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## The joy of film-making

Wednesday, July 20, 2011

**Film-maker Vishaal Desai writes about what drew him to this creative profession, his inspiration, views and why he loves his job**

People often asked me, as I finished my B.Com at H.R. College, "Why go into a creative field? Why not study CA or Law? Get a lucrative job, make a lot of money?" My answer is simple, I do what I love, but more importantly I love what I do and that is what enables me to go the extra mile. In any field, the one characteristic that supersedes ability is attitude and anyone who undertakes work that fails to spark passion within them is unlikely to reach their pinnacle in that world.

Why does creativity get my pulse racing? What drives my passion? In one word: 'Stories.'

I've always been captivated by our capacity to imagine, to innovate and what better way to inspire these qualities than stories?

Throughout our history, we looked toward tales of heroism, struggle, sacrifice, but most importantly stories that inspired us to better ourselves. Our stories evolve with us.

Stories are the filters through which we effectively learn what it means to be human. As a child, I thrived on a staple diet of books and films like 'Flash Gordon,' at that point they were just mediums through which I could feed my imagination. The earliest memory I have of a film where the complexities of the story and characters really affected me, was the climax from 'The Empire Strikes Back'. This influence was subsequently reflected when I watched the latest StarWars movie in 1999. Herein, with the birth of high-octane visual effects, came a tangent to my journey.

The visual innovations of this film and others like 'The Matrix' pushed my interests ever so slightly towards visual effects and CGI – tools that would enable me to create the wondrous worlds and characters that until now existed solely within my imagination. I graduated from H.R. College in 2004 and enrolled in The University of the Creative Arts (UCA) in England, to do a BA in Animation. It was during this period that I, for the first time, picked up a video camera, and though this may sound clichéd, it was when I used that camera to make my first short film that I realized where my real aspirations lay. The skills that I picked up at

UCA helped visualize my imagination, but it was the words on paper that I fell in love with and the surge of excitement as I watched those inanimate words transform into action through the lens of my camera.

I subsequently did a Masters in Screenwriting at the reputed London Film School (LFS). It was here that I was introduced to the subtleties of storytelling by studying the films of visionaries like Fellini, Bergman and John Ford. I was pushed to experiment, to innovate in ways that I would not have done before, I learned to think out of the box, to explore thoroughly my own perceptions and opinions, then cross the limits of my imagination, finding new avenues through which to express myself. Now, back in my hometown, with a world of opportunities ahead of me, I started 'A Thousand Faces Productions' (named after Joseph Campbell's book) and intend to pursue my goals with fervour.

Through the gruelling process of independent filmmaking, I aim to implement the biggest lesson that I have learned in my year at LFS, i.e. to find that elusive balance between telling a story that inspires me and telling a story that inspires others. Coming back to my first point, people often said, "Filmmaking is volatile, the risks are far greater than the rewards."

Yes, being a creative professional of any sort is not easy on one's wallet. This isn't a world of 9-to-5 jobs and the payoff takes its own sweet time. Why then should one waste time on something that doesn't bring practical, tangible results? Simply put, if money is the only reward one seeks then a creative profession is a waste of their time and effort.

Creativity, whatever its form, has the capacity to rejuvenate and influence in a great many ways. And that is the real reward of this profession, the ability to both entertain and put forth one's views in ways that cannot be expressed through other means, the ability to change the world around you by bringing forth that, which is within you. I count my blessings everyday for the ability to partake in a profession that is my greatest passion.

### FILM-MAKING FUNDAS

Film-making is a highly creative process fuelled by the desire, passion and determination to tell a story. Filmmaking is a long, expensive process which takes years to master and maybe break into. There are a number of courses you can pursue at different institutes spread across the country. You can study film-making at the following institutes:

#### Whistling Woods International

Whistling Woods International, Film City Complex,  
Goregoan (East), Mumbai: 400065  
Tel: +91 22 65281084 / 30916107 / 30916234 /  
30916000  
Web: [www.whistlingwoods.net](http://www.whistlingwoods.net)

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**Film and Television Institute of India**  
Law College Road, Pune: 411 004,  
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25430017  
Web: www.ftiindia.com

**Zee Institute of Media Arts**  
3, Ashqui Bunglow, Shashtri Nagar Cross Road,  
Lokhandwala Complex, Andheri(W),  
Mumbai: 400 053  
Tel: 91-22-26302937 / 38  
Web: www.zimainstitute.com

**Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute**  
E.M. By-Pass Road,  
P.O. Panchasayar,  
Kolkata: 700094  
Tel: (033) 2432 8355 / 8356 / 9300  
Mail: [srfti@cal.vsnl.net.in](mailto:srfti@cal.vsnl.net.in)  
Web: www.srfti.gov.in

**LV Prasad Film & TV Academy**  
28, Arunachalam Road, Saligramam, Chennai - 600 093  
Tel: 0-65257476  
Mobile: 98402 10909  
Email: [info@prasadacademy.com](mailto:info@prasadacademy.com)  
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**Dr. (Mrs.) Minnu R. Bhonsle, Ph.D.**  
Consulting Psychotherapist & Counsellor

#### Astro Focus



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Select Sun sign:

#### Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 20)



Devote more time and effort to your present task that appears to be slowing down. Plan work schedules well in advance to save delays later. Working late along with heavy responsibilities at home could affect your health. Some of you could suffer from stress. A relaxing time with family will ease your problems away.



Select Sun sign:

#### Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 20)



What the cards say: Take things easy  
Path: Tolerance is a great virtue. Don't be short tempered and harsh  
Ally: Virgo will cool you down. Avoid Cancer and their clinging ways  
Card for the week: Tarot key no. II The High Priestess. The inner world is very important and inner connection will create a fountain of knowledge leading to real and lasting success

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