

Jason Xenopoulos appointed Executive Creative Director at Young & Rubicam

Filmmaker and entrepreneur Jason Xenopoulos, who was contracted into Young & Rubicam to develop the creative strategy for its successful MTN pitch, has subsequently been appointed Executive Creative Director for the agency.

Jason is a 34-year-old filmmaker and entrepreneur whose media ventures have covered the areas of film, television, music and the Internet. His first feature film as writer-director, *Promised Land*, was released in January 2003 in Cinema Nouveau and Ster-Kinekor theatres across South Africa. Over the past year, the film has garnered critical acclaim around the world. *Promised Land* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2002 where it was the first fully-financed South African film to be chosen for the festival's Official Selection programme.

The film has also garnered several prestigious awards including The Best Screenplay Award at the Tokyo International Film Festival, the award for Best Editing at FESPACO in Burkina Faso, awards for Best Picture Editing and Best Sound Design from The South African Guild of Editors (SAGE) as well as a Special Mention at the African Cinema Festival in Milan. Most recently, *Promised Land* won the Best Feature Film award at the Apollo Film Festival in the Karoo. In addition, the film was also selected to take part in the Rotterdam Film Festival, The Athens Film Festival, Sithenghi, The Commonwealth Film Festival, Opendoek in Belgium, Africa in the Picture in the Netherlands, the Festival of Seville and the Kerala Film Festival in India. *Promised Land* will be released theatrically in the UK in June 2004.

Jason's second feature film, *Critical Assignment*, was financed by Guinness in the UK and has played theatrically in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and the Cameroon. *Critical Assignment* is ground-breaking in terms of its seamless integration of advertising and entertainment. The film was selected as the Opening Night Screening at the 11th New York African Film Festival held at Lincoln Centre in April 2004. It has also been selected for presentation at the Commonwealth Film Festival in Manchester and the Hollywood Black Film Festival to be held in Los Angeles in June 2004.

Jason recently completed 10 weeks as 2nd Unit Director on *Kingdom in Twilight* - an epic fantasy/adventure saga directed by Uli Edel (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*). The project involved intensive visual effects and Jason worked closely with Academy-Award winning visual effects team Volker Engel and Marc Weigert (*Independence Day*).

From 1998 - 2000 Jason held the position of CEO at Metropolis Transactive, an Internet media company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. At the age of 28, Jason was the youngest CEO of a JSE-listed company.

As Chief Executive Officer of Primedia Pictures between 1997 - 1998, Jason was involved in the development and production of various film and television projects including the feature film *Boesman & Lena*, a Primedia Pictures/Pathé co-production starring Danny Glover and Angela Basset.

In 1994, Jason founded VWV Interactive which rapidly grew to be South Africa's leading web development company. When Primedia acquired a stake in VWV Jason joined the Primedia Group where he was instrumental in driving Primedia's R1,5 Billion acquisition of Ster-Kinekor, Africa's largest cinema distribution and exhibition company.

In 1993 Jason graduated from New York University with an honors degree (summa cum laude) in Film and Television.