

Ermoupolis, October 27, 2017

Ladies and gentlemen,

Unfortunately, service duties at the headquarters of the South Aegean Region make my presence impossible at the 15th Yperia International Convention for Tourism and Culture and the 8th International Amorgos Film Festival.

I would like once again to congratulate the initiators of the initiative and the very important topic of this year's event.

It is a great pleasure for the South Aegean Region to keep alive the interest of Hollywood filmmakers, to invest in Greece and especially in the South Aegean.

The proposal was first tabled a year ago by Steven Bernstein, who, visiting Syros, "discovered" the ideal natural setting for the shooting of international film productions.

The South Aegean Region has promoted the proposal since its inception, with great zeal and at very high levels of

government, integrating it with a strategy to attract investment and global visibility to our islands.

Recognizing the importance of the above investment for the islands and the country as a whole, at a time of great growth in cinematographic tourism, an immediate initiative was taken, in cooperation with the ministries involved, to create a friendly environment, contributing to the harmonization of the institutional framework of the Greek legislation to the European one, in order to implement the big investment proposal.

The bill, passed last August, is the first and very big step that paves the way for the implementation of the Syros project. However, much remains to be done, both in the administrative and in the economic level, in order for Greece to become a competitive character among countries that have attracted major international cinematographic and television productions in recent years. The bill provides the so-called *cash rebate*, which will return 25% of the money spent in our country to the foreign producer, but taxes haven't been completely removed yet, which, instead, is common in other countries.

It is worth noting that the proposal is highly ambitious and involves several tens of millions of euros, especially for the creation of the "largest production studio in Europe".

The lead author of "The Greek Film Plan in Syros" is Steven Bernstein, who, besides a highly awarded filmmaker, is a man who believes in our country and has carved his own revolutionary vision based on the cultural heart of the Cyclades.

Steven Bernstein, a cinematographer, producer, director and screenwriter, awarded by the American Film Association Award, has linked his name to Hollywood award-winning films such as the Oscar-winning *Monster*, starring Charlize Theron, the recent *Dominion*, to John Malkovich, *Scary Movie 2*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *One Night with the King*, *Decoding Annie Parker*, *White Chicks* and many others. He won an American Cinema Society Award for "Magic City". He also won the Golden Lion at the Cannes Film Festival for his work in the field of advertising. The book of *Film Production* (Focal Press) has been translated into many languages and has become a major commercial success. He has created a number of film schools all over the world, and has been collaborating for eight years as a judge at the Greek Film Festival.

His vision is supported by a team of distinguished producers and directors from Hollywood, such as the artistic director of film productions, Charles Lee and Martin Meunier, one of the pioneers in animation techniques, Richard Gladstein, Andrew Lane and Gary Romolo Fiorelli.

This is the most serious investment proposal that has been made for Syros, which includes the establishment of a film school and the creation of permanent facilities for movies production. Beyond a contemporary glorification of the seventh art in Greek waters, this move will be an economic and tourist revolution for Syros, the Cyclades, the South Aegean and our country in general.

The benefits that will result from the realization of films on Greek territory are particularly important. Syros will be the basis, but directors will now have the option of choosing "sceneries" from all the Cyclades and mainland Greece.

As a gesture of his absolute commitment to the creation of an international film studio and film school on the island, Steven Bernstein has completed today in Syros the six-day long, free intensive film course he held in Syros on 22-27 October with the participation of 130 students from Greece and abroad.

Confident in the successful outcome of your work, hoping to have contributed to deepen your knowledge in the topic exposed, I thank you once again.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGIOS LEONTARITIS

ANTIPIERIFERARHIS CYCLADES