

GRAD CABLE

The official newsletter of the Texas A&M University at Qatar Graduate Student Association



UPCOMING EVENTS/NEWS

FEB. 9

NATIONAL SPORTS DAY
(OFFICES CLOSED / NO CLASSES)

FEB. 28 - MAR. 4

SPRING BREAK
(NO CLASSES HELD)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO RECENTLY DEFENDED THEIR THESIS!

MASTERS

SHAMEER ABDULLA

DOCTORAL

MOHAMED SUFIYAN CHALLIWALA

Behind the Lens

by Murtaza Ali Khan

Most of my friends call me a “photographer,” yet I refrain from claiming that tag. I am just one who is looking to capture stories. Stories that could form from various elements around us; it could be just a casual conversation between two people or an idea in your head. However, I feel just looking at something can sometimes get the creative juices flowing, and there you are, with an imaginary pen trying to jot down a narrative only by examining what is defined in that rectangular frame.

This curiosity of storytelling took its start long back during my high school when I started to watch films seriously. While it took the year 2020 for the general masses to “overcome that one-inch tall barrier of subtitles” to be exposed to some excellent cinema, as Bong Joon-Ho, the director of ...

.... Oscar-winning movie *Parasite* would put it, I had gone onto that since 2005. I would select a film carefully upon reviews and watch it with subtitles. What does this have anything to do with photography, you might wonder? This quest of needing subtitles would not restrict me to Hindi films since I grew up watching Bollywood, but allow me to see films

PHOTO BY MURTAZA ALI KHAN



from other cinemas. Japanese, Korean, Italian, Latin American, you name it. My compass of viewership would encompass narratives rather than being partial over which star is cast in a movie or the orthodoxy of having Hindi itself spoken. I do sometimes have trouble following speech, and I still do put subtitles in Hollywood films. But coming back, these different films introduced me to cinematography, the nuances of the cultural yet universal narratives,

and how these themes could be covered by a single lens in entirely different viewpoints. It gave me, and I shall say a vision.

All of this interested me in becoming a filmmaker, and while I have failed at that, I mean, if I hadn't, you wouldn't be reading this in *Grad Cable*; I never lost sight of that vision. It would take a couple of years until I started university, and I never thought I would get a semi-opportunity to go behind the lens. Getting involved in extracurriculars introduced me to a video enthusiast friend who would work on small, just-for-fun skits with his friends. His camera work and skill got my attention and knowing him allowed me to learn how to use camera work on the side. I would then be nominated in the Pakistani student association back in my undergrad to the role of the 'media' person. I would have to handle posters, cover event photography, and videography, and I used all these excuses to blatantly perfect my own craft rather than just serving these roles. Yet, I would not have the freedom to create art since I never owned my own camera.

Enter a year later, and my brother purchased one. I then actively thought of switching towards photography to execute that vision, clicking away around the entirety of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. Photography allowed me to beautify places or, in some places, tell some concept of the story. Meanwhile, Fate would have it that I gave up on the very thing I loved doing once I graduated and had to attend to other responsibilities. After coming to Qatar and saving up enough to buy my own camera, I could get back into this craft once again.

Movies have taught me about love, despair, fear, and joy, and wherever I go with a camera in my hand, I am looking to invoke either of these emotions not by action but somewhere lingering through that frame I capture, behind the lens.

Shifting Perspectives

by Marwa AbdelGawad

As an undergraduate student, I believed that I could achieve the impossible, that I literally had the world at my fingertips. I was brought up completely believing in the saying: “if there is a will, there is a way”. I studied and worked hard and got the internships that I wanted, the grades that I needed, and the scholarships that I deserved. When I graduated, I felt that I was in control of my life and I knew that if I do what it takes, I will achieve my goals.

PHOTO BY MARWA ABDELGAWAD



Years later, I started working at TAMUQ as a Teaching Assistant in MEEN and then decided to pursue an academic career which led me to do my Master’s and then my PhD. Gradually, that feeling of being in charge started to fade away. As I got married and was blessed with my first child, I gradually noticed that in fact, not only was my life no longer perfect order, but that I also responsible for someone else's life as well.

At first, it seemed impossible to manage all my deadlines on time and still get enough rest. Meanwhile, it was confusing to understand how I could develop a controller for internal combustion engines during my Master’s but fail to comprehend what my baby daughter needs. Adapting to this new notion of complete chaos and randomness was exhausting and challenging to say the least.

As the days went by and my struggle just seemed to escalate, I realized that my main dilemma was not that I was still adapting to motherhood but that I was not able to let go of the desire to control all the “independent variables” that were suddenly introduced into my “life equation”. I was still trying to live the life I had as an undergrad where I could be in charge of the when, where and how of every aspect in my life. I was still trying to

PHOTO BY MURTAZA ALI KHAN



.... make motherhood fit into my many responsibilities of being an engineer, student, wife, and daughter. It took me a while to completely comprehend and embrace the fact that being a mother is not one of the many roles I have that I can alternate between and choose when to assume. It is who I currently am. My job now was to figure out how to be all these roles together. To do this, I came to accept the idea that it is ok to seek support from my family and let go of extracurricular activities that do not actually benefit or add any value to me. I learned to better manage my time and become more efficient with it both at home and at work. I made the decision to only spend time on things that truly matter.

So, if there is one thing that this experience has truly shown me is that we only “want” to believe that we have limited hours in the day. While, as a matter of

fact what we truly need is to learn that those 24 hours granted to us each day are sufficient, but we have to figure out how to spend them wisely. For example, the hours that we spend looking through our social media would be better spent catching up with family, learning a new hobby or in my case watching Netflix with a large bowl of popcorn with my family. Learn to prioritize, work hard and efficiently and most importantly always be grateful.

ADDITIONAL DEADLINES

FEB. 11 - LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR MAY GRADUATION, 4:30 P.M.

FEB. 19 - LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR DEGREES TO BE AWARDED IN MAY BY 5:00PM WITHOUT A LATE FEE. A DIPLOMA FEE OF \$47.50 MUST BE PAID EITHER AT REGISTRATION OR AT STUDENT BUSINESS SERVICES (GSC). COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FOR DEGREE FORM VIA THE HOWDY PORTAL. A LATE CHARGE OF \$50.00 WILL BE ASSESSED TO STUDENTS WHO APPLY FOR GRADUATION AFTER 02-19-21. (APPLIES TO MASTERS NON-THESIS, MASTERS THESIS AND DOCTORAL CANDIDATES)

MASTER'S - NON-THESIS

FEB. 19 - LAST DAY FOR MS STUDENTS TO CHANGE DEGREE TO M.ENG. OR M.C.S. AND STILL GRADUATE IN MAY 2021

MASTER'S - THESIS

FEB. 26 - LAST DAY TO SUBMIT "REQUEST AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION" OR 10 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE EXAMINATION, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES;
LAST DAY TO SUBMIT "REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM FINAL EXAMINATION"

MAR. 12 - LAST DAY TO TAKE FINAL EXAM (DEFEND THESIS)

DOCTORAL

FEB. 26 - LAST DAY TO SUBMIT "REQUEST AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION" OR 10 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE EXAMINATION, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

MAR. 12 - LAST DAY TO TAKE FINAL EXAM (DEFEND DISSERTATION OR RECORD OF STUDY)