

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Warren Pereira: 'Filmmaking Isn't Like Sports'

Adam Leipzig · Thursday, June 28th, 2012

When he's not in his native India, Warren Pereira lives between Los Angeles and Portland, which is where I caught up with him, as he was shooting a concert video with electro house artists like Steve Aoki and Datsik. A former competition swimmer, Pereira shoots commercials while also pursuing his other passions – making short films, and soon, he hopes, shooting his first narrative feature.

Recently, Pereira's campaign for "The Hinglish Project" won the Golden Lion Award at the [Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity](#), the most important advertising event of the year.

Hinglish itself is fascinating: it is a new font developed for English speakers, that allows them to decipher Hindu script when they are visiting India. Pereira's creative approach was equally innovative.

How did you get the Hinglish gig?

I was in India in January doing some research for a documentary on the Indian tiger. I met the creative director over coffee and she told me about the project, so I just went out and shot a demo for her, just out in the street, taking the point-of-view of a foreigner, which is what Indians call tourists.

Three months later they called me and offered me the job. They saw a free-of-charge demo and knew what I could offer. Filmmaking isn't usually like sports, where you get somewhere for clear reasons. In filmmaking, there's rarely clarity. This was the way it should work.

Watch The Hinglish project here:

You grew up in Mumbai, then moved to Canada. You seem ideally suited to cross-cultural explorations.

I was the perfect fit for the Hinglish campaign.

When I left India to finish high school in Toronto, it was an extreme change on many levels – especially the weather! I was used to the heat of Mumbai! And the scale of things in the Western world was much bigger then. You went in to get a light bulb and there were maybe 500 choices... in India, they was one, and you hoped it would fit.

You have a distinctive visual and storytelling style. But it is so hard to get a feature made. You, like other talented directors, need to pay the rent with commercials while trying to get a long-form done. What's your approach?

I've done five short films and three even qualified for the Oscars, but in a way I'm avoiding approaching it. You, being a producer, can relate and understand. I did my narrative short films,

and I'm so grateful to the Screen Actors Guild and all the guilds so I could do them. But it's an endless stream of money and doing the work, which never ends.

Then you submit to festivals, which also costs money. Usually when you do shorts, you're your own side show. You put up your own posters and get people on Facebook. Then you go to the theatre and its projected wrong! "My anamorphic is squeezed!"

I've written my feature, but I've decided to hold off a bit and really develop the script. Some indie films are very good but don't go anywhere. I really want to be ready.

That's so true. I think something like 4,000 completed feature films do not get released each year, which amounts to more than one billion dollars of investment that goes to waste. I'm not trying to depress you, but that's what's happening. I've taken some time off from producing so I can start sharing some of the insider information filmmakers and other creatives and innovators need to know, so they can really get their work out to audiences. Without that, our culture suffers.

It does suffer. Because film informs the culture, and otherwise we get formulaic repetitions.

What movie have you liked recently?

Drive, directed by Nicholas Winding Refn. The way it was shot, the soundtrack, the performances, all the little director things. There's a scene with Carey Mulligan and Ryan Gosling in her apartment. The director holds the frame on her and she's not doing anything apparent, she doesn't have any dialogue, but it grips you. She's breathing, her rib cage lifts, and you feel the intensity of her emotion. It is incredible that the director noticed that and held the shot.

More of Warren Periera's work can be seen on [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#).

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