

Horror up close

MEET Vikram Bhatt whose *Haunted* is all set to release in 3D tomorrow

Vikram Bhatt has a nose for horror. Not satisfied with his horror trilogy "Raaz", "1920" and "Shaapit", the filmmaker has yet again forayed into the world of ghouls, creaky doors and blood-curdling screams. Releasing tomorrow, his film "Haunted" gets bigger and possibly better with Vikram dabbling for the first time ever in 3D stereoscopy — a first for any Indian filmmaker. Ask him about his experiment with 3D, a technology that's restricted by the fewer number of theatres equipped to handle it, and he says: "3D as a technology works for any genre — action, animation, so why not horror, I thought. After my horror trilogy, I wanted to do something different." Vikram has roped in Prasad EFX, Chennai, to create the 3D effects for "Haunted".

The story

Set in Dalhousie, "Haunted" tells the story of Rehan who wants to complete the sale of his ancestral property Glen Manor. He has to wipe out the image of it being a haunted house, but realises the place has a story to tell, and falls in love with the dead woman residing there. Mithun's son Mimoh (now calling himself Mahakshay) and newcomer Tia Bajpai form the lead pair of the film. Obviously 3D is going to make the film much more spine-chilling. "3D is a tool. It is an enhancement of the sensation; it can't be the sensation," says Vikram. "In a country that has more 2D theatres than 3D, it wouldn't make so much sense, if it was not for the



WORLD OF SUSPENSE A still from "Haunted" and (below) Vikram Bhatt

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strength of the script and the experience of writing something that lends itself to 3D."

The cast

His lead actors are new to the audience, even though Mahakshay has one movie to his name. The director says he is sure his lead will deliver. "Mimoh and Tia have acted in the past. Tia is a television product having won a singing reality show



and acted in a couple of soaps. When a film doesn't do well, it could be due to a whole lot of reasons, not just the actor. That doesn't make Mimoh less talented in any way," he says.

Ask Vikram if 3D is the USP of the film, and he says, "There are two factors to make a film work. One is getting the audience in, and then making them stay there. Horror, 3D and great music are good marketing

pegs. But five minutes into the film, the audience is going to look for a story. I would say that the USP of 'Haunted' is its story."

"Haunted" is being released in 2D and 3D in Hindi and Tamil tomorrow, and in English and Spanish two months later. "Fear is primordial. There is nothing cultural about it. A romance or an action film may differ from region to region because of the cultural connect, but not horror. I had dubbed '1920' too as 'Gayatri' in Tamil, and it did well, though 'Shaapit' didn't work. As for Spanish, I think Latin America is a good market."

Ask Vikram if he will move out of the horror genre, and pat comes the reply: "People want to associate Vikram Bhatt with something. I have realised through my career that it is better I be the master of one than a jack of all trades!"

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