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Anurag Kashyap says great editors make great directors



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Bengaluru: Acclaimed filmmaker Anurag Kashyap on Thursday criticised a section of filmmakers for compromising on artistic independence and creative freedom, describing them as “opportunists”.

“In order to make your life easy, you just cooperate with the regime,” Kashyap said while addressing students and aspiring filmmakers at AKTION, an event hosted by the Rushes Film Society at St Joseph’s University, Bengaluru.

“I don’t call them filmmakers, I call them opportunists,” he said, adding that he does not judge filmmakers who give in to fear but criticises those who compromise their creative freedom.



Kashyap addressed more than 1,000 students and aspiring filmmakers from 15 institutions on how stories are created and presented in modern cinema. He said that when art becomes commercialised, it turns into merchandise.

Drawing a historical comparison with the film industry during Adolf Hitler’s regime, Kashyap referred to German filmmaker Fritz Lang, who left Germany after refusing to make propaganda films and later moved to Hollywood. He also mentioned filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, who stayed in Germany and produced films for the Nazi regime.

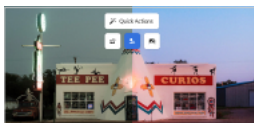
“I now look to younger filmmakers for inspiration,” Kashyap said, adding that while digital cameras were expected to reduce filmmaking costs and difficulties, the process also resulted in a loss of discipline in some areas.

Speaking about filmmaking techniques, he said the discipline he learnt from editing on Steenbeck machines helped shape his approach. He observed that filmmakers today often focus on multiple shots for a sequence instead of carefully designing individual shots and constructing the mise-en-scène.

Kashyap also said that editors and cinematographers sometimes influence direction-related decisions, while the urge to share the viewing experience on social media has reduced meaningful discussions around cinema.

Kashyap was welcomed by Pro Chancellor Rev Dr Melwyn Pinto SJ, Dean Dr Parinitha Shinde, Head of the Department Dr Maruthu Pandian, Registrar Dr Syed Wajeed, Controller of Examinations Dr Godwin D’Souza, and Assistant Professor Shubha Das from the School of Communication and Media Studies.

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While highlighting Kashyap’s achievements, Dr Shinde said his film *Gangs of Wasseyapur* premiered at the Cannes Director’s Fortnight in 2012 and was later included in The Guardian’s list of 100 films. She also noted that he created India’s first Netflix original series, the Emmy-nominated *Sacred Games*.

Rev Dr Pinto compared Kashyap’s filmmaking approach with French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard’s view that every film requires a beginning, middle and end, though not necessarily in that order.

Kashyap also spoke about the influence of Vittorio De Sica’s *Bicycle Thieves* on his filmmaking philosophy. He said the film taught him that cinema does not need to be altered to be effective.

He recalled applying this approach while making films such as *Black Friday* and *Gulaal*, where he allowed locations to remain natural rather than creating artificial settings. He said he believes the camera should observe and capture performances naturally rather than actors performing specifically for the camera.

Kashyap said he hopes Indian cinema continues to explore themes such as sexuality, politics and religion in a direct manner.

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