



EUROPA CINEMAS

NETWORK REVIEW N°26

19TH NETWORK CONFERENCE

CINEMAS **ON THE MOVE**

EUROPA CINEMAS **AWARDS 2015**



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by Claude-Eric Poiroux & Nico Simon

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Europa Cinemas Network Review

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Founded in 1992, Europa Cinemas is the first international film theatre network for the circulation of European films.
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Cinema Le Louxor (Paris), Philippe Pumain Architect, with Fabre/Speller and Ch. Laporte © Luc Boegly

19TH NETWORK CONFERENCE

Driving demand for European Film
PRAGUE, 2015

After having finished digitising their projection rooms, network exhibitors who met in Athens two years ago have now embarked on a further programme of renewal and innovation with respect to programming and promoting films. They have had to adapt to fast-changing means of communication in the ever more connected world of today, retain their long-standing, inquisitive, film-loving customers, and take advantage of a young audience ready to 'consume' the raft of images offered at any time and on any media platform.

Using digital means to attract new audiences has become second nature for teams who have also had to adapt to new demands from an increasingly pursued and fickle public. Two years on, the Conference in Prague, to be attended by hundreds of film professionals, will enable our most active members to meet each other and share their experiences. The success of the Innovation Labs organised by Europa Cinemas in Bologna, Sofia and Seville demonstrates the dynamism of hundreds of exhibitors, keen to invest their efforts and resources to offer many different activities in their cinemas and to promote European films. This Network Review will contain further examples of grassroots initiatives, illustrating their proliferation.

Let's not forget of course that these cinemas offer the only shared forum where films of all types are offered to audiences under the conditions envisaged by those who actually produce and direct the films. It is a unique chance for Europeans in 600 towns to access theatres that screen six out of ten European productions. And these cinemas are posting steady results in the context of increasingly diversified competition. The film theatre is undoubtedly the future of cinema and the frenzied investment in many parts of the globe is overwhelming evidence of this.

Our network film theatres have another advantage: they are places of discovery. Because they were the first to believe in Pawlikowski, Sorrentino, Petzold, Audiard and Lanthimos, and they are doing the same now with Ruben Östlund, Alice Rohrwacher, Céline Sciamma and Miguel Gomes. Following the modest results of *Dogtooth* and *Alps*, *The Lobster* has found its audience through our perseverance and the repeated boldness of its author. Therefore, we enhance the value measurably, and even economically, of creative works in Europe and of those who constantly produce them. The dissemination of works has always been the primary objective of Europa Cinemas and is the

common purpose that unites network exhibitors with the many sales agents joining them in Prague this year. Our network film theatres are investing and innovating. Anybody who has visited recently opened venues such as Picturehouse Central in London, Kino Nowe Horyzonty in Wrocław, Louxor in Paris, Cinema Ideal in Lisbon, G8 in Sofia or soon-to-open cinemas such as Caméo in Namur, can see first-hand the way exhibitors use their audacity and foresight to seek new audiences and attract them to stunning locations which offer all the modern trappings needed to make European films a success. Their practices and choice of films for their programme schedule are of course commensurate with the prestigious buildings of these special venues. Furthermore, most network cinemas offer a broad range of content (début films, documentaries, broadcasts of operas, etc.), but also events and interactive communication (social networks, blogs, Skype discussions, pop-up screenings, etc.). Not to mention original experiments such as 'mobile cinemas', marathon screenings, mini-networks, etc... These two days at the Prague Conference will focus on sharing experiences and discussing objectives to be achieved.

It is this wealth of initiatives that gives the film theatre its unrivalled appeal, confirming its supremacy over all other communication tools and ensuring its safe place in the distribution chain. We live in an increasingly virtual world. Paradoxically, however, there is a growing desire to screen creative, cultural and entertainment works in physical spaces that bring together real people to share their views - whether in agreement or in disagreement - during collective events. Film was born in public theatres and now, 120 years later, people continue to love and to keep alive the immense diversity of films in these increasingly sophisticated and interconnected places.

— Claude-Eric Poiroux (General Director) & Nico Simon (President of Europa Cinemas)



Nico Simon © M. Gyselinc - V. Patsialos



Claude-Eric Poiroux © Sandrine Jousseume



BEST PROGRAMMING

FILMHUIS DEN HAAG (THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS)

Of all the film theatres in the Netherlands, few offer a programme as broad and diverse as Filmhuis Den Haag. Each new initiative is driven by a strong love of cinema. This year, Filmhuis Den Haag has won the Europa Cinemas Award for best programming 2015.

Filmhuis Den Haag rediscovered the important and impressive oeuvre by Valerio Zurlini and Joseph Strick. The Filmhuis not only brought their films to The Hague but, as so often in the past few decades, also arranged for a selection of films to tour the many other film houses throughout the country. It has made Filmhuis Den Haag a film icon in itself for the Dutch film world. The Filmhuis is world cinema, screening films from over 60 countries including many European countries, and with 140 premieres a year.



Many actors, directors, composers, producers and set designers have featured in the programmes and have visited the Filmhuis, at the heart of the city on the North Sea coast. Audrey Hepburn, Isabelle Huppert, Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Ken Loach are just some of the prominent film makers who enjoy or enjoyed coming to the Filmhuis to share their work with the audience. Writers, musicians and other artists, too, are frequent visitors. Anton Corbijn is a regular guest, and the well-known Dutch writer Arnon Grunberg presents a periodic programme on film and politics, for which he selects a particular film and then engages the audience and politicians in a debate.

The Filmhuis is, after all, located in the political capital of the country and the City of Peace and Justice. It therefore incorporates these themes in its innovative and topically relevant programming, and it frequently undertakes activities in collaboration with the many embassies in town as well as the European Commission. Renowned museums such as the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag and the Mauritshuis are regular partners, as is the pop music venue 't Paard van Troje, which brings in a young and trendy target group as well. With the Montesquieu Institute, devoted to politics and democracy, the Filmhuis hosts talk shows in the café to help the public connect more deeply with films and to encourage their contribution to the programming. Festivals such as Movies that Matter (originally created by Amnesty International) and Writers Unlimited draw yet another type of audience, while country-oriented festivals like Eastern Neighbours and the Indian Film Festival bring together very diverse target groups. All of these programmes together form a huge open window on the world.

Film education and talent development play a significant role in the Filmhuis. Over 12,000 school pupils learn to watch and make films here, and the Filmhuis offers a venue where local film talents (young film makers and artists) can gather and show their work to each other and to another audience, and can curate film programmes

with the Filmhuis staff. This latter opportunity is offered to many communities in The Hague, for instance the hip-hop community, but special programmes are also developed jointly with students, skaters, the politically engaged and senior citizens. In all cases, their own wishes and ideas are pivotal.

The many special programmes, sometimes tailor-made for a third party, form a natural component of the entire programming at the Filmhuis. New releases, classic films, introductions, public lectures and debate evenings intrinsically connect to the various target groups, from toddlers to pensioners and from native Dutch to new arrivals, via any of the many routes to enter this country and become part of Dutch society and Filmhuis Den Haag.

Film is the most wonderful discipline, with a power unlike any other medium to comprehend the world and to communicate what moves and motivates people. This power resides in the idiom of film itself, but also in its association with music, art and literature. The tales that play out on the silver screen are tales that uncover our world to us. A world gone by, a world yet to come, a beautiful world, or a horrendous one. Film helps viewers to understand different worlds. Indeed, is film not the vehicle of empathy par excellence?

In the coming years, the Filmhuis Den Haag team will take a further step toward designing and positioning the film theatre as the place to go for a total experience. Whatever you like to do: to 'simply' catch a movie, to contemplate art, to eat and drink, to meet other people, to exchange experiences, to learn about film history or film technology, or to develop your own film-making skills – it's all possible at Filmhuis Den Haag. At every hour of the day, the venue offers film and film-related programming that threads together creativity, inspiration, knowledge and entertainment. This will make the task and therefore the programming of the Filmhuis more relevant than ever. And hence, more than ready for the future.

— Géke Roelink, Director.



Géke Roelink

BEST YOUNG AUDIENCE ACTIVITIES



Inflatable open air screen and outdoor activities

CINE PARADISOS (KORYDALLOS, GREECE)

It has been 30 years since Cine Paradisos opened its doors with Giuseppe Tornatore – the auteur of the homonymous Oscar-winning film – and Nicola Piovanni – the film’s score composer – serving in situ as its spiritual godfathers providing the opportunity to a continuous series of generations of viewers to fall in love with the art of cinema and more substantially to acquire the feeling of being part of the community beyond films.

The original building of Cine Paradisos was constructed by the municipal authorities with the voluntary participation of the members of the city’s Cinematic Club. Since 2007 Cine Paradisos has been fully renovated into a modern three-store building with a winter room theatre of 300 people and a revamped open air theatre located on the loft of the building with capacity of 250 people. Cine Paradisos hosts multiple venues for public activities, a special showroom for art exhibitions and an area for workshops. Moreover, there is an extra theatre for additional screenings located near the cinema’s main building.

The city of Korydallos is an unprivileged suburb of Piraeus famous for its major prison facilities located nearby the cinema. Given the position of the cinema in the vicinity of a major multiplex and far away from the centre of Athens – the cultural meeting point – Cine Paradisos has decided to propose a programming oriented to the young audience and socially sensitive groups, in order to establish itself as an artistic alternative point for Piraeus.

Thanks also to the support of the municipality, private initiatives and the voluntary work of the Cinematic Club, Cine Paradisos is one of the few suburb theatres which survived during the crisis of the last six years. Also many traditional centres for young audiences in Athens had to shut their activities, therefore we decided to move on rapidly and reinforce our programme by expanding our young audience festivals to the surrounding territories of Piraeus in order to ensure our survival, collaborating with schools from all over Athens. Our strength is indeed the ability to combine a brave social policy on tickets with the community self-respect, so that now we can see thousands of unprivileged families enjoying the craft of cinema without feeling an object of charity.

We have created a group of specialised partners dedicated for the young audience activities. By now “School goes at Cinema” festival series – the cornerstone of our fest initiatives – has been acknowledged as one of the most successful young audience festivals in the country and has been nationwide acclaimed for its social sensitivity with symbolic ticket fares and free admissions. Among the most original Young Audience projects we have implemented, I would definitely mention the cinematic lessons inside the prison schools for young convicts. Although in Europe this can be a common practice, in Korydallos the prisons are very notorious so we had to work on this project for long time in collaboration with the municipality authorities to ensure our presence inside.

Moreover Cine Paradisos has been the first theatre to introduce the Culture Solidarity Action. It implies an alternative ticketing strategy where customers could pay their cinema tickets through food and clothing instead of money. The goods collected are then given to the needy citizens affected by the economic crisis.

As Korydallos city is facing rapid social changes, we have confronted myriads problems such as sheer economic shortage and social disappointment due to the general upraise of the intolerance. We pay great attention on fighting racism and unhealthy nationalistic values that keep infiltrating in our young audience.

On this regard, I remember that after the screening of the Barefoot Battalion (an excellent neorealist film by Gregg Tallas depicting life of children in German occupied Greece in the ‘40s) during the Morning Monday school initiative, we had hard time in the conversation with primary level students.

A lot of children had their own misrepresentations coming from the beliefs of their families, who might have in a way demonized German people, and they started to show extremely hostile behaviors. The scenario of the film obviously didn’t help, therefore we had a very long conversation with the students along with the teachers in order to explain them the current situation about the crisis, the importance of not demonizing external factors and the sense of solidarity. Our goal was to open a window to make them think differently. We were exhausted but proud about discussing with the kids on such a crucial matter with clarity and honesty, away from the typical ethic preaching. We also understood that children watch a film in a more simple and clear way, we didn’t realize that this film could have these kind of social and political implication on them. It was a lesson for us too.

In a period of economic depression and social crisis, Cine Paradisos continues its multifaceted programme of cultural activities with the priority to underline that culture is an integral part of our society. We see our operation more as a dynamic interactive film centre rather than a static cinema venue as we seek to improve the human social experience.

— Zak Ioannidis, General Art Director



Zak Ioannidis



© Sarajevo Film Festival

BEST ENTREPRENEUR

MIRSAD PURIVATRA - OBALA MEETING POINT (SARAJEVO, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA)

Kino Meeting Point was opened just after the 4-year long siege of Sarajevo ended, in 1996. It happened through a private-public partnership in which a war-ravaged former public cultural centre was turned into a state-of-the-art cinema.

Our non-profit association, Obala Art Centar managed to fundraise internationally and gear local community support to start the cinema and we have been successful in managing it ever since. Today it stands for quality cinema experience, not only in Sarajevo, but also across former Yugoslavia and the region, known for its refined programming, superb technical capacities, a great bar and innovative event hosting capabilities. Very centrally located,

amid different university departments, most notably between the two art academies, those of drama and the fine arts, it attracts a young crowd of avid art lovers and established artists alike.

It is also the home of the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF). The two are inseparable when it comes to audience development. The visibility of the festival shines the light on quality films that might not be someone's first choice on TV, home video or the multiplex, while the year-round offer of quality films in the cinema continually creates and maintains the cinema going culture.

Our biggest challenge is like the Red Queen from Alice in Wonderland: "You have to run faster just to stay in the same place". Watching films on personal screens has become ubiquitous. We always need to work harder to highlight the communal part of the experience, such as making it a great night out, facilitating an exchange of opinions or offering the sheer old sense of belonging, to make cinema-going really worthwhile for an individual, family and society as a whole.

The country has only 31 modern screens and overall cinema attendance has been very low for many years now. However, it has been growing for the last three consecutive years. The growth has also benefited European films, however they still lack the visibility and it is most often down to the specialized exhibitors and festivals to create even basic visibility for most European titles. Besides a few globally-positioned English-language European films, the most a European non-national arthouse success film can hope for is not more than 2 to 3 thousand admissions, from 5 to 6 screens, over two or three weeks in Bosnia. It's worth mentioning, for the sake of comparison, that a European film programmed in the Open Air programme of the Sarajevo Film Festival can make the same number in one screening only.

Facebook is our key tool; it has lowered our advertising costs and has put us in direct contact with our audience for everything from basic information to discussion about films and programming ideas. We have over 10,000 followers, 90% of them from Sarajevo, with whom we communicate on daily basis. Youngsters, members of our film club and volunteers, are making an important contribution to our Social media teamwork by introducing their peers to the work of the cinema.

We are very proud of the IFFR (International Film Festival Rotterdam) Live and the CPH Dox (Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival) opening that we proposed last season: our audience was very enthusiastic to take part in these Europe-wide participatory events. The first question from the audience chosen for the panel discussing the screening of 1989 at the latter event in Copenhagen actually got "tweeted" from Kino Meeting Point.

Another project we are proud of is the SFF Operation Kino, which we started together with the Transylvania,

Sofia and Istanbul festivals. The rationale was that the region shares common problems in the exhibition sector, namely lack of modern infrastructure and widespread piracy that have ultimately degraded the cinema-going culture. Still, our events were all very well attended. So, we decided to test the Festival-as-distributor-and-exhibitor concept, use the visibility of our respective brands in our own territories, share some of the costs and fundraise jointly and "go back" to the traveling cinema model.

The project expanded from 10 cities to more than 40 cities currently in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We programme films that would definitely "not-reach-the-screen-near-them" along side more obvious choices hoping to broaden the scope of existing film lovers and recruit some new ones at the same time. We also operate a VoD platform with a couple of thousand titles that we promote at public screenings, so the access to quality content does not stop after we leave town.

Offering interesting and quality programming, based on a mix of best new art house films, national and other thematic weeks, classics and children films, with as many guest talks before and after the screening as we can provide. Good programming incorporated in the event-driven cinema concept is one of our strategies for the future. Our VoD platform is an additional step in how to approach and attract mainly young audience, addicted to the use of handheld devices. We will continue to invest in our cinephile club and work closely with elementary and secondary schools to foster new generations of cinemagoers. We are going with a clear message: "Watching films in cinemas is a unique and priceless experience". Cinema (film) will be a link to other "life" aspects: Film and Music, Film and Food, Film and Literature, Film and Politics. It will be more and more interesting in Kino Meeting Point! Welcome to Sarajevo to discover it and enjoy!

— Mirsad Purivatra, Festival & Cinema Director



Mirsad Purivatra

AUSTRIA

CINEMA PARADISO, ST. PÖLTEN AND BADEN



Paradiso Baden

Adolf Burger (in the center) who inspired the story of *The Counterfeiters*
© Cinema Paradiso

Paradiso St Pölten

Turning abandoned cinemas into dynamic cultural centres

Cinema Paradiso's cinematic dream began more than 20 years ago. We wanted to present Giuseppe Tornatore's film *Cinema Paradiso*, which had been removed from the billboards after only two weeks, to the largest audience possible. In four days, more than 10,000 people attended the first "Open Air Film Festival FILM AM DOM" in St. Pölten's cathedral square to enjoy the fruits of European cinema.

Scarcely conceivable for a little town in the countryside. And so began our tale of success. For years, with the support of local people, we strove towards running an independent arthouse cinema.

Our quest was concluded in 2002. Taking over a disused cinema in the town centre, we opened the brand-new "Cinema Paradiso": the first theatre with 120 seats and a classic design; the second one is more a 'tavern-theatre' with 65 cosy café seats and tables. We had managed to realise our unique cinematographic concept "More than just cinema": an arthouse cinema where, alongside the daily offering of films, more than 100 events, concerts, readings yearly have graced our stage. A place where the different art forms can meet and take inspiration from one another.

In 2006, Cinema Paradiso St. Pölten was given the Europa Cinemas Young Audience Activities Award for its endeavours to thrill young audiences with the cinematic art form. To be handed the prize by Jeanne Moreau and Costa Gavras remains one of the most unforgettable acmes in our history.

The success of Cinema Paradiso St. Pölten was unexpectedly large, and the admissions continued to rise steadily. In December 2011 we built an extension to the cinema and opened the multi-purpose third theatre – a fully-fledged film theatre with 90 seats and a soundproof events room with space for an additional 200 people standing. In 2014, Cinema Paradiso St. Pölten was able to welcome a further 75,000 visitors to more than 3,500 screenings of more than 250 films. In the summer we organise the large festival "Cinema Paradiso Open Air at the Town Hall", directly in front of the cinema on the baroque main square. 400 seats and additional stands offer a cinematic experience under the stars, including premieres of new films and revisiting the most popular films.

At the end of 2012, the Beethoven Cinema, the very last film theatre in the small town of Baden, shut its doors permanently after 88 years. The local people fought the closure of this cinematic and architectural masterpiece. We were asked whether we could get involved in Baden. Attempting to establish a cinema as a regional centre of film and culture is no small task, but it worked. A minor miracle that stands against the trend of cinemas closing in Europe's rural areas.

We managed to save the last cinema in the region between Vienna and Wiener Neustadt and, after a long period of renovation, re-opened it as "Cinema Paradiso Baden". The cinema, boasting two theatres, is found in a charming side street in the small pedestrian area in Baden. A large chandelier hangs from the high ceiling in the hall and a bust of Beethoven looks down over the auditorium. The cinema was completely renovated whilst simultaneously retaining the unique charm of the old film theatre.

In November 2015, Cinema Paradiso Baden will celebrate its second birthday, with a record that far exceeded any expectations. 2014 saw the sale of a further 65,000 tickets for more than 2,300 screenings

of more than 200 films. In addition, 50 live events took place. Just as in St. Pölten, we managed to successfully establish a cinema in Baden as centre of film and culture in the heart of a small town in rural surroundings. The resounding message that they tell us is "finally we can experience special films, European cinema and high-quality live shows in our own town without having to get to Vienna."

We show daily European cinema, films from around the globe and family comedies, whilst also bringing filmmakers and experts on stage. Several times a year there are special themes in our programming, such as the "Mountain Film Festival", "The long day of escape" in cooperation with UNHCR or the "Climate film days". Furthermore, there are regular live events such as concerts, readings and DJ sets. Young regional artists can meet stars from the national and international scene. We continue to work with NGOs, clubs and educational institutions, which gain a platform to present themselves and intervene in film discussions. As a result, Cinema Paradiso St. Pölten and Cinema Paradiso Baden have established themselves as cultural centres of the region and eminent economic forces in their respective town centres. They are the meeting point for film buffs, music lovers, night owls, children, families, elderly people, schoolchildren and students. Cinema Paradiso is a place that breaks down generational boundaries and those created by distinct cultural interests.

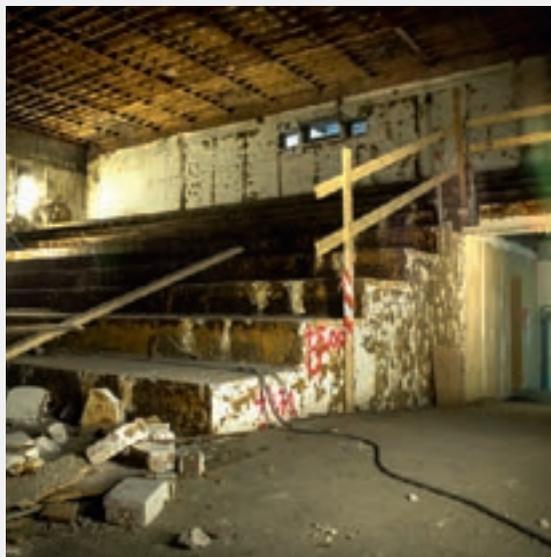
Through Cinema Paradiso St. Pölten and Cinema Paradiso Baden we managed to bring Giuseppe Tornatore's vision from his legendary film *Cinema Paradiso* to life: to put the magic of cinema back into the places and towns where it has died out. We live this dream every day, because the magic of moving images on the big screen, and the intensity of shared experience will never vanish.

— Herr Mag. Alexander Syllaba,
Director of the Cinema

Front to back: Karl Markovics (*The Counterfeiters*), Herr Mag. Alexander Syllaba, Karin Lischka and Thomas Schubert (*Breathing*)
© Cinema Paradiso

BELGIUM

LE CAMÉO, NAMUR



Renovation works (2014) at Cameo © Marianne Grimont



Caméo Namur (simulation) © Grignoux



Brasserie Sauvenière Grignoux - V+

Preview screening of *Wild Tales* © Dominique Houcmant / Goldo

Inventing a way to get funding from the audience

The Belgian non-profit association “Les Grignoux”, which already counts three arthouse theatres in Liege, is opening a new 5-screen cinema in Namur with a successful new way of getting funding from its audience.

The association runs 3 arthouse theatres (Parc-Churchill-Sauvenière, for a grand total of 8 screens), two cafés and 4 art galleries in Liege. Each year the 3 theatres welcome more than 450,000 visitors. Les Grignoux has been entrusted with running the Caméo cinema in Namur. It will be opening in early 2016 with 5 new screens and 780 seats. While the city council of Namur has invested in renovating this historic city centre Art Deco landmark, Les Grignoux is also investing in fitting out the whole Caméo complex (theatres and café). The investment budget is more than €1 million and will create 40 new jobs. Once again Les Grignoux has set up a public private partnership for the complete overhaul of this public building, in the same way as it did for Le Parc and Le Churchill. Le Sauvenière is a brand new building. So far, the association has invested more than €7 million in various public cinemas.

Since its foundation 40 years ago, Les Grignoux has always been able to count on the loyalty of its visitors and the collaboration of numerous associations in running all kinds of cultural activities.

Backed by the active involvement of the local population Les Grignoux, has organised and implemented actions to protect and expand viable and socially embedded cinemas in Liege: the opening of the cinema Le Parc in Droixhe, a suburb of Liege, in 1982; a successful protest against turning the cinema Le Churchill into a shopping centre in 1993; defending cinemas rooted in the heart of the city against a proposed project to build a multiplex in the outskirts of town (50,000 signatures were collected in protest and there was a subsequent demonstration of some 5,000 people and an elephant, which was a symbol of the protest); the opening of Le Sauvenière in 2008.

Today, Les Grignoux has come up with yet another way of garnering support: rather than going for a traditional bank loan, the association has invited the local population to participate financially in the developing their social economy-based enterprise by issuing 100-euro bonds.

The bond is a loan from a person to a legal entity (in this case the non-profit association “Les Grignoux”) for a duration of 10 years, i.e. the time required to write off the projection equipment for a minimum amount of 100 Euros (this small amount ensures broad, varied participation) and a fixed interest rate of 1% per year from the start, which is actually three times higher than the current Belgian bank rate on saving accounts.

This innovative funding mechanism allows audiences to become financially involved in the new project in Namur, and might also allow the association to do without the banks all together if it manages to collect the maximum amount needed for the digital equipment for all 5 screens. As for the café, the enterprise will be using its own funds for its development.

Raising funds from citizens, and from the “warm money” created by solidarity rather than from the “cold money” of banks, is clearly very much in line with the values the association stands for. It also opens up a brand new way of financing that could benefit the whole non-profit sector, and in this way the association can reach out to citizens who know what they are doing and are ready to support it.

The communication campaign around this initiative was launched by reaching out to 20,000 Facebook followers using a stop-motion clip created by a young local artist. The clip was shown throughout the summer, creating a buzz that caught the attention of both the national press and people throughout Belgium and beyond.

During the 2-year restoration of the cinema Le Cameo, Les Grignoux set up a “nomadic” version that aroused wide interest. With just one, single, modestly-sized screen (96 seats) operating at weekends and with regular screenings at other cultural sites, Les Grignoux were able to maintain the programming of arthouse films in central Namur – films that would otherwise have been denied to local audiences. They also continued developing their educational programme “Ecran large sur Tableau Noir”, which was initiated by Les Grignoux and has spread throughout Wallonia and Brussels, one of the association’s cornerstones. Since February 2014, more than 50,000 tickets have been sold for these activities through arthouse programming, school programmes and special events.

An estimated 100,000 tickets sold annually for a fully-operational Le Caméo appears to be a realistic goal given the success of these first two years of reduced activities.

— Benoit Thimister, *Les Grignoux*



Benoit Thimister © Dominique Houcmant / Goldo



G8 Cinema museum exhibition



The Evening with children's brass orchestra Karandila Junior

BULGARIA

G8 CINEMA, SOFIA

A new arthouse cinema in the heart of Sofia

Opened in October 2014, Cultural Centre G8 (G8 Cinema) is a new private art house cinema and also a venue for special events related to the cinema and the wider world of visual, performing arts, literature and cultural heritage. Located in the hearth of Sofia, the building, which houses the cinema, is a restored architectural monument of the early 20th century.

G8 is equipped with three screening rooms, a hall for presentations and trainings, a small museum of cinema, a café and a garden, which in summer turns to an outdoor cinema.

Our mission is to promote film culture through diverse selection and exhibition of high-quality films from all over the world – new releases, classics, independent, documentaries, short films, etc. The films are part of our regular program or of cinematic events – festivals, retrospectives and film clubs. Aside

the diverse programming we try to provide more interesting events which are also a key factor in attracting, building and developing of new audiences. With the selected screenings there are accompanying events – discussions, concerts and exhibitions, literature readings. We try to make people aware they can find and see different and interesting titles and events in our film theatre. Towards young audiences we offer initiatives that are part of our regular programme (weekend screenings; monthly kids' theater productions) or of festival schedule. Young spectators are also welcome to our venue with special price policy and interesting new projects.

The biggest challenge for our team was the creation and opening of our new venue in only seven months without support or funding of any local and national authorities. Another challenge was – and still is – to position our venue as one of the leading arthouse cinemas with strong identity in the capital's landscape.

We believe in the potential of films as an educational tool, and a medium for social life and community engagement. That is why our efforts are focused on providing a diversity and quality programme suitable for different age groups and interests. The festivals are very important for us because of the need to diversify our programming. Their role is also a key factor for the promotion of cultural diversity. These events very often provide a unique chance for screening many quality films. We also try to manage and provide in our programme not only numerous premieres and new releases, but also retrospectives, that are aimed at meeting the needs and interests of our audience and community in general. The new initiative organized by G8 in collaboration with film distributors, festivals organizers, NGOs and artists is G8Docs "Why not a documentary". The main goal of the project is to promote the documentary genre through diverse selection and exhibition focusing on Bulgarian, European and worldwide documentaries. The screenings on the G8 documentary festival are often accompanied by a variety of events such as discussions, exhibitions and concerts. These events are useful for the

good promotion of the films and also help the audience to learn more interesting facts about the artists and their process to create their works. "The Nonconformist Alternative" is our recent project for the promotion of short films, developed in partnership with artists and professionals. There will be a monthly presentation of thematic programmes of short films selected by curators like students and specialists in the field of humanities, culture, film critical studies, audiovisual arts accompanied by discussions, nominations and funding of opportunities. We believe that the project meets the need for regular screenings of short films in Bulgaria and will support the development of young artists by providing a stage on which they can present their works. The strong point of the G8 was also the establishment of the cinema museum. Because of the terrible fate of almost all of the oldest film theatres from the first half of 20th century in Sofia, we would like to keep the memories of the spirit of these cinemas. In 2015 all Bulgarian film community celebrates "100 Years of Bulgarian Cinema". But we also believe that we should keep and tell the story about the cultural map of the capital's cinemas from the past until nowadays. We hope to attract new audience through our museum by improving the knowledge of young filmgoers on how the film theatres in Bulgaria looked before the digitalization era.

An unusual event which was part of G8Docs turned out to be very successful, as it was combining screenings of documentaries and short films with live music by Bulgarian children's brass orchestra – Karandila Junior. We are also proud that the audience appreciates our summer project. Every evening, our outdoor cinema (G8 Kino Dvor) was crowded of viewers attending the screenings of new European films.

Nonetheless, we are aware of our future challenges, namely keeping and diversifying the level of our programming, attracting new audiences and finding funding for the digitization of the other two screens of G8.

— Zornitsa Krasteva, Deputy Manager



The outdoor cinema



Zornitsa Krasteva



CROATIA

KINO EUROPA, ZAGREB

The 'think about what you watch' approach

Kino Europa is Zagreb's iconic cinema. It was built in 1924-25 by the wealthy Müller family from Zagreb with a wish to build the most beautiful, important and modern cinema in the region. Early in 2008 the cinema management was entrusted to Zagreb Film Festival with the aim of making Europa the regional hub for film and film art. Croatian national treasure.

In compliance with the 2013 Resolution of the Ministry of Culture, Kino Europa became a protected cultural heritage site and a Croatian national treasure. With its cinema interior, its opulent stucco decorations and post-Art Nouveau classicist details, Kino Europa is one of the most magnificent venues in the city. The cinema premises, located at the very centre of the city, host the large hall with 500 seats in the auditorium, the Müller Hall with 41 seats, the Cinema Shop – a film gift shop and bookshop, and the Cinema Bar – a popular hangout place for before and after the screenings.



It was the City of Zagreb that bought our cinema in 2007 from private owners after a successful action launched by Zagreb Film Festival and Croatian Film Clubs' Association called 'Gimme the Cinema', during which the entire Croatian film and cultural public scene, as well as all film lovers, appealed to the city government to purchase this property and put the auditorium to film use. The most important task at that moment was to prevent the building from decaying, to restore and reinstall the technical equipment and the hall, design a first-rate programme of contemporary independent and arthouse films from all over the world, and to regain the trust of the audience who completely lost the habit of frequenting old cinemas in the city centre. This was not easy for us, we had neither the films, nor the means and the audience, but diligent and hard work paid off: we managed to meet our initial objectives and realise the long-term strategic timeline. The results of this effort are today quite evident, both in the increased number of visitors and in media visibility and acknowledgment in the local and international public.

Our mission is to make it possible for Zagreb's citizens and visitors to continuously enjoy a first-rate line-up of contemporary independent and art house films and to educate audiences of all age groups and inclinations on film culture and art. Today Kino Europa is one of the most important and active cultural institutions not only in Zagreb, but in Croatia as a whole. As such, it is renowned in the region and beyond. This auditorium has seen many generations throughout its 90-year history. This was the first cinema for many of Zagreb's citizens, the first films on the silver screen. Kino Europa also sets an example to other independent cinemas in the country. We aim to use our knowledge, experience and advice to help existing cinemas and environments that are only just starting out.

It is undoubtedly the programme's diversity and quality that makes our programming innovative and our special approach to every event and screening. Our motto is 'Think about what you watch' – this is how we

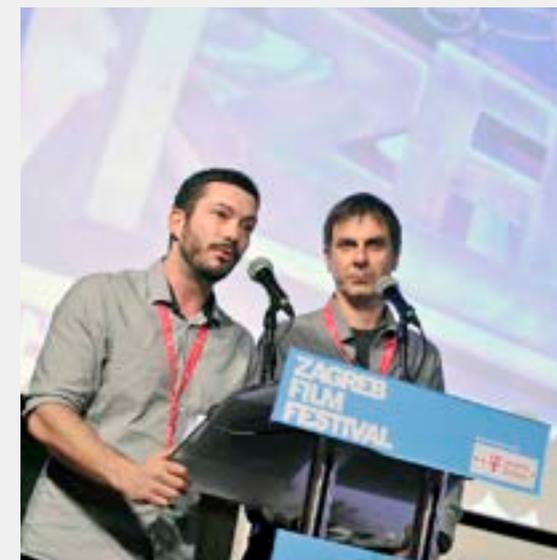
approach the audience. We teach them that a cinema is no longer just a venue where you come to see a film and then leave. A cinema is a lot more – it has to be a living, vibrant institution, a place of discussion, conversation and learning about film culture 24/7. There are many ways of achieving this beyond the standard listings. First of all, collaboration with different educational programmes, Q&As and hangouts with directors, film crew, critics etc. before and after the screenings, interdisciplinary cultural collaboration and connecting film to other artistic disciplines within the scope of certain special programmes etc.

For our communication strategies, given the fact that we do not have a large budget for promotion, a great part of our strategy is based on social media. This is the most important and most powerful promotional weapon we have and we strive to have a good daily presence on almost all social media platforms.

I would like to share a quite memorable anecdote. Recently we organised a Czech Film Week and in the middle of a full-house screening (460 people), the subtitling projector broke down. The film had to be stopped until the problem was solved, and the audience began to cheer. The enraptured atmosphere exploded when the projectionist entered the auditorium with a small projector and started setting it up. Instead of leaving, the audience had huge fun with our technical glitch and that made us really proud and happy.

As for the future of Kino Europa, first of all I hope we will manage to renovate the building fully and restore its old shine. This is one of the most important goals for the next four years and we are investing a lot of energy in this. If we succeed, we will take the cinema to the highest possible level, to the pleasure of our audiences, visitors and filmmakers. Only then can we say that the first, basic step – the building renovation, custom-made programme and attracting the audience back – is complete. After that we can safely launch step two and become one of the best cinemas in the world. And this is how I see it in the future.

— Hrvoje Laurenta, Director



Hrvoje Laurenta and Boris T. Matic

CZECH REPUBLIC

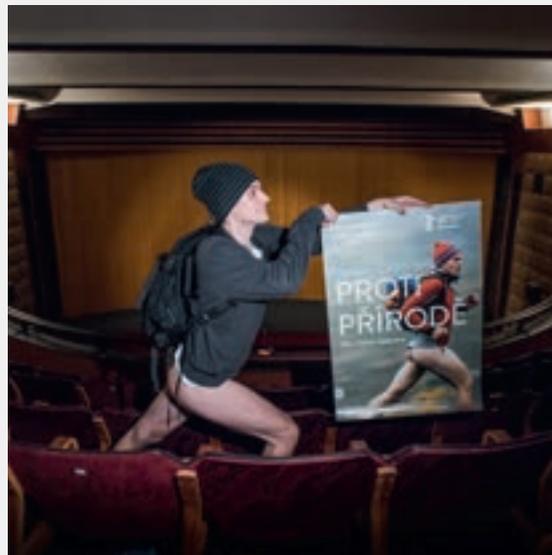
SCALA, BRNO



© Ivo Dvorák



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Metropolis, performing band FORMA

Two years after the re-opening

The history of Scala started in 1929 when the cinema became part of a building hosting a café and an office space. Scala was the first cinema fully dedicated to sound film in Moravia, the eastern part of the Czech Republic. At the time it was called Cinema DOPZ and from its opening it was the cinema with the largest screen and audience capacity in Brno.

Since then, Scala has only had a few interruptions in its activity: in 1945 due to the events of the war, in 1957 for reconstruction (which lead to a lower audience capacity) and in 1971 for the installation of the 70mm projector. The history of the cinema's name is also very interesting and demonstrates our history: the name DOPZ was replaced by Scala in 1935, in 1948 the cinema was renamed Cinema Moskva (Moscow), for a short period between 1968 and 1969 the name Scala was back, replaced shortly again with Moskva. The cinema returned to its title Scala again in 1989, hopefully for the last time.

Scala was closed by the city in 2011 when the cinema could no longer compete with newly opened multiscreen cinemas in Brno. Closing Scala led to major public debates and protests from the general public, among them the voices from Masaryk University were the loudest. The University soon started negotiating with the city and Aeropolis (a company owned by managers of the Prague-based cinemas Aero, Oko and Světozor). Negotiations were successful and led into the re-opening of Scala in October 2013, after light interior design changes and digitization.

After the economic stagnation of Scala from 2000 and its closing for two years, it wasn't easy to keep the historical reputation of the cinema going. The biggest challenge was to find a model of mutual cooperation between the University and Aeropolis, in other words a solution through which the cinema could fulfil both its cultural and entertainment role, together with the newly established role of an educational and university centre. We had to find a way of managing the cinema in close cooperation with Masaryk University and other cultural institutions in Brno.

I think that we have succeeded in this effort and managed to use Scala as a social space playing all the afore-mentioned roles. On a practical level, in the morning Scala "belongs" to the University and hosts lectures, conferences and other educational events; during the weekends and evenings it is a regular cinema offering movies, premieres, alternative content, festivals, animation training, etc.

It was not easy and took a lot of trial and error, mistakes and compromises, but at the moment Scala is among the top three single-screen cinemas in the Czech Republic in terms of admissions. Time has proved that what looked like the biggest challenge at the beginning – combining the needs of the university with the needs of a cinema regularly screening films – is now its biggest asset, bringing Scala a broad spectrum of supporters, fans, partners and, of course, spectators. Scala's strongest point is, in fact, its close connections to Masaryk University. This is truly a unique connection, bringing new impulses into our daily management. We are now working on opening more of the morning educational events in Scala to public audiences as we believe there is a great potential to bring more attention to Scala and introduce our cinema to new audiences.

Scala wants to be a representative metropolitan cinema for Brno, attracting a range of audiences. I think we are on a right way to achieving this, but a huge effort still needs to be made in maintaining this position and its further development. Our programme is made up of a mix of selected films, alternative content and other events, the programme profile would tend towards modern arthouse, but we have no compunction in also selecting quality mainstream titles. Scala presents ceremonial premiere screenings, live transmissions of opera, drama, musical performances, silent films with live music and many film festivals. Students of film studies at Masaryk University participate in designing our programme and they create their own regular programme cycles. In cooperation with the Moravian Gallery across the street, Scala manages an open-air summer cinema in the gallery's courtyard. Recently we started having regular screenings in our cinema café, focusing on documentaries and older titles.

When communicating with our audience, we use the classic printed cinema programme, but as more people are used to communicating through social media, it is essential for us to keep our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts updated, as well as a special mobile app with our programme. We could work without the printed media (sooner or later we will probably stop printing the programme brochures), but our activity cannot function without the internet and social media.

How do we envisage our future? There is still a lot of work ahead of us – we need to make ourselves more visible in the city, introduce the new Scala to new audiences, we only re-opened barely 2 years ago. But honestly, we see its future in bright colours.

— Radek Pernica, Director



Radek Pernica



Kim Foss with artwork by John Kørner

DENMARK

GRAND TEATRET, COPENHAGEN

Don't curb your enthusiasm!

Rule number one: never rest on your laurels, not even when you're-running a 102-year-old cinema! The first time I attended the Europa Cinemas Conference, in 2006, we received the award for European cinema of the year (we still use this as a marketing hook). I was new in the job and didn't have much responsibility for the prize, which was more of a reward towards my predecessor in the job.

Ten years later Grand Teatret is still standing, six screens in a beautiful red brick building in typical Art Nouveau fashion – smack in the centre of Copenhagen. And even better: the cinema has never had such good business as it has now. Yet, like everyone else, we do of course feel the threat from streaming, from piracy.

Nonetheless, we are currently doing very well thanks to many factors, a very important one being the fact that Grand Teatret also has a distribution arm, Camera

Film. Apart from working with exhibition we also buy Danish rights for some 20 films per year – not only securing a strong independent profile for the cinema, but also supplying an extra source of revenue for the company. It's a beautiful setup, which I'd strongly recommend to any cinema – granted your local market can accommodate more distributors, of course.

The distribution arm also allows us to curate with more precision. For instance, we have dug ourselves a niche for music films and have partnered with record companies and music magazines for extra impact. We started with *Searching for Sugar Man* a couple of years ago (rest in peace, Malik Bendjelloul, one of the warmest and kindest directors to ever set foot in our cinema). It went through the roof. Then we took on Nick Cave (*20,000 Days on Earth*), which also did fantastically. And this year we have taken on three films featuring members of the infamous Club 27: Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse and Janis Joplin.

"Music Is the Healing Force of the Universe" is the title of an old album by Albert Ayler. I think he was right, but we could say the same about films and cinema. And music and film together is simply the best. We opened *Amy* in July and at the moment of writing this article the film is still running in the cinema. Nationwide we have sold more than 65,000 tickets, 15,000 of them at Grand Teatret. For the opening of the film we joined forces with our local documentary film festival, CPH:DOX, and sold out the three biggest-screening rooms in the cinema at the same time – in the middle of the summer vacation, when many of the inhabitants of Copenhagen are out of town.

We also managed to convince celebrity photographer Søren Solkær to put together a show with his best portraits of Amy in our café, which we usually reserve for exhibitions by up-and-coming local artists – curated under the faux-French banner "Minuit Vernissage". It all went together nicely. By the end of the year we – that's Camera Film – will have sold something approaching 100,000 tickets for music documentaries in Denmark

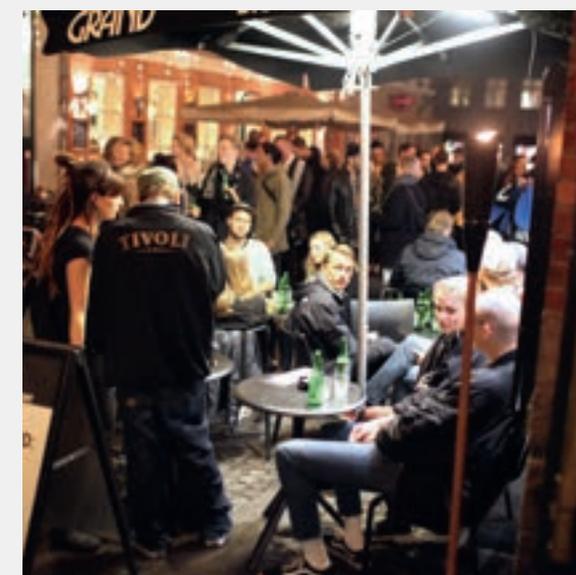
(a huge chunk of those in our own cinema) and we have been having a blast doing it.

But business models are changing, and it's not always a walk in the park. The film about Kurt Cobain – "Montage of Heck" – was with HBO and destined for a quick TV- and DVD/VOD-release. The hold back in Denmark is still four months for the second window, and if you can't warrant that, you can only do event screenings – and not a 'proper' release. Those are the rules. So we shot from the hip, organised one off shows – also at sister cinemas outside of Copenhagen – and got some 5,000 admissions in over a little less than two weeks. *Janis*, which we released in October, was also a real quickie. We bought the rights only 14 days before the actual release.

This is a fun exercise, which we have tried a couple of times before. You can get a lot done with the right mix of spontaneity and adrenaline, and should the politicians do away with geo-blocking, then quick decisions and fast work might very well become a tool for keeping up a strong profile for your cinema. And on the subject of spontaneity: if you're having fun, the audience senses that. Actually, that is one of the things about the cinema business, which never stops to amaze me: audiences know and feel. They have a sixth sense. If you thrive on enthusiasm, they sense it. And if you make cynical and calculated choices, they sense it, too, and often they will punish you for it at the box office.

We are of course keeping the virtual cinema open 24/7. We are on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and we also have a blog dedicated to the cinema. But social media is mostly just the icing on the cake when it comes to regular screenings. Our main audience still lives in the old world. They read newspapers and they pick up our printed program and have it lying about at home. They also appreciate that we try to serve the best coffee in town! So please give us a support model for Old Audiences activities! I don't know about you, but the older demographic is certainly paying my salary.

— Kim Foss, Director.





FINLAND

KINO TAPIOLA, ESPOO

Building loyalty and involving the community

Our beautiful, stylish cinema originates from 1955 and is protected as part of Finnish architectural heritage due to its authentic 50s design. Kino Tapiola re-opened in 2010 fully digitalised and meticulously renovated to fit the classic, atmospheric style of the 50s.

We are situated in Tapiola, known as the cultural centre of Espoo (Finland's 2nd biggest city), so when Kino Tapiola's future was at stake in the past, it was the local community that started lobbying the City of Espoo to save it. Since Espoo Ciné International Film Festival founded the company to run the cinema with the aid of the city, our aim has been to become very much a "local" cinema, with a mission to focus on screening mainly quality European and domestic films:

from the content distributed in Finland, we simply choose the best. Thanks to our audiences' avid cultural interests and the proximity of Helsinki and nearby multiplexes, it has been possible for us to concentrate on building a clear arthouse profile, which is valuable as Finland severely lacks independent arthouse theatres. The biggest, mainly Swedish-owned cinema chain Finnkino owns 75% of the market share, almost 90% in the big cities; Kino Tapiola is the only independent cinema in Espoo. Even in Helsinki, there is only one independent cinema that belongs to the Europa Cinemas network.

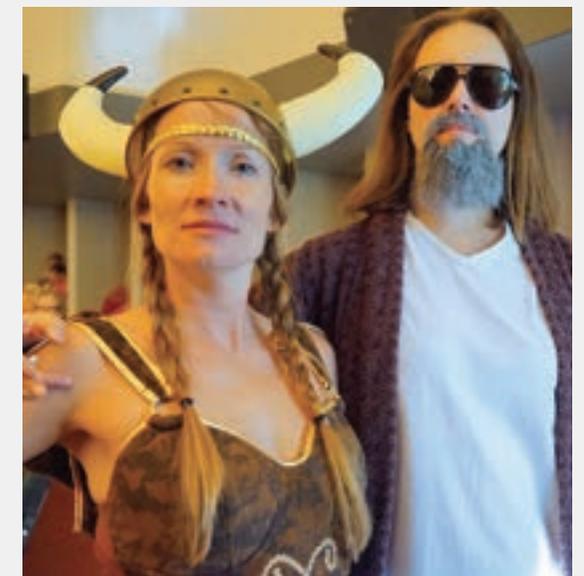
Our cinema has only one screen with 194 seats and a spacious lobby with a cozy, welcoming feel, so we have developed our customer strategy from the beginning towards approachability and community building, inviting our regulars to have input on our opening times, holiday schedules, and most importantly, programming. We feel that we are here only to serve our customers who fought to save their local cinema that they are so proud of, so we are very keen to hear their opinions about what films they want us to screen and re-run. We encourage this on our Facebook page, in our weekly newsletter and on our webpage, and we always label the films "Toive-elokuva" or "Toiveusinta" ("Audience Favourite"/"Audience Favourite Re-run") in our programming flyer and our website so that our customers know their wishes have been heard. For example, when we showed the Royal Opera House content for three seasons, we invited our opera regulars to participate in planning whether to continue with the ROH or to show other opera houses' material instead – it was great to make an informed decision based on real opera fans' input and our fourth ROH opera season turned out to be the most successful so far. Also, when we weren't sure whether our audience wanted to see the new Star Wars films on its international premiere date (as it isn't actually our profile film), we asked our audience's opinion, and with immediate responses in favour, we announced we were selling tickets. Thus, asking the audience actually helps us in our work, but also the kind of word-of-mouth publicity inspired by our audience-friendly approach is really valuable to us, as we do not have budget for marketing.

This is our 5th year running Kino Tapiola and we are very proud of our growing admissions. This has been a record breaking year, and the top 3 films of 2015 so far are 1: *The Fencer* (a Finnish-Estonian title), 2: *Ida* and 3: *The Imitation Game*. We have tried to find even more ways to communicate with our audience, establishing a message board at the cinema for customers' notes. Our most widely shared Facebook posts have been the photos of these messages, inspiring many comments and debates. As our cinema turned 60 this year, we decided to arrange a week-long celebration in August to thank our loyal customers with three special screenings for free, birthday cake, discounted tickets of €5 for all

films (including a London musical), and this created a great buzz with a lot of good will and feedback about our cinema. One of the free screenings was a Restaurant Day (a Finnish concept promoting street food) event of the cult film *The Big Lebowski* where we sold hotdogs as characters of the film, inviting the audience to come dressed up as well; the event was a huge success with lots of customers spending time on our patio in the sunshine and we had many great pics circulating in Facebook – afterwards it really felt everybody had heard we were celebrating our birthday!

We are situated less than 15 minutes away from Helsinki but since the return ticket price is more than our admission fee, we feel that there are lots of potential customers that possibly have heard about us, but haven't made it to us yet. Thankfully, in August 2016, the new metro line will open, with a stop in Tapiola, and from 2017, the ticket fare will be the same as for Helsinki. As the situation for independent and arthouse cinemas is so limited in the Helsinki area, the arrival of the metro should help bring in new customers. Meanwhile, we want to keep listening to our audiences' needs, and focusing on organising more special cinematic events that bring in new audiences, as at present our audience profile consists of mostly 45+ women, the typical audience for arthouse films in general. (By the way, Kino Tapiola is one of the very few cinemas in Finland run by women). As a small operation working under a cultural mandate, our resources are scarce, but we hope to generate good buzz around our cinema so the message about the gem of Kino Tapiola will spread, bringing in more people to watch quality European films and companies to arrange events and screenings at our cinema.

— Hannele Pellinen, Cinema Manager



Hannele Pellinen & Riina Kivijärvi



FRANCE

LE MÉLIÈS, SAINT-ÉTIENNE

From a small neighbourhood cinema to an innovative cultural establishment

Le Méliès' history as an independent arthouse exhibitor goes back to 1983. It all started with two screens, then four in 2006 and currently six screens on two separate locations - Jean Jaurès and Saint François - since 2014.

One amongst a handful of cinemas in France to have been granted all three French exhibition labels by the French CNC (Research, Repertory and Young Audience), Le Méliès has evolved from a small neighbourhood cinema to one of the major cultural establishments in the area.

Saint-Etienne is a lower middle class city, which has lost 40,000 inhabitants over a period of twenty years due to the collapse of its former industrial glory. It does however count no less than 26 cinema screens. Our most central cinema, Méliès Jean Jaurès with its four screens, has to compete with two multiplexes in the heart of the city centre (10 screens each, all run by the same exhibitor). With the growing competition of central and suburban multiplexes, of new circulation channels, VOD, web, etc., everyone at Le Méliès has been organising "the Resistance". Access to film is not easier given the local competition. And the purchase of our own building (guaranteeing our independence) has taken us heavily into debt until 2025. So team work and constant new challenges are key to turning our weaknesses into assets and maintaining our fragile financial balance.

Both Méliès Jean Jaurès and Saint-François are run by a team of 17 film buffs who work on a day-to-day basis to defend a diverse and ambitious selection of films. We do watch all of our films in advance and carefully select them. They are advertised to our audiences through a newly designed website, a 48-page publication (25,000 prints per month) along with Twitter and Facebook counting more than 8,000 followers.

Each member of the Méliès team has their own personal film culture and movie-going habits, and in their own way have a particular influence on our programming choices. This also fosters a close relationship with our patrons and partners, thus making the Méliès experience a very singular one in comparison to a multiplex.

In addition to our six screens, on which no less than 600 feature films and 100 short films are shown each year, Le Méliès also has a nice little café, located on the first floor of Méliès Jean Jaurès. Le Méliès Café is open year-round from 1 pm to 1 am, and its selection of food, drinks and events is just as carefully selected as the films shown by its "big brother".

Thanks to its central location in the city, its numerous events and its outdoor patio, Le Méliès has gradually become a cultural beacon other theatres, festivals and concert halls look up to, in advertising their own programmes and events.

In order to stand out and make our own place in this particularly competitive environment, we need to stay alert and keep up with innovations in the industry. The experiences of other arthouse cinemas in France, Europe and the US are always an inspiration to us and push us towards one goal: offering our audiences a unique and constantly renewed movie-going experience.

Although the transition to digital cinema has not – in our opinion – been an aesthetic revolution, it has allowed us to explore new avenues in terms of communication and event planning.

This is how our 'Skype Me If You Can' events were born. Each month we invite foreign filmmakers to interact with our audiences on Skype.

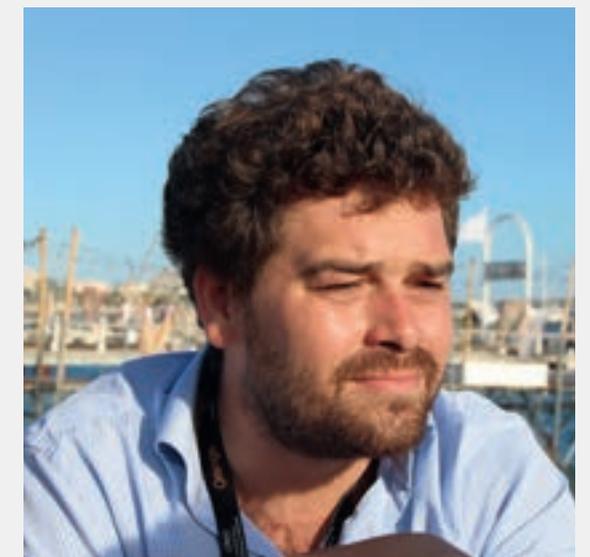
We have also been producing our own videos and DCPs, which we can then share on the internet and on each of our six screens (home-made PSAs, weekly promotional trailers, event teasers, etc...)

We are still looking to get closer to our audiences and have started up a number of other projects, like "Get on the bus" (where our patrons can take a bus trip with us for one day to movie-related destinations such as film festivals, studios, museums, etc...) or our forty High-School Ambassadors (two students chosen in each school every year, who act as Ambassadors of our cinema amongst their peers). Our audience has recently teamed up with us in making our cinema accessible to those who can least afford it. "Solidarity Tickets", inspired by the Italian Caffè Sospeso, are now available at our ticket office.

For the past two years Le Méliès has hosted a three-day professional vent for distributors and exhibitors, organised with the support of the SDI (Independent Distributors Association). These productive workshops and brainstorming sessions are designed to develop circulation of the most fragile films.

Always eager to learn and to share, we would like to set up an exchange programme between employees of other European cinemas.

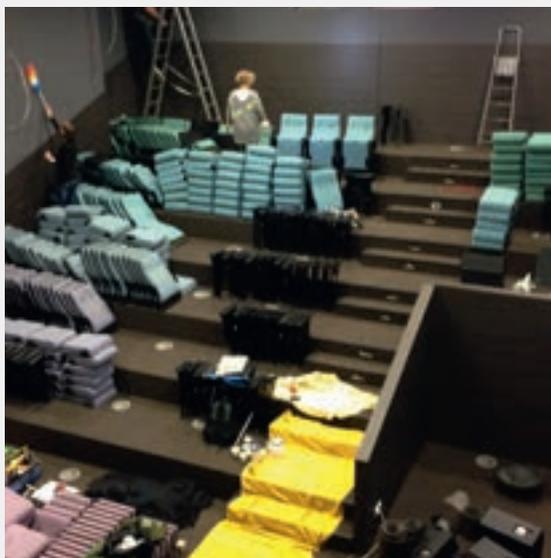
— Paul-Marie Claret, Sylvain Chevretton, Sylvain Pichon.



Paul-Marie Claret

GERMANY

LI.WU.@FRIEDA, ROSTOCK



li.wu.@Frieda



li.wu.@Frieda



Celebration for the 20th anniversary of li.wu.@Metropol

Premiere of *We Are Young. We Are Strong.* (by Burhan Qurbani) at li.wu.@Metropol

A second venue for arthouse films in rostock

The Lichtspieltheater Wundervoll (li.wu.) is a non-profit arthouse cinema in Rostock, the largest city in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania near the coast of the Baltic Sea. The cinema was established in 1993. It was first located in the “Institut Français” in Rostock. Since 2012, after two relocations, we have been working with one screen in the city’s oldest cinema building, which we remodelled to its original purpose. Now we are calling it li.wu.@Metropol and it has 160 seats. In April 2014 we opened our second single screen location with 121 seats in a cultural centre called Frieda23 (short for Friedrich Street 23) located in a former East German public school.

The building has been totally renovated over recent years and the cinema is now called “li.wu.@Frieda”. We share the building with various cultural partners, such as the “Institute for New Media”, the local public radio station “Lohro”, an art school, the “Heinrich Böll Foundation” and others. This gives us lots of opportunities for collaboration with these partners. Every spring we are a partner of the “Institute for New Media” and their “FiSH – Festival”, which stands for “Festival im StadtHafen” (Festival at the City Harbour). This festival is a film contest especially for the young German film scene. It serves as a platform for up-and-coming film makers from Germany, and a partner country from the Baltic Sea region which changes annually.

Both our cinemas are located close to the city centre, and to each other. There are only two commercial cinemas belonging to one multiplex chain in town. These cinemas are mainly focused on the big productions. We are the only alternative place to see ambitious and smaller productions.

One year after the opening of “li.wu.@Frieda23” we are very happy that the parallel operation of two cinemas is working out well. Establishing a second location was a risk, especially because it opened right before the summer. But our customers accepted the new place and we were able to reach new customers, too. The second screen has helped to make our programming more diverse, and has given us the opportunity to show more documentaries and niche movies.

More than 75% of our screened films are European (co-)productions. We have a mixed audience ranging from university students to senior citizens. We do not try to reach everyone, we try to cater to film lovers, and we want to differ from commercial cinemas (this means, for example, no popcorn). We try to show every film both dubbed and in the original version with subtitles. We have modern 4K projectors and 7.1 digital sound for new films, but we still have a working 35mm projector for classics.

We want to offer more than just the films and so we have set up several events. There is “Culinary Cinema” together with the local slow-food community. It combines movies that are related to food or cooking with delicious high-quality snacks from local and organic products that are prepared by the Slow Food people. Another event is what we call the “Treasure Chest”, where we show classics like “Blade Runner”, “The Third Man” or “Possession” with an introduction to the movie and the production.

We receive e-mails from people thanking us for these events that have helped rekindle their love of cinema-going.

On 19 January 2015, we had the great honour of screening *Wir sind jung. Wir sind stark.* (*We Are*

Young. We Are Strong.) by Burhan Qurbani before its official release, in presence of the main cast and the director. The film covers events that took place in our city in August 1992. A xenophobic mob attacked an apartment block, inhabited mainly by Vietnamese immigrants, and set fire to it. In the audience were victims of the riots, former politicians, journalists, police officials and many citizens of Rostock, some of whom were eyewitnesses to the events. Immediately after the premiere a very emotional debate started, discussing questions of responsibility and what could be learned from mistakes that were made. This discussion was recorded and is available online (filmgespraeche.de/wir-sind-jung-wir-sind-stark/).

The movie is as relevant as can be. Most screenings were sold out and it became the most frequently visited film in the history of the “li.wu.” It is still running for schools!

During recent weeks we have renovated the “Metropol”. We are now offering tiered seating, we have changed to an even bigger screen and upgraded the sound system.

After all these challenges – the final relocation, the building and establishing of the second location and the modernisation of the “Metropol” – for the first time in many years we can now focus on the most important things: our programmes, our partners and guests. We have an established network involving many other local people and associations engaged in the cultural sector, and we are working together. For the future we aim to sharpen our image. We will continue to offer more than just films. We are working on further developing our cinemas as places for discussion, experience and education – and of course entertainment.

— Anne Kellner, Director



Anne Kellner



ICELAND BÍÓ PARADÍS, REYKJAVÍK

— Creating a unique social experience to win viewers' loyalty

Bío Paradís was founded in summer 2010 when the last cinema in downtown Reykjavík was closing down. Following the trend observed in the rest of the world, cinemas had been moving away from the downtown area in recent decades, leaving for the suburbs and the shopping malls.

The cinema that Bío Paradís was founded in was once at the forefront of new developments in the cinema business. Opening its doors to the public in 1976 with four screening rooms, it was the first multiplex in the northern countries, using the latest technology of the plate system so that several screens could be operated at once by a single projectionist.

It was a wild success. By 2010, its commercial owners could not find a basis for operating the cinema anymore.

So when the opportunity arose in summer 2010 to open the country's first arthouse cinema, a group of hopelessly optimistic and idealistic people, otherwise known as Icelandic filmmakers, founded Bío Paradís. The cinema opened its doors in September as a non-profit association run by the Icelandic Film Makers Association, Film Directors Guild of Iceland and the Association of Icelandic Film Producers. Its goals were to enhance film culture in Iceland and to support film education for younger audiences.

There were only a couple of major obstacles that faced the new operation in the first few months. The board and management soon learned that the Icelandic distribution market was not a very friendly environment to survive in, since all three distributors in Iceland were running their own cinemas and imported films first and foremost to screen in their own cinemas. None of them was really interested in arthouse films, and if they did buy them they were not for sharing. The digital conversion of cinemas was also a big game changer, as no one involved with the founding of the new cinema had fully realised the investment involved.

The major windfall came when the cinema received a grant from MEDIA to digitize three of its four screens. To counter the problems with programming, the cinema started distributing films in 2012 for programme purposes. Bío Paradís was then able to refinance in 2013, buying the digital equipment and securing public financing from the city and state that amounted to just under 25% of its annual operating costs.

Since Bío Paradís opened in 2010, the distribution of European films in Iceland has more than tripled. The cinema now distributes around 25 films per year, all of which screen at Bío Paradís only, but are also available on two VOD platforms and eventually on TV. In addition, the cinema has travelled around the country two last summers with its programme, providing an opportunity for audiences outside of Reykjavík to experience Bío Paradís's international film programme for free. The cinema has operated a very ambitious school programme and has received more than 22,000 young people for its film literacy classes since 2011. Now the programme is also offered to all colleges in Reykjavík, who come every semester for film classes in Bío Paradís. The cinema offers a number of film days annually and special programmes in collaboration with cultural institutions around the world. In 2013, Bío Paradís started the first International Children's Film Festival in Reykjavík which has been a great success annually. And in 2015, the old Reykjavík Film Festival started by Fridrik Thor Fridriksson in the 70's was reinstated

as the Stockfish Film Festival in Bío Paradís in collaboration with the cinema. This festival will have its second edition in Bío Paradís in February 2016.

Since the cinema is releasing films throughout the year, that are only going to be screened at Bío Paradís, advertising budgets are very limited. The management relies heavily on creative marketing, special events and social media, for creating word-of-mouth for its release strategy. Premieres with targeted audiences play a big role, as well as a lot of work is done getting write ups in the cultural press with film makers and people associated with our films. Bío Paradís has hosted several filmmakers for the release of their films in Bío Paradís, the most recent one being Luc Jaquet for the *Ice and the Sky* premiere on October 16th.

Bío Paradís has become a very important cultural venue for Icelanders and it has now received more than 300,000 guests since it opened. The best screenings and the most attended screenings at the cinema are the ones that are truly a social event and people come for the sake of enjoying a unique atmosphere. These screenings are promoted solely on social media. The whole operation does not come without its challenges, as the association continues to be underfunded and understaffed, but we are truly optimistic about the future. The commercial cinemas in Iceland complain very loudly about illegal downloading and the decrease in cinema ticket sales, while Bío Paradís continues to grow. It is also important to bear in mind that the traditional movie going experience is truly threatened by the rise of new technology and new consumer behaviour, whereas the experience of going to a screening in Bío Paradís cannot be downloaded on Pirate Bay. So Bío Paradís might one day be the last cinema standing in Reykjavík, but it will probably still be there.

— Hrönn Sveinsdóttir, Managing Director



Hrönn Sveinsdóttir © NannaDis2013



IRELAND CINEMOBILE, GALWAY

Cinemobile, the original 'pop-up cinema'

Cinemobile is Ireland's mobile digital cinema and is a complete cinema service for all communities in Ireland. The idea of a mobile cinema originated in France with a company called Toutenkamion (literally meaning 'all in a truck'). It is basically an artic truck that in less than an hour transforms into a 100 seater cinema.

Ireland got its first cinemobile in 2001 when it was funded as a Millennium project and we have been touring the island of Ireland since. SCinemobile is a not-for-profit organisation which intends to continue to give communities access to the cinema experience. Over the past 15 years Cinemobile has had over 400,000 visitors come through its doors and has become a staple venue for film festivals, arts festivals, education projects, schools and communities throughout Ireland. We are 'on the road' approximately

250 days of the year, with about 30,000 people through our doors each year. Cinemobile is unlike any other cinema in that it can reach practically any location in any part of the country and we love to do imaginative screenings in remote and unusual places.

Everyone remembers their first cinema experience – it's a memory that always stays with you, and it's for that reason that our work with schools is one of the most rewarding strands of Cinemobile programming and we now screen to 10,000 schools children each year at both primary and secondary level. Cinemobile gives children the opportunity to watch and enjoy a film in a communal setting with their peers. This is the beauty of Cinemobile; it arrives to the school door, avoiding transport costs, with the cinema experience packed in an amazing truck where children of all ages can experience the magic of the moving image.

A great example of how cinemobile delivers as a unique education venue occurred just last month when we ran a hugely successful animation project with multi award winning Irish animation company Cartoon Saloon. With the guidance of a facilitator, who used the theatre screen to project his real-time illustrations, pupils sketched characters from the Oscar nominated *Song of the Sea* and subsequently watched the film. One of the more expansive of Cinemobile's projects came in 2014 with the awarding of funding from Creative Europe for a unique audience building initiative for remote regions of Northwest Europe. The project *North by North West – Films on the Fringe* which involved Cinemobile partnering with cinemas working in rural parts of Iceland, Finland, Scotland and Norway, with organisations such as Bio Paradis in Reykjavík and our other mobile cinema friends, Screen Machine, in Scotland. The project operated as a kind of 'film swop' between the 5 countries and gave audiences a chance to delve into the cinema of other countries a little bit more.

In line with all the changes we have made to our programming in the last 5 years we are now screening more European and international films than ever before. 70% of all our screenings are now arthouse cinema titles, and that's something we're very proud of.

In the past, staff at Cinemobile were often surprised at the amount of work delivered on the ground each year, yet how disproportionately small a number of people seemed to know about the service we provided. So over the last number of years we have put a lot more resources into rectifying this gap between our output and its visibility with the use of social media. They have become vital for Cinemobile's engagement with its customers, perhaps even more so when it involves the film industry.

But in 'Cinemobile's world' it's not only about connecting with fans, but also about crediting the people who help make events happen and, in a time

of swathing cuts, acknowledging funders. In such instances social media connects audiences with film, producers, actors and fans, while minimising marketing costs in the process. It is a real-time tool on the outcome of events but also a gauge on how matters can be improved.

As we know the idea of Pop-Up Cinema is all the rage now, but of course Cinemobile in many ways was the original 'pop-up cinema' and we have now added that specific stand to our programme. This allows communities all over Ireland the opportunity to set up their own event screenings; they chose the films, the date, the time and they also market the event themselves; Cinemobile provides the venue, the projectionist, the 2k digital projector, the public liability insurance, and we source the films they want too. The event then takes place when all tickets have been sold within the community. Programming such as this ensures we stay true to our original remit, which was rooted in community.

Thankfully the Irish Film Board and the local council in County Galway are good supporters of Cinemobile. But in many ways we have to now operate like any commercial business. We believe passionately that a child living in a rural area is as entitled to this experience just as a child living in urban centres, but now that we have lost so much of our subsidy it is difficult to do so. Cinemobile is currently seeking support from funders to reinstate this parity as we believe access to the shared cinema experience is still a vital part of what makes up a healthy and vibrant community.

Our current machine is 15 years old and we are also looking at replacing that too, so if there is anyone out there who wants to invest or partner in our adventure give us a call in Galway, Ireland!

— Noreen Collins, Manager



Noreen Collins and Lelia Doolan (founder of Cinemobile)

ITALY

POSTMODERNISSIMO, PERUGIA



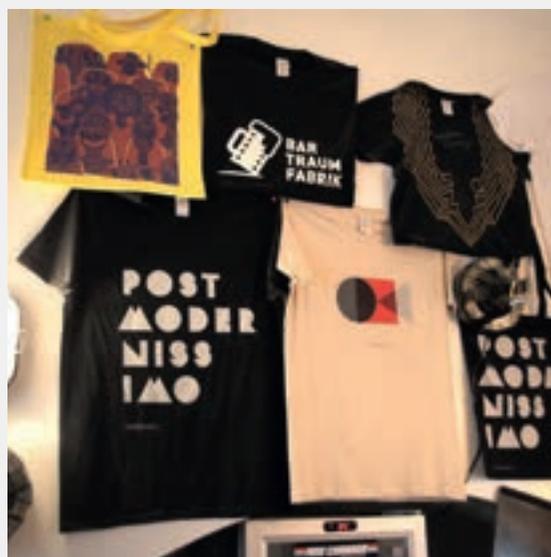
© Rosario Terranova



Edgar Reitz at PostMod © Marco Giugliarelli



© Rosario Terranova



Crowdfunding & brand building: the heart of a community cinema

The PostModernissimo was brought about by the determination to create a community - to offer, alongside good movies, many different artistic projects. Live theatre, music and, most of all, an ongoing dialogue with its audiences. It has three movie halls, each with a different soul: the main space has 159 seats, the second one 54 and the “Terza Sala” can seat 30 people, the latter in fact is mostly dedicated to retrospectives and experimental works. The movie house is also very proud of its state-of-the-art audio-visual system, with 4K projectors, and its friendly, warm attitude.

This is a place which is seen as a meeting point, featuring exhibition areas for visiting artists and a cafeteria where local and farm-to-fork products are served. Everyday a diverse crowd, from senior citizens to kids to college students to foreign tourists visit this movie theatre (where the vast majority of shows are in original version with subtitles). A special mention goes to the KinderKino project, dedicated to children and families. Every Saturday morning is the CineMà morning, specifically thought to suit new mums’ needs — low volume, a space for buggies and a baby-changing table at their disposal.

The PostModernissimo was founded in downtown Perugia, Umbria by the Anonima Impresa Sociale, a cooperative created by Giacomo Caldarelli, Andrea Frenguelli, Ivan Frenguelli and Andrea Mincigrucci, all media professionals and cinema lovers. The cooperative counts more than 60 economically and creatively contributing members. Since the premises were once home to the major arthouse cinema in town, which had been closed for 15 years, when these friends presented their project, they also actively contributed to redeveloping the historical district of Perugia. This could be why so many local people funded the project through a crowdfunding campaign and through the possibility of buying shares with a diffuse shareholding formula. The inhabitants of Perugia were fueled by a well-thought out, marketing-savvy call to action: “Does Perugia need a place like this?” was the question. If the answer was yes, you were immediately given the possibility of doing something yourself for the project. Anybody interested in taking part in the enterprise could just go and meet the founders at the temporary store there during the redevelopment work, discuss the project and contribute with their own suggestions.

We developed a dedicated brand for PostModernissimo, which is actually a “non-brand”. The concept is very simple: starting from 3 basic geometrical shapes (square, circle and triangle) and three colours (red and two shades of grey), we played with these three elements combining and mixing them up in order to get a coherent and flexible image: declining it in different ways, from graphic elements to a personalised font. The inspiration of Futurism has played a major role in our work. We decided not to create a single, definitive and unmodifiable brand, but rather to let all the graphic work follow our cultural and commercial activity. As such the brand needs to be open, evolving, almost fluid. We keep on setting higher challenges for our creativity while trying to remain recognisable but still surprising. The communication and creativity of our brand has been developed by an external agency which is nonetheless an integral part of the PostModernissimo project. The idea was to involve different authors at a national level, often with no links to the town, but still trying to keep in mind the core identity of PostModernissimo: a “community cinema” strongly integrated in its territory, yet open to external influences. We like to think of ourselves as a giraffe with its heart in the town and its head looking out to the whole of Italy and Europe.

Audience feedback on our brand-building campaign was quite simply enthusiastic. Already during our renovation period, when our only contact with people was through social media and our temporary store, our t-shirt and goodies sold out immediately!

The impact of our brand on Perugia was very striking, in a couple of hours we reached over 1000 Facebook fans and this enthusiasm helped our crowdfunding campaign take off. At the beginning our t-shirts and shopping bags with the PostMod logo were meant as rewards for the crowdfunding supporters, but in the following weeks the brand and the goodies spread throughout the whole region, boosting the visibility of our project. Since the very beginning, the crowdfunding campaign had a crucial role in the success of PostModernissimo and this has become true only thanks to the efforts of our collaborators who, on a voluntary basis, made their know-how and skills available for the service of the cinema.

Social media play a major role in marketing and promotional strategies, and every event gathers a small, passionate community. This means that it is easy for online users to feel like they are really part of a project, contributing with their opinions or simply getting in touch with people who share their interests. Interaction is fundamental. A case study could be made on Asif Kapadia’s *Amy*: even though the PostModernissimo was not the only movie theatre in town to screen it, during the three days it was showed more than 600 people flooded in. Tickets for the premiere, featuring a themed happy hour and dj set, were sold out.

First and foremost, the PostModernissimo is built on an idea of social responsibility applying to culture. The real focus is on the audience, who can not only enjoy a tailor-made movie programme, but who is also actively and economically contributing to project.

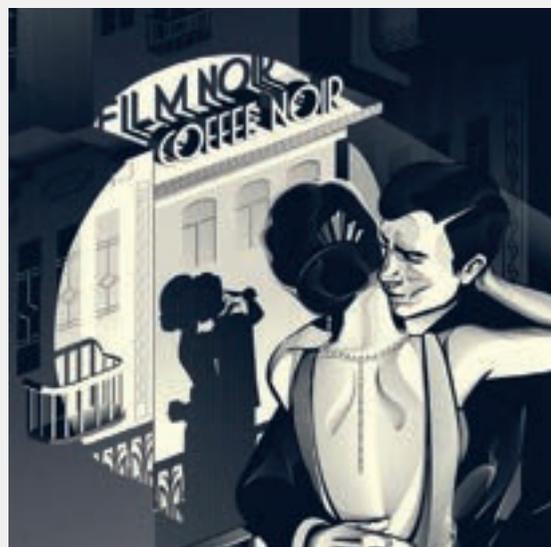
— Giacomo Caldarelli, Andrea Frenguelli, Ivan Frenguelli and Andrea Mincigrucci



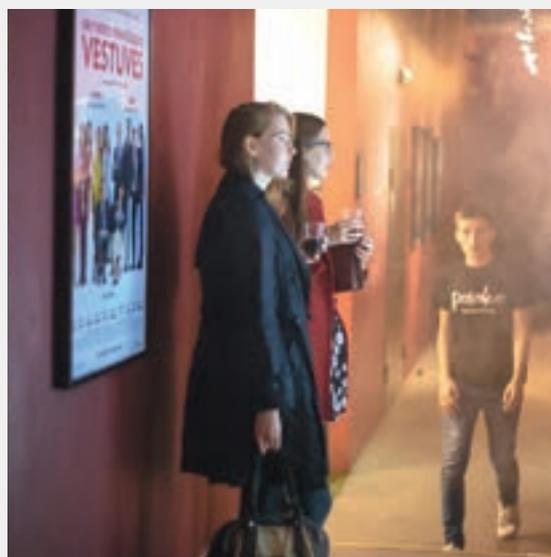
Left to right: Andrea Frenguelli, Andrea Mincigrucci, Ivan Frenguelli and Giacomo Caldarelli

LITHUANIA

KINO PASAKA, VILNIUS



Coffee and film noir programme poster



A boutique cinema in the very heart of the city

After 6 years since it was founded, boutique cinema Pasaka in Vilnius managed to find its loyal audience and inspire Lithuanians to watch more European films. Cinema Pasaka is the first and only private arthouse cinema in Lithuania. The cinema is located in the old town of Vilnius in the premises above a legendary restaurant "Bočiai" (nowadays "La Bohème"). Today both screens (150 and 87 seats) are equipped with digital projectors and attract almost 60 thousand admissions every year.

Our cinema, first of all, is the house of good films, we like to say that "it is selected by hands and heart", because we want to ensure a quality content for our guests. It is also important for us to host other cinema related or inspired activities.

Additional attention to the older generation is also a remarkable aspect in our mission, not only by organizing special day screenings with a friendly price, but also initiating a one-month long activity where people can buy a ticket for a senior viewer who can't afford to come to the cinema.

Funny community gathering ideas follow the serious activities. For example, Pasaka organized the so-called "Slippers day" where the spectators coming to the cinema in slippers would be able to watch films for free the whole day.

Our recent publicity success was during the launch of the film *Serial (Bad) Weddings (Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu?)*, Philippe de Chauveron when the team of the cinema, disguised in glamorous wedding dresses and made a lively presentation of the movie with some traditional wedding rituals.

We also work a lot with local communities, for instance we develop close relationships with surfers and extreme sports passionates, with the neighboring church community, foreign culture institutes, etc.

Openness, creativity, sincerity and trust are the key elements that make our programming and marketing strategies innovative. We try to educate our viewers and offer something innovative for them. This is how films like "White Shadow" (Noaz Deshe) about the albinos in Tanzania enter our programme.

The cinema publications and graphic materials are always prepared with great care for design, visual aesthetics as we believe that it is important for our audience and to express our respect for them. We managed to involve professional advertising agencies in creating the visual strategy for our projects, which often end up winning local advertising awards. The visuals for this year's project "Cinema Under the Stars" won two awards at the National Advertising Festival "Adrenalinas".

Social media as well represent a very important element of our communication strategy. They allow us to talk to our clients directly, helping us to reach the audience by employing a moderate amount of money. We consider the usage of social media is our natural state of mind, rather than a professional activity. We simply and very naturally share our daily life with our viewers, no matter if it's a picture of cup of coffee with an article in the magazine, a shot of children in the workshop or a video from the Q&A session with the film director.

The cinema benefits from its location, being the only cinema in the old town of Vilnius. The building, the

interior and the simple approach create a special, home-like atmosphere that the audiences appreciate. Since more and more people are watching films online, cinema is becoming a luxury and somewhat extraordinary. Therefore, we try to give our viewers the special feeling with a homely touch.

The variety of programming gives opportunity to have a broad spectre of offer: from classics to recent releases. Another strong point is the team working in the cinema – all cinema enthusiasts, professionals in their field, connected not only by work-bonds, but also long lasting relationships. For example, just recently our projectionist welcomed all the cinema community to the screening hall where he married his fiancé in front of the screen.

Pasaka always tries to respond to audience's needs as it is our survival condition. We don't like to consider ourselves as omniscient professionals owning the full decisional power on our programming. During summer months when the admission numbers drop radically, we go outside and organize "Cinema under the stars" with an exclusive programme and a huge screen in the courtyard of Contemporary Arts Center.

However, the biggest challenge is still fighting stereotypes and preconceptions and the lack of interest in cinematography coming from unexplored territories and smaller countries. Also, there is no support in Lithuania for promotion of European cinema, neither on the exhibition nor distribution side, so we always have to look for a balance between artistic and commercial aspects.

Furthermore, arthouse cinemas like ours should think about the possibilities to enter the digital platform and be ready to serve our viewers with the best European cinema no matter where they are.

— Greta Akcijonaitė, André Balžekienė



Gretā Akcijonaitė and Andre Balžekienė © Monika Daužickaitė



© Krystyna Trybis

POLAND

KINO POD BARANAMI, KRAKOW

Niche films and innovative marketing

Kino Pod Baranami is situated in a very unique location - renaissance Pod Baranami palace in the heart of Krakow - at the Main Market Square. Operating under this name since 1993, it has evolved from a single screen (Red Auditorium) on the first floor, into two more (Blue and White Auditoriums) on the second floor. The three rooms' names refer to Krzysztof Kieślowski's Trilogy.

The cinema's mission is to promote the idea of cinema-going and film culture among people of all ages and all interests. We are to educate and bring the best in cinematography to our audiences. What makes our programming (awarded by Europa Cinemas in 2009) innovative - is first of all - its diversity. We are open for all genres, subjects and themes.

Our programme consists of total niche films as well as more commercial, but still ambitious, productions which we know our viewers want to see. The innovativeness of the programming lies also in the fact that it is open



© Sabina Szkarla

to suggestions from our audience (and our staff!). We are very open to our viewers' ideas, we try to make their dreams come true. The cinema cooperates with important festivals around the city, often presenting films to accompany the programme of those events. We also like to build special events around films screenings. We act in line with the principle that cinema is more than film - there are meetings, bike races, concerts or debates. So, other cinemas may screen the same film but without all the add-ons that we provide.

As for innovative marketing, we were among the first in Poland to promote a cultural institution with QR codes (collecting likes on Facebook via posters with just a QR code on it all over the city). We also (secretly) organise guerrilla marketing actions around the city. We try to be active in social media - Facebook, Instagram and now we are one of the first cinemas in Poland on Snapchat! Social media plays a huge part in our marketing strategy. We are very present on Facebook (more than 32,000 fans), Instagram (1,500 followers), and Twitter (1,000 followers). We are learning all the time, trying to participate in social media and marketing workshops and courses. Recently, we started running a profile for our youngsters' film club on Snapchat - it is like black magic to us, but we are getting better and better. We are also trying to keep good relations with film bloggers - who have more influence now than regular media.

As far as audience development is concerned, we are very proud of the fact that we are trying to reach all age groups, from 0 to 100 years old. We are in touch with our audiences, listening to them and trying to react to their needs.

A couple of recent events were particularly striking for us in terms of successful and positive feedback from the audience. One of them was "poster-harvesting" during our summer film festival, when we presented our poster archives on the terrace of Pod Baranami Palace and it was open for people who bought a ticket on that day. Our viewers could pick as many posters as they wanted.

We made them very happy on that day. At that same festival, we introduced a very special event - open-air screenings in the palace courtyard. Cheap tickets, moonlight, breeze of air, glass of wine, amazing atmosphere - it was a very successful cycle of screenings, with many happy viewers. And the last thing which surprised us - just a couple of days ago - was a late night screening (on Thursday) of Polish film *Demon*, at 11.30 pm. It gathered two full rooms of students, eager to see the newest film by Marcin Wrona (who died tragically few weeks before). The cinema was packed. It was a screening of Students' Night Film Club, where we offer students cheap tickets, free coffee and sandwiches - the screening is always on Thursday late night. The fact that there were 250 viewers on a week-day night, and many stayed till past 2.00 in the morning to talk about the film, and come up with many interpretations - it was unbelievable. It was what running a cinema is all about!

What is our cinema's strong point? We are unique. And many things are included in that word: the atmosphere, the location, the programming, the number of events that we organise nearly every day, the combination of modernity and tradition and the fact that many of our viewers call us their second home.

However, there are two big challenges ahead of us now. One is reaching teenagers, who tend not to go to the cinema at all or they choose multiplex cinemas. We are trying to show them that arthouse cinema is also cool and worth visiting. The other challenge is opening another room in the cinema, to be able to do even more than we do now.

I see the future like this: we keep up the good work with our amazing and passionate team. We have more screening rooms, filled with great films and fantastic events, because we are filled with ideas that are ready to be put into life. We want to be setting new trends and make our audiences happy.

— Maria-Magdalena Gierat, Director.



Maria-Magdalena Gierat © Emilian Aleksander

PORTUGAL

CINEMA IDEAL, LISBON



The complete renovation of the oldest remaining cinema in Portugal

Cinema Ideal has existed since 1904, making it the oldest remaining cinema in Portugal. For over a century it was mostly a "cinéma de quartier", a popular film theatre, situated in the historic centre of the city, but on the edge of a red light district. Its last renovation dated from 1954 and for the last ten years it had only programmed adult movies. We took over the site in November 2013, and by the end of August 2014 we were reopening as a fully renovated cinema.

Cinema Ideal is a single screen venue, with 192 seats, with a balcony, a bar and foyer and a very particular architectural design. It is situated nearby the Chiado area and it is nowadays the only remaining cinema in the centre of Lisbon, all others having been shut down over the last three decades. The theatre is equipped with digital projector and an 8-meter wide screen, on the floor above the cinema there is a 35-seat café and a bookshop.

The cinema was completely renovated - in Portuguese there is an expression for it "descascado até ao osso/ stripped to the bone" - by an architect who is also a fervent cinephile. He used natural and local materials (the floor is made of cork, the entrance is in white marble), and made some bold choices (the seats are from the Finnish architect and designer Yrjö Kukkapuro). He really wanted our cinema to look like no other existing cinema in Portugal, and we agreed with him.

From the beginning we had a strong presence of Portuguese cinema (pretty much under siege these last few years of economic and political crisis) and tried to mix European films with classics along with also new releases.

Although we only had a single screen we have tried to think and act as a "multiplex". As we operate for 14 hours a day, most of the time we can have three screenings simultaneously. This helps us to reach out to different audiences, in terms of age, social and economic background and cinema likings.

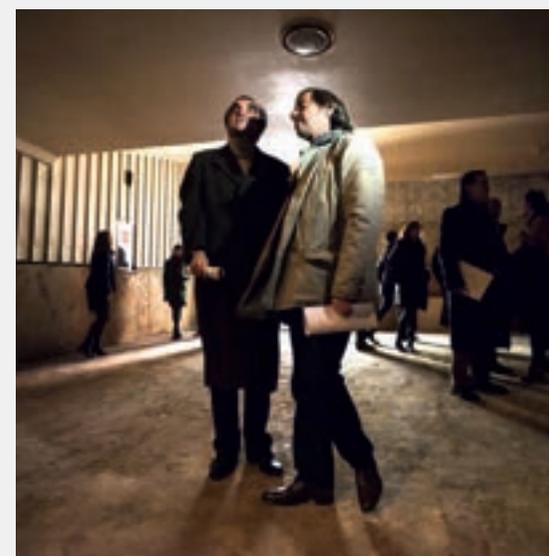
Since we are the only remaining cinema in this part of the city, we want to keep also a profile of 'cinéma de quartier' with which people living nearby or at a walking distance can identify themselves. We collaborate with educational or public centres for aged people and social care organizations, with whom we have been organising events from the very beginning. For all these people we want to be another "shop around the corner".

It is always something very special when you show *The Kid* or *The Gold Rush* at Christmas, or when you have Chaplin coming back with *The Great Dictator*, or when you release four documentaries about the Second World War (*Night Will Fall*, *The Decent One*, Lanzmann's *The Last of the Unjust* and Ken Loach's *Spirit of '45*). Or also when you have the re-run of *The Searchers*, your senior viewer who would usually look at some of your film posters very suspiciously, could pass by one day and say: "A film with John Wayne...! I'll come and see this one".

Of course our main concern is, and will always be, the new generations of cinephiles not being aware of the uniqueness of seeing a film in a dark, comfortable and special cinema. But it is this mixture of people of all ages and backgrounds that always make you feel your work and your life is worthwhile. Film and cinemas have the quality of going through a crisis for over five decades and still giving us so much joy with every new film and every new day.

One day we opened a newspaper - which has the biggest circulation in our country - and the brightest and cultest columnist wrote a small piece defining our distribution company as "The always visionary, cinephile and courageous Midas Filmes" and our theatre as "The new and wonderful Cinema Ideal in Lisbon".

— Pedro Borges



José Neves (Architect of the cinema) and Pedro Borges
© Bruno Almeida/Público



Pedro Borges © Bruno Lisita/Público

ROMANIA

TRAVELLING CINEMAS

An alternative way of accessing wider audiences

CARAVANA GALA FILMULUI DE AUTOR

Can you tell us about the Asociația Cinemascope?

Cinemascope organises the Les Films de Cannes à Bucarest Festival, two mobile cinema projects – one focused on Romanian cinema and one on European cinema – and some other projects relating to film promotion, distribution and educational projects through / for cinema. The festival started as an initiative to bring to the Romanian audiences titles not otherwise available in distribution and was co-initiated with the Cannes general delegate Thierry Frémaux as a way of combatting the disappearance of cinemas in Romania.

Where does the mobile cinema project stem from?

In 2007, after *4 months, 3 weeks & 2 days* got the Palme d'Or, there was a great deal of interest in the film in Romania. I had produced the film and I finally decided to distribute it myself as well. There were very few cinemas left in the country so we decided to organise a caravan and present the film in as many places as possible. We raised funds, brought a truck from Germany fitted-out with a 35mm projector, a screen, and sound equipment, we found the venues and for some 4 weeks the caravan went around Romania, reaching 25 different towns.



Les Films de Cannes à Bucarest 2015 © Ionut Dobre

This enabled some 20,000 people to see the film – and we documented the experience in a short film. The idea was to set an example to encourage the authorities to do something about changing the situation of the network of state-owned cinemas. But there was no concrete answer from them. However, the initiative did generate a trend, and now there are several such caravans in Romania – this way of bringing films to audiences has become the regular answer to the lack of theatres.

How does the audience respond? What difficulties are there in building an audience?

Together with the disappearance of cinemas in Romania, the habit of going to watch films in single-screen theatres has dropped a lot. Younger people have lost contact with the various different ways of making cinema. Piracy is huge. Over 90% of films screened by multiplexes are American titles. So it is not easy to build an audience. Nevertheless, the brand of Cannes, the promotion that we do and the presence of great filmmakers have turned the festival into a great success. After only six years, nearly 15,000 viewers have come to watch films in Les Films de Cannes à Bucarest during a week of screenings. For the caravans, things are more complicated, especially for European titles since there is literally no promotion at all for such films in Romania – due to the very small return from exploitation. We use the festival to make as much buzz as possible about the titles that we will screen later on in the caravans, we try to mobilise local film lovers and, whenever we can, we bring along guests or critics to accompany the films.

What are the main problems that you encounter? Do local municipalities support you?

For the caravans, there is no financial involvement from the municipalities – sometimes they contribute with a venue – but we have to bring along all the screening equipment with us since we are often talking about conference rooms with a few chairs, not rooms fitted-out for a proper screening. The caravans are organised with a very small budget even if they involve quite significant running costs – so the biggest problem is that we are not able to promote

the events intensively. Another problem is that most of the public film screenings in Romania over recent years were organised for free – as an attempt to attract people back to film – but the result is also that people now consider that film is something which should always be consumed for free – and the connotation of this habit is that it is not worth paying to see a film.

How do you envision the future of the mobile cinema?

We have already encouraged some film education programmes for children in Bucharest and we would like to expand this initiative to other towns in the country as well. We prepare special screening sessions for children during the caravan – which are important, especially in places where there is no cinema left, since we would like children to develop the pleasure of watching films on a big screen. The aim of mobile cinema is, little by little, to create enough local interest for such films so that the community could decide on setting up a cinema – and from that moment on the caravans would move to the next step – of creating a significant event in the community (by bringing guests and creating film

events) but would do this for spectators that were given back the possibility of watching screenings regularly and not only a few times a year.

— Cristian Mungiu, Filmmaker



Cristian Mungiu © Ionut Dobre

CARAVANA TIFF



Caravana TIFF (screening in Timisoara) © Claudia Tanasescu

Could you tell us about Romanian Film Promotion?

At the beginning in 2002 Romanian Film Promotion was just a vehicle for organizing TIFF (Transilvania International Film Festival). After a few years we realised that TIFF had become a hub for the promotion of all Romanian cinema and that our team did more promotion for the Romanian cinema than the CNC. So we made a proposal to the CNC and started representing Romania at international festivals such as Berlin and Cannes, and also editing catalogues. We have also become members of European Film

Promotion. For the past 7 or 8 years we have developed film education actions and have tried to give access to films from TIFF by running a mobile cinema, to make these films available in our country to audiences who could not otherwise see them.

When did you start running the mobile cinema?

With the help of grants from PHARE we managed to purchase a mobile 35mm projector and an inflatable screen, and in 2006 we organised the first mobile cinema throughout the country. We now do it in digital. We have managed to buy a 10,000 lumen HD projector and can screen films from HD files. We would like to have a mobile DCP projector, but we still need to find a solution to purchase it.

The mobile cinema was part of the Operation Kino project (in partnership with the Sofia Film Festival, Sarajevo and Istanbul)?

Operation Kino was an excellent project. We managed to exchange films and this helped us in acquiring of the rights (as we took them for 4 territories) and also in inviting guests. Sadly, we did not manage to create sustainable VOD platform, because there is a serious problem with the piracy in our countries. Operation Kino ended this year, so as of 2016 each partner will do its own projects.

How do you do your programming?

We choose to show the best films from the TIFF selection and the best Romanian films of the year. But there are also times when we choose to purchase

the rights for some specific films like *Rams* (Grímur Hákonarson) this year, which won Un certain Regard in Cannes. We have pioneered this type of distribution (we did the same last year with *Xenia*, *La isla mínima*, Stockholm). We try to show the films first as part of the mobile cinema, with the idea that this will create an audience and will promote the theatrical release (knowing that for an arthouse film we will have very few screens for a release). For us, a traditional release combined with a pre-release in a mobile cinema is, for now, what suits our current market best.

How is the audience responding?

Some of them (mostly cinephiles) are motivated by the title and the TIFFF brand, the guarantee of a good film and a special experience, but for most people in the audience (and I'm talking about the regions without cinemas) the biggest pleasure is to see a film on a big screen. There is also the social experience that you can have, mostly during summer, of seeing a film and talking about it afterwards. In some places we have tried reopening some of the summer outdoor theatres, for instance in Timisoara where, thanks also to the excellent weather, we had 1,200 people at our screenings every evening. We are happy that we have been able to develop a special relationship with the audience and with the local authorities. They both wait for our films with baited breath. For us it is very important that the TIFFF brand means a lot not only in Cluj and Bucharest, but also throughout the whole of the country.

What are the difficulties that you encounter?

I think that the biggest difficulty is logistics. Romania is a big country with very few good roads, distances are big and so the traveling costs are high, particularly if you want to go to many places. We have also tried to have a mix between indoor and outdoor screenings, but we saw that outdoor screenings have more success. This means that we have to travel with the equipment and ensure the best possible conditions. We do not want

to create any discomfort for the audience. So all these things put together make this project complicated.

Future developments?

We would like to go up a level, to upgrade our equipment by investing in a lighter way of travelling, and maybe even in some folding seats. After that we would like to have stronger links between the mobile cinema and TIFFF, to underline the fact that it is the festival that brings the films throughout the country and maybe try to bring audience members to TIFFF, like a sort of reward meaning increased audience involvement. I would also like to find local promoters, NGOs, young people wanting to organise this type of project in their cities and to help them do it for free or for a nominal fee. The idea is to give them the know-how to organise this type of event themselves so that they can do it in their own towns and cities.

— Tudor Giurgiu, Director of TIFFF, President of Romanian Film Promotion, Filmmaker



Tudor Giurgiu

CARAVANA METROPOLIS

Could you tell us about Asociatia Metropolis?

Metropolis Cultural Association organises KINODiseea International Children Film Festival, the biggest event in South-Eastern Europe dedicated to educating young children and youth from different backgrounds through art cinema, and the Metropolis Open-Air Cinema which brings the best European films to the wide public in large and small cities in Romania.

Where did the mobile cinema project stem from?

The Metropolis Open-Air Cinema started back in 2012. We acquired, with European funds, the most innovative technical equipment to be found in Romania for outdoor screenings, a 17,000-lumen digital projector

and an inflatable screen the size of a 2-storey building. At the time we started this project, most of the art cinema venues had shut down around the country or had been turned into restaurants or casinos, and it was obvious that only film-lovers were watching European films in the handful of festivals that were mainly held in Bucharest. Multiplexes in malls were being built everywhere, but they were screening blockbusters in a huge proportion, with very little space left for European cinema, and the demand for it was low. Less than 5% of the Romanian public was attending European film screenings. At the same time, European films could not be watched on television either and VOD was practically inexistent in Romania. All these issues were



© Caravana Metropolis

feeding online piracy tremendously. Also before the revolution, many outdoor cinema gardens existed all across the country but, again, they were all shut down right after. We were determined to bring European films back into the lives of the Romanians, and so we did, by taking our big screen and projector into as many towns and cities around Romania as possible, showing the best new productions straight from the big screens of the Cannes or Berlin film festivals.

How do you do your programming?

From the beginning we realised that is important not to scare the wide audience with very niche films, so we select films that are European and artsy, but at the same time, not too hard to digest by unaccustomed viewers.

How is the audience responding?

Our project was successful from the very beginning. In the first season, we gathered an audience of over 80,000 in 6 cities, the second year brought us 50,000 viewers in 3 cities, as our budget was insufficient for travelling to more places. The third and fourth editions gathered around 90,000 each. We did not charge an entrance fee to make sure that we got a big audience for the films and could work towards developing their taste in this direction. From the discussions and surveys we carried during the event, we discovered that many of the people attending the screenings were watching a European film for the very first time, and that they had preconceived ideas about such films, never thinking they would be enjoyable and that we had managed to prove them the contrary and that they will now continue to watch European cinema at every opportunity. We mainly targeted young people because they are potential cinemagoers once they develop a taste for European cinema. Once they attend Metropolis Open-Air Caravan and like a film that is both artistic and accessible, our hope is that they will attend the few screenings of European films that there are in the cinema theatres and consequently, our goal is that local distributors will be able to distribute more European films successfully.

What are the main difficulties that you encounter?

Rainy days are hard to predict and it is challenging for us! Another difficulty is that the law that does not allow outdoor events after 11 o'clock in the evening and we would like to programme more than one film each evening. Another time-consuming problem we encounter is getting the all the authorisations from each town or city we plan to travel to with the caravan, to use the public place, which is always the city centre square or a big park.

How do you envision the future of Caravana Metropolis?

We are hoping for successful future editions and that our audience will continue to grow and that we will be able to establish more partnerships with the city halls and councils from different cities. We are also hoping to find indoor venues where we can travel with the caravan during the cold season.

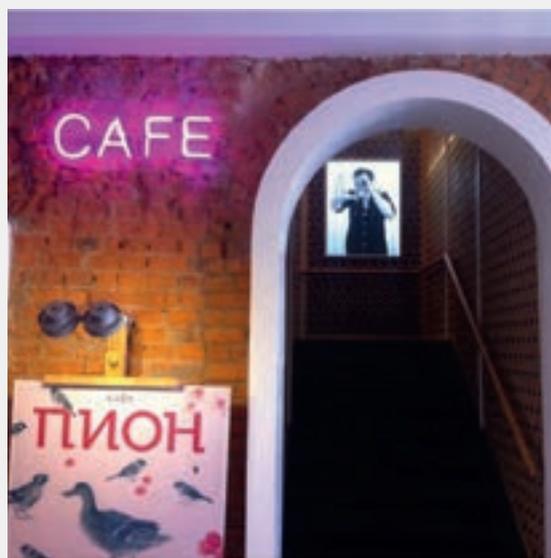
— Daniel Mitulescu, Producer & Ligia Mitulescu, Artistic Director



Daniel & Ligia Mitulescu

RUSSIA

PIONER CINEMA, MOSCOW



Rebuilding the Moscow cinephile community

Pioneer Cinema was built in 1953 by the prominent Soviet architect Zinovy Rosenfeld. For more than fifty years, until the 2000s, it operated as a film theatre for children and teenagers. But in the middle of the 2000s it almost ceased to exist. In 2009 Pioneer was purchased by a private company and renovated by the architectural firm Wowhaus. It re-opened on 15 October 2009 and shortly after became one of the most significant cultural venues in Moscow.

Pioneer is located on Kutuzovsky Prospekt, one of the main avenues of Moscow, and occupies the ground floor of a magnificent Soviet-style residential building. The theatre has two identical screening rooms each having 84 seats. Pioneer is the best technically-equipped film theatre in Russia and has both DCP and 35mm interlocked projectors. Café Pion and Pioneer Bookstore are also part of the cinema. Pioneer's spacious foyer, with panoramic windows and luxurious Baccarat chandeliers, is often used as an exhibition facility, where we present paintings, photographs and posters related to films, our special programmes and retrospectives. Apart from the main venue on Kutuzovsky, Pioneer has two open-air theatres — in Gorky Park (500 seats, opened in 2011) and in Sokolniki Park (400 seats, opened in 2015).

Pioneer is the only arthouse venue in Moscow which shows a variety of artistic films every day, ranging from festival hits and auteur blockbusters to film classics and old rarities. Our goal is to bring the best cinema, both classic and new, mainstream and edgy, to a large and respectful audience keen to discover new films and experiences. We believe that the true and most authentic film experience can be only delivered on the big screen in a film theatre. That means we don't sell popcorn and only show films in the original version with subtitles. We are trying to raise our audiences and rebuild the Moscow cinephile community that has unfortunately been disintegrating due to the closing of the Moscow Cinematheque (Moscow Film Museum), which used to be our main partner. Pioneer also collaborates with UNIFRANCE, BFI, EYE and other national and international film institutions. In 2015 it became the official screening venue of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and shows films that are thematically linked with temporary exhibitions and a permanent collection of the Pushkin Museum. We think that a perfect film theatre today is not just a place for leisure and entertainment but also — or first of all — a cultural and educational space.

Each year Pioneer hosts various film festivals, including a French Film Festival and Festival of New Israeli Cinema. One of its highlights is BRICK, the annual festival of British cinema launched and programmed solely by Pioneer. Pioneer is famous for its retrospectives. In the past few years Pioneer has organised retrospectives of Bela Tarr, Vera Chytilova and Seijun Suzuki, Paul Verhoeven and Alfred Hitchcock, Alexei Guerman and Alexei Balabanov among others.

Pioneer is the first cinema in Russia that regularly screens restored masterpieces of world cinema. In 2014 Pioneer launched "At the cinema, at last" series. For one weekend a month Pioneer's audience can watch a selection of classic movies linked by a common theme, style or director. These films have never been released in Russia but it is never too late to see them on the big screen for the first time or rediscover familiar movies. In 2015 Pioneer started to promote and distribute the programme At the cinema, at last in other cities of

Russia. For one of the highlights of the programme — James Cameron's Terminator — Pioneer even went into distribution and showed the film in several cinemas across Russia.

There are also completely new films that can be seen only in Pioneer. For example, Gaspar Noé's Love 3D failed to receive a distribution certificate in Russia, but can still be shown in film festivals. Pioneer is the only cinema in Russia that supported this film, by including it in the At the cinema, at last series.

The programme "At the cinema, at last" is so popular that even Rutger Hauer heard about it during his visit to Moscow this spring and decided to drop in to Pioneer and say hello to the audience before the screening of the Blade Runner. The Final Cut. The audience knew nothing about the visit, it was a surprise for them. The audience was very impressed, as was Rutger Hauer, who did not expect to see a full-house at the screening of a film made in 1982.

Pioneer is a customer-oriented company. That is why it pays so much attention to communicating with its followers on social media. Our audience is highly digitised. 70% of our tickets are sold online, and for some events even 100%. We have more than 35,000 subscribers on Facebook and reply to all the messages and comments. Through social media Pioneer receives feedback on every aspect of its work — from the timetable to the quality of food.

Next year Pioneer is planning on launching a programme called Cinema on Demand. Anyone who wants to see a certain film on the big screen will be able to submit a request on Pioneer's website. As soon as there are enough applications for one film, the screening will be organised. Apart from this Pioneer is planning on opening arthouse cinemas in other Russian cities and launch new open-air screenings as well as developing its own distribution network.

— Mary Nazari, CEO Pioneer Cinema



Mary Nazari



Bioskop Vilin Grad, Niš

SERBIA

BIOSKOP VILIN GRAD, NIŠ

Viling Grad: a cinema fit for all generations

With its central position in the city, right in the pedestrian area, Bioskop Vilin Grad is a great meeting point. Its doors are open to all generations of viewers. Serbia has a long cinema tradition! The first projection in Belgrade was held barely six months after the very first film projection ever in 1895.

Since then, Serbia has always been a country of cinema, except during a very precarious, quite recent period when cinemas crashed completely and where there was a significant risk of there being a cinema-free landscape. One of the first cinemas that closed down was in Niš, in Central Serbia, the country's second largest town, which has been without a cinema for ten years.

The programming at Bioskop Vilin Grad in Niš is similar to other cinemas, and yet completely different. We screen both commercial and European arthouse films at the same time, which could seem confusing on one hand, but on the other hand, it makes perfect logical sense since the number of satisfied audiences is growing.

The area in front of the cinema can be used for all kinds of events and premières. The events take place in the streets in front of the cinema, spontaneously, without being necessarily part of an intentional marketing strategy. Cinema has become a part of everyone's lives in this venue.

To develop our audience, we have created a loyalty card programme where people can collect points. There are a number of different rewards, such as access to festivals and events. Every month some of the nearby schools can bring their classes to a film screening for free.

As both a distributor and an exhibitor, we know very well a film which is not well distributed will not have an audience, and that a cinema screening a film with no audience cannot be considered as a cinema, but at best case a popcorn shop. It is not possible to harmonise these two aspects without visiting several cinemas and observing audiences watching a film. That is what makes our work different. We are glad to distribute more films today, which means that the

audience is growing and that our work is turning out to be successful.

As organizers of the Kids Fest and Auteur Film Festival, we are facing a big challenge when it comes to promoting films, but that is something we are intensely working on. Just sitting around a table with ten colleagues from different departments and talking about films, which every single one of us has to watch, we find solutions to all sorts of problems. And just as a magician pulls a rabbit out of his hat, we just keep putting together different ideas and end up creating a formula to promote European films successfully. Social media plays a key role in our promotional strategy in relation to all other media, which are now identified as "old" media. This includes newsletters, which are sent once a week, targeting different populations for different campaigns and online ticket reservations and sales. We can say that social networks have become part of our core activity and are contributing to our success more than anything. We are particularly proud of our Kids Fest event, which has just ended, during which a great number of screenings and events took place. There were creative and educational workshops with great entertainment content and all sorts of initiatives for young audiences, such as a children's choir in a cinema. There were mascots available to take photos with kids, and our favourite initiative was a quartet show in front of the cinema as an introduction to a screening.

We will always renew our commitment and continue in our efforts to ensure that Vilin Grad plays its full role for cinema lovers.

— Igor Stankovic, CEO MCF MegaCom Film



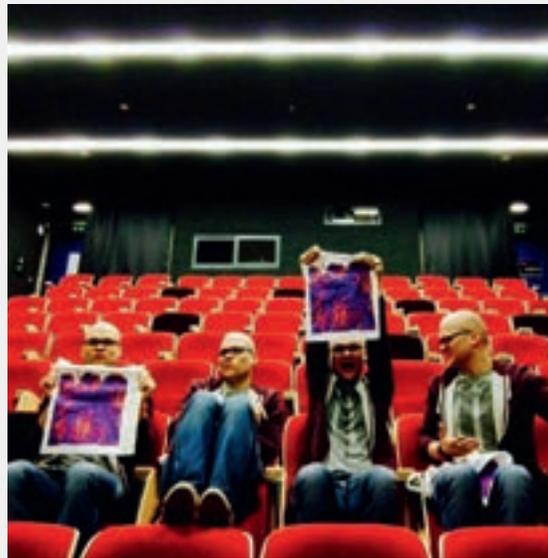
Igor Stankovic

SLOVENIA

ART KINO ODEON, IZOLA



"Bags travel" operation

Q&A with the director Rok Biček after the screening of *Class Enemy*

A small cinema with a wide screen

Art Kino Odeon Izola, founded in 2003, is situated in the small fishing town of Izola with just under 16,000 inhabitants, while there are two larger cities in close vicinity, sporting multiplex cinemas showcasing major productions. In light of these facts, we have decided to consciously build and develop our own identity as an art house cinema, mostly featuring non-commercially oriented films.

Our grand aim and big wish is to provide audiences with an opportunity to rediscover all the beauty and dimensions of film in the cinema, which is what film was meant for.

Since we try to remain inclusive, it happens occasionally that we also reach for more commercial titles, however, we do prefer to avoid them. The mere fact that we are able to do so can also largely be attributed to our loyal audiences, since it is a statistical fact that we have fewer visitors to our cinema when we screen more commercial films, which is a piece of information we gladly confess to and are especially proud of. Given that we have in the past year had almost 15,000 viewers, we feel that the local community has recognised the importance of the presence of film art in the region.

In addition to the quality regular film programme, it is important for each cinema theatre to offer a space where we can have guest appearances at various festivals, since the festivals showcase events that offer a real treat to all cinephiles. As a cinema we ascribe particular importance to the International Film Festival Kino Otok – Isola Cinema, held in June. We have been co-habiting and co-creating a film landscape with this particular festival for 11 years now. In the past year, we have also co-organised the Slovenian Animated Film Review, which is currently in terrific shape, but it lacks its own venue and event to screen its works and offer a profound representation of this type of animated film. In co-operation with different cultural agents, we also organise thematic programme scopes or weeks dedicated to different auteurs or, in some cases, a chosen cinematography of a particular nation.

In our cinema, we have been hosting school screenings for years and, with the help of film educators, we take great care in making sure that the films are presented to the youngest audiences in a proper manner. As part of the regular Art Kino Odeon programme, we are implementing the project Cinema Girandola (Kino Vetrnica), where during the weekends, the first screenings are dedicated to the youngest audiences.

In any event, the past school year 2014/15 brought the most important success for film education, namely being included in the National Film Education Programme implemented by the Slovenian Art Cinema Network. As part of this project, we were able to provide kindergartens and schools with an opportunity to benefit from free screenings and educational content, which had extremely positive effects. Children were able to meet film in a special, unique way, sometimes even in the presence of filmmakers, which is definitely a nice experience.

In the past year, we have also decided to open wide the doors of our cinema to non-film cultural

content, such as all kinds of audio-visual events, concerts or performances, with the idea of attracting a slightly different kind of audience to our facilities.

However, we strongly believe in sincere communication with our audience, therefore, a clear social media strategy is more than crucial. We have recently started an action called "bags travel" and achieved amazing results in terms of Facebook views, clicks, tweets and audience involvement in general. Posted pictures of our cinema bags were sent from all over the globe from South Africa to Europe. We hope to unroll the process of connecting, exchanging opinions and information with our audiences with a goal to becoming a better screening venue.

Definitely, it would not be possible without the cinema going digital in May 2013, which marked a watershed in the cinema's activities. By transitioning to the digital screening of films, an entire new array of possibilities has opened up. Without a doubt, digitalisation meant the rebirth of Art Kino Odeon, and also provided us with new challenges, in addition to new possibilities. We will try to meet the challenges head-on. Society and technology are rapidly changing at the moment, so we will do our best to meet these developments as innovatively and creatively as possible, because we believe the most successful recipe to keep a loyal audience is to provide an interesting, high-quality programme, which will always be the guiding light in our cinema.

— Petra Božič, Director.



Petra Božič



Some of the partners © Carlos Rosillo

SPAIN

CINES ZOCO MAJADAHONDA, MAJADAHONDA

When filmgoers become stakeholders

Cines Zoco Majadahonda has been open since 20 December 2013. We are located in the first shopping centre that opened in the region of Madrid in 1979, in Majadahonda (70,000 inhabitants).

What's our strength? More than 1,200 members are "owners" of the Cines Zoco Majadahonda. This is what makes us stand out and is our greatest asset. For the past two years we have been working on creating a concept of a cinema which is closer to viewers, where they can feel that they are being listened to and have a feeling of belonging.



Pedro and Agustín Almodóvar

The cinema reopened its doors thanks to the efforts of the inhabitants of Majadahonda. When the Renoir Majadahonda cinema closed in April 2013, 3,200 signatures were collected opposing the closure. This public support was the germ of the cultural association which manages Cines Zoco Majadahonda. There are currently more than 1,200 members, who pay an annual fee of €100 making the survival of the theatre possible.

Our goal is to keep the only existing theatre in the centre of Majadahonda open and to keep alive this important cultural focus that our community needs. We aim to be the reference film theatre in the northwest of Madrid, committed to provide quality programming with films both dubbed into Castilian as well as in the original version. In Cines Zoco Majadahonda we give a great importance to our special events, which is also what sets us apart from other theatres around which are mainly situated in large shopping centres.

We all want to make the cinema become a place where the viewers can feel at home, we listen to their comments and slowly adapt the programming in line with their needs and wishes.

Currently our biggest challenge remains bringing new audiences to the cinema, so we work in two directions. On the one hand, we have created an education committee that works closely with teachers in schools in our city, ensuring that our cinema is a meaningful tool for the education of children and young people. On the other hand, we have started a collaboration with youth organizations in Majadahonda to make them feel the movies as their own and work together in creating new content which is more attractive for young people.

We would like social media to have a much bigger impact in our promotional strategy, nonetheless we are able to inform and update our audience quickly through regular newsletters with over 1,800 people registered in our contact list.

Above all, what we are particularly proud of is the event called "Directors in the Zoco". Since the cinema opened two years ago we have ensured that every Thursday we have the honour of sharing impressions and viewpoints with several film directors. It has already become "Thursday's cultural" in our city and our loyal audience fills the room until the very last corner. Pedro Almodóvar was the most important guest we had, who shared a lot of anecdotes on his beginnings in the cinema world. We also had directors like David Trueba and Carlos Vermout, and others who do not have an opportunity to show their work in other theatres in Spain. The magic of these events is that a very intimate atmosphere is created in the room, making directors more relaxed and helping them to tell their personal experiences with our viewers.

We face the future full of enthusiasm and optimism. Over the second year we have managed to renew almost all of the supporters who were committed in the first year, thus giving a vote of confidence for our project. We are working hard on creating new content that appeals to our viewers to continue to be proud of their cinema. For example, at the moment we are working on the projection of operas in our cinema. To give the audience further added value we have created a parallel course enabling viewers to have a prior opinion on the opera, thus making the pleasure of watching opera in a movie theatre even greater for them.

Another of our future projects is building a new strategy to attract young audiences, it is a challenge that we are beginning to develop with cultural youth associations in the area.

— Javier Asenjo, Vice-President of the Board of Directors



Javier Asenjo

SWEDEN

RIO, STOCKHOLM



A study to find new ways of reaching a wider audience

Rio is a single screen cinema in Stockholm, which had its first premiere in 1943. Rio was re-opened by Folkets Hus och Parker in 2009. The venue was restored to its unique original condition, with the support of the King of Sweden. Today Rio is an event cinema with both a screen and a stage, a cinema bar, a café and a restaurant.

Rio is a meeting place and a cultural venue aimed at enhancing and diversifying the cinema experience, combining film and performing arts with current social issues. At Rio you can enjoy a weekly programme of film screenings, a movie breakfast every Sunday, a night out at the Cinema Bar or go to Cinema for babies (actually for parents and toddlers). Rio also works as a stage for Stockholm's many independent filmmakers and cultural players. Events, clubs, seminars, debates and screenings are arranged by different associations and organisations, with important issues on the agenda. It is a deliberate strategy to cooperate with external partners, to reach new audiences. It also helps to ensure quality and diversity in the programme.

At an international level, Rio might be more well-known for the A-rated campaign, which caught the attention of journalists and film professionals worldwide, raising awareness of gender inequalities in film. For a film to be classified as A-rated, it has to pass the Bechdel-Wallace test, meaning it has to contain two named women talking to each other about something other than men.

In these times when catastrophic images of refugees and misery reach us every day, tolerance and humanity also have to come from the cultural sector. This will be visible in Rio's programming. Activities directed for people newly arrived in Sweden, prioritising on films from the Middle East and Eastern Europe, will be much more common in the Rio's programme in coming years.

In recent years, ticket sales of what we call "specialised films" declined in Sweden. A few commercial titles have a bigger impact on box office statistics each year. In Sweden, the peak of ticket sales for European films was in 2007 with 18.4%, compared to the 2013 low of 9%. This is an international trend. The UK, for instance, 2012 saw the share of non-English-language film drop down to 0.9%.

We are convinced that this is not because the films are worse or less interesting for the mainstream audience. On the contrary, we believe, rather, that the declining trend is due to the fact that arthouse cinemas use an old-fashioned and excluding language, which fails to communicate that our films are exciting and enticing. The arthouse world uses a vocabulary which is directed towards "our own world". This results in an even greater distance between our desired visitors and the cinemas.

If we want more people to discover the amazing European films that we screen at our arthouse cinemas, we must listen to the audience and its needs. With this in mind, we are conducting a study on this subject in collaboration with the audience and the main stakeholders in the Swedish film industry. The project is divided into several parts. First, we have sent out a questionnaire to over 3,000 cinemagoers in Sweden. There is a mix of the multiplex audience and the arthouse audience. We asked for example: What factors come into play when choosing between different cinemas? What are the strengths and weaknesses of arthouse cinemas strengths and weaknesses? Why have specialised films been branded as being difficult and heavy, and how can we adapt our communications to change that trend? The next step is in-depth interviews, with the help of a researcher, who will then analyse the results. A PR consultant, who is external to the film industry, together with several players from within the film industry, will implement new courageous and innovative promotional campaigns for our cinemas and films.

The mission is to find new ways of reaching a wider audience by communicating our activities and movies with new words. We believe that this will generate greater interest in specialised films and bigger box-office results.

— Ellen Tejle (Cinema Manager)



Ellen Tejle

TURKEY

BEYOĞLU AND PERA SINEMASI, ISTANBUL



Beyoğlu Sineması, Istanbul

Beyoğlu, Pera, Baska... Another cinema in Turkey!

Founded in 1989, Beyoğlu Cinema is located in one of the oldest districts, and definitely one of the most famous streets in Istanbul – Prospect *stiklal*. The theatre is built on the ground floor of the historical Halep Passage created in 1885, turning several small shops into a cinema. It was the first new cinema to open in Istanbul after 30 years of constant closures. Over five years we built Pera Cinema on the same floor as Beyoğlu.

For the opening of Beyoğlu we arranged the first night performance of the film *Dolunay* (Full Moon) by the outstanding Turkish director *Ahın Kaygun*, who couldn't find any other cinema willing to screen his film.

In the past we have given a chance to films by now world-famous Turkish film directors Zeki Demirkubuz and Nuri Bilge Ceylan at a time when no other cinema was ready to show them. In 26 years, we did our best to screen outstanding films produced by Europe, or even further afield from South America to Australia, from Iran to Canada. While the majority of cinemas in Turkey were showing Hollywood productions, we have always tried to show multicultural films from the whole world. This is why, since its opening, our cinema has always been one of the venues for the International Istanbul Film Festival. For the same reason it has become one of the first cinemas in Turkey to join the Eurimages/Europa Cinemas Network. Our cinema has got a reputation of 'Repertoire Cinema' and is considered as one of the few Art Film Platforms in Turkey.

Various events are organised in the foyer shared by Pera and Beyoğlu, such as film galleries, meetings with film directors, press-conferences, film previews...

But the process of globalisation is increasingly affecting the social mission of the cinemas in Turkey. The viewers' profiles, their lifestyles, their income levels have changed a lot during the last decade. Several malls have opened all over the place, Hollywood films are powerful and limitless.

Film release formats have altered to DCP, which means we have to renew equipment which we cannot afford. We tried to find financial support from both private businesses and governmental organisations but unfortunately to no avail. After we announced that we might have to close, our viewers started a campaign to collect signatures in support of our cinema. Just when we were about to close down our cinema, we met with Baska Sinema (network of Turkish independent distributors and exhibitors promoting diversity), which shared our Quixotic views. With the financial support of Baska Sinema we managed to re-equip our cinema with DCP.

As a result of this cooperation, which has lasted for two years now, we have managed to present a programme consisting mostly of European films.

Baska Sinema's programming is based on a curatorial selection. We see films at national and international festivals, and also programme through with a Turkish distributor. Our aim is to create the buzz of a film festival all year round.

We focus as well on marketing side. It was not easy in the beginning to market Baska Sinema as it is a

unique model of distribution in Turkey. As for the screenings, we have changed the usual structure and made it much more flexible and varied. New events and thematic screenings have also been added to the programme. At Baska Sinema, films stay in theatres for at least one month. Every day, at the same venue, you can see a minimum of three different films.

A special selection of films, such as 'Surprise Film Night', 'Short Film Night', 'Documentary Night', 'Premieres', 'Cult Film Night' and 'You Didn't Miss!' are screened on the last session of every Wednesday Baska Carsamba (Another Wednesday) Nights. Baska Sinema also organizes special *SineBebe* screenings for mothers and babies. It's a great opportunity for mothers to watch films comfortably with their children and socialise with others. Some screenings are followed by Q&A sessions with the film crew.

Our budget is very limited so we cannot carry out as many new projects as we would like and our marketing campaigns are very limited. This is why social media is vital to us. Our content is very rich and we have a strong, interactive relationship with our followers. It is a cost-effective and time-efficient way to keep our audience informed about films and Baska Sinema. We have some 155,000 followers on Facebook, 53,000 on Twitter and 11,000 on Instagram. Our web page and monthly newsletters are the other online communication sources we use.

When it comes to looking to the future, it must not be forgotten that 60% of the box office comes from Turkish commercial films, then US blockbusters. arthouse market share is around 5%, but our collaboration with Baska Sinema optimises the diversity and the visibility of European films.

— Baha Serter (Pera Cinema),
Temel Kerimoglu (Beyoğlu Cinema),
Imre Tezel (Baska Cinema).



Baha Serter

UNITED KINGDOM

HOME, MANCHESTER



HOME Launch - Danny Boyle



HOME Launch



(Courtesy of HOME)

A new concept for a flagship cinema

In April 2015 the film theatre Cornerhouse in Manchester moved into HOME, a new £26m 6,000m² arts centre that includes five new cinemas equipped with the latest 4k digital projectors, 7.1 surround sound and 35mm/16mm projectors. This is a distinctive and visionary project in the current economic climate with Manchester City Council procuring the building with the support of Arts Council England.

The cinema launched on April 21st. The wider building opened to the public on May 21st with the HOMEwarming weekend. The weekend included the UK premiere of John Maclean's *Slow West*, who was also in attendance.

Cornerhouse was a flagship independent film theatre and occupied a unique position in the North West of England. As Cornerhouse our film programme played a major role in the cultural life of the region and beyond, by providing a broad range of independent film and video, most of which would not otherwise be available to our audiences. HOME continues to build on this. In addition to the five cinema screens HOME also includes a 500 theatre, 120-150 flexible studio theatre, 500m² 4m high gallery space, education spaces, café bar, restaurant, offices and other ancillary spaces consistent with a production centre, a making place – intimately concerned with providing new opportunities for artists and audiences.

Key to HOME's success is developing and delivering a single distinctive creative vision that delivers the very best in film, contemporary visual art, theatre and performance art practice. The programme teams across the three artforms and our Engagement team work together to produce a high quality programme with local, national and international significance.

HOME is the first purpose-built five screen independent specialised cinema in the UK. The additional screens enable HOME to extend the programme by increasing the number of titles and so improve audience choice and access in Manchester and the region. We have increased special events and the number of archive and restoration titles we screen (both those on a reissue basis and screening titles that we feel deserve revisiting such as *Seconds*, *Two-Lane Blacktop* and *Distant Voices, Still Lives*). Our flexible programming enable films to build a word of mouth audience and to run for extended periods (to mention an example, *Amy* ran for 12 weeks). We live to work with artists to produce questioning and ambitious artistic projects and involve audiences with new and extraordinary experiences in contemporary theatre, visual art and film. We are accessible to all members of the community and this is reflected in our ticket pricing policy.

Full time exhibition of an independent film programme for diverse audiences in Greater Manchester and the North West, including specific audience development initiatives aimed at cultural diversity and disabled audiences. HOME thrives in a highly competitive Manchester market for cinema by providing a clearly differentiated experience and programme.

Young people aged between 14 and 17 are specifically targeted for audience development through a membership scheme offering them discounted tickets to all screenings, including festivals such as ¡Viva! Spanish and Latin American Film Festival and full time students can also take advantage of an advanced

booking scheme offering £5 tickets for the vast majority of our film programme.

HOME's film programme is comprised of first run auteur and international cinema combined with the best recent independent releases and partnership events. HOME produces ¡Viva! Spanish and Latin American Film Festival and produces the Asia Triennial Manchester film programme. Regular high profile events take place throughout the year, and on-going collaborations and partnerships for such special events include: BFI, Chinese Film Forum UK, Anthony Burgess Foundation and BAFTA.

Jason Wood, HOME Artistic Director stated: "Film has taken a professorial role at Manchester Metropolitan University and this relationship will have a positive impact on the role of HOME within the city. We will build on our already strong relationships with UK distributors to maximise opportunities for high profile talent Q&As."

As part of our programming process, one of our segments and one of HOME's key flagship projects for our opening year is Music & Film. The series at HOME presents an eclectic season of new commissions, bringing together some of Manchester's most innovative and exciting musicians with classic films, archive footage, artist film and experimental cinema. Combining the immediacy and energy of live performance with the magic of the big screen, the project forms part of HOME's extensive cross-art programme and consolidates HOME's partnerships with local universities.

Music & Film draws titles from international film archives across the world and gives musicians the opportunity to explore the relationship between live sound and image, with many of them scoring and arranging for film for the first time!

— Rachel Hayward, HOME Programme Manager (Film and Film Hub NWC)



Rachel Hayward



EUROPA CINEMAS

41 countries - 626 cities - 1048 cinemas - 2,558 screens



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