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"Neither success nor failure is permanent"

# RISHAB SHETTY







h a s h t a g

TRENDING NOW



# DEDICATED TO THE CRAFT OF FILMMAKING

*Rishabh Shetty*

While the movie **Kantara** continues to make and break records at the box office, the lead actor and director **Rishabh Shetty** is grabbing eyeballs for all the right reasons.

When some Government officials visited actor Rishabh Shetty to invite him to be a guest at an upcoming function and asked him how he was feeling, his answer was simple, "normal." And this is exactly how this exclusive conversation with **Bindu Gopal Rao** flowed. The actor is amicable and has no baggage of being the face of the highest-grossing film in Karnataka, earning over Rs. 400 crores beating *KGF: Chapter 2*. Born Prashant Shetty, he grew up in Kundapura and studied in Bengaluru. Doing all kinds of jobs from a mineral water business to dabbling in real estate and hotels, he armed himself with a diploma in film direction from Bengaluru's Government Film and TV Institute.

After acting in movies like *Thuglak*, *Lucia*, *Sarkari Hi. Pra. Shaale*, *Harikathe Alla Girikathe* among others, he has also directed movies like *Kirik Party*, *Katha Sangama* and *Shivamma*. His recent release that has been bankrolled by Hombale Films, *Kantara* which he has both acted and directed in, has made him a household name, and with the right reason. The movie that straddles a social issue using a traditional, spiritual practice strikes the right chords and gives the message without being preachy or trying too hard. And this is something that gives the audience an insight into Shetty's deep-rooted love for the art and craft of filmmaking.





# Excerpts

## How do you look back at your decade plus journey in films?

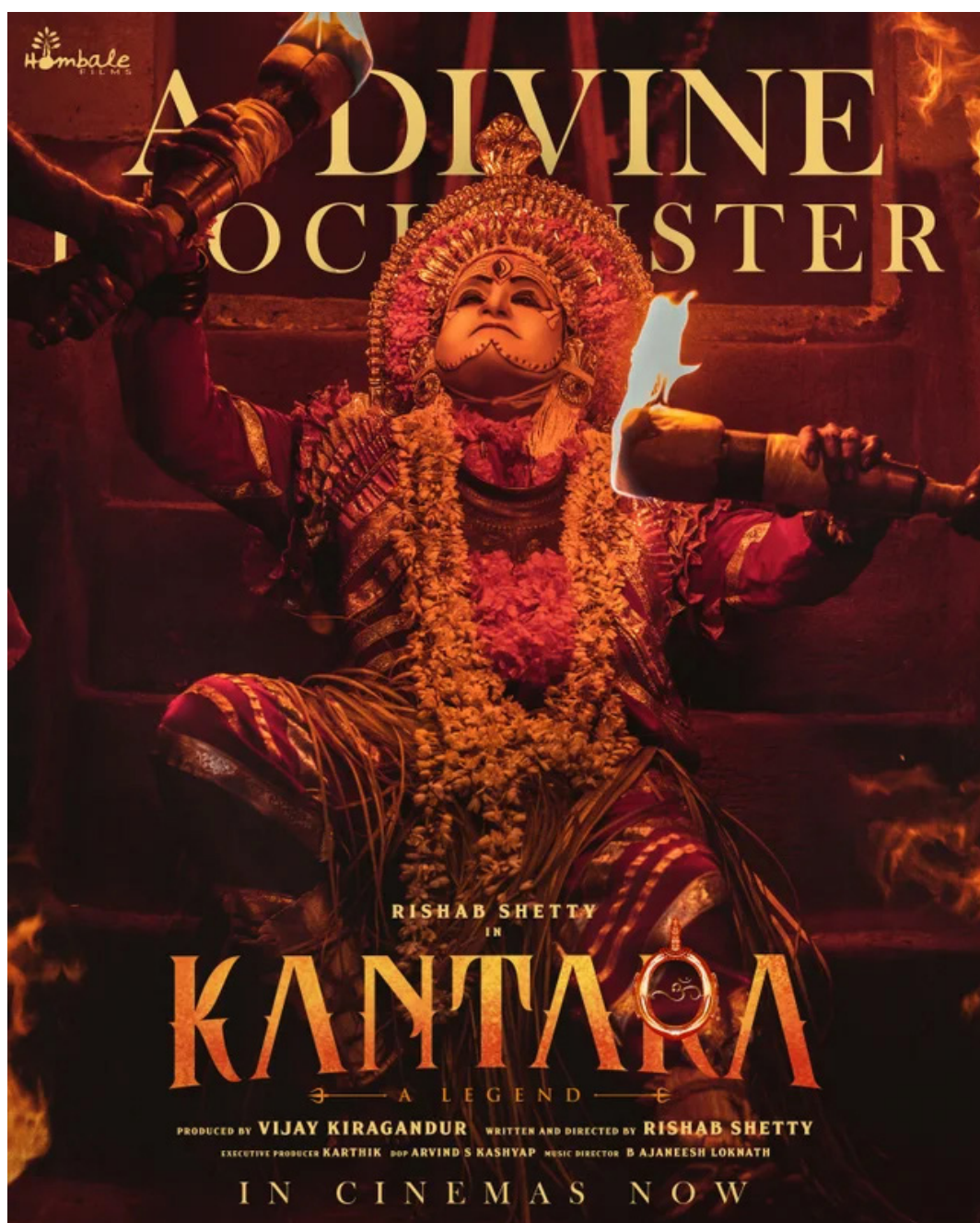
It is just a journey – every film teaches you something and adds to your experience. We try to correct mistakes of the past and make new ones (laughs). It is a learning process for me as each movie teaches me an aspect of filmmaking.

## For someone who struggled with odd jobs to make it in the industry, what kept you motivated?

I do not think too much about anything and while I had a goal to do something in the film line, there is also a need to survive which means that I had to do odd jobs. While I come from a middle-class home, we are from a reputed family erstwhile Panchayat family. We lost a lot of agricultural lands but had enough to lead a comfortable life. But we all need to work for survival, and I saved a portion of what I earned so that I could make a career in the movies. I think my goal was clear, so I also happened to meet people from the industry.

## How did you get your first break? Were you nervous or excited?

I never felt it was a break, for me it was just like the other job ended and this one started. I feel that is how things must be and while everyone is saying *Kantara* is a big success (we have a Tulu language release pending), for me it's a job done, and I look at what next.



You should not have baggage and in films as I know, neither success nor failure is permanent and it's all about that one Friday.



**In films as I know, neither success nor failure is permanent and it's all about that one Friday.**







**As you dabble being an actor, director, writer, and producer, have you felt it is a lot to do or you like doing everything?**

I do not look at it like that. I came to be an actor but there were different situations created. I thought of starting through the route of an assistant director and became enamoured by the filmmaking process that gave me a lot of happiness. This was also the time when I faced failures as an actor and in business and looking for a job was my job. At that time all I asked God was to give me so much work that I would not have time to even scratch myself. I just love being busy. When I met Rakshit (Shetty), there was a turning point as we had a good exchange of ideas being technical and I learnt a lot. This is when I started writing as well and had also made up my mind to direct. When I worked with Rakshit on *Ulidavaru Kandante* in 2014, it was a collaborative effort and he would make all the shot divisions and it gave me immense confidence about film making. And I like direction as I like stories and controlling the narration.

**When writing *Kantara*, did you ever imagine that it would become so successful?**

When I narrated the film to *Ajaneesh Loknath* (music composer), I told him, something will happen, I don't know what but it will be something and will connect with the audience. I told him we must put our best efforts for the movie as this is something that is once in a lifetime. We started in April 2021, wrote in May 2021, and started shooting in parallel sets in September 2021. I felt there was some energy but never imagined it would become so big.



***It is just a journey - every film teaches you something and adds to your experience. We try to correct mistakes of the past and make new ones.***



**The subject of *Kantara* is very unusual. While you have said you grew up watching the *Bhoota Kola* performance, how did you prepare for the role?**

The first thing when doing such a film is that you must believe in it, and I believe in *Daiva Aradhane* (the worship of spirits also called *Bhoota Aradhane*). I have seen the same growing up in Kundapara and it extends across Tulu Nadu (Dakshina Kannada district) till Kasargod and beyond. This is not an art form but a belief and a ritual and I had to do it under the lens of spirituality. I went to Dharmasthala and offered prayers to Manjunatah Swamy and Annappa Swamy. I went to the community of the *daivaka nartakas* (divine dancers), told them the story and had them with me when I did the movie. They were happy and they guided me through the movie until the release. When I was doing these scenes, I abstained from non-vegetarian food and would eat the *prasad* and start shooting through the night. Once I applied the paint, I would not eat anything till I removed it.



Ajaneesh Loknath





### Can you share some experiences you had when shooting this film?

I had many experiences that I will keep to myself but all I will say I had a protected feeling. There was an energy that protected us through the shooting.

### Does the blockbuster success of the movie put unconscious pressure on you?

When the movie was about to be released, I had a sense of heaviness. When people saw the movie, some of them started seeing me differently. One of the women who is part of the family of the artists, fell on my legs and I did the same, but it felt too heavy, so I stopped visiting theaters after that. I do not want to be seen as God.

### How do you choose scripts to act/direct?

When I am acting, if I like the story and character, I will say yes. When directing, I like social issues and when it is layered with storytelling and anything that talks of our culture. With Kantara also this is what I wanted to do, and I like to create new genres and work on different issues every time.

### What do awards mean to you?

Awards are good appreciation and there is always an attraction about it. Just like in our childhood when we were given a cup when we won something, there is always a good feeling when your work is appreciated.

### What next for you?

As of now, I am not working on anything as I am on a break (half of which is done). I have spent time with my family on a holiday and am continuing with some temple runs. I will start in January next.



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