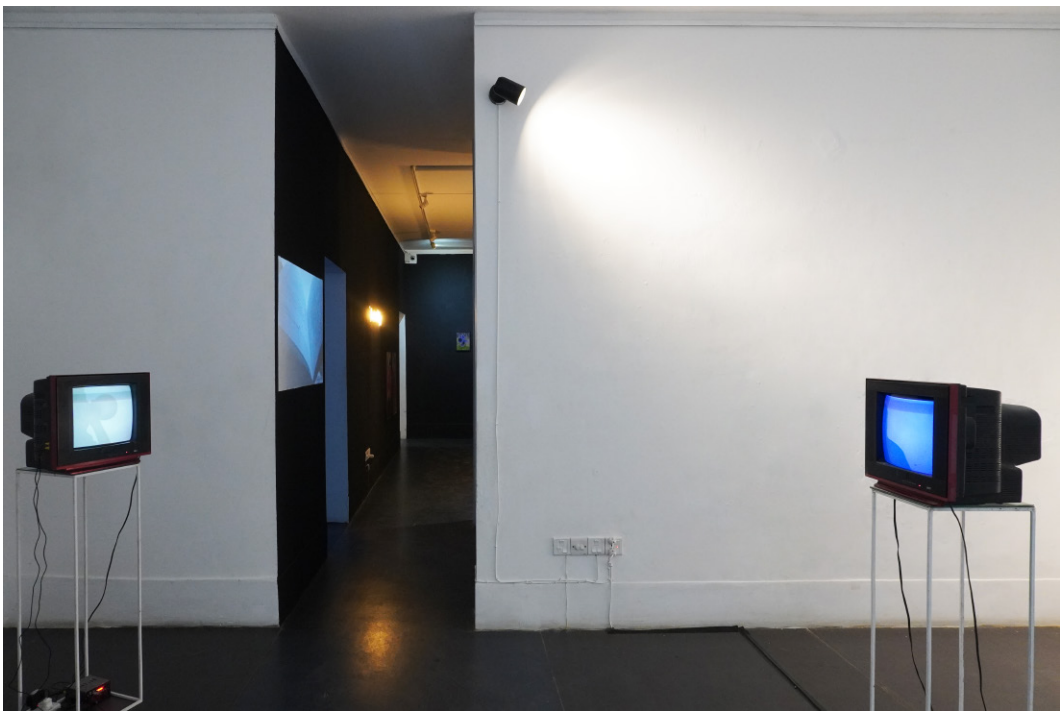
"Whimsy", a double channel video installation with prints to accompany, dramatizes the dismemberment of the human body recompensed by surfeit of concessional information disseminated by the mechanics of marketing and consumerism. Axing its primordial contacts with the world, the body is denuded of its vitality of movements and intentionality of actions, and eventually is reduced to the repetitive moves emulating that of a stringed puppet.

Palash's deep-rooted fear and sense of insecurity resurfaces with every single stroke drawn on the surface of the TV screen as a signification of negation. Contesting and fictionalizing the dynamics of simulation Palash posits an antithesis of absence, or in other words conjures up a presence; presence of all those who fell victim to various means of disappearance. This Is "Arrow" in a nutshell.

“Of Fragments” invites contemplation in view of the variegated tools/media of creative expressions Palash Bhattacharjee has employed to poetically translate the complex nature of the self’s intra-action with the world, in his case channelled through sporadic bursts of recollections/visions. Being held hostage within the domestic scene yet stirred by the call of the wild, the artist negotiates the passage of time by re-creating a world of his own. The realization of this act hinges on the imaginative and critical participation of the viewer, a reciprocation that "Of Fragments" powerfully commands.

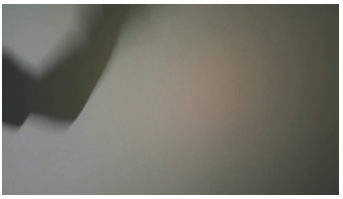
Sharmillie Rahman
Writer, curator

Sharmillie Rahman studied Philosophy and English Literature. Through the years after graduation, she has dedicated portions of her time to reading, writing, and teaching literature. Her initiation into the world of art came about when she joined the team of Depart, an English art magazine, now defunct. She was responsible for translating articles, writing reviews, micro-editing, and penning her own articles – all of which she continues to pursue as a free-lancer. She organized an art camp at Bormi, Gazipur which transpired into a contemporary art exhibition at a Dhaka-based art gallery. After a period of hiatus, she returned to the art scene debuting as a curator. Her first intervention was *Un/Seen*, an exhibition by Dilara Begum Jolly; followed by Wakilur Rahman’s *Self-quest in the time of corona*, Tasadduk Hossain Dulu’s *Anecdotes of Lust* and Sharad Das’s *The Archiving Body*. She is an incurable introvert and divides her time between home and her occasional pursuits.















Whimsy, laser print on paper (10 pieces), 11 X 8 in, 2023
Whimsy, laser print on paper (2 pieces), 10 X 8 in, 2023

Whimsy, double channel video installation and three video still, 2023






Too


Do it soon



আমার চর্চার ধারণাগত ও মাধ্যমগত উপাদানগুলো আমার জীবন-যাপন ও অভিজ্ঞতা থেকে সংগ্রহ করি। এর ভিত্তিতে আমার এই কর্মযজ্ঞে, নিজের অভিজ্ঞতায় দেখার একটা জগতের কিছু ছোট ছোট টুকরো হাজির করেছি। যা একেবারে অদেখা কিছু নয়, আবার দেখার ভিন্নতায় অদেখাকে দেখতে যাওয়ার একটা ইচ্ছার প্রকাশ এখানে করেছি। যে সময়টা কোনো স্থানের সীমার ভেতর আমাকে যেতে হয়, আমি আমার দেখার সেই জগতটাকে অল্পই সেখানে দেখতে পাই। সেখানে হারিয়ে যাওয়া সময় বিক্ষিপ্তভাবে দেখা দেয় আবার বর্তমানটা খানিক পরে সেইখানে যোগ হয়। সেই বিক্ষিপ্ত সময়গুলোর স্মৃতিতে অনেক বস্তু, অনেক ঘটনা আর অনেক তথ্যের সমন্বয় ঘটে যেখানে তাৎক্ষনিক উল্লেখ করার মতো সুনির্দিষ্ট কোনো কিছু খুঁজে পাই না। তাই সমন্বিত স্মৃতি আর পাড় করা বর্তমানের বিভিন্ন অভিজ্ঞতার মিশ্র প্রতিক্রিয়ার কিছু টুকরো টুকরো ছায়া এখানে হাজির করেছি। যেই স্থানে একটি পারিবারিক আবহে আমার দিন বদলায়, সেই আবহে কিছু ধারণা আমার কাছে ধরা দেয়। সেই ধারণা থেকে চেনা-জানা বস্তু আর ঘটনার সমন্বয়ে আলাদা আলাদা ছায়া নিয়ে এসেছি। চেয়েছি বর্ণনার বাইরে গিয়ে ছায়াগুলোকে দেখার। ভিডিও, মিশ্র মাধ্যমে চিত্র ও স্থিরচিত্র এবং অক্ষরবিন্যাসী আলোসহ সাধারণ বস্তুর ভেতরই এই ছায়ার রূপ প্রকাশ করেছি। আশা করি দর্শকও ছায়াগুলোকে চিনতে পারবেন।

পলাশ ভট্টাচার্য্য
শিল্পী

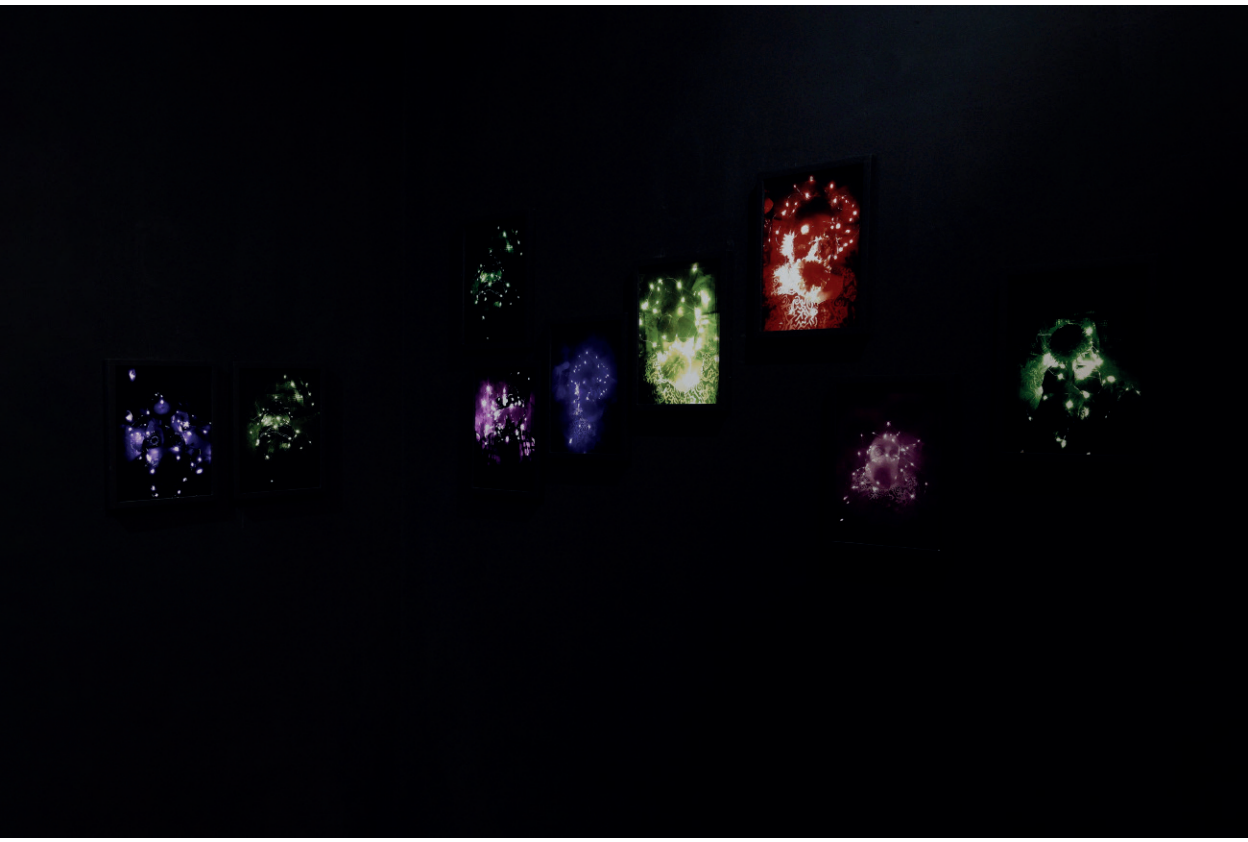
Open door, single channel video, 2020

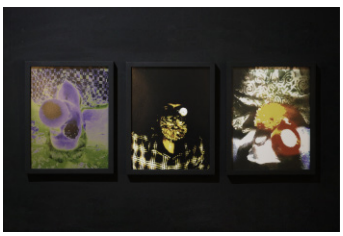
Closed door, laser print on paper (6 pieces), 10 X 6.5 in, 2023
Closed door, double channel video installation, 2023
Closed door, LED neon intallation, 8 X 12 in, 2023
Closed door, LED neon intallation, 8.5 X 24 in, 2023

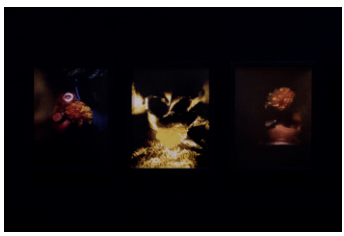


Arrow, single channel video, 2023



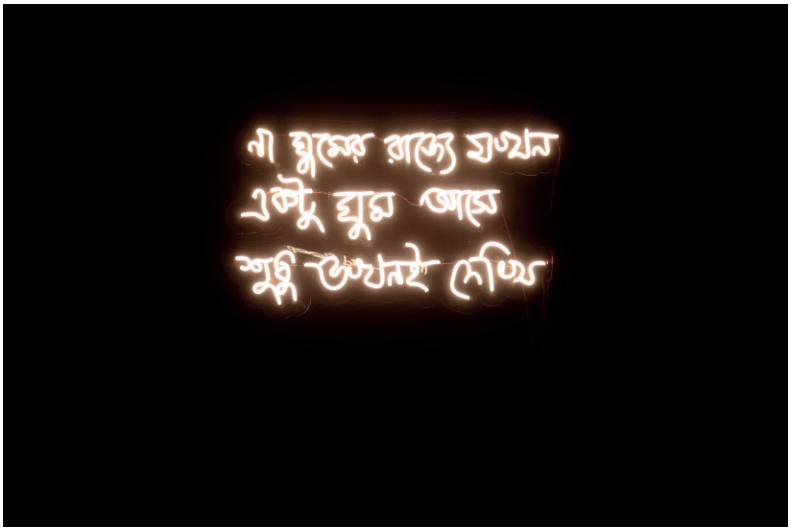


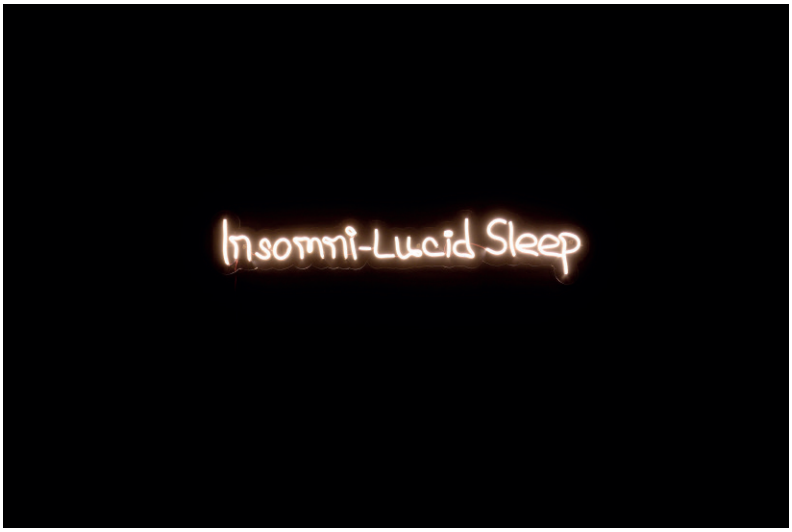






Insomni - lucid sleep, photograph (18 pieces), 12 X 9.5 in, 2023







Insomni - lucid sleep, LED neon installation,18 X 30 in, 2023
Insomni - lucid sleep, LED neon installation, 6.5 X 35 in, 2023
Insomni - lucid sleep, single channel video, 2020







Palash Bhattacharjee (1983, Chattogram) entered the scene armed with an array of performative arsenals. Alongside photo-video installations developed from his performances and site-specific installations, he inserted another crucial element, namely sound. From his early works based on photo and video installations in 2009 to that of his more recent near-absurd performances and video installations, he articulates the neural through the experiential. Since 2011, he set in motion a practice that forked into two divergent and also overlapping strands – video and performance. His single or multi-channel videos and performances are the result of his meditations on body's communion with spatial reality often set in a temporal framework. His reorganizes multiple approaches as he sets out to restore an event from life, which is at once overwhelming and abstract. He received his Master's and Bachelor's degrees from the Department of Fine Arts, Chittagong University, subsequently in 2005 and 2006. He was awarded the Asia Pacific Fellowship Residency from MMCA Residency Goyang in 2011 and received a grant from Seoksu Art Project, South Korea, in 2010.

Shortlist

2020, 2018, 2016, 2014- Shortlisted Artist, Samdani Art Award, Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka
2015, 2018- Shortlisted Artist, Aminul Islam Young Artist Award, Bengal Foundation, Dhaka
2014- Shortlisted Artist, Subir Choudhury Practice Grant, Bengal Foundation, Dhaka

Exhibition (Selected)

2023- NOmade Biennial 'BEAST ON FIRE' Art Center Gallery EL, Elblag, Poland
2022- Warehouse421, 'Language is migrant', Abu Dhabi, UAE
- Colomboscop 2021, 'Language is migrant', Colombo, Sri Lanka
-19th Asian Art Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2021- Chobi Mela 'Shunno', 'Anatomies of Tongues', Dhaka
- Undefined Territory! The Bangladesh Art Week at Gulf Photo Plus, Dubai, UAE
2020- Dhaka Art Summit, Samdani Art Award Exhibition, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 'The Oceans and the Interpreters' and 'The Deep City' Hong-Gah Museum, Taiwan
2019- 23rd National Art Exhibition, Shilpakala Academy, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 'Borders: Representation and Reality' Gallery, College of the Arts, Portland, Oregon, USA
2018- Samdani Art Award Exhibition, Dhaka Art Summit, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 'Subtext', Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth, Bengal Art Foundation, Dhaka
- 'Shararnama' Topography of Mirror Cities', Daily Star- Bengal Arts Precinct, Dhaka
- 'Ajantrik', 'Seven Exhibitions', Exhibit 320, New Delhi, India
- 18th Asian Art Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
2017- Ephemeral: perennial at Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct, Dhaka
- 22nd National Art Exhibition, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
2016- 20th Young Artist Art Exhibition, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- Samdani Art award Exhibition at Dhaka Art Summit, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
-17th Asian Art Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
2015- The Other "I" In Art, Action/Adventure Theatre, Portland, Oregon, USA.
- FIVA Festival Internacional de Videoarte, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Only Connect- Edition 3, Daily Star Bengal Arts Precinct Gallery, Dhaka
- Open Studio '1 mile^2 Dhaka 2014' Old Dhaka, Organized by Britto Arts Trust
2014- 'Graft and Transplant' Blueroof Art Festival Community Exhibition, Chengdu, Sichuan, China
- 'Samdani Art Award Exhibition at Dhaka Art Summit, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
2013- Cheragi Contemporary Art Show, Edition 2, Cheragi Lane, Chattogram
2012- 'An Essay'- Solo Show at Gallery Bishaud Bangla, Chattogram
-15th Asian Art Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- Dhaka Art Summit, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- 'Playing On' Gallery at National Changdong Art Studio, South Korea
2011- Being on the move, Community Space Litmas, South Korea
- Closer & Closing, Gallery at National Goyang Art Studio, South Korea
- 'Lyrical Soul' at Dukwan Gallery, South Korea
2010- Outcome Exhibition of 2nd Porapara Site-specific Art camp, Alliance Francaise de Chittagong
- April Meeting Festival (Aprilski Susreti) V.I.P Art Gallery (SKC), Belgrade, Serbia
-17th Young Artists Art Exhibition, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka
- Open Studio + Festival, Seoksu Art Project, Stone & Water, Supplement Space Manan-gu, Anyang, South Korea

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Arrows





Arrow, single channel video, video still, 2023
Arrow, photograph (2 pieces), 33 X 24 in 2023

In Palash Bhattacharjee's body of artworks, interpenetrating narratives emerge, woven around fragments of time and place, mediated through a curious process of techno-aesthetical re-production/presentation. Comprising primarily of video installations, alongside neon installations, photographs, prints, and a small collection of found objects, the current repertoire is a subjective exploration of one's 'movement' through places, imaginary or otherwise, as much as of one's sovereignty over time; both of which are claimed as personal.Being relocated within the domestic confines defined by patterns of intimacy and affect (apropos of COVID-19 and subsequent circumstances), made possible a recognition of a free interplay between the artist and his immediate environment. Palash invests his multidisciplinary works with nuanced imagery, often leaning toward the abstract and the absurd, as he aims to reconfigure his social self from both, an actor and an observer's perspective. His stance is more thoughtful than playful, which is transcribed into his works in a prevalence of purposefulness.

Palash challenges the linearity of time and the cohesion of spatial configurations while reconstructing the continuum which unfolds in idiosyncratically experiential mise-en-scène. Palash is seen to embody his past while engaging with his child and her toys, projecting the resurgence of the child like emotions toward an imagined future, conversely, envisioned through the lens of his lived experience and the concurrent premonitions of the unknown. Memory, dream, and nostalgia come into play in reconciling the disjointed "moment(s) of vision", interfaced as it is with the subliminal. Relayed through performative gestures/maneuver, these works articulate his ambiguous relationship with the world at large, hence, finding their locus in the semiotics of fear, distrust, misgivings and a wavering faith in the necessity to persist.

His still and moving images reveal a self-reflexive disengagement with the politics of bias and consent. His works cleverly eschew aesthetic finesse, giving precedence to the means over the end. The result is more akin to a craft overlaid with the markers of the process. He questions the modalities of disseminating 'news' and dispensing justice through subtly irreverent performance acts. The experimental 'stills' are laden with shadows invoking the idea of 'lack' or disorientation due to resistance against a 'contemporaneity' driven by the logic of algorithmic capital. As an artist, Palash is deeply rooted in this very digitally morphed phenomena/realm of artistic production. However, his pronounced inclination toward images redolent with the sense of touch, reflected in a riot of colours, alongside those portraying sleep-induced 'grotesque', let alone the non-narrative, staccato formats of the videos might ring much like a call to a heightened engagement of the sensory-inscribed 'living' body with the unconscious; toward the formulation of a self, more integrated within and without.

Sharmillie Rahman
Writer, curator

Of Fragments / Palash Bhattacharjee / Curator: Sharmillie Rahman / 10 -24 November, 2023
Kalakendra, 9/4, Block-D, Lalmatia, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh

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