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By the very nature of its diversity, the Asian member countries of the **ASEM** region are a terrain of new stories. The filmmaking is avant garde in its raw nature, unabashed and experimental and yet most of it escapes the global audience as it is targeted to appease only the domestic markets. Bollywood, the mainstream Hindi film industry from India is a classic example. Low-budget independently produced films from the Asian ASEM region do not quite reach out in comparison to their international counterparts. The debatable reason for that could be the lack of Creative Producing.

**A Creative producer is ideally someone who focuses on being the holistic producer, who identifies, options, develops, and pitches the developed stories. She/he also challenges the writer/director creatively; raises financing; leads the casting/packaging process; hires and inspires**

crew; and navigates the sales, distribution, and marketing arenas. In other words, a Creative producer needs to have good instincts and evolve their communicating and problem-solving skills at all stages of realizing a project. and not just while sourcing funding as is the case with the Asian ASEM region.

Perhaps, the most successful collaboration in the arts between regions of Asian countries and Europe is the sector of Creative Producing in films. While the South Asia promises to be rich in story, raw talent and experimentation, Europe comes to the helm with its vast experience, access to pitching and funding bodies and creates an alternative art-market for Independently produced Cinema (Indies) in Asian ASEM countries which would otherwise dwindle in some art-house festival circuits in their domestic economies. There is much challenge to handle creativity along with the International sales, which are crucial for a film's fate. It's unfair to look at both regions within their pan-identity, especially Asia. Within the Asian region, perhaps Bollywood is the only industry which survives and out-stands Hollywood's box-office records. The reasons are best left for critical judgment and the mighty populace. Other than that, the Asian ASEM region film industries struggle to outwit the American box office with its domestic replicas, most of them lacking in technique and money. Within such a scenario of changing statistics, Creative Co-producing provides an alternative to good cinema.

South Korea is a good case study as an industry which would have long gone stagnant if successful *Ko-productions* wouldn't have floated. **The Korean Film Council (KOFIC)** has always been abreast with developments on the other side of the globe and created successful programs and markets to enable and benefit Creative Producing of projects. KOFIC believes that logically and firstly, **International Co-productions help boost tourism of the countries involved and generates revenue indirectly by way of tourism.** It's an often used formula by its famous cousin industry from India, Bollywood which mostly shoots at foreign locals today, thus generating revenue from Non-resident Indians and boosting tourism for its host-countries through Indian tourism, yet refrains from calling it a creative Co-producing effort. There might be rebates, concessions and benefits offered on locations by host countries in this case by the creative control but the helm of affairs rests with the Indian production house involved. South Korea comparatively, not just shares resources but creative intervention as well. Second, it's a way of invigorating the stagnating Korean film industry while partnering with other regions. There is a lot of activity between China and South Korea, for instance, where the latter is a supreme hub for most of the post-production on co-produced projects. Others being Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan which also participate in international co-productions. While partnering with Europe for an international Co-production, South Korea's KOFIC entitles a project in an International co-production market provided it is shot for more than 10 days in Korea and that the participation of foreign capital in the production must exceed 80% of the total cost of the film. In addition, the films are not encouraged to portray Korea in a negative sense. For a Creative producer, it's reassuring to know that co-producing projects can get approximately 25% of cash grant, which is the highest in the Asian ASEM region and comparable only to Singapore.

Apart from direct funding for co-productions with Europe, KOFIC also organizes the **Asian Film**

**Market** during the **Busan International Film Festival**. At the last festival, a record-breaking 37 companies from 15 different countries presented their latest co-productions at the Asian Film market screenings. Apart from that there were 26 co-produced films (with Europe) in the Asian Project Market (APM) in development. According to Busan's mandate, it not only discovers but connects, supports and promotes new talent. The online market within its scope also had new 29 films which were seeking international distribution. Five of these funded projects were European co-productions with Italy. Interestingly the Asian Film Market also hosts networking programs like **EAVE:Ties that Bind** workshop co-organized with the **Udine Far East Film Festival**, Italy and EAVE Film Fund Talk promoting meetings with Europe's major fund managers. In addition, the market also hosts the Asia-Pacific Producers Network (APN) round table to boast Creative co-producing with Europe. Clearly, KOFIC plays a central role in supporting structures for Creative producing within the industry of South Korea and Europe. Being one of the key players in the Asian ASEM region, South Korea is also a resource of the emerging and nascent south-east Asian regions. An interesting one amongst them being Vietnam. Creative producing in Vietnam with Europe is crucial in its survival. **Some of the art-cinema's finest gems are result of such successful collaboration**. For instance, in Vietnam, collaborations between Vietnamese director Tran Anh Hung's and French producer, Christophe Rossignon are known. Their film, *The Scent of Green Papaya* (Vietnamese: Mùi đu đủ xanh, French: L'Odeur de la papaye verte) is a Vietnamese-language film produced by Lazennec Production, France. In Vietnam, the arching body of film, **the Ministry of Culture** is responsible for promoting any such collaborations. The festival circuit is vibrant but the market scenario is still under-developed. Although international sales companies like Wild Bunch, France is increasingly showing interest in Art-house cinema from the East. The common ground between the Asian ASEM region and Europe still remains their interest in art-house cinema. Perhaps, that's why populist cinema like Bollywood appeals to the mainstream and refrains from creative co-production. Although, with recent **NFDC (National Film Development Corporation)** initiatives, international co-productions and networking events in creative producing are being developed with Netherlands's Binger Lab and interesting indie cinema is emerging with European collaboration. Lastly, it's also reassuring to see that Creative producing is seen as an important aspect in the growth of the industries of the Asian ASEM regions and commendable efforts are also made by cultural organizations like **NETPAC (Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema)**, a leading platform for discovery and promotion of Asian cinema to Europe, hoping that the liaison between the two regions contributes more gems to the kitty of world cinema.

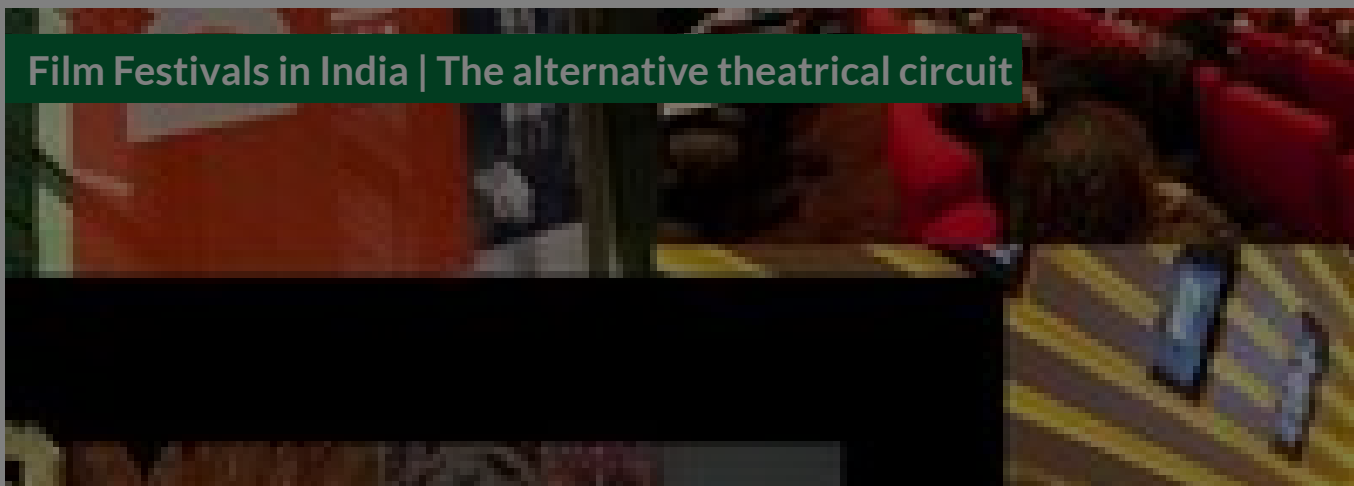
*Parul Wadhwa is a documentary maker with a varied background in co-curating film festivals, archiving film memorabilia, managing film and video art residencies, restoration and colour grading, she has previously worked in Bollywood (India), South Korea and the UK to gradually working independently now. She holds a Masters degree in English Literature from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in India and a Certificate in Asian Film Professional Training from the Korean Film Council in South Korea.*

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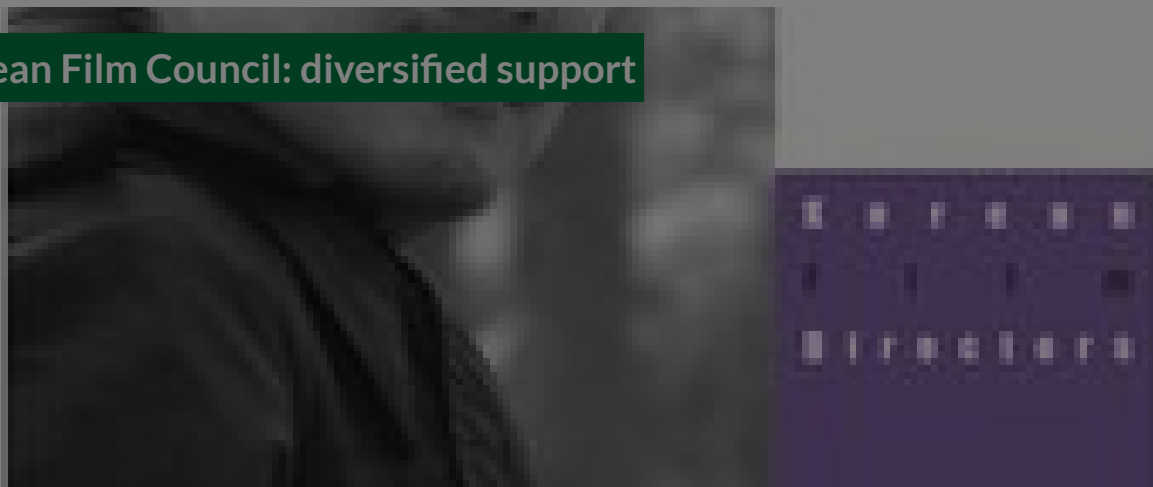
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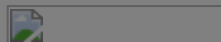
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