

Anirban Bhattacharya, Chanchal dissect the art of acting

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Just before dropping Part 2 of “Karagar”, which was released on December 22, Anirban Bhattacharya and Chanchal Chowdhury sat down for a discussion, organised by Hoichoi. The two have known each other since Chanchal began working in Kolkata’s theatres and usually call each other “Boro Babu” and “Choto Babu”. In a cozy, friendly discussion, the two shared their insights on art and being an artist. Despite international borders, West Bengal and Bangladesh have very common roots when it comes to entertainment. With the onset of OTT, this unification is on unprecedented levels. Anirban noted the shared history of both Bengals and said that art is so powerful that it heals the pain of the gory, brutal history. Art is a reminder that unity is so much bigger than our differences.

Anirban claimed that Chanchal has been a healer amidst the difficult times of the post-pandemic era. Chanchal replied with his characteristic humbleness, saying that he loves acting and is unsure of how good he actually is. Chanchal added that artists have a role to play in art, which is essential for the progress of society. “Artists shouldn’t compare between mediums and should dedicate their work to their audiences, who deserve the utmost priority,” said Chanchal. The two talked about the evolution of art. Anirban mentioned how previously it was mostly about making up illusory characters, unconnected to reality, whereas now it is about relatable stories and characters. Chanchal was also delighted to share his observation on the topic.

Chanchal said that he finds himself and contemporary artistes quite lucky to be present at a time where they are able to tell stories of real people. He shared, “It is indeed people like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen—commendable Bangladeshi directors who paved the way for such storytelling for the masses. Now, the calculations have been reversed, and the distinction between mainstream and rest is blurred.” Adding to his point, Chanchal also mentioned the significance of bringing belief into art. He explained that at present, we seem to lack belief in society, politics, relationships and most other things. However, this belief is crucial for art. If an artist doesn’t believe in his work, in the assumption that they are in fact the character, then audiences won’t believe it either—making the chances of any real connection with the audience impossible. Anirban praised Chanchal’s extremely expressive eyes, which narrate the inner thinking of his characters brilliantly. Chanchal explained his working process, saying he can’t see his eyes during shooting, so it is his belief that drives that narration. From his observations and surroundings, he builds up the character that he plays and solely believes he is that character. However, this effort needs a lot of dedication. Chanchal mentioned that he is often unmindful the nights before shoots, unable to remember what people around him say. He believes such mental isolation is essential to morph into certain roles. The actor went on to stress the importance of being sensitive to real emotions, as that enables an artiste to nurture an emotional side that can later be brought into art.

Chanchal praised Anirban’s recent projects like “Mandaar” and his work on the stage, noting how Anirban has both the dedication and talent for producing good art. The two continued talking, dissecting the trade-off in the quality and quantity of work. Chanchal said he doesn’t leave work until he is completely satisfied, and certainly not doing so would’ve earned him more leisure time. However, Chanchal believes in being satisfied with modesty, as he learned from his years of theatre experience. “When we die, we can no longer use our money. However, through good work, an artiste will be forever remembered by the audience,” said Chanchal. Another topic the two seemed passionate about, is the importance of setting a precedent for new generation of artistes. They talked about the disillusionment that they had to go through in terms of previous icons and concluded that that is indeed a reminder to not follow suit.

Afterwards, the two discussed their personal lives, with Chanchal saying that previously he was a foodie, but currently he is hungry for good work. Chanchal also loves travelling with his son, and enjoys fatherhood. He stressed on the significance of duties towards one's family. The star of "Hawa" shared that he believes if one is not diligent towards their family, then one is being hypocritical by claiming that they love everyone. Chanchal would go on to express his anxiety in regards to future projects and how he worries about the possibility of repetition. He believes that circumstances would have been easier if more people shared his visions. Finally, Chanchal stressed that art cannot survive without the scar of time, and that is an ideology he is always followed.