

SÂDHU

seeker of truth

a film by Gaël Métroz



TIPIMAGES PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A FILM PRODUCED BY FRANCINE LÜSSER AND GERARD MONIER IN COPRODUCTION WITH RADIO TELEVISION SUISSE AND SSR SRG IDEE SUISSE - CAMERA GAIL METROZ - EDITING THOMAS BACHMANN
MUSIC JULIEN POUGET - SONGS SURAJ BABA - WITH THE SUPPORT OF OFFICE FEDERAL DE LA CULTURE, FONDS REGIO FILMS WITH LA LOTÉRIE ROMANDE, VILLE DE GENEVE AND CANTON DU VALAIS, FONDATION CULTURELLE SUISSIMAGE,
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STARTING SEPTEMBER 26TH 2012

PRODUCTION

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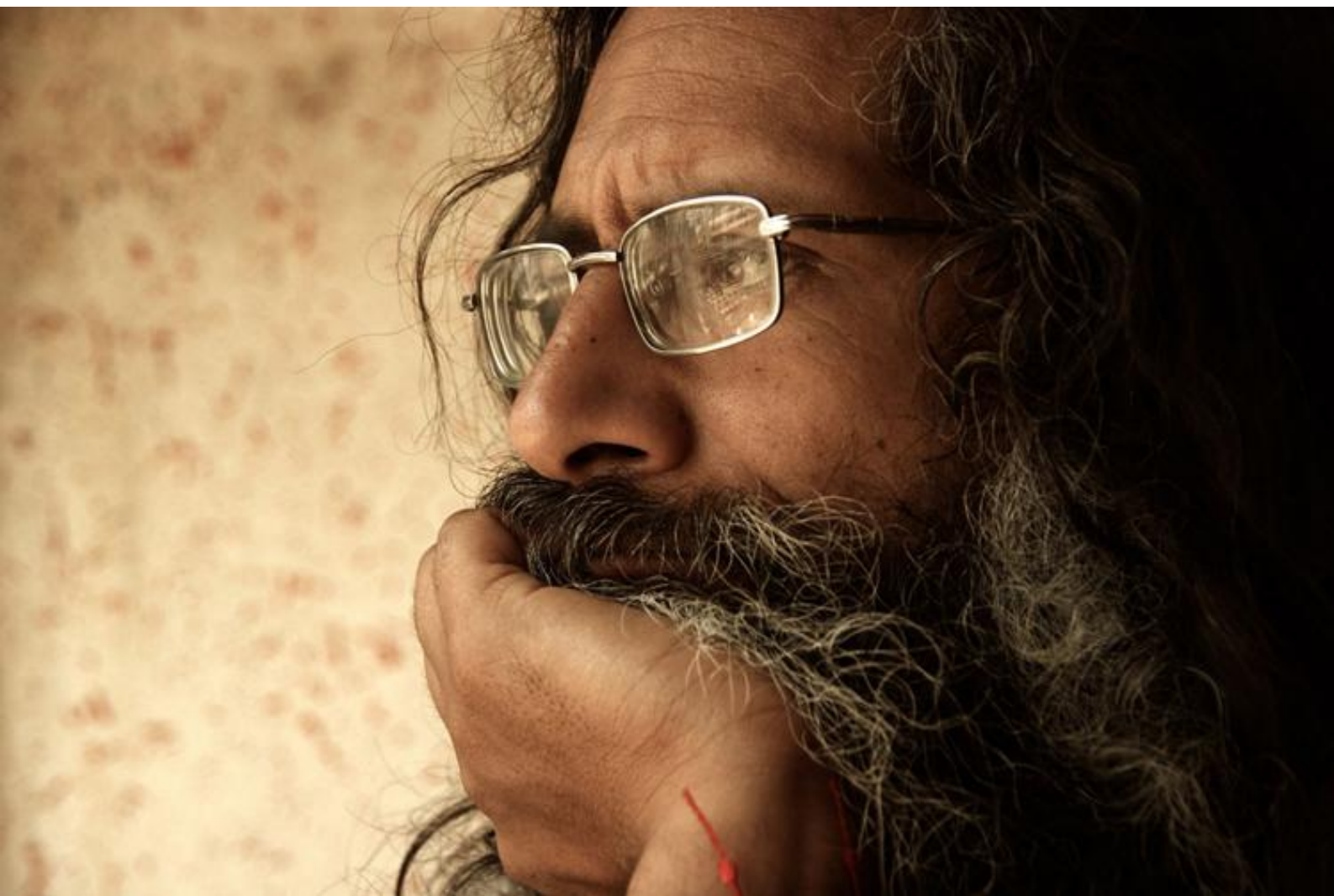
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Press kit, poster and pics are downloadable on the official website

www.sadhu-movie.com or www.agorafilms.net

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THE FILM

SYNOPSIS

Suraj Baba is a sadhu, a Hindu holy man. He has renounced to earthly goods and has shut himself away to live in a cave in the heart of the Himalayas at 10,000 feet above sea level. After eight years of isolation and meditation, he takes the risk of exposing himself to the world once more. Before he confirms his vows to become an ascetic monk after a pilgrimage of many months, Suraj decides to join the rest of sadhus during the Kumbh Mela celebration, which gathers more than 70 million pilgrims every 12 years. Suraj's sincerity during his journey of initiation turns the Indian mysticism into a secondary theme of the movie. He is a wise man that doesn't want to be wise any more.

WHAT IS A SADHU?

From Sanskrit "good man, Holy Man," the sadhu makes the vows of poverty and chastity. It is the mythical character of India, representing both the philosophy and the rejection of material goods in favor of spirituality.

"Sad" means truth and "sadhu", seeker of truth.

The sadhus cut all ties with their families, and have no wealth. They live withdrawn, or are begging on the roads of India and Nepal feeding themselves with donations of the devotees.

Today they constitute 0.5% of India's population, but the authentic sadhus do not usually show outside the Kumbha Mela.

They practice meditation. To part from the physical suffering that make men vulnerable, they impose themselves many mortifications.





THE PROTAGONIST SURAJ BABA

Born in Darjeeling, India, with a bourgeois background, Suraj left everything to live a spare life of renouciant. Respected in India as a holy man, he gave up everything to devote himself to meditation. He had lived in a cave at 10'000 feet in the Himalayas when he met Gaël.



THE KUMBH MELA

Largest religious gathering in the world, the Kumbh Mela is a pilgrimage that takes place every twelve years at the foot of the Himalayas on the banks of the Ganges. It attracts millions of pilgrims. This festival reflects the complex mix of religious and cultural values that forms the social fabric of Indian society.

The Kumbh Mela once contained the nectar of immortality. Bathing in the sacred river would provide for the faithful a total remission of their sins. More for the sadhus than for the faithful, it represents a unique event.

It brought together more than 11 million pilgrims in 1977, 25 million in 1998 and over 70 million in 2010.

BACK STORY

Over the course of six years, Gaël met many sadhus while he was en route between India and Nepal. He was fascinated by their philosophy of privation and accompanied them on several pilgrimages.

Since the sadhus only appear briefly in his movie *Nomad's Land- in the footsteps of Nicolas Bouvier*, Gaël expressed the wish during the film's post-production to make his next film about one of them. During the three months he spent looking for a main character for his upcoming film, *SADHU*, his fascination for ascetics turned into affection. During his search, Gaël met Suraj Baba, a person who shattered Gaël's myth of what a sadhu, an unworldly ascetic and a holy man is according to many Indians.

Gaël especially liked that Suraj didn't seem to embody a common sadhu at first sight: he had big glasses and an even bigger interest for the western culture (e.g. rock music, Plato's philosophy, the novels of Hermann Hesse and Saint-Exupéry). That was where Suraj's strength and weakness lay. He had yet to find his own way between the western and the eastern worlds, between consumer society and privation, between a stable family life and abstinent solitude, and between having success in life and living a successful life. While he assimilates both of the apparently contradictory lifestyles, he debunks the clichés we usually have about the "Orient" and "oriental spirituality". The search he carries out on his journey of initiation will eventually lead him to not choose between his solitude and the world, his past in society and the abstinence of the present. Suraj is determined to reconcile both ways of living life and to live "inside and outside the world at the same time".

Gaël is one of the few persons that Suraj has met in the last eight years. During the first days they spent together, Gaël was not sure whether Suraj even spoke English. But after some weeks had passed, Gaël and his camera slowly turned into Suraj's confidants. Since Gaël was alone with Suraj – without a crew –, he was able to film the sadhu's activities without bothering him. Thanks to their friendship and the unique Kumbh Mela celebration, Suraj finally decides to make his dream come true. He wants to face his fears and unite the past and future in order to experience the world both in his cave and in the rest of India. During the pilgrimage they share, Suraj and Gaël show us that Indian spirituality can sometimes also turn out to be a business. After following Suraj Baba for one year, the viewer also realizes that Indian spirituality also truly does exist. The tradition of this spirituality, which is based on the idea of finding our place in the world and in nature and having control of our bodies and minds, has been alive for thousands and thousands of years. This spirituality embraces a universal development, even though it leaves little space to individual development. From 250 hours of compelling footage, Gaël created a one-and-a half-hour-long movie in which he invites the viewer to travel with Suraj Baba and discover India's beauty and world of thought.

THE DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S NOTE OF INTENT

Depuis plusieurs années, je parcours la planète pour partager la vie de ces philosophes anachroniques qui pensent que le bonheur dépend de la simplicité. C'est à Gangotri, aux sources du Gange à 3200 mètres dans l'Himalaya, que j'ai rencontré Suraj Baba. Depuis huit ans, ce sâdhu vivait là, de méditation et de yoga. La première fois que je l'ai vu, il réparait le chemin qui menait de sa grotte au Gange. Je l'ai aidé à porter des pierres, il m'a porté un thé au lait avant de s'en retourner à son yoga sur les berges du fleuve sacré. Au fil des semaines, je me suis installé dans la grotte voisine, et au fil des mois, je suis devenu son ami. Le premier depuis huit ans. J'ai compris qu'il se sentait piégé par son érémitisme et n'osait plus retourner au monde après tant d'isolement.

Lorsque je lui ai parlé de mon projet de rencontrer des sâdhus parmi les 70 millions de pèlerins de la Kumbha Mela, il m'a demandé si je pouvais l'y guider. Et on est partis pour ce pèlerinage qui, au fil des péripéties, est devenu le plus long de notre vie. Durant ces 18 mois de tournage, on dormait au bord des rivières, se nourrissait de ce que les pèlerins nous donnaient. Lui avançait avec sa petite besace, et moi je le suivais avec ma caméra, dans les plaines gangétiques, en Inde, à travers les cols de l'Himalaya, au Népal, au Mustang, vers le Tibet.

Au fil du tournage, Suraj s'est avéré ne pas être un sâdhu comme les autres. Il ne cherchait pas une doctrine, mais son propre chemin. En doutant même de son statut de saint homme, il est devenu pour moi le vrai sage. Un homme en quête.

Gaël Métroz



GAËL MÉTROZ

BIOGRAPHIE

Gaël Métroz est né le 28 novembre 1978 à Liddes, en Suisse. En 2004, il obtient une Licence en littérature française, philosophie et histoire de l'Art à l'Université de Lausanne. Il obtient plusieurs prix littéraires dont le Prix de la Sorge en 2004 et le premier Prix Nicolas Bouvier en 2008. Après avoir écrit et mis en scène la pièce L'Enfant Déchu, il décide de se focaliser sur les métiers d'auteur-réalisateur et journaliste.

Gaël tournera autour du monde afin de donner le temps au voyage de s'exprimer en parcourant plusieurs pays, comme l'Ethiopie, le Soudan, l'Egypte, la Birmanie, la Turquie, l'Iran, le Pakistan, l'Afghanistan, la Chine, l'Inde, le Népal... En qualité de journaliste, il publie ses carnets de route autant à la télévision (Passe-Moi les Jumelles, TSR), à la radio (Un Dromadaire sur l'Epaule, RSR), que dans la presse écrite (Le Nouvelliste, La Liberté, L'Express, L'Impartial, Le Journal du Jura, Le Courrier, L'Illustré...).

En 2008, il réalise son premier long métrage cinéma NOMAD'S LAND – sur les traces de Nicolas Bouvier qui a réuni plus de 40'000 spectateurs en Suisse. Le film a été primé entre autre par le prestigieux Golden Gate Award pour le meilleur documentaire au Festival international du film de San Francisco. Aujourd'hui Gaël Métroz présente son deuxième long métrage cinéma intitulé SADHU, le portrait d'un saint homme hindou qu'il a suivi pendant plus d'une année.

FILMOGRAPHY

2012 **Sâdhu** – feature doc

2010 **Kalash, les derniers infidèles du Pakistan** – tv doc

PUBLIC AWARD Rassegna Internazionale Cinema Archeologico, 2011

2008 **Nomad's Land – sur les traces de Nicolas Bouvier** – feature doc

GOLDEN GATE AWARD, San Francisco International Film festival USA, 2009

PUBLIC AWARD, Festival Planeta 2009, Mexico

BEST DIRECTOR AWARD, Festival de Qinghai, China 2010

BEST FILM AWARD, Festival de Qinghai, China 2010

2006 **L'Afrique de Rimbaud** – tv doc



MUSIC

The main part of the movie's soundtrack was composed in two weeks in the mountains of the Valais canton in Switzerland. During his trip, Gaël met a sitar player named Orindam who had flown there from Kolkata. We got along very well from the beginning. I discovered in him a great musician who had mastered the repertoire of classical Indian music. I added some of my own rather occidental ideas inspired by rock and blues music that Orindam didn't know. The two musicians from Valais – Stéphane Montangéro, who learned how to play the tabla in India, and Florian Alter, a highly talented violinist – joined us during Orindam's stay.

I wrote some of the songs and ambient music in collaboration with Gaël. We always follow the same working process: he tells me which ambience he has in mind, I compose several themes, we exchange some ideas on mp3 files and then talk about how to proceed with our work. Gaël is an ideal director for me because he knows how to put his trust into a musician and guide the work in the right direction.

Nowadays, with music becoming more and more standardized, I believe that we've been able to create an interesting sound that is not at all perfect, but very lively. I think it's a good sign when a listener can't tell that a computer was involved in the music-making process.

Julien Pouget

THE PRODUCTION

PORTRAIT

Producer of award-winning *Nomad's Land - in the footsteps of Nicolas Bouvier*, rewarded "Best Documentary" by the prestigious San Francisco Film Festival and seen by over 35'000 spectators in Switzerland, Geneva based Tipi'mages Productions believes close involvement and strong personal vision of projects lead to films of character.

In 2005 Francine Lusser and Gérard Monier created Tipi'mages Productions in Geneva. Linking the experiences of the two film industries, the Swiss and the French, they aim at building bridges into the European and International markets.

Filmography

2012 SÂDHU

feature documentary - director Gaël Métroz

HAZEL

short film fiction - director Tamer Ruggli

2011 PASSÉ COMPOSÉ

doc tv - director Isabelle Rey

2010 MOI C'EST MOI - ICH BIN ICH

feature documentary (minority coproduction) - director Gabriele Schärer

KALASH, the last infidels of Pakistan

tv doc - director Gaël Métroz

2009 FREUD'S MAGIC POWDER

short film fiction - director Edouard Gétaz

2008 NOMAD'S LAND, in the footsteps of Nicolas Bouvier

feature documentary - director Gaël Métroz

SEX TOYS STORIES

tv doc - a film by Anne Deluz and Béatrice Guelpa

2006 ROOM 24 (CHAMBRE 24)

short film fiction - director Andrew Katumba

FACT SHEET

Title	SÂDHU
Shooting location	INDIA AND NEPAL
Director	GAËL MÉTROZ
Camera and sound	GAËL MÉTROZ
Original music	JULIEN POUGET
Original songs	SURAJ BABA
Editing	THOMAS BACHMANN
Sound mix	DENIS SÉCHAUD
Color correction	PATRICK LINDENMAIER
Graphical design	MASSMILIAMNO BALDASSARRI
with	SURAJ BABA
Production	TIPI'MAGES PRODUCTIONS FRANCINE LUSSE & GÉRARD MONIER
in coproduction with	LA RTS ET SSR SRG
Swiss distribution	AGORA FILMS
International sales	URBAN DISTRIBUTION INT
vod distribution	UNIVERCINÉ SWITZERLAND
Length	93 min.
Language	English and Hindi
Subtitles	French, German, English
Shooting format	HDV
Camera	Canon
Projection format	DCP
Projection ratio	1:1.85
Year of production	2012
Country of production	Switzerland

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