

Shekhar not surprised by costumes Oscar for 'The Golden Age'

Shekhar Kapur wasn't surprised in the least when his film 'The Golden Age' got the Oscar for best costumes. However, the acclaimed director says that he wasn't really expecting Cate Blanchett to get an Academy Award for the film because the jury doesn't have the time to see 'subtle nuances'.

Shekhar, currently into the pre-production of 'Paani', his first Hindi film since 'The Bandit Queen' 14 years ago, played a big hand in how Cate was dressed in 'The Golden Age'.

'I participate in every department of my cinema, costumes included. Otherwise I wouldn't be making films,' says Shekhar.

'That Alexandra Byrne won an Oscar for the costumes is not a surprise at all. It's a richly deserved award. Doing the costumes of 'Elizabeth' and now the sequel 'The Golden Age' isn't the same thing as doing the clothes for contemporary dramas. Clothes are as much a character in 'Elizabeth' as in 'Jodhaa-Akbar', if you know what I mean.

'In the first Elizabeth film, Cate Blanchett's clothes expressed innocence and love and vulnerability. In 'The Golden Age', the costumes had to take her from mortal to divine. The clothes were all part of a design that took the character to divinity. We even saw her in a nightdress. There she had almost become a spirit.'

About Cate Blanchett missing out on the Oscar for best actress, Shekhar says: 'I was a lot more disappointed when she didn't get it for the first part in 1998. This time I had a feeling Cate wouldn't get it.'

'For a performance to be Oscar-worthy it has to be a lot more 'in your face', like what Cate did by cross dressing in 'I'm Not There' for which she was nominated in the best supporting-actress category. When there are subtle nuances in the performance (like Cate's in 'The Golden Age') the jury doesn't have the time to see it.'

He elaborates on the pressures put on the jury. 'The jury members have lots of films to see. And they're an aged lot. So they look for overt signs of brilliance, like a physical disability. Very often the Oscar isn't going to the performance, it's going to the character. Personally, I felt Cate Blanchett had a far more complicated character to play in the sequel.'

At the moment Shekhar is location hunting for 'Paani'.

'I'm seriously into pre-production. I'm going around [Mumbai](#) taking shots of buildings and locations. There won't be any stars. Only newcomers in 'Paani'.'

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)