

Published Date:	29 Apr 2023	Publication:	The Times of India [Kolkata]
Journalist:	Priyanka Dasgupta	Page No:	5
MAV/CCM:	379,477/55.97	Circulation:	162,938

From the green room: 13 rare images of Chapal Bhaduri on display in city show

Priyanka.Dasgupta
@timesgroup.com

1 **Kolkata:** He ruled the Bengal stage as the highest paid 'actress' of his time in the 1960s. Today, he is the last surviving female impersonator in Bengali jatra. Emami Art is hosting an exhibition titled 'In A Cannibal Time' from Friday featuring 13 of Chapal Bhaduri's images taken by Naveen Kishore, a publisher, theatre lighting designer and poet.

Living in an old-age home in north Kolkata, a day in Bhaduri's life is just like that of any octogenarian. Chapal-rani, the moniker he earned for his performances, checked into Ramkrishna Old Age Home in 2017. The last time he performed on stage was in Delhi in 2020 for Rakesh Ghosh's 'Upal Bhaadury... Tale of a Dead Star' where he played the protagonist.

"I am 84 now and have a problem



One of the images of Chapal Bhaduri at the exhibition

with my legs. It is challenging to perform on stage," Bhaduri said.

He is happy that Kolkata is seeing the exhibition of 13 photos of him in the green room. "They are part of Kishore's exhibition of photos from four different series — 'Performing the Goddess', 'The Green Room of the God-

E It is challenging to perform on stage now. Two years ago, I gave away my costumes and makeup kit

Chapal Bhaduri

dess', 'The Epic and the Elusive' and 'In a Cannibal Time'," said Richa Agarwal, CEO, Emami Art. Kishore's 1999 documentary 'Performing the goddess, The Chapal Bhaduri Story' plays in a loop on the television as visitors enter to look at the images.

Age and his homosexual identity can be reasons for loneliness. But Bhaduri doesn't show it even if he feels that way. "He has contributed so much to art and yet, is living in a no man's land. Too old, as he says, and not as beautiful as he used to be," Kishore said.

A typical day in Bhaduri's life now entails walking down memory lane and puja rituals. Brother of actor-singer Ketaki Dutta, Bhaduri began his tryst with jatra with 'All Baba' in the 1950s and followed it up with several performances in 'Raja Debidas', 'Chand Bibi', 'Sultana Razia', 'Mahiyashi Kalkeyi' and 'Ramanimohan'. A fan of old English, Hindi and Bengali films, Bhaduri now spends time watching movies on TV.

An acting career spanning 50 years has seen him act in Kaushik Ganguly's 'Ushnotar Jonne' and in the films 'Arekti Premer Golpo' and Raja Sen's 'Maya Mridanga'. Yet, no offer can persuade him to return to acting. "For me, a no is always a no. I have no dearth of awards. I'm a believer in God. It's divine intervention that has kept me going and fit. I am certain that I have received more than I deserved," Bhaduri said.