



19TH EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK CONFERENCE
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RESUME

19TH CONFERENCE

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EUROPA CINEMAS

CREATIVE EUROPE - MEDIA SUB-PROGRAMME

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INAUGURAL SESSION

Nico Simon – President of Europa Cinemas

Welcome to the 19th Conference. In 2003 the conference had 300 participants, this year we are almost 500. The Europa Cinemas network has existed since 1992. It started at that time across 12 media countries, 24 cities, 45 cinemas and 110 screens. Twenty-three years later, these initial network members have multiplied to 2,330 screens, in 969 cinemas and 576 cities, in 30 media countries. This has been made possible by international cinema operators and thanks to the continuous confidence and support from the European Commission successive media programs and now Creative Europe. Thanks to the French CNC (Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée), Eurimages, and also to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, without their support the network could not exist.

Over a decade ago, the main discussions were about digitisation of screens. Digital also brought another diversity to cinemas, the presentation of new cultural content such as operas and other performing arts, strengthening the cinema as social and cultural meeting places for citizens to physically connect.

Audience development has always been a main focus of all exhibitors. New media allows cinemas to build up audiences. There is not just one audience, but there are many and by having a look at many of the network members' internet sites and social media activities we can rest assured that, as for the past 100 years, they are doing audience development every day, just in a different, more connected, modern way.

Digitisation in most European territories raises new challenges, new opportunities, and new questions. How can we further improve circulation of European films? Is the theatre still the most important place to watch films? Are there too many films that cannot be properly released? Might there be too many, but not enough good films produced? Which new release models need to be found to allow proper distribution and circulation to demanding audiences? How will the European Commission's wish for a digital single market impact the film and audio-visual sector? How can we get young audience who are digital natives? How to address piracy? But, then again, this might not be a big issue for small independent films. Are day and date releases on multiple platforms a solution for better circulation?

Not all solutions will fit all situations. Europa Cinemas' goal is to explore and discuss what's best for the different situations in the different territories. The conference is one of the association's most important achievements. This year's conference is open to all exhibitors, not just the Europa Cinemas network.

Lucia Recalde Langarica – Head of MEDIA Unit, European Commission

Europa Cinemas is one of the cornerstones of Creative Europe's media unit.

Cinema remains a special and incomparable social experience, but also a very important component of the film value chain. We are living in a digital world and it is transforming businesses and industries. The relationship between exhibitors and audiences has changed dramatically. Audiences are not happy anymore with a passive role as viewers or spectators. They want to have

a say, interact, co-curate, and these new forms of engagement have been boosted by new technologies and social media.

One of the commission's initiatives is the digital single market strategy. DSM means modifying copyright rules to make it fit with the digital revolution. The main goal of this modernisation is to improve the access of creative content across the EU, for the sake of strengthening cultural diversity, cultivating competition and stimulating growth and jobs. New copyright laws will not overhaul the system completely. Rather, reform in a gradual, targeted and balanced manner. The commission has no intention to regulate on windows. Cinemas need to respond. Innovation is not an option, innovation is a must. Europa Cinemas will publish its innovation survey in 2016. Next year we celebrate 25 years of the media program and Europa Cinemas is considered an important part of that program and a success.

Přemysl Martínek (Head of International Relations, State Cinematography Fund, Czech Republic)

Czech State Film Fund is made up of nine people who decide where the finance goes and who choose the projects. We are working on a new long-term strategy as the Czech State will be increasing funds, but they need to be careful not to put the money into just one place. The aim is to not only support production and subsidy the films but also to place these films, with their strong support from the public sector, to make them visible and connected to audiences. A major issue is that distributors are not in direct touch with cinema owners; so one area of support is for audience development and education. We will not support only Czech cinema, as we do not stand alone in Europe. We want to strengthen European cinema in coming years.

Claude-Eric Poiroux – General Director of Europa Cinemas

This is the first Conference where we can announce that all the cinemas in our Network are now fully digitalized. Over the last ten years we have been through this historic revolution, probably the most important since the invention of talkies. What has happened over these last ten years? We have shared a lot of information and a lot of thinking, particularly through each of these Conferences, and we have taken important decisions on technical, economic, professional and social issues. Our companies have invested heavily, our teams have evolved and our business practices too have changed in order to adapt to the disappearance of prints and their replacement by dematerialized films. But all this is not yet over, even though it is impossible to go back. Many of us have kept 35mm projectors in order to screen heritage films. Some directors are still making films on 35mm and, close to home, László Nemes requested that his film *Son of Saul* could be offered in a 35mm print in theatres which are still equipped. And let's not forget Quentin Tarantino who is going to release his upcoming film first in the 70 mm print form! We'll have to renew our equipment regularly to take into account the evolution digital technologies, which are much less stable than the robust 35mm cameras. We are only at the beginning of a technological evolution that will force us to continually reinvest in order to remain competitive.

What has happened around us over these last 10 years? The internet has definitely become part of our lives, in the way we behave, we communicate, in our entertainment and cultural practices.

All ages and all parts of the population are affected by this. And of course today's children have known no other environment than this.

It's been many years that we've faced up to this evolution and trained our staff to use these technologies. We have created new jobs, hired or trained young community managers to promote our cinemas and our films through the social media, in online forums and on all these types of platforms that make it possible to reach and bring in new communities of viewers. Europa Cinemas has supported you for more than 10 years in these initiatives, thanks to the Innovation Labs in Bologna, Sofia and Seville, that hundreds of you have attended in order to improve your practices. But the Internet is not just a communications tool. It is also an enormous reservoir of images, a supplier of audiovisual content and thus of films. It is a space that is much less well-controlled than our cinemas, piracy is increasingly sophisticated, creative works are at a disadvantage in favor of worldwide consumer products. The offer is multifaceted, it reaches everybody at home, in his office, in his pocket. Everyone can be a spectator of any sort of content, in any place and at any time. And the film is a remarkable flagship product. Remember that Netflix has dematerialized itself too: ten years ago, it was the leader in the market for DVDs sent by post. Today of course it is a leader in the distribution of online content and its dream is to become the leader in the production and distribution of films and of series.

That is the context in which we continue to work as exhibitors. For this, we do have some strong assets. This is what we wanted to illustrate in the Network Review that you've just received. 26 cinemas that are "on the move" are presented there, through their initiatives, their ideas, and their innovative practices. And we want to share these success stories with our Network members and beyond.

During this three-day Conference, we're going to exchange ideas, practices and initiatives in this remarkable forum, and we will open up our thinking to those who are relying on our cinemas to showcase to the public the works that they produce, direct, discover, distribute. I'm talking about the producers, film directors, festival directors, distributors. And let's not forget the Europa International sales agents who meet with us for the third time. Our theatres are real, they are visible, they are lively and they offer a unique environment to films. They're the only place where people can get together to share a *collective emotion*, and that is what Alfred Hitchcock considered was the only aim that a filmmaker was trying to achieve when he wrote and made a film.

This evening in the Lucerna, member of Europa Cinemas, we will be awarding three prizes to the best Network exhibitors in 2015. We'll then be screening a new documentary *Lampedusa in Winter*, first film by Jakob Brossmann that we hope will be distributed in Europe and screened in our cinemas. Programming such a film is what represents the originality of our theatres and their essential place in the European market.

I now give the floor to Michael Gubbins, who will run our debates with Catharine Des Forges. These debates have been prepared by the team of Europa Cinemas and our Steering Committee. And I'd like to thank all of you who responded to our questionnaire and have taken part in the content of this 19th Conference. Your turn to speak.

SESSION I – DEVELOPING THE AUDIENCE FOR A DIVERSE CINEMA

Directed by Michael Gubbins – Consultant, SampoMedia, UK

PANEL I – Cinema: A 21st Century Art Form

Speakers:

Cristian Mungiu – Director, Exhibitor and Distributor, Romania (*Skype*)

Bohdan Slama – Director, Czech Republic

Laurent Cantet – Director, Founder of La Cinetek, France (*Skype*)

Melissa Van der Schoor – Programme/Distribution Coordinator, IFFR Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Mirsad Purivatra – Director of Sarajevo Film Festival – Exhibitor, Obala Meeting Point, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Cristian Mungiu – Director, Exhibitor and Distributor, Romania (*Skype*)

I hate to say this but's worse than eight years ago. There's a law that passed recently, as a result of some unfortunate events that happened here, which has meant that all activities which were held in public places with any kind of risk – earthquake, fire – would be forbidden. The last three cinemas in Bucharest (more than 300 seats) were shut down, just last week. An environment in which we literally have nothing left except multiplexes makes it difficult for premieres and distribution, because the multiplexes have signed up to VPF.

It's difficult to release Romanian and European content.

After receiving the Palm d'Or for *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, it was difficult to release the film in Romania. I fundraised and bought a van to start up mobile cinema in places where there were no cinemas left. There were thousands of people watching the film. I hoped it would be an example. But it didn't reach the industry and now there is a habit of organising caravans. It's an interesting experience, but it can't replace a well-equipped cinema.

We have a huge problem of piracy and it is a big problem to get people to watch films in cinemas. The habit is difficult to replace, if you lose a generation. The chain of multiplexes play 95% of all their shows in American blockbusters and American films. They create how people perceive cinema, leaving little space and education for alternative content.

They tried VOD but unless you stop piracy first and invest in education, then it won't work. If you watch American cinema from age 4, then you won't be prepared at the age of 18 or 20 to watch a different kind of European cinema.

For smaller theatres, VOD won't work unless there's a European law that's firm against piracy. People will always watch films for free if they're available and we're talking about niche product. Europa Cinemas is an important network because it is practically impossible to place a European film in a multiplex.

Bohdan Slama – Director, Czech Republic

A producer told me that film could change the world, a little bit, through ideas and emotions. An idea is the most powerful thing. People need it so the question is how to get younger people to get to the cinema.

I agree 100% with Christian. Older cinema, independent cinema that I show to people, they like and want to see. But the cinemas show American films and Czech comedies. In schools kids are learning about literature and music and theatre but not film, and film history. It needs to start at schools, teaching children that film is not only entertainment. It's also part of the world in which we are living.

Laurent Cantet – Director, Founder of La Cinetek, France (Skype)

La Cinetek is a project, a dream that came into being a few years ago. The fact that it was impossible to see again films we loved, films that make us what we are. We decided to make a site, where you could see films that have become invisible today. We opened a new site three weeks ago and we asked 26 filmmakers from all over the world to give us a list of 50 films each and then we tried to negotiate with the distributors to make it legal. We have a French IP address for access and made 400 films available. Our cut off date was the year 2000, so films from before that with introductions, often by the directors. There is also an added explanation as to why the films are important, to help guide audiences to these films that we all love.

Our aim originally was to share this culture and we wanted to try to make it a tool to help a younger audience to discover these films. We don't have prior statistics about who uses the site but we know that students find it an educational and a cultural tool as they thank us for using it. We all share a certain conviction that the more films you see, the more you want to see and if you see films here you will want to go to the cinema.

Melissa Van der Schoor – Programme/Distribution Coordinator, IFFR Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Eye for Life is a new initiative, collaboration between us and three sales agents. We selected five films and each was screened in multiple cinemas across Europe (40 simultaneously), to have a festival experience of watching it together in the presence of director and cast, and to replicate that in other locations. We had a live video connection showing the cast in Rotterdam, and you could ask questions from anywhere in Europe for the Q&A through twitter, through a hash tag. During the festival there might be a hundred people coming in, but even the week after, when it's released, it doesn't do as well. We think you have to do something extra, the presence of a filmmaker gives it something special.

Mirsad Purivatra – Director of Sarajevo Film Festival – Exhibitor, Obala Meeting Point, Bosnia and Herzegovina

There is an audience in Sarajevo watching mostly new films. We are forced to be a distributor, to have our own cinema and to educate. We don't have Netflix but we do have HBO. Dieter Kosslick said people are watching Eisenstein on their phones. We have to fight to get them to the cinema for that magic moment in the dark, where you can be afraid with two hundred people, or two. We have lost this generation – I know this for sure from my son.

We have to accept the reality of VOD. You need local and state support, and European support as well as good managers. You need cultural ministers and those who run the facilities to be educated so that they do care about audiences.

PANEL II – Cinemas: The Audience Creators

Speakers:

Christoph Freier – Account Director, Media & Entertainment, GfK, Germany

Christian Bräuer – CEO, Yorck Kino Gruppe, Germany

Clare Binns – Director of Programming and Acquisitions, Picturehouse Cinemas, UK

Susan Wendt – Head of Sales, TrustNordisk, Denmark

Jaume Ripoll – Co-Founder & Head of Content and Development, Filmin, Spain

Brian Newman – Founder, Sub-Genre, USA

Christoph Freier – Account Director, Media & Entertainment, GfK, Germany

2015 in Germany was a very successful year, at least for the first nine months, as spectators spent 20% more than in the previous year. The growth is due to two phenomena. Audience figures among elderly audiences are going up and, for younger audiences, they are going down. We saw a 40% drop in younger audience attendances in cinemas.

The aim of this study was to observe the different age groups in order to identify the critical groups among them. We wanted to understand what the barriers were to increase their attendance. There has been a price increase, but it is not the only obstacle so not the only lever to bring people back to the cinema. In terms of price we can look at special days and prices for families but we need to look at other factors too. Going to the cinema competes with other leisure activities, DVDs, television shows, social networks, gaming and so on. Young people rarely go to the cinema alone and it's an activity planned in advance. We should stress the fact that young people have less free time now than they used to, and consumers generally.

How can cinemas motivate people to leave the sofa and come to the theatre? Theatres must endeavour to become better integrated into the everyday lives of people. Loyalty cards are important but getting to know the audience individually is more important.

Christian Bräuer – CEO, Yorck Kino Gruppe, Germany

Kino Gruppe is kind of like the Berlin type of Picturehouse, with twelve art house cinemas in Berlin, of different chains and agencies. We do marketing activities together to reach the audience. Our program is about 40% national titles and 40% European films. So we are dependent on the quality of the movies and it's not always very good. Every week there are 10-15 new films, but if the quality is good it's easier as the audiences come automatically to us. We do special screenings and sneaks; in that way we are an innovative network already.

What we did was to build a brand, which has really helped, under this group name. We say that if you go to a good cinema then you never feel lost. We need the trust of our audience, and that they are talking to friends and colleagues. Berlin, like London, has a huge migration so what we are doing now is showing German movies with English subtitles so that non-Germans including students can watch German movies. We have a loyalty card and an annual flat rate pass that young people like. If they have the pass they're more likely to try a movie that they might not otherwise. It's also important to work with radio and media to create special partnerships.

Clare Binns – Director of Programming and Acquisitions, Picturehouse Cinemas, UK

Young audiences are not top of my list of worries. Mainly because I think if the films are good and there are good things going on in your cinema then you're marketing to different groups. And I think, now, that people are using cinemas for different things. So I'm more concerned about getting people into the cinema, to see a diverse range of films and entertainment.

If we love film, and I think everyone in this room does, then of course we have a responsibility, and our responsibility is to make the best of cinema available to people. Because we have so many cinemas, and so many successful cinemas, we can do more interesting things.

We've opened three cinemas this year, the big one being Picturehouse Central in the heart of the West End. We're showing Carol in 35mm because that's how the director made it and because we have so many cinemas we can offer the distributor a run around the country. All of the cinemas we open we expect to take a full year to get going. You can't just open and expect the audience to come; you have to continue to work to get the audience.

One thing we've recognised is not just being an exhibitor; we are a distributor as well. We also have a service where we book for other cinemas and help to build a unique program for them. Each cinema has to have a unique identity, which is why I say we are a group and not a chain.

Susan Wendt – Head of Sales, TrustNordisk, Denmark

We have strong years and not so strong years. At the same time, what you can see today, is the development with series; big directors, actors and writers are entering that world, because that's where there's a lot of money. Which means it takes longer for them to return to quality movies. This goes through production, sales agents, cinemas – the time spent is spent a lot on series.

Jaume Ripoll – Co-Founder & Head of Content and Development, Filmin, Spain

We've been on the Internet for 8 years. We are the Angela Lansbury of video on demand right now. It was said for a long time that the Internet was the enemy of the film business but ours is a platform created by distributors who 8 years ago decided to create it. They established that the only way to widen their audience was to make films available for the whole of our territory. There has been talk of having an end date, closing or changing those windows.

The Internet makes less than movie theatres today and it will continue to make less, because the price of watching them on the web is far less than in movie theatres. We cannot change this where there is so much piracy. We changed the price and we achieved success.

We did co-operate with other festivals but five years ago we decided to have our own film festival, only on the web. Why? Because only 15 of the 400 films that play at Berlin, or Cannes or Venice, will make their way to Spain and people want to see them.

Brian Newman – Founder, Sub-Genre, USA

The whole industry is built on scarcity and we're all having a difficult time trying to fix it. And quality doesn't seem to matter that much, actually, because we're all watching cats online instead of quality European cinema. So, it's now an attention economy and what matters is the consumer getting what they want and when they want it, and we're having a tough time adapting to that.

They're going back and creating physical bookshops because they see where they're lacking and if we don't step up to meet that then they will be the digital single market and it won't be a pretty world.

We've spent a lot of time and money becoming a brand. They go online to read all of our cinema news and festival reports and now they trust us. Build a brand so you don't have to spend on advertising.

SESSION II – WORKSHOP 1 – RENEWING OFFER AND AUDIENCES

Directed by Catharine Des Forges – Director, Independent Cinema Office, UK

Speakers:

Stephane De Potter – Distributor, Cinéart, Belgium

Laurent Dutoit – Distributor, Agora – Exhibitor, Les Scala, Switzerland

Tara Judah – Events Coordinator, Curzon Cinema & Arts

Branko Krsmanovic – Exhibitor, Kupina Bioscop, Serbia

Marynia Gierat – Exhibitor, Kino Pod Baranami, Poland

Charlotte Wensierski – Founder and Head of The Bloggers Cinema Club, France

Patrick von Sychowski – Co-Founder & Co-Editor, Celluloid Junkie, UK

Nikolina Demark – Spotter, Spotted by Locals, Serbia

Ellen Tejle – Exhibitor, Bio Rio, Sweden

Stephane De Potter – Distributor, Cinéart, Belgium

In the Netherlands there's a flourishing situation with new, independent cinemas, but in Brussels it's disastrous for art house cinema.

The question I would like to raise is this: are we not now attracting this older audience who, already, when they were younger, were in the habit of going to the cinema? But what about the new audiences? The younger audiences don't have that habit. In 20 years, they'll be that age, but will they still come when they're 40 or 50 years old, as we haven't got them in the habit of going to the cinema when they're young.

Digital technology allows us much more flexibility in terms of releases and in terms of organising different programs in one cinema. But if the programming is too scattered, the audience loses its way, so we should be careful about this. We shouldn't try to organise things in the same way as live theatre. Previously, people knew they could go to the cinema blind, but now they think they have to check the Internet to see what's on at what time.

Cine clubs attached to cinemas can work. If you don't package things in this way it can be more difficult to attract people. There is the same relationship between distributors and exhibitors.

Laurent Dutoit – Distributor, Agora – Exhibitor, Les Scala, Switzerland

The market is different from one European country to another, so the solutions are very different. Where the cinema or cinemas have disappeared, in our countries, Belgium and Switzerland, we have networks that are still quite strong. Nevertheless, digitisation has brought about significant modifications and an increasing number of films available, as well as more being released each week.

The lifetime of a film is much shorter now. The other thing that is really changing is the model based on 35mm distribution. What we've experimented with in Switzerland is multi-programming that means that a film is not necessarily filmed throughout the day, maybe just one or two sessions.

Ten to fifteen years ago the most attractive session was the evening one, 9.30pm, but today it attracts the fewest people. We see more in the afternoon than in the evening. The audience is aging – 50+, who are less keen on going out in the evening.

One of the challenges is finding ways of making the evening sessions possible.

Tara Judah – Events Coordinator, Curzon Cinema & Arts

The Curzon Cinema & Arts is in a rural town, twenty minutes outside of a bigger, more vibrant city. It's a single screen heritage cinema, with a capacity of 270. It's one of the oldest, purpose built, continuously operating cinemas in the UK and so we do have something unique.

One of the things we did was, on Heritage Open Day, when people can look behind the scenes to see the original booth with 35mm projector, we made copies of praxinoscopes from biscuit tins, so children could come and make their own pictures and see how it works. We did this with thaumatropes too.

We also run regular animation workshops. In the UK there's a big focus on 16-24 as the target audience. Our town has an aging population and people come because they remember their first visit to the Curzon and so we want this new generation to come when they are also 40, 50, 60 and older. So we start with really young children and we get them to do hands on activities. It doesn't mean they're in an auditorium watching European films yet but what it does mean is that they're coming to a place where's there's always a projector in the background, there's gold curtains opening onto the screen and they're creating something that they can take home and look at on their device – something they are familiar with. There's an association between that old space and the new technology they're using every day.

Branko Krsmanovic – Exhibitor, Kupina Bioscop, Serbia

My cinema is in the south of Serbia, called Kupina. There are 140 seats and 95 seats in our cinemas, which have been renovated. We have workshops but we also have a program for sixteen young entrepreneurs who work across photography and design and we have a big conference for creative design in our cinema. We have an agreement with every cultural and educational institution in town to work on development.

We select young people who will promote ideas in town through their peers. We organise in every school for four or five young people who will promote our cultural event. We choose 205 ambassadors for culture from 65 different educational institutions in town.

In the second year, we organised ambassadors in another two cities in Serbia. So now we have 400 in 3 cities and 130 schools. And every Monday they communicate to 90,000 pupils and facilities about cultural activities. They each have a badge so that people can identify and ask them about cultural activities in their city. We have had a 30% increase in engagement in organised activities in the first year just from what the cultural ambassadors are doing. We are not sure of numbers for general activities, as they don't have that data.

Marynia Gierat – Exhibitor, Kino Pod Baranami, Poland

We use non-standard marketing for engaging the city. Our cinema is a renaissance palace in the main square of the city, so we are visible.

We have had things like Chaplin characters promoting silent cinema and a flash mob playing Ping-Pong, promoting the Asian Film Festival. For the Summer Film Festival we do guerrilla marketing (not approved by the city at all). Flowers made of paper are put in the gardens surrounding the main square and we spray on the streets the tag line of the cinema. Summer deck chairs with cinema logos that say 'I am in the cinema' are put in partner bars and cafes along with a special board game. The game is based on the films in the festival. We promote our cinema and cinema-going itself. The bag says 'I am going to the cinema'.

We have a terrace so we organise open-air cinemas there. We have a special event called Poster Harvesting; we open film poster archives to everyone who buys a ticket on that day and they can collect as many posters as they want.

We also went to the university to heir film studies department and brought chairs and promoted films in our cinema and our student film club.

We do really targeted, themed screenings. Food and wine tastings with films, a good niche where esoteric/religious films are combined with eastern poetry readings, and we screened *Journey to the West* along with a yoga class in the cinema, and had a very popular bicycle screening and a city night bike race.

We have a good relationship with our senior citizens; they see films and discuss them. We wanted to recreate this with young audiences (aged 16-19). We give them the cinema. They have a timeslot not taken by regular screenings and they program it, do the introductions and lead the discussions. It's not professional but we let go of that and let them run the cinema at that time. We treat them to a free coffee and sandwich and after long discussions, sometimes ending at 2am, the older ones have a vodka shot. The children have an apple. They get a loyalty card. After 5 films they can see the 6th one for free.

We have a promo trailer (Wes Anderson style) and a summer film festival trailer, which is a competition. There are 96 films referenced in one and a half minutes, and the contest is to guess them all.

Charlotte Wensierski – Founder and Head of The Bloggers Cinema Club, France

The Bloggers Cinema Club is a cinema related blog I created in May 2013. It's a collaborative exercise, there are twelve or more writers who work on this; fine art students, journalists, record sellers, etc. We are eclectic in talking about independent cinema and mainstream cinema.

One thing I'd like to talk about is our relationship with distributors. At the beginning we tried to contact distributors in order to create interactivity on the site. For example, we offered free cinema tickets that people could win but that's not so easy when you have very few statistics. As we developed more reliable statistics we were able to show that we'd developed more relevant articles to interested film lovers and we also showed that we were reliable and regular so the number of followers increased. It's then the distributors that came to contact us, because they

wanted us to talk about their catalogues. Once people became aware of our importance we formed an association.

Patrick von Sychowski – Co-Founder & Co-Editor, Celluloid Junkie, UK

I write for Celluloid Junkie and I'm here to talk about social media. 1) What people think social media is, 2) What social media actually is and 3) how to use social media to attract audiences for your cinema.

When we talk about social media you have to stop thinking of yourself as being the same as your films. The great strength of Facebook is that everybody is on it, but that's also the problem. They might have an account but they don't want to be seen on the same social media platform as their parents.

Prince Charles Cinema on Instagram has great success, because they don't just talk about their films, they create a community. Learn by seeing what others do.

People don't think of YouTube as a social media platform, but look at the comment field, it is a platform and it will only become more important. Why? Youth are migrating in social media to video platforms. If your strategy doesn't have videos, then you have a problem. And if you only put up trailers then you also have a problem. You have to actually MAKE those videos. This year is the first year that youth are spending more time on digital video than social media like Facebook. Messaging platforms are social media. Messaging is not just for talking among friends, it's for e-commerce and creating communities.

Facebook is the number one social media platform in the world, the second is QQ, a Chinese messaging app. Which one should you be on? The bad news is, nobody knows which will take off. No one knows which will succeed but the good news is that it costs zero. You can experiment. It cost the people, the time and the inspiration.

Final 4 lessons: don't think of the platform first. Think of what you want to achieve first and think backwards from that. Don't broadcast, it's a dialogue, two ways. It's for the mobile, not the desktop. You have to create experiences.

Build the brand loyalty – you are more than your films. They need to want to go to the cinema and then think about the film, not the other way around.

Nikolina Demark – Spotter, Spotted by Locals, Serbia

Spotted by Locals is a series of online travel guides for different cities, written exclusively by locals. We have 66 separate city guides across major cities in Europe and we have become more popular. The 'good virus' spread to the US and Canada.

I am a 'spotter' – someone who writes articles about the city for the site, but we're also a tight community. We have a network forum, a Facebook site and an annual spotters' meeting. The founders are a couple from Amsterdam and they like to travel but they noticed that all the regular guides are ones you can buy in shops but they very quickly become out-dated. Which is fine for historical monuments but not for restaurants, bars, clubs and cinemas. We live in a fast environment, things change constantly.

What they wanted was to recommend places locals like to hang out, places that represent the 'soul' of the city. Each city has four or five spotters. Last year, we had over 2 million unique new visitors. In the last year, we wrote a list of 25 best European art house cinemas. It is one of the most published and shared articles on the Facebook site. Cinema has turned out to be the most popular place that travellers want to know about.

No commerce – we are not a paid service. We are not allowed to accept anything in return for writing an article – not money, food, drink, etc. This is not our day job, it is something we do out of our passion. It's personal, it's our story.

It's a powerful marketing tool and you don't have to pay for it. Involve locals in your local cinema. Get people from your country to assist with your social media profiles.

Mathias Holtz (replaced Ellen Tejle) – Exhibitor, Bio Rio, Sweden

We are a Swedish cinema chain. We instigated a survey, because we had a sneaking suspicion we were doing things wrong. We have 160 screens in almost as many cinemas across Sweden; four inner city art houses who are members of Europa Cinemas and a smaller network of fourteen cinemas who are supported by Europa Cinemas. In the digitisation process and in renewing our offer, art house has been important and we are screening more than we used to. But we now have questions about how we communicate things.

Cinema Rio in Stockholm, our case study, we started running in 2009. It's in the inner city and it's from the 1940s but it's also a single screen, which isn't the most modern and cost efficient way to run a cinema.

Specialised screenings and events have been very successful. Cinema breakfasts, documentary soup nights, psychologists watching and discussing films, talks from the creative industry, director Q&As – these sell out 75% of ticket sales. But we can't do this for every screening.

We started surveying people outside multiplexes and asking them about our cinema. We found out two things: they don't know our programming and two, they're kind of fearful going in to the cinema because they perceive the venue as somewhere they will see a three hour black and white film, and they will be forced to get up on stage and be engaged in conversation.

SESSION II – WORKSHOP 2 – EXTENDING DEMAND

Directed by Michael Gubbins – Partner, SampoMedia, UK

Speakers:

Monica Naldi – Exhibitor, Cinema Beltrade, Italy
Marc Prades Gimeno – Co-Founder of Screenly, Spain
Jiří Šebesta – Coordinator, Cinema Royal, Czech Republic
Alice Quigley – Marketing Coordinator, Watershed, UK
Benoit Thimister – Head of Finances, Les Grignoux, Belgium
Sam Clements – Marketing Manager, Picturehouse Cinemas, UK
Jaki McDougall – Exhibitor, Glasgow Film Theatre, UK
Sigrid Limprecht – Exhibitor, Bonner Kinemathek, Germany
Ivo Andrlé – Distributor, Exhibitor, Kino Aero, Czech Republic

Monica Naldi – Exhibitor, Cinema Beltrade, Italy

It's a small movie theatre we started to manage a couple of years ago. It was about to close, had been underused and we thought it would be a great shame to lose such a theatre in Milan. So we decided to run it. We had to reinvent the movie theatre. It's not in downtown Milan, has about 200 seats and we had to convert to digital, without a business plan.

We wanted to share a passion for cinema with others. We refurbished the bar. We do something unusual in Italy – we screen five different films every day. We wanted to reinvent the strategy to meet audience needs – young and old.

We have a mailing list, we use Facebook, we have a magic sentence – people coming to the theatre have to remember it by heart and if they can they don't pay for the movie ticket. We asked audiences to request films they missed and if there'd be more than 20 people requesting it, we'd show it again. Each time, we'd see we had that twenty, and another fifty people coming.

Marc Prades Gimeno – Co-Founder of Screenly, Spain

We have a list of cinemas in our network and this platform allows any user to show their film, provided, of course, there is a minimum of people wanting to see the film. We have three main messages, and we have three potential users. It is close to crowdfunding as a concept and we think it is the simplest way to explain to the users what we are about. They can understand that when they buy a ticket in the cinema that they allow this event to be organised.

If the filmmaker, producer or director doesn't have a distributor then we can tell them that Screenly is a portal allowing the filmmaker to program in cinemas. The third user is any spectator who wants to use the platform to organise an event. It can be anyone, an individual, a festival, the community, etc.

We presented ourselves in 2013, introduced the project and activated it in May 2015. We were in Barcelona for a test period. We had the support of the local authorities and wanted to make sure the platform worked properly.

We have invited all Spanish distributors and we have new generation distributors. We also have a documentary of the month, and the largest catalogue of classic films. We also distribute for directors who don't have distributors.

Jiří Šebesta – Coordinator, Cinema Royal, Czech Republic

We had three cinemas and a lot of festivals and after seven years we were getting tired of that. So we were hoping to develop some projects that would bring the cinema somewhere else, outside of the cinema. We had some house parties with projections and saw the first news of 'Secret Cinema' in England that was successful, so we organised Cinema Royal, communicating with our audience where to meet and the ticket price is three times more expensive than the cinema. The ticket was always strange, on something like chewing gum or a banana.

We had a screening of *Aliens* in an abandoned mall, three screening in an abandoned hotel in the centre of Prague, *Metropolis* in a power station, it was a really successful show! *2001: A Space Odyssey* in a church, *Rocky* in a gym with a boxing match. We did about 22 events in 5 years, not only in Prague, but also in other cities in the Czech Republic. We found out that a lot of things happen in the capital but not so much in the other parts of the country.

Our audience attracted mainly young people from 18-35. We were surprised by all the people coming to our show, but even those over 40 and 50 followed the dress code. Admissions, we started with 200 for a show, but now we don't do a show for under 400 or 500 admissions. The cost now never goes under 15,000 Euros, which is quite a lot in Czech territory. We were not able to do a profitable event in the first two years because we always developed the production and set design in such a big way.

Where does the income come from? We found out our three, sometimes four or five times more expensive movie ticket never pays for the event. So we always have to find commercial partners to pay the rest. But the events were so successful that finding partners wasn't difficult. The income of the bar is also a very important part of the income.

What we achieved, most important for us, was fun from our work.

After the first three years, our commercial partners ask us to organise commercial events for them. We get jobs and started operating as a marketing company. We attracted a completely new audience who weren't before going to our cinema.

Alice Quigley – Marketing Coordinator, Watershed, UK

Conversations About Cinema is about using a free range of digital platforms, like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, and it's about adding value to the cinema's core offer of showing films theatrically.

It came from the really simple idea that people would go to watch a film and want to talk about it and how it made them feel. At Watershed, we have a noticeboard where people can write their opinions, and pin them to the noticeboard. So we experimented with amplifying this idea to use it as a method of reaching bigger audiences for films that could be perceived as challenging. In a digital sense, we wanted to see if we could harness the power of these conversations and replicate the analogue shared experience in the digital sphere.

In the UK we have a network called the Film Audience Network, run by the British Film Institute and managed through the different hubs in the UK. Over the course of six months we showed 83 films, had over 50 value added events (intro, Q&A, music, etc.) We worked with a shared menu of films (*Selma*, *Timbuktu*, *Au Revoir Les Enfants*) and then each area looked at films that affected their specific area.

We created sharable assets for each film; commissioned articles, audio recordings, video recordings, audience vox pops - where we asked them how they feel, we worked with film talent. We have a website: conversationsaboutcinema.co.uk and a Twitter account and YouTube channel, but we have always been really conscious that it's not a destination itself and is about building the audiences for the cinemas.

Benoit Thimister – Head of Finances, Les Grignoux, Belgium

We have 3 cinemas in Les Grignoux; 8 screens, costing 700 million euros – 63% comes from our revenue. For a new cinema project, we needed an investment of 1.1 million euros. Our funds come from own contribution of 450,000 Euros, and a loan of 650,000. Six banks gave us the green light without conditions or mortgages. But we had another idea – to call on the citizen savings.

Suggesting bonds to the value of 100 euros with a 1% interest rate over 10 years. The subscriber who gives 100 Euros will be reimbursed in 10 years, and he/she will have received 10 euros interest. The subscriber can of course subscribe to several bonds, not just one. To be successful, we required a minimum of 500 thousand and a maximum of 650 thousand Euros. It had to start in June this year and end in October. On the 30th October, we had more than 1000 citizens and certain companies who subscribed the amount that we needed and in four months we did get the money we needed to fund this project. We've had to behave like a bank, organising and managing the bonds. For us, despite the work, it was much cheaper because of the added value – not in the costs, but in that we have more than 1000 citizens to whom the cinema belongs. A part of it belongs to them. We've had extremely good media coverage.

Sam Clements – Marketing Manager, Picturehouse Cinemas, UK

We are a group of 23 cinemas in the UK. We program other cinemas as well and release films. We were collecting email addresses on our website for a while. We sent out weekly listings and people came but we didn't get any insight into what people were reading beyond the open figures. Along came alternative content and we realised we were getting different audiences. We started asking people at the cinema if they'd like to be on a mailing list for events. We added this option to our website and now we have two newsletters: one for films and one for events. A few years later, earlier this year, we completely changed how we talked to our customers over email.

Segmenting the audience – if we have the information then we owe it to them to use it – we started creating different lists. There are lots of sub brands at Picturehouse – Vintage Sundays for rep cinema, Discover Tuesdays for concentrated art house films, and children's screenings and events. We provide screening notes for customers, sourced and written by our knowledgeable staff.

The reason we're doing this is because the competition is: Netflix, Amazon – they have inbuilt algorithms and we are used to it as customers. We're doing this, but in a more human way. We curate our programming so we need to curate our marketing too.

Jaki McDougall – Exhibitor, Glasgow Film Theatre, UK

Expanding our reach beyond the demand of our three-screen cinema has always been an aim and with digital technology we saw the opportunity. We decided to create our own player, for two reasons: social and commercial. In Scotland there's 32 areas or regions and 8 have no cinema provision. GFT is a beacon for its area. Access, equality and inclusion are a great priority for GFT. We have captioned screenings and are trialling a new visible option with introduction to films with British sign language, screenings for people on the autistic spectrum, young and old, and screenings for older audiences. But what about older audiences who can't get out of the house and parents with young children?

Our project was to find funding for six players around the UK for at least 18 months and we were looking to cinemas that had the same strength of brand as the GFT and the idea was that we'd show films on our screens and online player on date and films that, outside of festivals and touring, don't get shown. We'd program in much the same way as we do our cinemas, and show the extras like post screening discussion and program notes would all be available online and much of it as a free service, so they're available to people who might come to watch it in the cinema and for people on demand.

We didn't get the funding for it. We received about 130,000 Euros from the National Science and Technology and the Arts Digital R&D fund. We had only enough money for two players for six months. Filmhouse in Edinburgh came to work with us. Day and date release, offering films from UK distributors (they take about 75%). Things were looking promising, however, there were problems. A friend's distribution company had decided to give us a film on date but other cinemas across the UK said that if it was given to the GFT on date that they would pull their screenings. It's still an experimental phase and we're still learning. At the end of the initial trial period we had not a lot of sales, but we didn't have the films.

Sigrid Limprecht – Exhibitor, Bonner Kinemathek, Germany

There might be a virtual cinema, which would only work in a network. Building up a new platform is expensive and it needs to go via the cinema. Thanks to the technology we have many opportunities to expand and to change. You need to be sure there is a connection with the cinema, so that both viewing at home and going to the cinema work. Some cinemas are doing this in Germany and the results show that people are still going to the cinema as well, but your branding as a cinema must be visible, because there are a lot of options, including iTunes, and cheaper platforms, plus piracy.

I decided not to mine any data because people want to be assured that nothing is happening with their data and you don't know with the companies – Distrify or whoever – what will happen. I think you have to be very careful.

Ivo Andrlé – Distributor, Exhibitor, Kino Aero, Czech Republic

When VOD appeared, the question was: is it our enemy now or is it our friend?

We, as cinema operators, understand that we are asking a lot in a time when comfort and options at home - the illegal and legal offer - is unbelievable.

The platform has to have the same curatorship. As soon as the cinemas understood the selection of films on this platform would be what they would screen anyway then they did want to put the links on their website and you can find the link through the cinema website. Cinemas get some share of the revenue when someone clicks on their site but the amounts are very low. So it's not commercially successful but it can be seen as furthering the brand and strengthens the potential for the relationship between the cinema and the viewer. Cinemas are already guiding people in offline work and they should be doing it in the online world too.

SESSION III – WHERE DOES CINEMA FIT INTO A CHANGED ECO-SYSTEM?

Directed by Catharine Des Forges – Director, Independent Cinema Office, UK and Michael Gubbins – Partner, SampoMedia, UK

Speakers:

Nina Peče – Exhibitor, Kinodvor, Slovenia

Krijn Meerberg – Exhibitor, LantarenVenster, The Netherlands

Georgi Ivanov – Programming Director, Lucky Art Cinema, Bulgaria

Russell Collins – Exhibitor, Michigan Theatres, Founder and Head of Arthouse Convergence, USA

Jean-Marc Lalo – Architect, Atelier Architecture Lalo, France

Nina Peče – Exhibitor, Kinodvor, Slovenia

We don't just ask cinemas to promote, market or shine a light on the films, what we are asking today, of cinemas, in the new eco-system, is for them to cultivate the audience, for films that are not primarily designed to entertain.

If the business model, which we are proposing, is to promote and market, and do events on one side and educate on the other side, then everyone, not just cinemas, has to chip in. There has to be a consensus in society that we need to cultivate audiences to receive films that are more than entertainment.

In Ljubljana, the decision was made that a cinema was needed for the city. It started from the point of view from an outspoken cultural character, to develop film culture among local audiences. From 2008 there has been a serious revitalisation. Twenty-seven cinemas in the country, joined with Europa Cinemas as individuals or as a part of a mini network. Municipality covers 50% and the cinema the other 50%; 1% is from the ministry for culture and 1.3% is from Europa Cinemas, 4% is from the film centre and the rest is admissions. The municipality – the city – gained from this model. There was a goal to get 50,000 viewers per year; we have 120,000 admissions per year of in a city of 290,000.

Krijn Meerberg – Exhibitor, LantarenVenster, The Netherlands

We moved and went from 50,000 to 250,000 visitors. It's not only a cinema but an arts house that also has jazz and blues music concerts. Try to convince your local government that subsidy is not a donation but an investment in culture.

Georgi Ivanov – Programming Director, Lucky Art Cinema, Bulgaria

Our main idea is to create a club mentality. Some of the cities haven't had cinemas for the past 20 years – which creates an opportunity but it also creates a challenge. Our research shows that our audience is 25+ (which is mostly the audience for European films) but we are also doing club cards that give you special perks, discounts and occasional free tickets. But also, what's more important, is that you go into the cinema feeling that it's your place, feeling that you're special.

Russell Collins – Exhibitor, Michigan Theatres, Founder and Head of Arthouse Convergence, USA

We have the opportunity to influence folks to come out to movies in our communities. Arthouse Convergence started in 2008 as a group of troubled souls gathering to talk about problems facing independent cinemas. In general, I believe Europe and European cinemas are ahead. We're still a little too caught up on the commercial model in the US and not so much on the cultural model that is important for the proliferation of art house cinema.

I don't think VOD is our competition as much as the other stuff is. If we can think about how to make spaces spectacular, be relentlessly creative in the spaces to do what we do – that's how we solve this issue. If there's a negative effect of VOD it's only incremental.

Jean-Marc Lalo – Architect, Atelier Architecture Lalo, France

I'm an architect and I build cinemas, mostly concentrated in France, but also in West Africa where cinema is starting up again. There are public places that continue to exist: the street, the square and the cinema – a sort of indoor public square. Meeting between people is still essential in these places and the formation of a community. The cinema and movie theatres belong to this movement.

Everyone is short of time and different leisure activities have taken up more of our free time, meaning the cinema has lost out to some extent. What we are seeing now is the phenomenon of densification, which leads to a mix of buildings and activities. We want places to do more than one thing – so cinemas can do this too: a multiplicity of audio visual activities, linked to the cinema to accentuate that the cinema has a central position in the city.

When we work on these projects – in Africa or Europe – we are keen to work on an idea that in the mornings the cinema can be a key site for conferences.

In countries that have lost their cinema buildings, when you ask what is important for your country – where cinemas and books have disappeared? We see religion as the answer when we ask about culture. We can use these spaces as a mirror held up to society. Through a film we can analyse the present, share our dreams and examine our heroes and gods.

EUROPA CINEMAS CASE STUDIES: OPEN SLOT

Hosted by Madeleine Probst – Programme Producer, Watershed, UK

The 'Skype Me If You Can' project was born at a Europa Cinemas session. We couldn't get Mark Cousins, one of our top guests, to come to Bologna. Sylvain was in the room and he was inspired to get talent via Skype.

We are film people, we can use images, we can use moving image as part of our marketing strategy. With DCP it's really easy to make your own trailers and promos.

Here, in Prague, and you've already heard a presentation from Ivo, but this is one of the distribution projects that has inspired me in recent years. They are relentless, they do so many different initiatives, and I could pick about 10 of their projects, but Jukebox has transcended their sites – it's also in other cinemas and it solves the problem of people asking, 'why aren't you showing this film?' More than ten cinemas have bought into it.

Hrvoje Laurenta – Kino Europa, Croatia

I am General Manager of Kino Europa at the Zagreb Film Festival and President of newly founded Croatian Independent Cinemas Network. We were founded one year ago; 27 cinemas from 27 Croatian cities came together to be stronger. Today there are 32 cinemas from 27 Croatian cities, across 37 screens.

We had to convince the government to assist with digitising each of these cinemas; otherwise many would have to close their doors. We succeeded. The timing was good, it was six months before the elections so the Minister of Culture realised at that time that for a little bit of money they could do very good work. More than 30 cinemas so far are digitised. A new minister has been elected now and we hope he continues the work. 70% of the money came from the Ministry of Culture and 30% of the money had to be assured by the cinema or local authorities.

In our next period we have two lobbying projects to do; first is lobbying for younger audiences with the Ministry of Education. We are working with the curriculum and are hoping this takes off in 2016. The second is that now we are digitised, we need other things in some of our buildings. Not everything is in good shape, and the technical possibilities mean we need to convince the Minister for Culture to make a small fund for the cinemas that can't pay a lot of money themselves to renew something in their building. Our next main activity is educational activity. We have done two educational projects, we had some lectures from Croatia and abroad, like this conference, and afterwards the cinemas made a deal to create a Croatian independent network. What I would like to be done in 2016 is the program 'Kino Doctor' or 'Cinema Doctor'. We all know about artist in residence programs, this is a type of manager in residence program, where the experienced cinema managers come to another cinema for a couple of days, where they need experience, and works with them. Our third big activity is programming on a national level. Now we have four Croatian movies coming to cinemas this winter and we are organising Q&As and premieres with actors and directors. When they come to each city, people will connect much more than before – they will have a chance to talk with the filmmakers before and after the screening.

The action is called, 'Let's Go To Cinema' or 'Let's Go To Kino'. All of this couldn't be done without a stronger partner, the Croatian Audio Visual Centre.

Luz Delgado – Cine Van Dyck, Salamanca, Spain

We believe children can be imaginative and creative. What's important is to see that children can create something on the basis of their own ideas without the intervention of a teacher or director. We have an artist who works with us, and who set up this space in 1994 to allow children to express themselves. But before we saw this exhibition set up in the Salamanca Contemporary Art Museum, we were enthusiastic about it. We asked them to choose cinema as one of the subjects for their idea.

We were able to show some 35mm prints. When we say film in Spanish, it means both the film and the print. This is already an invitation to dream. We didn't give the children any instruction; we just asked them what their favourite films and characters were. We made comic storyboards and this enabled the children to react. Through stop motion action workshops, we were able to build both an emotional connection and technical understanding of filmmaking.

Javier Pachón – Cineciutat, Palma, Spain

In five years, Spain has lost 35% of cinemas and 43% of its Box Office owing to the global economic crisis and living in a society of police and corrupt politicians, as well as a lack of public support, plus digitisation costs and illegal access to films. As an audience, we made a farewell dinner to the only cinema where we live. But in less than 2 months, almost 1000 people were putting 100 euros into a bank account, to save the cinema, but we didn't know who the owner was. We were making the audience the industry. There is still a lot of work to do.

David Deprez – Stichting Filmtheater Lumière, Maastricht, The Netherlands

We did some research and learnt that we have a large community of non-Dutch speaking Europeans. But English is a common language. So we wanted to show European films with English subtitles. But it costs somewhere between 1000-2000 Euros to create the DCP. Why? Because of concerns over piracy. So we started our own cine cafe and open air screening for 1000 people, showing films we could get with English subtitling. We also trialed screenings with both Dutch and English subtitles. But the problem is that it's too expensive. It takes three months to get an answer from a sales agent. This is not just a market issue, but also a cultural issue; it's about connecting different audiences. These people may be living somewhere else in Europe but they are not connected to European cinema. I would like to start a working group to get this problem solved by next year.

Susan Picken – Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast, UK

Access is a major issue in Northern Ireland where there are 194 screens but 93% of those are multiplexes. There are only two cinemas showing cultural content in Northern Ireland.

'The Black Moon Film Club' is for adults with learning disabilities to program and set up and execute their own film clubs. And it won the Emerging Community Cinema Club prize from Cinema For All. 'Project Monday' is working with the largest multiplex chain. We chose six cities where limited or no access to cultural content existed. QFT and these six selected sites show the same content at the same date and time. We picked films that worked elsewhere and were loved and perhaps we can sell our services and curatorial expertise to cinemas that aren't servicing their audiences.

Jindrich Pietras – LUX Film Prize and 28 Times Cinema Project

The LUX Film Prize and 28 Times Cinema Project is an initiative of the European Parliament. We offer subtitling and DCP creation for countries where the winning films have no distributor. For 28 Times Cinema Project, 28 kids between ages 18 and 25 attend the Venice Film Festival and make up the Young and European Jury for Venice Days.

Hrönn Sveinsdóttir – Bio Paradis, Reykjavík, Iceland

We are the only art house in Iceland and the only member of Europa Cinemas. We are non-profit and quite new. It's young, but built in the 1970s and hasn't been renovated. We barely make ends meet so we haven't renovated in the 5 years we've been there and the biggest problem is access. The reality is that it costs around 45,000 Euros just to make room one accessible, because we have to put in two lift points and a special bathroom and it's been really depressing, sad and bad to have this community angry at us.

We have applied for every possible grant – there are only three. Legally we are not obliged to do anything but it's terrible for us. So, while I was on maternity leave the board decided we should crowd fund for this. The goal was 30,000 Euros, and if we could collect that we would put 15,000 of our own money in.

We started in April. By the middle of June we knew it wasn't working, we had about 10% and 10 days to go. There was nothing elegant about it but one thing in the panic was tagging people we knew in photos of people at our cinema, and we asked them to tag everyone they knew. We had less than 48 hours left but it started happening on Facebook, and people started saying that they loved the cinema and wanted to support it. So we started calling big companies and it was a herd mentality, once they realised it was happening, we went viral, and they wanted to jump on the bandwagon and keep giving us money even though it was about to stop. We actually went over. And this was the best PR campaign we ever had.

Boglarka Nagy – Institut Français de Bucarest, Bucharest, Romania

My job is to look after two screens, one that is part of the Europa Cinemas network. We subtitle in French, Romanian and German. We have also had to face up to some difficulties in the past two years. We couldn't recruit projectionists who were properly trained, as there were virtually none. We need to train people. It's not just a problem for our own cinema; it's a national problem. It's not a problem we think of because of digitisation, we think of projection as something easy that

anyone can do. But this isn't always true. Just because everything is pre-calibrated by specialists and experts you believe there isn't very much to do. We talked to people from Europa Cinemas and found a brilliant acoustic engineer who agreed to come to Romania, so we could organise training sessions regarding sound in our cinemas. This program enabled 15 projectionists coming from 4 cities, not just Bucharest, to receive this training and to take part in the training sessions to understand how sound systems work in the cinema, how to identify a problem and how to overcome the problem.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOPS & SESSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Both directed by Michael Gubbins – Partner, SampoMedia, UK

We are taking on these issues as Europe as a whole. These are not just problems of cinema; they are political problems, social problems, and cultural problems.

When we're talking about single markets we have to remember that we have a cultural mission with Europe as well and we cannot fail on that cultural mission, because all the rest of it stems from there.

Our cultural mission, the social cohesion all has a central role in Europe. It has an essential social function that we should be proud of selling and make sure that nobody is telling us that we are a platform. That's 1. Number 2, and I'm stealing this from our American friends, the 'aesthetic mandate', it's the art form – It actually matters, and the place in which that art form is actually seen, matters.

Palaces and sofas, and somehow we all think the innovation is on that sofa, and of course some of it is, but the palace element is what this art form needs to build on. If we have confidence in that art form itself then we can have faith in on demand platforms and we need to make sure that the core aesthetic mandate is kept. If we see our role as building out from that aesthetic mandate – we heard about something very important, the experience economy – we can develop our own audiences from within – that's number 3.

We are looking at participatory relationships with people in our cinemas and we've got to broaden that out. It is a challenge; it's a challenge to get young people into our cinemas. What's changed is how we use social media and how we interact, how we combine what we do with other forms of entertainment, not just cinema. There are other ways of getting into people's lives, and we all have a responsibility, not just cinemas – producers and the broader industry. The elongated value chain of cinema, which has production over here, with no relation and little incentive to have a relationship with an audience over here, is at the core of our problems right now. This changed digital environment we're talking about needs to close that up.

It's our responsibility to bring them in – the industry as a whole. We've seen some of the practical ways to extend – putting up big screens in public places and people going into communities and schools and telling them what we do. Brand, I don't think we should worry about the idea of brand; we should look and read heavily about the idea of brand in the digital world outside of us, because it's the same as us and what we're really talking about is identity. And I think sometimes we underestimate just how essential and how strong your identity is. How strong a community built around a cinema can actually sustain that.

Listening to Ivo and Jaki – they were very positive – and there was more scepticism from Sigrid about how the platforms might work with our branding. But it's going to happen anyway, whether or not we engage with it. I think that there is an argument for having different VOD brands, maybe we're them and maybe we're not. There is no demand for it to be on demand. No one knows it exists or wants it to exist. Those VOD platforms need you – what are they giving back? What is that relationship? Being part of that broader conversation is vital.

You're the demand creators, you're working in the one limit you've got, there'll never be fewer things for people to do than there is today. But you have to have the confidence that you can win

consumer time. You've got to have confidence in product and in those ideas. There is something we need to do as a network, and as individuals, to change the discourse a bit. I'm a journalist and looking at this conference and thinking in terms of headline, there isn't an obvious headline. To me, this conference has helped me re-think, this is a set of actions out of which a set of interesting headlines might come.

The other absolutely clear thing to me that's come through – everyone was incredibly generous with their findings and research – and it's extended to the Twittersphere, and the conversations have been brilliant. That needs to continue – that sharing of experience, and the sharing of ideas, the more you can formalise that, the better it is.

Data sharing – data is one of our weaknesses. We are up against data giants, like Amazon and Netflix, not the multiplexes. It's globalised big data. They know what to sell me, because they do it through millions of transactions. You don't have that luxury, but we can't rely on a little bit of data or a little bit of knowledge because you can end up adapting to something too small. Talk to your audiences and aggregate and share. But it is a personal relationship.

Crowd funding isn't just about money, what it can do for you is to build a community. You are the community building part of the business and it's about building communities of interest.

CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

Nico Simon – President of Europa Cinemas

In my opening speech I asked a certain number of questions. I think the different discussions that took place here were illustrations and trying to give answers to those questions. There are no real answers to all the questions but I think we're getting somewhere, because finally we're concentrating on the real questions. For ten years we devoted a lot of time talking about digital cinema and VPF. Over the past ten years, a very painful process, was replacing one machinery with another machinery. That was it. So we have a new machinery that suits better our needs, our audiences' needs and I think this conference put the right discussions en route. There is not one answer, there are several answers and I was very happy to see many examples of how people in different countries and different cities are trying to find ways to keep audiences and to address young people, and to get them interested in European films. I would like to hear more of those experiences, and the conference was maybe a little bit short. But I think everyone has something to take home and think about and we'll meet again in two years in a city not known yet, in a galaxy not too far, far away. May the force be with us.

Claude-Eric Poiroux – General Director of Europa Cinemas

First of all I'd like to thank everyone who helped organise these debates. Madeleine Probst, Catharine Des Forges and Michael Gubbins. This conference was a success, you've all witnessed it, and you've all contributed to it. Beyond the 450 badges that have been handed over, we have welcomed many guests who have joined us to share their thoughts on specific topics or during informal meetings. Overall we had more than 500 participants, making this Conference one of the biggest events that we've held, and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the Europa Cinemas team and Fatima Djoumer and Claudia Droc for the brilliant organization of this three-day Conference.

We would like to thank the European Commission, officials of Creative Europe and of the Agency who mobilize significant resources to encourage and support our efforts. The results we are strengthening from year to year in terms of audience and market shares are important assets for all of the Creative Europe policy.

Prior to the Conference, we published our 26th Network Review. 26 of our members can present what they do on the field, how they innovate in terms of event organization, investment in new locations or in the renovation of their cinemas. During the Conference, nearly 50 of you have presented their work, either during plenary sessions, or during workshops, and many of you have spoken either in the Conference room or using tweets or blogs. We can say that these three days of discussions have been intense and productive for all of us and have given a dynamic view on the Network's activities.

At the beginning of the Conference, we shared the rather pessimistic remarks from Cristian Mungiu, who reported the closure of several cinemas in Bucharest because of their non-compliance with the new seismic regulations. This is a hard blow to several independent cinemas and we are very attentive to temporary solutions to be quickly implemented.

We also heard our American friends, who have attended our Conferences for many years. Officials of Art House Convergence do not hide that they are inspired by our network model to develop their own distribution activities in the many independent cinemas they federate across the United States. Many of us are participating in their annual meeting in Sundance. Finally, we have welcomed the officials from the French Institute, with which we begin a wide partnership covering the 40 digitized cinemas that they have worldwide.

So thank you all for your attendance. Thank you to the Czech network exhibitors who received us. And see you soon for the Label in Berlin, the Innovation Lab in Sofia and the meeting of exhibitors in Cannes.

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