



Sheetal Sheth: An Exclusive Interview with the talented actress. (Photos)

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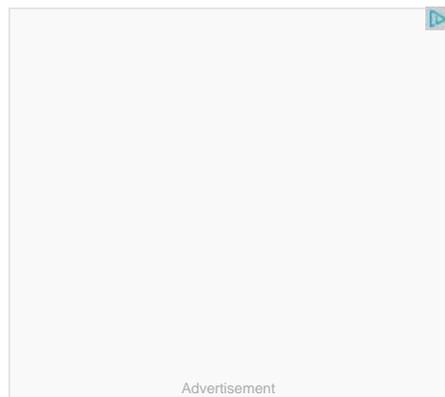


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Sheetal Sheth was born in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, and lived there until she was about twelve years old. The family moved to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania which is where her parents still live. Sheetal grew up loving sports and dance, and very involved in the community. She realized her true passion, acting, in high school.

How did you get started in acting?

"I discovered it (acting) in high school, and I just was so taken by it and mesmerized by the process. Really, the process and work is challenging and intoxicating. I love people. I'm fascinated by people. I devour any kind of book about psychology, about what makes people tick. I just love it, which is such a big part of acting. I love performing and I love what story telling can do. It is really extraordinary in terms of the impact that it can

have on someone's life."

Sheetal made it her mission to perfect her craft, and was determined to learn, and expand her knowledge and skills. She decided to attempt the challenging process of auditioning for

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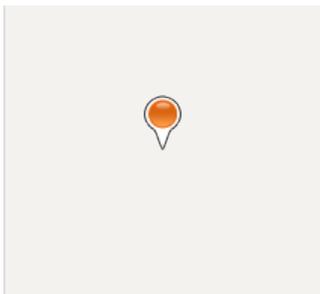
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acceptance into the prestigious Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, and was successful. From acceptance into this prestigious school that hones actors talent, she found her calling and has never looked back. www.tisch.nyu.edu



Sheetal Sheth Official head shot
Photo credit: Sheetal Sheth



Location: Los Angeles, Ca

What happened after you graduated from Tisch?

"I didn't really audition too much while in college. And was so ready to get in the game. You have to be really disciplined. I would get up every day; I'd look at all the castings. I didn't have an agent at first, so I picked up Back Stage, www.backstage.com on Wednesday from the newspaper vendor. At night or Thursday morning, when the new one came out so I could get my submissions in early. I got a couple little jobs, and then started meeting people in the industry, did a few showcases, got my first agent, which led to other jobs, which led to more opportunities. I just kind of hit the ground running, just working my ass off, and just doing everything I could do to work."

What was the very first professional role that you ever got?

"I did a lot of unpaid stuff. I mean I did a ton of unpaid stuff, which is all part of the process. You have to pay your dues. My very first movie, "ABCD", which I was the lead in, I was not paid. Other actors were, but I did not have credits, and really wasn't in a position to negotiate. We shot that over a month, and I was really excited to have the opportunity. It was a low budget project and a great part, but I was new,

and had very little experience in the world of film. I'd only done little; industrials or commercials. "ABCD" was even more important to me due to the story we were telling. It became a very important movie in the community. It was milestone in the Indian American experience being represented in America. I am so proud to have been a part of that. My first paid job was an AT&T voice-over."

I've seen your breadth of work and it is extraordinary.

"Thank you. The thing that I'm most proud of I would say is just the range of stuff I've been able to do, along with the number of personal stories people have trusted me with. Certainly, it has not been without struggle, because a lot of times you go off and do small movies, they pay you nothing, but you do it because you love what you do. At the end of the day, it's about the stories you are telling, that's why I got into it. I'm really proud of a lot of the choices that I've made."

I saw on your website, you had the female lead in "Looking for Comedy in Muslim World". Is that the movie that you count as your break in into the industry?

"It's interesting. I think it just depends on what people define as success, right? I mean obviously that movie was the first studio bigger budget that I had done. It certainly wasn't a big budget, but it was more than I had been used to. I was used to doing independent movies that were less than a million dollars. Working with someone like Albert Brooks, someone who is a legend in the community was such an honor, was a thrill. To have worked with him (Albert Brooks) so early in my life, I relished it so much because I learned a ton from him, and I feel very grateful to have had his guidance and care. So in the sense, how the industry may have first gotten to know me, because I did a movie with Albert Brooks, so yes, I think that definitely was significant. Even when I got into this business, I made it very clear to myself to define success for myself. The reason why I wanted to do "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World" is because I loved Albert, loved the script, and I thought it was really relevant and important at the time."

Let's talk about "REIGN" now. How did you become involved with the project?

"I got an e-mail actually from Peggy Lane Rourke (Peggy Lane), who is a friend of Kimberly's (Kimberly Jentzen). She e-mailed me saying that she is involved in this movie and would I be interested in this role. What I heard from Kimberly is that they had wanted me for the role, but didn't know how to get in touch with me. Peggy knew a few people that I'd worked with, and I had done a pilot years ago with a few people that she was working with at the time, and they gave her



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my information. She e-mailed me directly and I said I would read the script. I did, and was really intrigued by it. I said I'd love to talk to the director. For me it's really important to hear what's behind it, what the vision is, what they see for it, tell them my thoughts, and see if we click. Kimberly (Jentzen) and I then spoke on the phone. We set up a time, we spoke, and I loved her. I thought she was brilliant and smart and fantastic, and I was sold. That was pretty much all I needed."

What was your favorite thing about the script? What was the thing that got you the most?

"I thought it was a complicated piece and circumstances. I thought that even though my character, Fadwa spoke very little, she was the heart of the film. I think that it was really important for her (Fadwa's) story to come across. I think the way that Kimberly wrote it was really lovely and honest and heartbreaking, obviously. I wanted to be a part of that story. I wanted to tell this woman's story. I feel very connected to that part of the world. I hadn't done anything like it. I like being challenged. I was really nervous about it. It scared me, and that was a good sign that I'd probably enjoy the experience."

Your experiences in all phases the production of "REIGN", can you tell us about that?

"Kimberly's (Kimberly Jentzen) not only a wonderful director but also a respected acting teacher in LA, which makes her an even better director. Someone who understands the actors' process the way she does is special and rare. Drew (Andrew Fognani, lead actor and producer) was focused and fully committed, which is what you want in a co-star and producer. He worked his butt off getting this made, and we are all grateful for his heart and generosity on and off set. Jack Green (Academy nominated cinematographer and his crew on board was amazing. It was such a privilege to work with them. Having his vision, guidance, experience, and faith meant so much to all of us. Will (Will Wallace, executive producer and supporting lead actor) was a great leader and kept the ship moving. He is a great guy and really good actor, and fun to work with. We truly had a fantastic team. I feel very lucky to have worked with this production."

Look for "REIGN" in up-coming festivals in your area. For more information please access the following links: www.sheetalsheth.com and www.facebook.com/ReignMovie and on IMDB at www.imdb.com/title/tt1838636/?ref=fn_al_tt_1

Sheetal's next up-coming projects are "Yes, We're open." in which she plays Elena with Richard Wong directing, and "The Wisdom Tree" playing Dr. Trisha Rao, directed by Sunil Shah.

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REIGN Official trailer

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Janet Fitzgerald, DC Independent Film Examiner

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