The Love that Dare not Speak its Name

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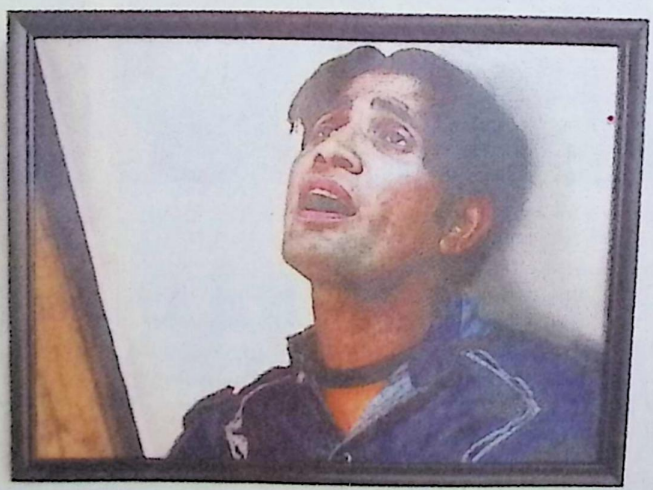
The walls of the EMK Centre were white and plain, and at first glance they seemed to be barren. Upon closer inspection, it was clear why the minimalist theme was chosen. The subject matter, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), is a taboo one. The blank backdrop was appropriate, almost necessary, for the gravity of the photographs.

Sebastien Chatelier, a freelance journalist, said he wasn't aware of Bangladesh until the Rana Plaza collapse. He realised that Bangladesh wasn't just about garments factories and decided to take a look into the social issues that are prevalent yet suppressed. Working with Rofiqul Islam Royal, a counsellor working with HIV prevention and awareness, he set out to document the lives of people within the LGBT community and give a voice to the unheard. Royal's work in the community has built up a level of trust that allowed both him and Chatelier to approach these people and photograph them. The discrete location of the exhibition echoes the way the event was promoted – via word of mouth. It's admirable that Royal and Chatelier have respected the values of ordinary Bangladeshis by not flaunting such a sensitive topic.



Sebastien Chatelier and Rofiqul Islam Royal pose next to their work

There is a touch of irony because the EMK Centre is overlooking thousands of people going about their daily business, yet inside are the stories of 'forgotten' people, who have either been shunned by society or have to resort to living clandestine lives. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts they found that, while the indigenous people of Bangladesh are a neglected people, there are a small handful of people amongst them who are minorities within a minority because of their sexual preferences.



Poverty.