

TPR N°14 – 16 MAY 2006

<u>RECENT AWARDS (EXCERPTS)</u>	<u>PAGE 2</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Germany – Lolas - <i>Das Leben der Anderen, Knallhart, Requiem</i> ● Crossing Europe (Linz) - <i>Gisela</i> ● Belgium – Prix des lycéens du cinéma belge francophone - <i>Trouble</i> ● Istanbul International Film Festival - <i>A Cock and Bull Story, Times and Winds, Two Girls</i> 	
<u>DIGITAL CINEMA</u>	<u>PAGE 2</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 30 new digital screens of Utopia / Utopolis Group join XDC roll out initiative ● Brazil's digital screens give indies a shot 	
<u>EUROPE</u>	<u>PAGE 3</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EU film production rose while admissions plummeted in 2005 ● Europe Day on 23 May at Cannes Film Festival ● Eurimages backs nine new European co-productions 	
<u>BULGARIA</u>	<u>PAGE 4</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● News Malls in Bulgaria's Capital Affect Cinema Policies 	
<u>SPAIN</u>	<u>PAGE 4</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Court condemns distribution trust 	
<u>SPAIN-PORTUGAL</u>	<u>PAGE 4</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Terra Firma buys AMC theaters in Spain, Portugal 	
<u>EX-YUGOSLAVIA</u>	<u>PAGE 4</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Border Post</i> unites former Yugoslav states 	
<u>FRANCE</u>	<u>PAGE 5</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In Le Havre, workshops on screenwriting in prisons and schools ● Images d'Ailleurs cinema celebrates 15 years ● Film associations cutting down 	
<u>HUNGARY</u>	<u>PAGE 6</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hungary attempts to revive its film industry 	
<u>ITALY</u>	<u>PAGE 6</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Quality Screens' for Italian and European films ● Italian films feeling momentum ● The Japanese like it "made in Italy" 	
<u>POLAND</u>	<u>PAGE 7</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travelling European Cinema 	
<u>CZECH REPUBLIC</u>	<u>PAGE 7</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Czech president rejects boost to state film fund 	
<u>UNITED KINGDOM</u>	<u>PAGE 8</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act, Knatchbull acquire UK distributor Artificial Eye 	
<u>MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES</u>	<u>PAGE 8</u>
<u>ISRAEL</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moments du Cinéma Français in Israel 	
<u>TUNISIA</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 13th session of European Cinema Days 	
<u>TURKEY</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turkish films rule at home 	
<u>AFRICA</u>	<u>PAGE 9</u>
<u>SOUTH AFRICA</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● South African explosion? 	
<u>CAMEROUN</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Great success for Ecrans Noirs festival 	
<u>MALI</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobile digital cinema: a screen beneath the stars 	

RECENT AWARDS (EXCERPTS)

- **Germany – Lolas**

Das Leben der Anderen (*The Lives of Others*, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck) – Best Film, Director, Actor (Ulrich Mühe), Supporting Actor (Ulrich Tukur), Photography, Production Design, Screenplay

www.movie.de/filme/dlda

Knallhart (*Tough Enough*, Detlev Buck) – Silver Lola for Best Film, Best Editing, Music

www.knallhart-derfilm.de

Requiem (Hans-Christian Schmid) – Silver Lola for Best Film, Best Actress (Sandra Hüller), Supporting Actress (Imogen Kogge), Costume Design, Sound

www.requiem-derfilm.de

Die Höhle des gelben Hundes (Byambasuren Davaa) – Best Children's / Youth Film

Lost Children (Oliver Stoltz) – Best Documentary

www.lost-children.de

- **Austria– Crossing Europe (Linz)**

Gisela (Isabelle Stever, DE) – Best Film

www.crossingeurope.at

- **Belgium – Prix des lycéens du cinéma belge francophone**

Trouble (*Duplicity*, Harry Cleven)

- **Turkey – Istanbul International Film Festival**

A Cock and Bull Story (Michael Winterbottom, GB) – Best Film, Fipresci Award

Times and Winds (Reha Erdem, TR) – Best Turkish Film, Fipresci Award

Two Girls (Kutluğ Ataman, TR) – Best Direction

www.iksv.org

DIGITAL CINEMA

- **30 new digital screens of Utopia / Utopolis Group join XDC roll out initiative**

(...) Utopia Group has just signed an agreement with XDC for the roll out of 30 digital screens spread over four countries: Luxembourg, Belgium, France and The Netherlands. In Luxembourg, Utopolis Kirchberg is upgrading 3 existing digital screens and is adding 7 new screens. This cinema will be the very first one in Europe to be fully digital! The group's Luxembourg arthouse cinema Cine Utopia is also installing 3 new screens. In Belgium, both Utopolis Turnhout and Utopolis Mechelen are upgrading 2 screens each and are adding 2 new screens. In France, Utopolis Longwy will have 3 new screens. Last but not the least, in The Netherlands, Utopolis Almere is upgrading the 3 existing digital screens, the recently opened Utopolis Emmen will equip 2 new screens and Utopolis Zoetermeer will install one digital theater. (...)

All the theatres will be equipped with Barco 2K DLP Cinema™ projectors which are DCI compliant. (...)

Source: www.dcinematoday.com, 25 April 2006 (Excerpts)

[The **Utopia** and **Utopolis** complexes in Luxembourg are members of Europa Cinemas]

- **Brazil's digital screens give indies a shot**

Moviecom and other large exhibs enter digital era

With some of the best beaches in Brazil, the 778,000 residents of Natal, on the country's northeast coast, have a variety of sunny leisure options. But when it comes to movies, locals have few choices. The 10 screens in town show only productions distributed by the majors - mostly Hollywood blockbusters and occasionally a commercial Brazilian pic released by Columbia or another major. U.S. indie, European, Asian and smaller local pics are not available.

This situation is soon to change, however, thanks to the introduction of digital exhibition. (...)

The fifth largest Brazilian exhib, Moviecom is the latest to enter the digital era in the country. Moviecom recently inked a deal with the local Rain Network to gradually digitize its 87 screens in 18 towns across Brazil.

A few days earlier, Arcoiris, the country's No. 4 exhib, with 95 screens, inked a similar agreement. (...) Eight exhibs, most of them art circuits in big cities, currently operate 95 digital screens with Rain's system.

With the deals with Moviecom and Arcoiris, Rain will reach the commercial circuits of medium-sized towns. In two years, when the transition to digital is completed for all 182 of Moviecom's and Arcoiris' screens, Brazil will have 277 digital screens. The country's total screen account is currently about 2,000. (...)

Big exhibs, such as Cinemark and the Ribeiro Group, took a wait-and-see attitude on digital, sitting it out until the DCI specifications were put in place. But other exhibs saw a window of opportunity, sharing the \$20,000-\$30,000 conversion price equally with Rain.

Current projection is done with a 1.3K system, but plans are to upgrade when 2K systems become available in Brazil.

The screens remain hybrid and the exhib is free to program both analog and digital screenings. Rain transmits the pics' files via Comsat to its client exhibs, which pay per screening.

While art circuits in larger cities save on the high costs of making prints, small-town exhibs also will save on print transportation costs. They'll also be capable of launching pics simultaneously with urban opening.

The digital business model also has brought exhibs increased ad revenues. Digitally shot commercial spots are economical to produce, so small businesses near theaters are ramping up advertising. Rain has established an ad sales department that's also targeting large corporations for theater advertising. Rain and exhibs share the ad revenues.

Source: Variety.com, 14 May 2006, Marcelo Cajueiro (Excerpts)

EUROPE

• EU film production rose while admissions plummeted in 2005

European cinema produced record numbers of films last year even as admissions nosedived.

The annual European Audiovisual Observatory report shows 798 films were produced in the 25 nations of the European Union (EU) – up 37 from 2004.

France led the way with 240 films in 2005, up by 28 even on the record year of 2003. (...)

Spain (142) and Germany (146) also enjoyed record numbers, in the latter case boosted by a mini-boom in documentary making.

Finding audiences proved a tougher proposition with admissions in the EU dropping 11% and falling below the one billion mark.

Some 892 million cinema tickets were sold in 2005, compared with 1.007 billion in 2004. They represented the worst figures since 1999.

The market share of EU origin films held steady at 24.6% compared with 25.2% last year but received a significant boost from local films that played well only in their home markets.

Observatory analyst Susan Newman warned it was too early to draw definitive conclusions about the performance of EU films outside the territories. (...)

Source: Screendaily.com, 11 May 2005 (Excerpts)

• Europe Day on 23 May at Cannes Film Festival

The Ministers for Culture in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal and Hungary have confirmed their presence at the Cannes Film Festival on 23 May, on the occasion of Europe Day, devoted to 'European films travelling the world'.

The day is being organised by the Festival and the European Commission. The Ministers for Culture in countries outside the European Union but participating in the MEDIA programme, which promotes European films, that is, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland, will also be invited for the first time to this 4th Europe Day, the Festival indicated in a statement.

The statement said that 'The Brazilian Minister for Culture, Gilberto Gil, has also agreed to speak during the Day'.

The European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding, and European Ministers for Culture will present the conclusions of their discussions and the options chosen to the press on 23 May.

Furthermore, as part of this Europe Day 2006, managing directors of large telecoms, Internet and audiovisual companies are to adopt 'a charter of best practice on on-line film'.

Participants in the discussions on this charter will include, notably, France Telecom, Telecom Italia, Vivendi Universal, AOL-Time Warner, Fastweb and Tiscali, as well as institutions such as SACD, the Society of Authors and Composers of Dramatic Works in France and the UK Film Council.

Source: adapted from AFP, 26 April 2006

• Eurimages backs nine new European co-productions

Eurimages, the Council of Europe's film fund, has announced a slate of nine films to receive its latest round of support. (...) Eurimages also provided funding to distributors for specific films. (...) In addition, the Eurimages' Cinema Support scheme has added three cinemas to bring its total to 41: **Kino Urania** in Osijek, Croatia; **Union de** in Bucharest, Romania; and **The Cultural Centre cinema** in Bitola, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. (...)

Source: Screendaily.com, 12 May 2006, Wendy Mitchell (Excerpts)

[The support of Eurimages to the cinema theatres is implemented by Europa Cinemas]

BULGARIA

• News Malls in Bulgaria's Capital Affect Cinema Policies

With the opening of two new cinema complexes in May, the number of halls in Sofia will reach 57. The boom was likely to decrease ticket prices, 24 Chassa reported.

On May 12 City Centre Sofia will open, offering customers a choice of six modern and comfortable cinema halls, the newspaper said. Another 13 halls, including a three dimensional IMAX movie hall, will be available after the opening of Mall of Sofia by the end of May.

Experts predict that the boom would lead to considerable market changes. Modern complexes like Arena situated away from the city centre might lose customers to the new easily accessible complexes. (...)

The cinemas in Sofia lack a flexible ticket price policy taking into consideration factors like the time of the screenings and customer groups, 24 Chassa reported. In order to keep their customers, existing cinema complexes might have to further introduce preferential prices for daytime screenings or older movies. Students, retired or disabled people will also benefit from cheaper tickets.

Source: Sofiaecho.com, 10 May 2006 (Excerpts)

SPAIN

• Court condemns distribution trust

The Spanish Court for Defence of Competition condemned the Spanish branches of Walt Disney/Buena Vista International, 20th Century Fox International, Sony Pictures, United International Pictures and Warner Bros for practises inhibiting free competition in the local distribution market. The five major companies were imposed a €2.4m fine, while the Federation of Cinematographic Distributors (Fedicine) was fined €900,000.

This unprecedented court decision is the answer to the 2003 claim of the Spanish Federation of Cinema Exhibitors (FECE), which denounced the unsustainable situation imposed upon them by the US studios. FECE accused them of building a "cartel" and obliging Spanish exhibitors to pay 15% more to the US distributors than to their European counterparts.

According to the Court, the distribution companies have shared "a substantial part of the film distribution market" by concerting their commercial policies towards film exhibitors.

Source: www.cineuropa.org, 12 May 2005, Vitor Pinto

SPAIN-PORTUGAL

• Terra Firma buys AMC theaters in Spain, Portugal

U.K. private equity company Terra Firma Capital Partners announced Friday it has completed the purchase of AMC Entertainment cinema theaters in Spain and Portugal via its Spanish cinema circuit, Cinesa. With this acquisition, Cinesa/UCI adds 106 screens (five multiplexes) to its circuit in Spain and Portugal. Following this transaction, Cinesa reinforces its leading position in the Spanish market with a total of 402 screens, and increases its position in Portugal to 34 screens, with some 22 million admissions per year. The move comes a year after Terra Firma's acquisition of Warner Bros.' and Lusomundo's interests in Warner Lusomundo Sogecable circuit.

Source: TheHollywoodReporter.com, 15 May 2006, Pamela Rolfe

EX-YUGOSLAVIA

• Border Post unites former Yugoslav states

Croatian director Rajko Grlic has scored a highly significant hit throughout the former Yugoslavian states with *Border Post (Karaula)*. (...)

The significance of his new film is not about box office as much as the fact that it is the first film co-produced by companies from all territories of the country now long gone. (...)

The film was supported by the ministries of culture of all five former Yugoslav territories and Eurimages. (...)

Overall the film has enjoyed 180,000 admissions from the total of 37 prints and gross box office of \$470,000, which is very successful (...).

Source: Screendaily.com, 26 April 2006, Vladan Petkovic (Excerpts)

www.borderpostmovie.com

● In Le Havre, workshops on screenwriting in prisons and schools

(...) He was sent to Le Havre prison for 33 days for driving without a licence. When it was suggested that he participate in a film workshop and produce a 'filmed letter', Jean-Baptiste, 31 years old, did not hesitate. 'Not having a busy mind is miserable.' The theme was 'Elsewhere'. (...) Last week, he showed his short filmed letter to an audience at the Volcan cultural centre in Le Havre (member of Europa Cinemas), as part of the eighth International Cinema and Youth Meetings. This is one of the 153 missives already produced by the Volcan. A DVD has been released and the idea is being exported.

The idea, launched in 2002 by **Ginette Dislaire** from the Film and Images section at the Volcan, is to produce a short film: a postcard of less than three minutes or a letter of less than 15, addressed to a person or to a group, either real or imaginary. A cinematographic response is expected, to be made under the same conditions of production, all overseen by a professional. 'With small digital cameras it is now easier to see into the daily lives of the people you film,' explains Ginette Dislaire.

The workshops began with young people and a teacher, on the theme of 'What makes your heart beat'. Revealing intimate details made them scared. 'To reassure them, first of all I had to make my own letter, addressed to a young, dead brother.' Since then, the workshops have expanded to include schools, local organisations, prisoners and people on low incomes (...).

'You might think that these productions are simply anecdotal,' states Ginette Dislaire, 'but they are the expression of intimate thoughts', often poetic and funny, rarely overly sentimental, even less so voyeuristic. The cameraman acts as a transmitter. The cinematographic element is supposed to be 'less a means of rehabilitation than a vehicle for creating a social link'. (...)

Source: adapted from Libération, 14 April 2006, Nathalie Castetz (Excerpts)

● Images d'Ailleurs cinema celebrates 15 years

Black culture honoured in Paris

The two-screen Images d'Ailleurs cinema in the Latin Quarter has proved itself a multicultural place where more than 15 films are billed each week.

(...) Images d'Ailleurs, which opened in the 5th arrondissement in the early 1990s, has proved itself committed and militant but without relying on multiculturalism at all cost. 'The objective at the beginning (...) was to create a forum for screening films which would give priority to black African, American and West Indian culture, but the lack of films led to an awareness of other Maghreb and Asian cultures, and it became a multicultural cinema,' explains Sanvi Panou, its director.

Classified art house, the two screens (150 and 75 seats) welcome 30,000 to 35,000 filmgoers a year and offer 15 to 20 films a week. Long-running exhibition is the order of the day, as is a particularly dynamic promotion policy thanks to many festivals and debates. This summer, the cinema will be given a more eye-catching façade.

For a fitting celebration of its 15th anniversary, Images d'Ailleurs is organising a festival, Les Etats Generaux du Cinema Noir, from 28 April to 8 May. (...)

Source: adapted from Le Film Français, 28 April 2006, Anthony Bobeau (Excerpts)

● Film associations cutting down

It is a strange paradox of finance in the French film industry: the greater the increase in the market share of French films, the greater the reduction in the selective support granted to the film industry via the support fund. Add to that a fall in this support fund's three main sources of revenue – tax on admissions, television advertising income and video turnover – and that is enough to give rise to uneasiness in the cultural organisations supporting the cinema. Fourteen of them, including Addoc, an association for filmmakers of documentaries, Agence du Court-Metragé, for short films, Documentaires sur Grand Ecran, for documentary films, Les Enfants de Cinema, Point Ligne Plan and SRF, a society of filmmakers, wrote to Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, Minister for Culture, on 18 April to deplore 'the disengagement of the State'. 'The national cinema centre, CNC, has told most of us that we will receive an overall drop in subsidies of between 10% and 20% and, for some, the amount will not change although activities are expanding,' they explain.

In her response, Véronique Cayla, director-general of the CNC, justifies 'these harsh decisions bearing in mind the economic context'. In 2005, the drop in takings 'brought about a large unavoidable and unforeseeable loss of resources to the support fund,' which forced her to fix a budget of around 10% less for assistance to exhibitors, producers and distributors (...). 'Solidarity of the non-profit sector with a joint financial effort is indispensable.'

Mrs Cayla believes that the total subsidies paid to the fourteen associations will be reduced by 'only 2.4% compared with 2005' and feels that 'support for short films and educational activities' are priorities. She hopes for recovery of support fund resources, as a result of the good increase in attendance at cinemas since January.

Source: adapted from Le Monde, 04 May 2006, Nicole Vulser (Excerpts)

HUNGARY

• Two years on from its new cinema law, Hungary attempts to revive its film industry

On the occasion of the French Film Festival in Budapest we examine the current situation with Hungarian films, shortly to be honoured on the Croisette and in cinemas

After last year's groundbreaking *Johanna* by Kornel Mundruczó, the Hungarian film industry's younger generation will be represented in Cannes by *Taxidermia* by György Pálfi (*Hukkle*) and *Friss Levegő* (*Fresh Air*), the first film by Ágnes Kocsis, who also had a short film at Cinefondation. The first film will be shown in Un Certain Regard and the second in Critics' Week. In a more commercial vein, the production company, Megafilm, will show Krisztina Goda's *Csak Szex és Más Semmi* (*Just Sex and Nothing Else*) at the Film Market. This is a comedy along the lines of *Bridget Jones* and was the biggest national cinema success of 2005. In their own different ways, these films illustrate the revival of Hungarian cinema, marked for several years now by a steady growth in production and national market share. With the State providing just over 50% of their finance, the films benefited from a total sum of 17.63 million euros in 2005. The increase in state funds followed the adoption of a new law two years ago, accompanied by a mechanism of tax incentives for national productions, coproductions and services provided to foreigners. Nevertheless, people are beginning to ask that the underlying principle be changed: 'Hungarian productions are treated like American ones, after the fashion of Spielberg's *Munich*, which isn't normal', continues the owner of Megafilm and president of the association for producers. It is clear that this tax incentive is aimed largely at foreign film productions as is demonstrated by several studio construction projects to supplement the current holding of just one, the Mafilm studio (...), and at competing with Czech, Romanian and Bulgarian neighbours.

In France, Hungarian films are screened in numbers which, albeit small, are unrivalled for many years. Thus, four films are being released in the first seven months of 2006: *District* in March, *Control* in July (both by CTV), *Fateless* in May (Films Sans Frontières) and *Taxidermia* at the end of August by Memento, which also coproduces films.

Source: adapted from Le Film Français, 28 April 2006, Sarah Drouhaud (Excerpts)

ITALY

• 'Quality Screens' for Italian and European films

There are already nearly 500 cinemas which have registered a request to participate in the special 'Quality Screens' project, a project devised and financed by the Minister for Cultural Activities, promoted by Italian film associations ANEC, ACEC and FICE, and whose goal is to promote and distribute quality Italian and European films.

As Gaetano Blandini, from the Ministry's Film Department recalled, 'Quality Screens' is replacing and broadening the 'Centocittà' initiative which, in 2004 and 2005, attracted an unprecedented number of visitors by featuring several films d'auteur in programmes, allowing them to achieve normally unthinkable results. 'Reaching the cinema,' adds Blandini, 'continues to be the most important moment in a film's career; it is not simply a place where films are screened, it is also a centre for social gatherings, and an opportunity for cultural development. That is why the government, despite the big cuts in the public budget allocated to culture, wished to be closely involved in the exhibition sector, convinced of the need for longevity in an initiative, and wishing to avoid selective events which never produce long-lasting effects.'

So three million euros were made available to cinemas undertaking to schedule quality national and European films between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007. Thirty-five films have already been chosen for April and May including *Il Regista di Matrimoni* by Bellocchio, *Volver* by Almodóvar, *The Golden Door* by Crialesse and *Free Zone* by Gitai.

Cinemas in towns with fewer than 40,000 inhabitants should be able to demonstrate 100 days of film scheduling. Cinemas in towns with between 40,000 and 200,000 inhabitants need 150 days of scheduling. Finally, for cinemas located in towns with over 200,000 inhabitants, the minimum requirement is of 200 days.

The Ministry, as well as exhibitors' associations, has insisted on the strictness necessary for the project to be carried out, as much in terms of the involvement of exhibitors as in terms of controls. 'It is difficult to foresee,' notes Paolo Protti, president of ANEC, 'how many cinemas will be "rewarded". One thing is certain: those who have registered their request will do their best to meet the requirements, and therefore the space allocated to European and Italian films will increase considerably.

'Furthermore,' remarks Domenico Dinoia, president of FICE, 'in order to meet the requirements, it will not be enough to schedule the ten to twelve most successful films d'auteur. They will also have to look at niche products, films by little-known directors. In short, they will have to make a place for films which are generally disadvantaged by market censure.'

Another positive aspect of 'Quality Screens' which should be emphasised may be found in the fact that most requests come from cinemas located in rural areas. As was already the case with 'Centocittà', the initiative is aimed particularly at small exhibitors, who are the ones currently experiencing the greatest difficulties. As Francesco Giraldo, secretary general of ACEC, recalls, 'Quality Screens' represents a valid and concrete contribution in the fight against the closure of buildings.

Source: adapted from Giornale dello Spettacolo, 14 April 2006, Franco Montini, translated from Italian by Amandine Lebrat

• Italian films feeling momentum

Italian films, for years maligned even in their own country, are enjoying a renaissance, with boxoffice booming and critical accolades rolling in. According to Italian cinema monitoring company Cinetel, some 34% of Italian boxoffice receipts have come from Italian films over the first four months of this year, compared with 23% for all of 2005 and less than 15% in most years. Figures have been buoyed by such commercial successes as Carlo Verdone's *My Best Enemy*, Fausto Brizzi's *Night Before Finals*, Nanni Moretti's *The Cayman*, Michele Placido's *Crime Novel*, and Cristina Comencini's *Don't Tell* - all of which have ranked in more than €5 million (\$6.4 million). *My Best Enemy* heads the pack, approaching €20 million (\$25.7 million) in ticket sales.

Source: TheHollywoodReporter.com, 16 May 2006, Eric J.Lyman

• The Japanese like it "made in Italy"

14,000 filmgoers attended the Festival del Cinema italiano, held from May 2-7 in Tokyo. The event – organized by Filmlitalia in partnership with Asahi Shimbun, a large Japanese publishing company, and in collaboration with the Italian Embassy and the Italian Cultural Institute of Tokyo – presented 12 Italian films, including *Don't Tell* by Cristina Comencini and *The Fever* by Alessandro D'Alatri.

"The festival results are obvious proof that greater investment is needed in culture," said Filmlitalia President Giovanni Galoppi. "Together with Gaetano Blandini, the Director General of the Ministry of Culture, we are promoting meetings with the heads of Japanese film production to set in motion a protocol agreement for co-productions between the two countries."

Source: www.cineuropa.org, 12 May 2006, C.D.M.

POLAND

• Travelling European Cinema

To promote European cinema, especially films that have difficulty finding audiences in Poland: this is the main objective of the organisers of the 11th European Cinema Festival, which begins today in Warsaw. This year the travelling festival will take place in seven Polish cities through June 4.

As part of the event, audiences will be able to see 30 films. Twelve recent European productions, never before screened in Poland, have been chosen to feature in competition. Twelve other recent films that have yet to find a distributor will be presented as part of the Panorama of European Cinema. A third section, entitled Open Borders, includes a presentation of six films made as co-productions. The theme of the section is the role of Europe in the world today. An additional section, Masters of European Cinema, will take place in Warsaw, where the public can see films by Forman, Fassbinder, Pasolini, Tarkovsky, Kieślowski and others.

The European Cinema Festival is organised by the Silver Screen multiplex network in co-operation with the French and Portuguese embassies together with the Italian Cultural Institute. For the first time, films will also be shown in smaller theatres and arthouse cinemas.

Source: www.cineuropa.org, 09 May 2005, Dorota Hartwich (Excerpts)

Website: www.eff.pl

CZECH REPUBLIC

• Czech president rejects boost to state film fund

Czech President Vaclav Klaus has vetoed an amendment that would have tripled the size of his country's state film fund. The bill now returns to the lower house, which is likely to override the president's veto with a simple majority later this month.

Klaus returned the amendment to the lower house of parliament May 12, saying that it amounted to unfair support for a commercial enterprise and gave preferential support for one branch of the arts. A vocal skeptic of the European Union, Klaus also objected to language in the bill that encouraged films that promote a European identity.

(...) Producers support the measure as it would mean more Czech films with higher budgets and would also allow Czech producers to become equal partners in European co-productions.

Czech broadcasters, exhibitors and rental shop operators object to the measure as the increase in funds would require higher contributions from them.

The veto came just days after the Culture Ministry released details of an Olsberg SPI study of the economic effect the film industry has on the Czech economy. The study recommends greater state support for the local industry, including a 12.5% tax rebate for productions filmed in the Czech Republic. (...)

Source: Screendaily.com, 15 May 2006, Theodore Schwinke (Excerpts)

UNITED KINGDOM

● Act, Knatchbull acquire UK distributor Artificial Eye

In a further shake-up to the UK distribution market, Artificial Eye Film Company, for 30 years the UK's leading distributor of arthouse and foreign language films, has been acquired by Act Entertainment Group, owner of Curzon Cinemas [members of Europa Cinemas], and Knatchbull Communications Group.

Terms of the acquisition were not released.

The deal comes just as Artificial Eye has been enjoying one of the most substantial successes in its history having made more than \$3.7m through the UK theatrical releases of Jacques Audiard's *The Beat My Heart Skipped* and Michael Haneke's *Hidden*.

Set up in the mid-1970s by Pam and Andi Engel, Artificial Eye owns a library of more than 200 films as well as two first-run cinemas in central London, The Chelsea Cinema and The Renoir [member of Europa Cinemas]. (...)

Artificial Eye's cinemas together with the Curzon Mayfair and Curzon Soho and the Richmond Filmhouse [member of Europa Cinemas] will be absorbed into a new subsidiary, giving the group nine screens on five London sites. (...)

This is the third takeover of an independent UK distributor in recent months, following on from Lionsgate's acquisition of Redbus and StudioCanal's takeover of Optimum.

Source: *Screendaily.com*, 12 May 2006, Geoffrey Macnab (Excerpts)

MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

ISRAEL

● Moments du Cinéma Français in Israel

The French embassy in Israel and the company Eden Cinéma Ltd will present the 3rd Moments du Cinéma Français, taking place from 4 to 14 May 2006 at the Cinemathèque in Tel Aviv, from 4 to 21 May at the Cinemathèques in Jerusalem, Haifa, Sderot and Rosh Pinna, and from 8 to 11 May at Ehal Ha Tarbut in Natanya.

The opening ceremony will be celebrated with Danièle Thompson's film *Fauteuils d'Orchestre* in the presence of the actor, Claude Brasseur.

Film lovers will be able to savour the pleasure of discovering first films, thoughtful and effervescent works, by future directors such as *Gentille* by Sophie Fillières, *The Passenger* by Eric Caravaca and *Les Mauvais Joueurs* by Frédéric Bailleux.

Toi et Moi, a second feature-length film by Julie Lopes-Curval, will close the Festival in the presence of the young actress Julie Depardieu. (...)

Source: *adapted from Israelvalley.com / French Embassy*, 28 April 2006 (Excerpts)

TUNISIA

● 13th session of European Cinema Days from 19 April to 7 May 2006

This year, European Cinema Days will take place in five Tunisian cities: Tunis, Sousse, Jendouba, Sfax and Kairouan (...). These days, which fall within the ambit of the cultural wing of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, are organised by the delegation of the European Commission and the embassies of European Union member states in Tunisia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (regional departments in Sousse, Jendouba and Kairouan) and Sfax city council. (...)

Featured works will include *One Day in Europe* by Hannes Stöhr, *Kebab Connection* by Anno Saul, *The Ice Rink* by Jean-Philippe Toussaint, *My Summer of Love* by Pawel Pawlikowski, *Habana Blues* by Benito Zambrano and Ernesto Chao, *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* by Jacques Audiard, *Palais Royal!* by Valérie Lemercier, *La Tigre e la Neve* by Roberto Benigni (Italy) and *Six à Trois* by Péter Tímár (Hungary).

Several Tunisian films are also to be shown at this festival, including *Khochkhach (Fleur d'Oubli)* by Selma Baccar, *Les Siestes Grenadines* by Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud, *Hyha wa Howa* by Elyes Baccar and *La Porte Sublime* by Mohamed Malas and Ahmed Baha Eddine Attia (a coproduction between Tunisia and Syria). And homage will be paid to Tunisian short films (...). This event will open with Michael Haneke's film *Hidden* on Wednesday 19 April at Le Mondial cinema in Tunis.

Source: *adapted from Infotunisie.com*, 13 April 2006 (Excerpts)

TURKEY

● Turkish films rule at home

Turkey is an exception among the world's cinema industries: it produces only 25 films a year (...) but national production occupies the lion's share of the home market (...). Bordering on 50% in 2005, Turkish films should approach 60% of the market share in 2006 thanks, among other things, to the enormous success of the ultranationalist film, *Valley of the Wolves: Iraq*.

Around a third of the year's productions could be seen at the national competition of the Istanbul Film Festival, which finished on 15 April. The selection comprised a mixture of released and unreleased films, including one of the great successes of 2005, Cagan Irmak's *Babam Ve Oglum*, which attracted 1.685 million cinemagoers. The melodrama is set in 1986 and was produced for the laughable amount of around one million euros. Freed from military jails where he had been tortured for five years, a militant journalist from the extreme left returns to the home of his father, a landowner, to entrust his son to him. References to recent traumatic events in Turkey's history add to the film's sadness.

But, equally, there was laughter: *Dondurmam Gaymak* is the history of an ice cream seller whose delivery tricycle is stolen – homage to De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. In this light comedy, you meet a former left-wing prisoner, an imam who attempts to keep the village youth on the path of righteousness and a hero who fears globalisation and entry into the European Union in equal measure. Finally, there was *Beyza'nin Kadınları*, an adults-only horror film whose heroine, a schizophrenic with multiple personalities, swaps, depending on the crisis, her skimpy loose woman's dresses for the veil of a female imam at the mosque.

In this journey through Turkish films, often captivating and sometimes exasperating due to technical imperfections, one film has stood out: *5 Vakit* by Reha Erdem won the main prize. Punctuated by the five daily calls to prayer, this exploration of the life of children in a village on the Aegean is both lyrical and meditative.

This is one of the only films from the competition which will be distributed outside Turkey. This is also the case for *İki Genç Kız* by E. Kutlug Ataman, a tale of the excesses of two teenagers in Istanbul, filmed in digital. Gülen Güler, the film's young producer (this is her first feature-length film), produced the film for 400,000 euros. 'I began shooting with 30,000 euros in the bank,' she explains. 'Enough to pay for materials but not for the team.' Then an advance from a television channel enabled her to balance the budget. And it was she who, for want of a company specialising in the sale of films on the international market, undertook to find distributors for her film in the United States and Germany.

(...) The Ministry of Culture is beginning to grant advances for some projects, but this is not yet an established process. At the moment, producers can rely on television channels alone, since distributors are not advancing money. However, exhibition is in good health, recovering slowly from the catastrophe presented by the coup d'état in 1980. In 2005, the 440 Turkish cinemas (that is, around 1,000 screens) welcomed 25 million filmgoers. And then there are the international productions, an area in which producers are but novices. The Festival organised a seminar bringing together European and Turkish professionals. Another producer, Djeida Tufan, has already commenced a film which is to be coproduced by Michael Katz, the Austrian producer for Michael Haneke, and Films du Losange.

Source: adapted from Le Monde, 17 April 2006, Thomas Sotinel (Excerpts)

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

• South African explosion?

In little more than 12 months, from February 2005 to March 2006, South African films, until now rarely seen on cinema screens, have been amassing international awards. The very recent success of *Tsotsi* in Los Angeles, where Gavin Hood's film about the redemption of a young ultraviolent gang leader from Soweto won the Oscar for best foreign film, has crowned a triumphant period. This award (...) merely followed, in fact, the Golden Bear awarded to Mark Dornford-May's *U-Carmen e-Khayelitsha* in Berlin in 2005, and, in this continent, the gold stallion bequeathed to Zola Maseko's *Drum* at Fespaco 2005, where 20% of the films selected for the competition came from Nelson Mandela's homeland. (...)

As well as prizes at festivals, this revival of South African films appears to have reached the cinemas and, therefore, the general public. *Tsotsi*, when it was released at the beginning of February, outstripped Hollywood productions, something of an achievement in South Africa (...)

This April, French viewers will be able to discover two South African productions at cinemas. *U-Carmen* (...) was released on 5 April. And in particular, *Zulu Love Letter*, which created an impression at the latest Fespaco both by the quality of its screenplay and by its dramatic intensity, although the jury did not single it out, will at last be available for viewing from 19 April. (...)

The international recognition of South African films as well as the apparent influx of films from that country could give the impression that now, more than ten years after the end of apartheid, we are witnessing the emergence of a great new film industry, as previously with Iran and more recently with South Korea and Argentina. In reality, while a boundary has undoubtedly been crossed, we are not there yet.

There are, for a start, historic reasons. There has certainly been an audiovisual and cinematographic industry in South Africa for a long time, but until the 1990s this was solely for the satisfaction of white audiences. (...) Those who attempted to escape the system had difficulty distributing their work, although the authors of certain militant films, essentially white liberals, were able to develop these works when the anti-Apartheid struggle grew in scale from the 1980s onwards.

(...) The national distribution network, which only covers white areas in which Hollywood-style films predominate, does not offer a significant market to local productions. (...)

Furthermore, (...) cinema continues to be, for the most part, something that white people do. It is not by chance that even subjects concerning the black majority, such as *Carmen* or *Tsotsi*, are still most often produced by

whites. All the more so since they will in all likelihood be viewed by whites in South Africa – black people represent 80% of the population but only 15% of cinemagoers. (...)

So the accumulation of successes at festivals, which may not be repeated on such a scale for a long time, is deceptive. It is not a case of a sudden 'explosion' but, rather, of a 'slow emergence of a new South African film industry', according to Jacques Bidou, coproducer of *Fools* and *Zulu Love Letter*. But the future is, nevertheless, promising since, little by little, the situation is improving. Black filmmakers are beginning to stand out, such as Ramadan Suleman, a deliberately 'politically incorrect' filmmaker or, to a lesser degree, Zola Maseko, winner at the last Fespaco. Also, the South African authorities decided, on the eve of the new millennium, to support the development of the seventh art by giving significantly larger sums to the NFVF, the South African National Film and Video Foundation, created in 1997.

According to Jacques Bidou, it undoubtedly remains to improve the system for training filmmakers and technicians, to stimulate the creation of a distribution network reaching the black population and to provide better support, through a specific finance system, for projects falling outside the showy industrial output of Cape studios. (...)

Source: adapted from *JeuneAfrique.com*, 16 April 2006, Renaud de Rochebrune (Excerpts)

CAMEROUN

• Great success for Ecrans Noirs festival

Regular visitors to the Ecrans Noirs festival over the last few years will not have forgotten *Djogo*, the film by Koumba Bididi from Gabon. (...) The filmmaker, the actress and the film will be present in Yaoundé as part of the festival's ten-year celebrations organised by the association Terre Africaine.

This event is taking place in Yaoundé from 27 May to 4 June 2006. *Mobuto, King of Zaire* by Thierry Michel, *Lumumba* by Raoul Peck, *The Golden Ball* by Cheik Doukouré, *Kini and Adams* by Idrissa Ouedraogo, other films by legends and other great moments from African films and from the Ecrans Noirs festival should all help to mark it out as a success.

For 2006, the festival has in fact chosen to look back over the past. (...) But the as yet unfinished programme schedule for this edition will also give ample room to recent productions from Africa and elsewhere, such as, for example, Thierry Michel's latest production, *Congo River, au-delà des Ténèbres*, and *U-Carmen*, the latest adaptation of Bizet's celebrated opera, by the South African filmmaker Mark Dornford-May.

And mention must also be made of *Sisters in Law*, from Cameroon, coproduced by Florence Ayisi with the English Kim Longinotto. The documentary, shot in the town of Kumba in Cameroon, was selected in over 90 festivals, including Director's Fortnight at Cannes in 2005. (...)

This year the festival village will be in the national museum in Yaoundé, offering more space. The screenings themselves will take place in six different locations: the conference centre, the Abbia cinema, the French Cultural Centre in Yaoundé, Amphi 500 at Yaoundé II university in Soa, Amphi 700 at Yaoundé I university in Ngoa-Ekellé and the Nkomkana events hall, also in Yaoundé. (...)

Source: adapted from *Le Quotidien Mutations (Yaoundé)*, 13 April 2006, Jules Romuald Nkonlak (Excerpts)

MALI

• Mobile digital cinema: a screen beneath the stars

From now on, the most remote bush villages in Mali, Benin and Niger will have their film screenings, thanks to a mobile digital cinema organisation. Report from Mali.

(...) Kadidia, the exhibitor at the mobile digital cinema, CNA, in Mali, explains not without pride that, for two years, the CNA has travelled 72,000 km in Mali alone, crossing all the regions in order to stop each evening at the most remote villages, lacking electricity. Throughout the year, even during the rainy season, two teams of three people share between them itinerant film tours across the country. One team sets up in Sikasso, the other in Ségou, then in Kayes, Mopti or Gao, for several weeks of screenings in a maximum radius of two hours' travel.

Over two million filmgoers at the end of 2005

The pace is heavy going: the mobile cinema will visit each of the ten villages chosen approximately ten times, that is, about every fortnight. So, at around four o'clock in the afternoon, the team sets out on its journey so as to arrive before nightfall for installation. Like any nomadic life, this one draws its energy from light organisation. In terms of logistics, the CNA is a 4x4 covered with logos in sponsors' colours, digital video equipment, a DVD reader, video projector, amplifier and tapes for the sound system, and of course a generator in its wheeled casing. Finally, the magic object, a white plastic 4 x 3 m screen, is carefully rolled and takes its place with the rest on the vehicle's roof. (...)

For several years now the mobile digital cinema has been travelling the roads of three countries, Benin, Niger and Mali. So by the end of 2005, more than two million filmgoers, most of them rural, had been able to see African fiction and public-awareness films. Each country manages its own CNA organisation, although the CNA in France, the initiative of a group of film and audiovisual industry professionals, does continue to provide support. 'The goal is for the French CNA to disappear, replaced by a panAfrican organisation,' explains Christian Lambert, one of the project's founders. He was shooting in Benin and Cameroon when he realised

that 'none of the African participants involved locally would ever see the film'. The organisation, founded in 2001, found favourable echoes in the film world before convincing sponsors. The European Union released 300,000 euros. 'This enabled us to purchase materials and vehicles and to pay the salaries of 12 animators for a year,' comments Christian Lambert.

A human adventure

Other partners joined in: RF1, TV5, the Belgian co-operative group Africalia, the tour operator Point-Afrique which offers freight transport, French and Swiss co-operatives, Val de Marne council, etc. Distribution rights of the some 35 fiction films which comprise the CNA collection are taken care of by the Intergovernmental Agency of the French-speaking World, AIF. 'When Dani Kouyaté (a Burkina Faso filmmaker) learned what we were doing, he offered all distribution rights for his films and gave money for petrol,' emphasises Christian Lambert. Nevertheless, helping hands are not enough to perpetuate the activity. Each organisation has to ensure its own financing. At the village, screenings are free. There is just one consideration: a hot meal for the animators, a table to place the video on and four chairs to mount the screen, which must not touch the ground. (...)

The film *Sia, the Dream of the Python* by Dani Kouyaté is on this evening's programme, in Sakoiba. But first there is a medium-length film, produced in Africa, on AIDS prevention. Teenagers, the elderly, relatives, the whole village is present. Well before the screening, children are hurried onto mats placed on the ground, opposite the screen. (...) The film on AIDS allows a long silence to hang. (...) In her loud voice, Kadidia links: 'Good, and now, before the big film, here's Buster Keaton!' The atmosphere relaxes, mirth winning over the audience. In Sakoiba, most people have discovered films for the first time with the CNA. They do not deny themselves. (...)

Source: adapted from Afrik.com, 06 April 2006, Sabine Grandadam (Excerpts)
