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# Sheetal Sheth

**On Acting in Hollywood:**

***"This is the only profession where it is OK to be ageist, sexist & racist! Why am I doing this?..."***

see p.64 for her answer

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## Actress

While it's been said that diamonds are a girl's best friend, Doritos will do just fine for Sheetal Sheth. The Jersey girl native did not step into the South Asian-American film industry overnight, yet her journey is dotted with inspired determination and an assortment of activities that have led her down this pathway of a filmography including five festival-winning films. Sheth's aspiration to use acting as a means for socio-political change, along with her love for extreme sports, and her bag-a-day addiction to Doritos are just some of the things that make this girl so wonderfully unique.

Sheetal, a self-professed child braniac, "like most Indian kids", grew up in New Jersey with a South Asian-American influence, going to multicultural dance practice between playing basketball, listening to Michael Jackson, Madonna and Hindi songs, and watching Indian movies along with Stephen King thrillers. She has always embraced both American and South Asian culture. Excelling as a youth leader heading various associations, religious and otherwise, Sheth was never one to clip her wings. She dabbled in basketball, dance, acting, and event-organizing, right up to her career at NYU's famed *Tisch School of the Arts*. Finally she dove into acting.

Much like the threading of both cultures while growing up, Sheth's film career focuses on the amalgamated South Asian-American film industry. Currently the female lead in Albert Brooks's *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World*, after an extensive international casting search, Sheth excitedly speaks of her love of acting. "It's all about connecting with people and creating a catalyst for examining our lives, and it's the first thing I ever truly felt passionate about."

To be released January 2006, details of her role in this Indian adventure film are on the hush as Brooks is fiercely protective of his scripts. However, since her first role as the lead in *ABCD*, Sheth takes the responsibility of starring in films that portray her culture seriously. The tiring stereotypical convenience store owner and cab driver roles are not for this South Asian actress; Sheth is bursting to tell the *real* stories of her culture. With South Asian culture infiltrating mainstream culture over the last several years, Sheth agrees, "(South Asians) are the next wave in films..." however, she also believes, "we need to get to a place where our ethnicity is not the first question asked."

Being called the Indian American Halle Berry, this actress is not fazed by her own beauty, rather, she explains that, "real beauty is being part of a medium that transcends time and helps initiate progress." Growing up in a country where basic human rights are taken for granted, Sheth explains, "You can't be a solid person without being involved in things outside yourself...the more I've seen, the more it reaffirms how much work still must be done" and this mentality, along with her Doritos, sustains such drive! And it shows through her lead roles in *Pocketful of Dreams*, *Wings of Hope* (for which she won *Best Actress* at the Cinevue Festival) and *American Chal*.

Despite her dedication to acting, Sheth knows how to unwind, and while it might not seem conventional, bungee-jumping does it for her! "I'm a huge thrill seeker," Sheth chuckles. When she's not skydiving or hand-gliding, Sheth is nibbling at some Los Angeles restaurant. "I love food, I eat over 3000 calories a day and fortunately, have an excellent metabolism."

This is one energetic, determined and talented actress, with a healthy appetite to top it off. So what's next on the agenda? The perfect union of her two main interests: "I would love to be a Doritos spokesperson, it would be amazing!" Sheth says.

-J.P.



Sheetal  
Sheth