

DIRECTOR'S CUT

A story of the Story-Teller

Tejas Deoskar



PEM: *From architecture to film writing, screenplay, script writing & direction; how and why was this transition? And how was the overall experience for a typical Marathi Boy from Nagpur.*

TD: My childhood has gone into watching my parents perform on stage as amateur artists. Despite their busy schedules – my father being an architect and my mother, an All India Radio employee, both of them pursued their passion fervently. Watching their routine did have an impact on my mind, subconsciously.

Let me tell you honestly, I was attracted to the world of music by fluke. I was fortunate enough to come across a musical band when I joined architecture college. I used to be a singer in this band for all 5 years of Architecture. I came in touch with people from music production, composers and the likes of it; all in their formative years. I started to work with them, learn from them about the nuances of music making while studying. By third year I got all the more involved in this field. Also, during the same time, I wrote lyrics for them.

Frankly speaking, I have never studied nor read poems or film lyrics but my lines were appreciated by everyone. That indeed gave me the confidence to write more. Eventually, I started to work with them in production of music videos, editing, and other facets of film production.

Me and my friends were getting paid for all the music videos, non-fiction films, documentary films, advertisements, audio albums etc; this was during my fourth year. By this time I had made up my mind to continue working in this field instead of pursuing a career in architecture. I knew that if I wanted to grow and make a career out of this; then Mumbai was the only place to work on a larger scale. Thus, I shifted base to Mumbai.

After graduation, I made a short film “KALAKAAR” (starring: Rajit Kapoor). This film gave me a chance to attend various Film Festivals for the next year and half. It received an overwhelming response and appreciation all over. It gave me an opportunity to meet people like Anand Gandhi (Ship of Theus), Rahi Anil Barve (Tumbadd), RS Prasanna (Shubh Mangal Savadhan), Kaivalya (Shubh Mangal Jyada Savadhan) etc. We all are contemporaries and have started more or less at the same time. All of them have now made a name for themselves with their exemplary works. I have been in the Film Festival circuit for 2 years, my short films have gotten awards and recognition all over. This opened a vista for my journey in the film industry.

PEM: *Being an architect, how has your perspective changed towards film making or production designing. Or has the architectural training helped you in any aspect of film making?*

TD: There are certain things that studying architecture helped me in film making; the most important, being personality development. Other than this, a sense of visual presentation and production design do play a key role in film making but there are production designers who overlook this aspect.

I feel, Story Telling is the most important thing in film making. This aspect has nothing to do with my training as an architect. It's more about how the story has to be presented in a way that is visually appealing to the audience. And direction comes next in line after the story. Saying that, I call myself as a story teller and I love to present stories in the most visually appealing manner to the audience.



PEM: Has the art direction changed in all these years? Does it mean that the role of art director has changed? Or has the way in which films are made is more grander today than it was yesterday?

TD: I don't feel that the role of art director has changed from what it was in films of yesteryears. What you must understand is that the technology of presenting the story has changed. Earlier, films were made inside the studio with all the available technology. Hence, we see huge sets being built for the movies. These days instead of constricted studio space, films are made in outdoor locations and in real time. Previously films were made in Eastman Colour, 4 Track Stereophonic Sound etc. which were extremely modern and path breaking then. But now, with the advent of technology we can present stories in a better way than before.

To sum up, a film is a director's medium of story telling. The vision of the director is the final word in film making. So, I feel art director has to work from the director's point of view. Ultimately, the director is the captain of the ship and every decision and every visual is as per his/her vision. But to answer your question; art direction has the same place that it had in past years.



PEM: We would like to know about your experience of working with Madhuri Dixit. "Bucket List" is her first Marathi film. Our readers would love to know how did you get her on-board? How was the overall experience of working with the undisputed Queen of Bollywood?

TD: We had a very short story line of 4-5 pages sent to Madhuri Dixit's talent agency. To our utmost surprise, her agency called us the very next day and informed us that they had liked the story and had sent it to Madhuri Dixit for her perusal. We were told to be ready with a narration to be given to her within 2 days. We prepared the best as we could and I gave a narration of 40 minutes to Madhuri. They told that they would get back to us after talking with her. We left the place and had hardly reached the parking when we got a call for the script.



That was our second stroke of luck! Since we did not have a detailed script, they gave us 5-6 weeks to get it ready!

We created 5 versions of the script and read it out to various people from non-film background. We finalized the script and gave the narration and were asked to come back again. We went to narrate for the second time and that was the time when Madhuri started to quip her inputs and expressed her viewpoints. Finally, we got a nod from Madhuri Dixit and she was officially on board, working with us in her first Marathi film ever! All within a span of 2 months!

Working with Madhuri Dixit and other stalwarts like Renuka Shahane, Sumeet Raghawan, Vandana Gupte in the film was indeed a great experience. We completed the entire filming in just 29 days. With such a tight schedule, it was possible only because of a highly motivated and focused cast-crew ensemble!

PEM: You did cameo roles in your directorial venture "Bucket List" and in "Baba" where you were the creative producer. Which role do you like the most; Tejas Deoskar as Director or Tejas Deoskar the Actor?

TD: Tejas Deoskar: The Director would be my choice, without a doubt. I love to tell stories and with a director's hat I can definitely do that!!

