

Pierre ASSOULINE, Producer

Pierre first expressed his penchant for the cinema, writing and directing short 16mm fiction films, after graduating from the National School of Fine Arts in France. Following this, he founded and managed a publishing house. His translations of ancient philosophical Indian texts such as “Bhagavad-gita” and “Bhagavat-Purana” into French led to these books becoming best sellers. His conferences in Paris University Jussieu, and his interventions on national television have given him at the time the status of a French specialist on Indian spirituality.

In 1981, he founded « Atma 95 », a Paris based FM radio station, which achieved high audience ratings with its innovative programming, mixing contemporary French culture with programmes on spirituality.

He would return to the cinema in 1988, devoting several years to theatrical release and international distribution of films by legendary directors (Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Jean-Luc Godard, André Techiné, Lino Brocka are just a few of the names in his portfolio...).

It is due to Pierre Assouline’s presentation of films such as “The Ruins”, “The Marginals” and “A Closed Case” to the French public that Mrinal Sen is well known in French art-house circles today. The same for Shaji Karun, of whom Pierre distributed Cannes’ Caméra d’or Mention winner “Piravi” and Cannes’ Palme d’Or nominated “Swaham”.

Pierre began producing feature films with his first production company, **Delfilm SA** in Geneva. He wrote the original story for his production “**Vanaprastham, The Last Dance**”, a feature film by Shaji Karun. It was filmed by the renowned Directors of Photography, Renato Berta and Santosh Sivan, and scored by the internationally acclaimed Indian composer and tabla genius, Zakir Hussain. The film was chosen for the **Official Selection at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival** and was selected in more than thirty other international festivals. It won “**Best Film**” at the **2000 National Indian Awards (India’s Oscars)**.

Pierre Assouline’s track record in Indian cinema as well as his countless stays in India over the past 20 years has enabled him to acquire in-depth knowledge of both traditional and contemporary Indian culture, and multiply his exchanges with motion-picture professionals.

Always very much involved in the content and the creative process, Pierre has produced or co-produced a range of films of all genres and his productions have gained him artistic recognition across the board.

Karim Dridi’s “**Pigalle**”, has developed a cult status and has received numerous accolades: **Official Competition in the 51st Venice Film Festival**, nomination at the **1996 Césars for “Best First Film”**, **Prix Michel Simon for “Best Young Actor”** and “**Best Young Actress**”, and was selected at several other international festivals.

“Al Centro...Forza Roma”, by Garbuglia and Orano, obtained the Franco Solinas prize for “Best Original Screenplay” and was selected at the 49th Locarno Film Festival.

Pierre then produced a film that combines stop-motion animation with live action: “Conspirators of Pleasure”, directed by animation master Jan Svankmajer. The film was present at over fifty festivals worldwide and received the Jury Award at the Locarno Film Festival.

Then Pierre produced “Los Angeles without a map”, a film by Mika Kaurismäki, based on Richard Rayner’s best-seller. Starring Vincent Gallo, Vinessa Shaw, Julie Delpy and Johnny Depp, the film premiered in competition at the Toronto International Festival.

In 2001, Pierre Assouline broke new ground by producing J.H. Roger’s “Lulu”, the first ever feature film without special effects to be filmed on High Definition Digital.

Thus, after over 15 years devoted to production, theatrical and international distribution, of feature films that have all been selected in major film festivals, through his French and Swiss companies, Pierre Assouline has launched Only Films , in Paris, to focus on production of first and second films driven by the strong personality of their international directors.

His productions under the Only Films banner include “The Furious Forces of Rhymes”, by New York director Josh Atesh Litle, a Hip Hop musical shot in seven different countries, and “Scattered Beauty”, a period film shot in Morocco.

For two years, he also served as creative development producer for the 2010 Oscar nominated Israeli/Palestinian feature film ‘Ajami’.

In 2005, he has established the Westeast Films Company (www.westeastfilms.com), an entity based in Mumbai, with French and US subsidiaries, to develop and produce Indian content feature films and to offer tailored co-production and production services in India to western production houses and filmmakers.

Under the Westeast Films banner, Pierre has executive produced among others the film “ Babaji, an Indian love story”, by Jiska Rickels presented in official selection at the 2009 Rotterdam International Film Festival, and in 2010, the Indian part of the film “The Experiment” with Adrien Brody, Maggie Grace and Forest Whitaker.

Pierre is a member of The Academy of Arts and Technics of Cinema (The Cesars), and an Expert in film related intellectual property as well as in film and audiovisual rights for the Paris Court.