

Runway and Beyond

Insan's photography captures models on the ramp and during moments of respite

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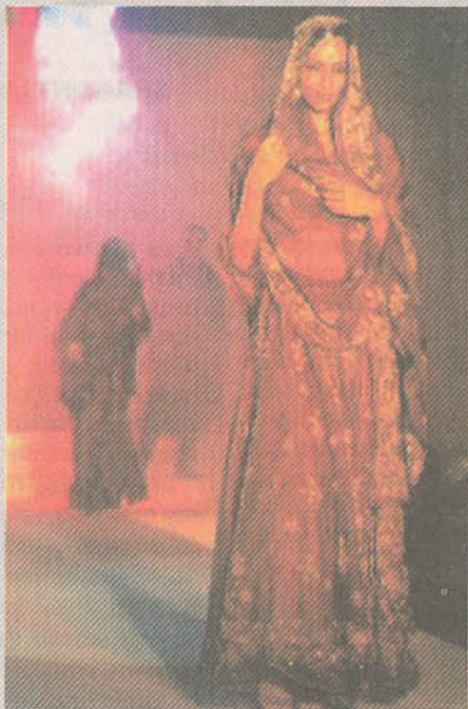
IT was in 1991 that Khademul Insan was literally dragged by one of his friends to take a course on photography at the Bangladesh Photographic Society (BPS). Once initiated into the world of celluloid, there was no turning back for him. One of his friends, Pallab, introduced him to photography and the other, Pial, groomed him as the photographer he has now become.

"Pial was my neighbour and an excellent photographer; he taught me everything from technique to aesthetics," says Insan who is having his first solo at Cafe Mango, Dhanmondi.

Insan's encounter with French movies had a lasting impression on him; it also made him more mature as a photographer. His involvement with a film society since 1994 helped him cultivate his craft. "The probing psychological gaze into the characters that I've seen in French movies always inspired me," he attests.

However involved in the aestheticised world of cinema he has been since 1994, Insan's first commercial venture, which was right after he completed his course from the BPS, was a commission for taking photos of a surgeon at work. "My father introduced me to the famous surgeon Dr. SR Khan, and he assigned me to take a series of medical photos. However, the sight of blood made me squeamish and all I did was some work on the demonstration classes where cow-organs were substituted for human's," Insan recalls.

Insan clearly did not have the heart for



Tupa, off the runway and pensive.

images that capture humans being cut open by a surgeon; he settled for fashion photography instead. His exhibition, too, is a comment on the world of fashion and glamour. "I put my pictures in batches -- each photo of a model in the ramp

is contrasted with another that shows the model in a totally different light. I wanted to show to people that however glamorous the fashion world may seem, the real person is always more attractive," exclaims Insan.

His show tries to dispel the 'magic' of the glamour world. As a model, any young woman is robbed of her personality. The dehumanisation is always shrouded in the glitters that the fashion world thrives on. If this was the focus, Insan could have made his comments more poignant by thinking up ways to poke fun at the whole affair. This he did not apt for. What he did was a subtle play between the two images that he placed side by side -- one of the model and the other of the person behind the model.

"Many said that Tupa's unassuming posture in the non-model-like portrait looked really beautiful. And this made me happy, as I really wanted the viewer to feel the difference between the model and the real person," Insan points out.

This show was conceived as a critique of Chobi Mela, the international show arranged by Drik, which Insan feels, as always, leaves out the home-grown talents. The show was put on display on December 16, 2005 and will remain open till the first week of February, 2005.