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### SOME FESTIVALS TO COME...

## RECENT AWARDS – FESTIVALS

### • Locarno International Film Festival, Switzerland – 3-13 August

#### ***The Piano Tuner of Earthquakes, Un Couple Parfait and Frankie***

(...) The jury will have additional awards in store for the two real successes in the competition: special jury prize for Nobuhiro Suwa and a special mention for the Quay brothers. These are two films at either extreme of creation today: one venturing into out-and-out mannerism (the Quays), and the other engaging in an asceticism derived from Antonioni and Godard (Suwa).

Fantastical. ***The Piano Tuner of Earthquakes, by the Quay brothers***, is as cumbersome to say as it is untellable. You could attempt to evoke an evil Doctor Droz, cloned robots, a lyrical singer taken away for the mystery of her voice (Amira Casar at her most photogenic), sensual woods, a piano tuner tuning sophisticated mechanisms by ear, the stubbornness of a repetitive tune by Vivaldi... The result will impress one who allows himself to be led into this world in which sepia becomes the natural colour of things and in which time affects slowness. We have seen filmmakers lose themselves in trying to follow David Lynch into a fantastical world lying uncultivated since *Eraserhead*. Not so the Quay who, after *Institut Benjamenta*, have become, with this crystal ball film, master craftsmen in this material.

*H Story*, the previous work by **Nobuhiro Suwa**, was a reinterpretation of *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* from Japan. ***Un Couple Parfait*** is for its part a sort of return to sender, with Suwa producing his fantasy French film. It is a film which adds up what remains of the foundations of modern cinema, namely couple cinema, created by Valeria Bruni Tedeschi and Bruno Todeschini who are on the point of separation.

In Paris for a friend's wedding, they shut themselves away in a hotel bedroom at Saint-Lazare in Paris where they argue, seek each other out and flee from each other. She wanders along the corridors in the Rodin museum, seeking an image of her solitude. He, in a bar, one night, awaits a girl and gets to know a bar fly, an Algeria veteran, who talks to him about a war like you talk about a couple: 'When you're scared, you kill the other person.' In terms of form, the film is perpetually taut, on a thread, always ready to break.

You wait for too long, it goes on and on, but no, it passes and throws us into confusion. (...)

In the Current Filmmakers section, ***Frankie, by the writer Fabienne Berthaud***, marked the end of the festival. It is the portrait of a girl before becoming the portrait of a model (Diane Kruger, in a not always structured role) who flirts with madness. The shots would certainly benefit from being longer, as in the formidable shooting scene which turns to nightmare. But this does not change the deep impression *Frankie* makes on us. (...)

*Source: adapted from Libération, 17 August 2005, Philippe Azoury (excerpts)*

#### **Awards (excerpts)**

Golden Leopard: ***Nine Lives*** by Rodrigo García- USA

Special Jury Prize: ***Un couple parfait*** by Nobuhiro Suwa- France/Japan

Silver Leopard: ***Fratricide*** by Yilmaz Arslan- Germany/Luxembourg/France

Silver Leopard for the best first or second feature film shared equally between

***3 Grad Kaelter*** by Florian Hoffmeister- Germany and

***Ma Hameh Khouhim- We are all fine*** by Bizhan Mirbaqeri- Iran

Special Mention to the Quay Brothers for the visionary atmosphere in the film ***The piano tuner of Earthquakes*** – United Kingdom/Germany

Public's Choice Award to the film ***Zaina, Cavalière de l'Atlas*** by Bourlem Guerdjou - France

Fipresci's Prize to: ***A Perfect Day*** by Joana Hadjithomas, Khalil Joreige- France/Lebanon/Germany

[www.pardo.ch](http://www.pardo.ch)

- **Edinburgh International Film Festival, Scotland – 17-28 August (excerpts)**

Standard Life Audience Award and Michael Powell Award for Best New British Feature Film: **Tsotsi** by Gavin Hood (GB/ZA)  
(Special Commendation: **Song Of Songs** by Josh Appignanesi, GB)

[www.edfilmfest.org.uk](http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk)

- **Copenhagen International Film Festival, Denmark - 18-28 August (excerpts)**

Grand Prix: **The Death of Mr Lazarescu** by Cristi Puiu, Rumania  
Best Actor: Ioan Fiscuteanu for *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*, Rumania  
Best Film: **Live and Become** by Radu Mihaileanu, France/Israel  
Best Script: Radu Mihaileanu for *Live and Become*, France /Israel  
Best Director: Bent Hamer for **Factotum**, Norway/USA  
Best Actress: Lili Taylor for *Factotum*, Norway /USA  
Best Cinematographer: Gyula Pados for **Fateless**, Hungary/Germany/Britain  
Best Female Director: Yasmine Kassari for **The Sleeping Chill**, Belgium/Morocco

[www.copenhagenfilmfestival.com](http://www.copenhagenfilmfestival.com)

- **Haugesund – The Norwegian International Film Festival - 19-26 August (excerpts)**

Andreas Award, Audience Award and local critics prize: **Giant** by Arne B.Rostad and Hallvard Braein (NO)  
Best international film: **The Death of Mr.Lazarescu** by Cristi Puiu (RO)

[www.filmfestivalen.no](http://www.filmfestivalen.no)

- **Sarajevo International Film Festival, Bosnia and Herzegovina – 19-27 August (excerpts)**

Best Film: **Leidi Zi / Lady Zee** by Georgi Djulgerov, Bulgaria  
Special Jury Prize: **Kukumi / The Kukum** by Isa Qosja, UNMI Kosovo

[www.sff.ba](http://www.sff.ba)

## EUROPA CINEMAS

- **San Sebastian: Claude Miller and Claude-Eric Poiroux ‘European Personality of the Year’**

Anjelica Huston will preside over the official jury of the **53rd Donostia-San Sebastian International Film Festival (Sept 15-24)**, which has also unveiled *The World’s Fastest Indian* [Roger Donaldson, US/NZ] as its closing film. (...)

**Claude Miller and Claude-Eric Poiroux of Europa Cinemas** will receive the festival’s one year old European Personality of the Year Award, recognizing their support of European cinema.

Miller is also on the official competition jury, chaired by Huston and including Veronica Forque, Enrico Lo Verso, Claude Miller, Lone Scherfig, Antonio Skarmeta and Dean Tavoularis. (...)

Source: [www.screendaily.com](http://www.screendaily.com), 04 September 2005, *Jennifer Green (excerpts)*

## DISTRIBUTION – PROMOTION

- **105 European films in Toronto with European Film Promotion**

For the ninth consecutive year, EFP will support the screening of over 100 European films from 17 countries, at the Toronto International Film Festival from 8 - 17 September, thanks in particular to a stand within the OMDC Sales Office. EFP will also give support to between 40 and 50 marketing campaigns for European films via the Film Sales Support (FSS) mechanism for sales agents. (...)

Complete list of films: [www.efp-online.com](http://www.efp-online.com)

Source: *adapted from Mediadesk Belgium, 24 August 2005 (excerpts)*

### • European Screenings in New York

On **14 and 15 November** this year, EFP will launch a series of 'Industry Screenings in New York' with a view to showing the most recent European productions to American purchasers. These 'Industry Screenings in New York' will take place at the Tribeca Film Center and will be accessible by invitation only.

Agents involved in the international sale of these films will play an active part, not only in their screening but also in the choice of marketing strategies. Directors will also be invited to New York to introduce their work. (...)

*Source: adapted from Mediadesk Belgium, 24 August 2005 (excerpts)*

## YEAR'S FIGURES

### • American films shunned

The 16% drop in attendance [in France] against last year is no doubt the product of several factors, which must include the absence of very popular American films. As a result, the 'crisis' has affected very many countries. In the United States, box-office takings have dropped by 9% and, in France, we estimate that American admissions have dropped by 13.4% against last year.

Has the Hollywood system broken down? It seems that in three years American cinemas have lost viewers, attendance going from 1.578 billion admissions in 2002, a record year, to 1.506 in 2004. While the drop is compensated by a rise in box-office takings, it does however remain a concern. (...)

*Source: adapted from Ecran total, 31 August 2005, Frank Dupoux (excerpts)*

## DENMARK

### • Highest admissions in 20 years

Thanks to a wide choice and number of films on offer, Danish films have registered their highest admission figures in over 20 years during the first half of 2005, with 1.9m tickets sold representing a 33% market share according to Statistics Denmark.

17 Danish films were released during that period, the highest total ever for any first half year. In comparison last year, only seven new Danish films were released at that time, selling 0.9m tickets.

Among the top 10 films of the first half of 2005, four local titles took the second, third, fifth and eighth position of the domestic box office. At number 2 after *Star Wars, Episode 3* is Tomas Villum Jensen's bitter sweet comedy ***The Sun King (Solkongen)*** produced by Thura Film with 346,575 admissions since last February. The modern fairy tale co-written by Villum Jensen with Anders Thomas Jensen stars one of Denmark's most popular actor Nikolaj Lie Kass.

At number 3 with 337,559 admissions is the local comedy ***Adam's Apples*** signed again by the highly successful Anders Thomas Jensen and produced by M & M Productions. A children's film ***Oskar & Josefin*** by Carsten Myllerup also scored highly at no5 with 247,231 admissions, while ***Angels In Fast Motion (Nordkraft)***, the drama directed by Ole Christian Madsen took the no8 position with over 193,000 admissions, in front of US blockbusters *The Robot* and *Meet The Fockers*.

The only non-Danish and non-US film at the Top ten during that period was the German ***Der Untergang (Downfall)***, with 318,979 admissions.

Cinema-going as a whole declined only slightly during the first half of 2005 with a 5% drop, compared to Germany (-11%), France (-15%) or Italy (-19%).

The second half of 2005 looks very promising again for Danish films, starting with Per Fly's ***Manslaughter (Drabet)*** that opened very strongly last weekend through Nordisk Film. Carried by raving reviews, the film was No1 at the local chart with 38,702 admissions from 61 cinemas.

Eight other Danish films in widely different genres will open over the next upcoming months, including Nicolas Winding Refn's action thriller ***I'm The Angel of Death-Pusher 3*** opening

tomorrow through Nordisk Film, Christoffer Boe's **Allegro** opening on September 30 through SF Film, and Jannik Johansen's **Murk** to be released by Nordisk on October 10.

Source: [www.cineuropa.org](http://www.cineuropa.org), 01 September 2005, Annika Pham

Danish Film Institute: [www.dfi.dk](http://www.dfi.dk)

## FRANCE

### • An MK2 hub of 12 cinemas in the 19th 'arrondissement' in Paris

At the end of September the Marin Karmitz network will open its eleventh Parisian cinema, the MK2 Quai-de-Loire. The establishment of this complex opposite the MK2 Quai-de-Seine will thus create a real cinematographic centre in the north-east of the capital. (...)

Source: adapted from *Ecran total*, 24 August 2005 (excerpts)

## ITALY

### • Outdoor cinemas pull in summer crowds

(...) Italy counts over 230 individually managed open-air cinemas, according to national entertainment organisation AGIS, spanning from the Alps' Valle D'Aosta region to Sicily, which has 34 open-air cinemas.

"A few years ago there was a sight drop in number of people who went to these open-air cinemas because of the difference with the technology of multiplexes. But now, open-air cinemas are becoming a driving force for cinema", says Walter Vacchino, head of exhibitors association ANEC. (...)

Vacchino points out that outdoor cinemas are popular with audiences of all ages since they usually screen a different film every night, and prices are very competitive – usually between €3-€5, compared to €7,50 in a multiplex. But outdoor cinemas have also been investing heavily in technology. "Today, they have become temporary multiplexes," Vacchino stated in a report in *Il Giornale*. (...)

Laura Di Domenico, ANEC's press officer for the Piazza Vittorio outdoor cinema in Rome, says it sells around 65,000 tickets every summer. The Piazza Vittorio cinema, which has existed for the last nine years, is currently screening last season's films as well as titles that premiered this summer at the Taormina, Pesaro and Locarno festivals. (...)

Giorgio Ginori, director of the 11-year-old Isola del Cinema in central Rome, says the popularity of DVD's and shortening DVD windows – which are often singled out as the reason behind the fall in admissions in cinemas – have only moderately affected his three-month festival. (...)

The Isola del Cinema seats 500-600 people in a cinema which this year, in line with the festival's 1950s theme, has been built as a replica of the theatre in Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso*. The programme includes last season's Hollywood and local hits, as well as Italian films from the 1950s and 60s, shorts from young directors and special evenings dedicated to Irish, Australian and Moroccan cinema.

Oddly enough, there is no official record of box-takings in open-air cinemas. Ginori, like other managers of open-air cinemas, is reluctant to reveal earnings. However, he says the cinema is not the single most important revenue for his non-profit festival, which also has numerous bars, a bookshop, and clothes and souvenir stalls. Around 2,500 people visit the complex on the Tiber each evening.

"The cinema's earnings aren't decisive if you take out the 30%-40% that goes to the distributor, the 15%-20% that goes to [copyright organisation] SIAE, and the cost of the theatre, projector and personnel", Ginori explains.

Nonetheless, outdoor cinemas seem to be relatively unaffected by the ups and downs of their cities' fellow multiplexes. "In Rome at least, there is space for everyone", says Ginori. (...)

Source: *Screen International*, 26 August 2005, Melanie Rodier (excerpts)

## POLAND

### • **The Polish Film Centre is born**

Three major public film funding institutions in Poland (the Agencja Produkcji Filmowej – Film Production Agency, the Agencja Scenariuszowa – Script Support Agency, and the Film Polski Agencja Promocji – Polish Film Promotion), will see their activities taken over by the new Polish Film Centre created by a law on film funding signed in July by the Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski.

In 2004, the Film Production Agency spent €4.6M on funding new projects (and their pre-production). The Agency will continue operating for another few months, making decisions for the last time on subsidies for projects on which the committee of experts has yet to decide. The Script Support Agency distributed €375 000 and Film Polski spent €494 500 to promote local films.

For the first year, the new Polish Film Centre (which will start work on 1/1/2006) will have a €25M budget, which guarantees that the selected projects will get up to €1M. The procedure for distributing subsidies has not yet been established —and the European Commission will have to approve it. (...)

*Source: [www.cineuropa.org](http://www.cineuropa.org), 29 August 2005, Dorota Hartwich (excerpts)*

### • **Warsaw festival launches CentEast film market**

**The Warsaw International Film Festival (WFF) (Oct 7-16)** is launching the CentEast regional film market for films from Central and Eastern Europe for the first time this year over four days from October 12-15.

WFF festival director Stefan Laudyn told ScreenDaily.com that CentEast builds on the experiences of the festival's previous Warsaw Screenings and will include closed screenings of around 20 films from Central and Eastern Europe.

"We have a wide definition of the countries being included ranging from Russia, the Baltic states and Ukraine through the Czech Republic and Slovakia to Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia," Laudyn said, pointing out that CentEast "is not intended to be a project market, but some people will probably be here with projects."

More than 100 professionals - 50 from Poland and another 50 from outside - will be invited to the event which will be attended by distributors, TV buyers, producers, sales agents, and international film festival directors and programmers. The long-term aim of CentEast is to raise the market share of films from the region outside of the countries of production.

"We will be showing films in the market that are no older than three months, i.e. they had their premieres at such festivals as Karlovy Vary and Sarajevo, as well as a selection of new Polish films. Most of the non-Polish films will also be screening in the main festival programme," Laudyn added. (...)

*Source: [www.screendaily.com](http://www.screendaily.com), 31 August 2005, Martin Blaney (excerpts)*

**Festival's Website: [www.wff.pl](http://www.wff.pl)**

## UNITED KINGDOM

### • **Spanish stars in London**

Give the Brits the opportunity to discover some of the recent Spanish film productions seems to be the aim of the first **London Spanish Film Festival (23rd – 29th September)**, an event organised by Tristona Media, in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy and the French Institute, and with the support of Instituto Cervantes [**at Cine Lumière, member of Europa Cinemas**].

The programme, which includes several UK premieres, mixes titles from well known directors such as Carlos Saura (***The Seventh Day***) and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón (who will introduce ***The Life that Awaits you***) with younger directors such as Catalan Cesc Gay (***In the City***) and Jaime Rosales, whose film ***The Hours of the Day*** won the FIPRESCI award at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival.

But the festival organisers are aware of how much film stars can seduce an audience, so, to bring some glamour to this first edition, Eduardo Noriega will participate on the 24th of

September in a debate on Miguel Courtois' *The Wolf* and actress Adriana Davidova will introduce *Síndrome* together with the actor and film director Liberto Rabal. The last day of the festival will enjoy the presence of Victoria Abril, to whom the festival consecrates a mini-retrospective composed of three of her films (...)

Source: [www.cineuropa.org](http://www.cineuropa.org), 22 August 2005, Vitor Pinto (excerpts)

[www.londonspanishfilmfestival.com](http://www.londonspanishfilmfestival.com)

## SWITZERLAND

### • The cinema: a pleasure which costs a lot

In ten years the price of a cinema ticket has gone from 13.16 to 14.37 francs on average. This progression, greater than retail price increases, has taken place alongside a rise in attendance.

Previously, the two curves were inverted: prices rose while attendance fell, according to the Federal Bureau of Statistics (OFS) in its '2005 Swiss Cinematographic Survey' which was published on Wednesday.

The increase in the number of viewers could be due to an improvement in what is on offer, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The number of cinemas and films at their first showing has continued to grow since the beginning of the 1990s, according to the OFS. At the same time, there has been an improvement in infrastructure with a vast programme of renovation and construction of cinemas.

The development of admission prices has, for its part, never reversed. It is at its highest for over 30 years. And Swiss cinema lovers pay more than their European neighbours. 'The cost of tickets in Switzerland is the highest in Europe and even in the whole world. Only in Japan do they cost more,' Umberto Tedeschi, author of the report, affirmed to swissinfo. (...)

Cinema prices are currently under the microscope of the pricing authority. Last week, Rudolf Strahm opened a preliminary enquiry to determine the role of foreign film distributors in the high price of Swiss tickets.

The price supervisor has met with cinema exhibitors and film suppliers. He has stated that distributors used different calculations, depending on the country, to fix the price of renting their films. He does not consider that this way of working is justified economically. Rudolf Strahm will, nevertheless, await the results of the preliminary enquiry which he has just opened before deciding to start proceedings. The conclusions should be drawn between now and the autumn. (...)

The OFS also comments that cinemas are essentially the haunt of the young and those who have received higher education. They are visited more between October and April, during certain breaks and at weekends.

The OFS also emphasises that the public is increasingly selective. Attendance is concentrated on a relatively limited number of films: in the last few years the top ten box office hits attracted between 24% and 30% of viewers. (...)

Statistics also confirm the success of American films. In 2003 and 2004, 47% of films from across the Atlantic exceeded 50,000 admissions. In comparison, Swiss films very rarely (16.5%) exceed 10,000 viewers annually.

This aspect will also be tackled in the enquiry commenced by the price supervisor. Rudolf Strahm intends to examine whether distributors of foreign films are taking advantage of their dominant position in the market. Nearly 90% of films shown in Switzerland come from abroad, in particular from the United States.

Source: adapted from *Swissinfo*, 27 July 2005 (excerpts)

## EGYPT

### • Debate over a decision

The Cinema Chamber has just approved a resolution forbidding the projection of foreign productions throughout the summer, to the advantage of Egyptian films.

While the State claims to favour the expansion of the seventh art, the Cinema Chamber has just surprised investors and distributors with its new resolution. Any screening of foreign films during the summer will from now on be banned. This is so as to leave the floor open to Egyptian films to encourage national production.

While this resolution does appear to favour Egyptian cinema, it also reveals a state of disorder, putting forward decisions made blindly. This is something akin to the state of Egyptian cinema over the last few years.

Omar Sérâg, distributor of foreign films, protests: 'Summer is the most profitable season for distributors of foreign films, and depriving them of this advantage represents a great loss for them. They represent only a minority of the members of the Cinema Chamber and were not able to prevent such a decision from being made.' And he adds: 'Several years ago Egyptian viewers began to get interested in international cinematographic production, following it through satellite or DVDs. Viewers sought to discover new foreign films on the screens. Recently, films by Spielberg, Tom Cruise or a film such as *Star Wars* have been released in Egypt at the same time as in Europe. Such a decision will discourage distributors in future!'

This view is shared by the critic Ahmad Saleh, who believes that the art environment needs foreign films to create real competition which could lead to Egyptian filmmakers improving their productions. 'Does it make sense to devote over 200 screens to the projection of just 13 films throughout the summer?' he wonders.

It is the same tune among exhibitors and cinema owners. For them, it is a question of an 'inevitable crisis.' Bahgat Chaker, director of the Osmane Group complex, is rebelling: 'I am not convinced. Such a resolution will damage the Egyptian film industry by encouraging its projection for just two months. Even if a film achieves box office takings in the millions it is certain that, in the long term, there will be fewer viewers interested in Egyptian cinema.' And he continues: 'I am against the idea of imposing one genre in particular on the people in charge of cinemas and on the audience. Because we will end up losing a chunk of viewers.' (...)

The Cinema Chamber itself is attempting to defend its good intentions. (...)

Its president, Mounib Chaféï, explains: 'We took this decision unanimously to protect the Egyptian film industry from unfair competition. This resolution respects the interests of distributors by allowing them to project until mid-July foreign films which have already been authorised. After that date, authorisation will only be granted to owners of complexes who cannot find Egyptian films to fill their cinemas.' Furthermore, Chaféï refers to the example of the Indian film industry which managed to restrict the projection of foreign films to the benefit of local films. (...)

The affair is now in the hands of the Minister for Culture (...).

*Source: adapted from Al Ahrâm hebdo, 13 July 2005, Yasser Moheb (excerpts)*

## NORTH AFRICA

### • Union through cinema

'It is a highly commendable initiative which will improve the promotion of North African cinema throughout the world.' This was the reaction of the director Farida Benlyazid, following the creation of **the association 'Maghreb Cinemas'**.

This director is in fact one of the signatories of this project which was conceived at the 58th Locarno Festival taking place in Switzerland from 3 to 13 August. At this cinematographic gathering a group of Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan directors decided to create a common association which would protect and promote the interests of Maghreb cinema. (...)

The Moroccan directors Hassan Benjelloun, Mohamed Asli, Daoud Aoulad-Syad, Jilali Ferhati and Ahmed Belghiti also feature alongside Farida Benlyazid. The director Saâd

Chraïbi is the spokesperson for Morocco. (...) Saâd Chraïbi is quoted by La Map as saying that the proceedings were 'legally drawn up as an international association which has, to begin with, branches in three countries in Maghreb.' (...)

The pioneers of this project do not yet know what premises will be used by these branches. However, for the moment the 'Maghreb Cinemas' site will be housed at the Tangier cinema site at the address: [www.cinemathequedetanger.com](http://www.cinemathequedetanger.com). As a reminder, this cinema was set up in 2005 within the buildings of Rif cinema in Tangier.

According to its organisers, the 'Maghreb Cinemas' association essentially will have the role of promoting Maghreb cinema. (...)

*Source: adapted from aujourd'hui.ma, 18 August 2005 (excerpts)*

## **MOROCCO**

### **• Attendance at cinemas in free fall**

(...) Of its 247 film theatres in 1985, Morocco today has no more than 164, while UNESCO believes that, given the number of inhabitants, around 800 cinemas are required in Morocco. Worldwide, young people represent the prime users of the cinematographic product. However, in Morocco, despite the demographic increase and the fact that young people occupy a very large proportion of the age pyramid, we are witnessing real disaffection for the cinema among young people. A national survey, carried out by the National Council for Youth and the Future, on the 'socio-cultural leisure activities of young people' has since 1993 shown that the cinema comes only sixth in the list of leisure activities for young Moroccans. (...)

The material and practical conditions in which cinema is offered for use by young people explains why they have deserted the cinema: lack of comfort, prehistoric fittings, lack of maintenance and hygiene (for example, broken seats and lack of ventilation) and deficient facilities. On top of this discomfort, reluctance on the part of young viewers can also be explained by the ever present lack of security at the sites. This is, moreover, one of the main reasons for the poor attendance rate by young female viewers in most cinemas, particularly in popular suburbs. (...)

The increase in ticket prices also uses its full force to tip the balance and explains the drop in attendance. (...)

According to most viewers, prints are defective and the quality of projection generally very bad.

The phenomenon of piracy also takes its turn in darkening the picture, with film theatres losing exclusivity of scheduling. Very often, even before a film is billed at the cinema, it is already on the market as a VCD or DVD at a price (5Dh) five times lower than the price of a cinema ticket (20 to 25 Dh). (...)

According to Mr Bakrim (assistant director at the Moroccan Cinema Centre, CCM), in order to remedy the drop in attendance, cinema attendance must be adapted to the changes which have taken place over the last few years.

Cinema has actually become a more global activity with the film itself no longer constituting more than part of a wider process of consumption. Now, young people go to the cinema not only to see a film. They go because there is a McDonalds, popcorn and animation, among other things. And this gives rise to the multiplex, the Megarama being the proof of this in Casablanca. In its desire to resolve the problem of reduced attendance, the Moroccan Cinema Centre has adopted a two-pronged approach.

Firstly, the CCM is to encourage a policy of constructing complexes or multi-screens comprising 3 or 4 auditoria, larger than is typical for a cinema, with cafés and areas for animation. The second part of the CCM strategy involves increasing activities around the cinema. For young people to return they must be motivated and to do this requires education about the cinema at schools and colleges. In partnership with the National Ministry for Education, the CCM is shortly to launch a cine-club plan. This is undoubtedly a wise decision for there can be no cinema without cinema lovers.

*Source: adapted from lematin.ma, 26 July 2005, Francis Vikou (excerpts)*

• **3rd Tangier Short Film Festival from 10 to 16 September**, organised by the Moroccan Cinema Centre. Nineteen Mediterranean countries will be present.

*Source: according to [liberte-algerie.com](http://liberte-algerie.com)*

Moroccan Cinema Center: [www.ccm.ma](http://www.ccm.ma)

## KENYA

### • **NuMetro opens four cinemas in Nairobi**

A South African firm, NuMetro, has opened four new cinema halls on Nairobi's Ngong Road as the movie sector shows signs of a revival after years of poor attendance due to insecurity, piracy and the rapid growth of home entertainment.

The theatres, at the Junction Nakumatt store have a combined seating capacity of 650. Two more 150-seater theatres are expected to open in Kisumu in October. The movie company says it is seeking other centres in the country where it can open movie theatres. (...)

[Trushna Buddhev, Nu Metro's marketing manager] told The EastAfrican that movie admissions had grown steadily over the past three years with the overall ticket sales at the three existing NuMetro cinemas at the Village Market, increasing steadily by 100,000 annually since 2003. Last year's figures stood at slightly over 450,000 tickets.

"Our admissions up to May this year are slightly over 200,000, which is higher than those of the same period last year. They are expected to reach 500,000 by the end of December," she said.

The sector was one of the main victims of the insecurity that has hit the entertainment industry in Kenya in the past few years, with people avoiding going out at night for fear of being carjacked. With most new theatres coming up at shopping malls in the suburbs, the attendance has grown steadily, but the issue of piracy is still to be resolved.

A similar trend is noted at the Fox Cinema, which has had a reported 10 per cent growth in admissions so far this year, and is expecting more growth towards the December peak season. (...)

"It's been a turnaround for the movie business and good movies are hitting peak figures in a shorter time than in the past," said Nick Gherani, marketing manager at Fox Theatres.

While NuMetro has 10 screens, Fox Theatres operate seven, between them dominating the main cinema market in the country.

With the number of cinemas rising, more movies are being screened simultaneously in Nairobi, affording moviegoers a wider selection at any given time. (...)

"We are seeing more growth in the 16-30 demographic bracket, but are also impressed by the growth in children's movies and among the over-40s," said Mr Gherani.

On genre, the current box office success of *Mr & Mrs Smith*, starring Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, is this year's big story with 32,000 admissions with the likelihood of breaking the 40,000 barrier. The current boxoffice record of 47,000 admissions was set by *Spider Man 2* last year.

But probably more important for the cinemas is the wide distribution of the figures this year, which indicates that more people are watching more movies. More titles are reaching the 20,000 admissions mark, the average for a movie in Kenya. (...)

One peculiar feature of Kenya's current movie tastes is the low turnout for science fiction movies, which do not work well unless they have a cartoon character.

Said Ms Buddhev, "Despite the popularity of this genre overseas, sci-fi movies have never been strong here, which can be frustrating for a cinema sector wishing to offer the full variety of movie entertainment available."

For example, Star Wars did not do as well as expected.

As the cinema culture grows, observers also see a rising popularity for smaller niche markets outside the typical Hollywood blockbuster movies.

The Nairobi Cinema has made a name as a venue for Christian-themed movies and the hosting of the African cineweek and the European film festivals has attracted a esoteric audience to Alliance Francaise as the place for alternative and arthouse style movies.

"Originally, the attendance was by expatriates living in Kenya, who came to watch movies from their own countries, but we now see a 50 per cent share of Kenyans coming to watch the films," said Olivier Lechien audio-visual attache at the Alliance Francaise.

He was particularly impressed by the attendance for the DRC movie **Pieces of Identity** by Mweze Ngangura, which has been a major hit at African film festivals. He, however, notes that it had a comedy twist preferred by a majority of Kenyan movie-goers.

This year's European Film Festival had a houseful for the German film **Luther** and the French film **Les Choristes**.

"It indicates a broader market that can now adapt to a wide variety of films," said Lechien.

*Source: Nationmedia.com / The East African, 29 August 2005, John Kariuki (excerpts)*

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## **SOME FESTIVALS TO COME...**

**Toronto International Film Festival, Canada – 8-17 September**

[www.bell.ca/filmfest](http://www.bell.ca/filmfest)

**International Film Festival Film by the Sea, Vlissingen, The Netherlands – 9-18 September**

[www.filmbythesea.nl](http://www.filmbythesea.nl)

**Gdynia Polish Film Festival, Poland – 12-17 September**

[www.festiwalfilmow.pl](http://www.festiwalfilmow.pl)

**Buster Copenhagen International Children's Film Festival, Denmark – 12-18 September**

[www.busterfilm.dk](http://www.busterfilm.dk)

**San Sebastian International Film Festival, Spain – 15-24 September**

[www.sansebastianfestival.com](http://www.sansebastianfestival.com)

**Helsinki International Film Festival – Love & Anarchy, Finland – 15-25 September**

[www.hiff.fi](http://www.hiff.fi)

**Athens International Film Festival – Opening Nights – 15-25 September**

[www.aiff.gr](http://www.aiff.gr)

**Lund International Film Festival, Sweden – 16-25 September**

[www.fff.se](http://www.fff.se)

**International Film Festival Manaki Brothers, Bitola, Macedonia - 20-25 September**

[www.manaki.com.mk](http://www.manaki.com.mk)

**Rio de Janeiro International Film Festival, Brazil – 22 September – 06 October**

[www.festivaldorjio.com.br](http://www.festivaldorjio.com.br)

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