

### **Europa Cinemas Network Review**

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English Proofreader: Tara Judah. Graphic Design: Change is good, Paris.

Print: Intelligence Publishing.

Cover: Transilvania International Film Festival

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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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The French version of the Network Review is available online at https://www.europa-cinemas.org/publications

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# **Our cinema-goers** are not goldfishes!

### The upheavals caused by the arrival of SVOD platforms are reinforcing the raison d'être of the Europa Cinemas network.

Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and from now on Apple TV+, Disney+, HBO Max, Peacock, Quibi... the hegemony of American platforms raises many questions about the visibility of films and their coexistence with series that are becoming the new staple content online. The cinematic ecosystem has experienced a fundamental transformation comparable to the one caused by the arrival of the television in the middle of the last century, with an extreme concentration of broadcasters worldwide. Now more than ever, it is necessary to promote cinemas, to assert their indispensable social role and their ideal ability to organise events and generate buzz around the screenings of films of all genres and backgrounds. In every country, exhibitors need to affirm their key role within the chain of film dissemination by adapting to new, large-scale business practices within the field and to the changing behaviours of audiences, among young cinemagoers in particular.

Exhibitors' greatest asset is their proximity with their audiences. They do not need to rely on algorithms when they have direct contact with audiences in their cinemas and social media channels. Without a doubt, this trust-based relationship explains why the film theatres that are part of the Europa Cinemas Network have better managed to resist the general decrease in cinema attendance.

But it is not enough to simply keep the audiences we already have; our main challenge is reaching out to Generation Z, the under-20s. The movie theatre has not played a significant role in the short history of these young film lovers, since they are



used to everything that little digital screens can offer. Their use of the Internet consists of surfing between multiple things at once and their attention span is like that of a goldfish in its bowl! Even though editing consists of quicker and quicker cuts in today's films, the content we present in our theatres involves longer periods of time and continuity; this is what gives a public screening its value. It is therefore up to us to communicate this value to younger audiences who can also appreciate the experience of the big screen, sharing strong emotions with their peers. European auteur films can make their way into the cultural consciousness of today's young people provided that we ourselves are creative in how we select and promote them. Films such as Parasite, The Square, 120 Beats Per Minute and the soon-to-be-released



Kinodvor-Kinotrip

Les Misérables can only make a mark on young people who discover them in the theatre. There is nothing to prevent collaborations with platforms like MUBI, which already exist in some countries and make use of all available media to organise events around film releases. This is also a means to address geographical inequalities that still impact certain regions of cinemas.

Even though some regions are underrepresented in terms of cinemas, we are not lacking films in Europe, given that film production has increased by 10% over the past two years, with 1,847 feature films produced. To such an extent that in a few countries this abundance of films on offer causes problems for programme schedulers as well as cinemagoers who have trouble navigating the stream of films and series available to them across all media. Our cinemas at least provide the advantage of clearly displaying programme choices and offering a consistent editorial policy – another asset in terms of building a loyal audience which takes advantage of theatrical releases to discuss the works on show.

Within this mixed cinematographic landscape, we can at least maintain the strength and the appeal of the Europa Cinemas Network. Since our last conference in Bucharest two years ago, our network has

welcomed nearly 100 new members working across 50 new towns and cities. And, of course, the 42 million cinema-wgoers that visit our theatres are powerful allies to European filmmakers. A good portion of the European film industry depends on our performance. The cinemas in our network are not satisfied with simply keeping cinema alive in Europe, they are reinventing it!

The greatest value provided by the network lies precisely in fostering dialogue between cinemas. Conferences and labs help to form the exhibitors of tomorrow and represent unique moments where professionals playing an important economic and cultural role in almost 800 cities across Europe can meet. The Conference in Lisbon will reflect this development perspective, offering a friendly atmosphere where exhibitors can invent new practices and work together towards the future of their cinemas – with a shared enthusiasm!

### Claude-Eric Poiroux

General Director of Europa Cinemas



# **Best Programming Kinodvor (Liubliana, Slovenia)**

Kinodvor is a city cinema where "films like to go to the movies". It is an historic film venue that opened its doors in 1923 with a very interesting history that includes several name changes and different programming lives. Since 2008, it has been run by a public institution founded by the Ljubljana municipality. It was a single screen cinema with 188 seats, exclusively presenting an arthouse programme, until we converted a small space under the cinema's balcony into a second screening room, with 21 seats. According to our founding act, Kinodvor was established to showcase "quality cinema" and to enable "continuous access to such cinema for all visitors."

At Kinodvor, we believe that a film becomes a film when someone is watching it. We work with an individual visitor in mind, but aim at diverse audiences, trying to earn their trust. Right from the start, quality and diversity have been our two guiding principles when it comes to programming. We have the ambition to become a vibrant meeting point for all generations. Though this sounds self-evident for a public institution with a cultural mission, making that a reality within the relatively small confines of a heritage cinema is a continuous balancing act. In addition to the constant changes of everyday life that influence movie-going habits and keeps us on our toes, it is all about finding creative ways to connect with audiences to firmly (re)establish a movie-going practice. Our programming strategy, therefore, consists of not one but many different innovations.

Kinodvor's programme consists, annually, of over 2,000 screenings across three major categories: theatrically released titles, our young audience programme and the

festivals/special events programme. As far as release titles are concerned, establishing a sufficiently diverse programme is a major challenge. Even if the eight distributors operating in the Slovenian market do have an abundance of quality titles on offer, a huge portion of those titles will not be viable for theatrical release in our territory due to a lack of screens. Since Kinodvor is the only year-round arthouse cinema located in the capital (a city with a population of 292,988) of an already very small market like Slovenia (2,089,310), the costs are simply deemed too high-and estimated revenue too low-to justify a theatrical release. In response to this, we support and encourage distributors to release more demanding, quality films by financing and actively involving ourselves in the creative promotional campaigns for those films. Thanks to our efforts, many titles-that would otherwise have been relegated straight to DVD, television or digital platforms - have had a "real life" on the big screen. In this respect, we are proud to say that Kinodvor has become a major game changer in Slovenia by contributing to the substantial increase of theatrically released films in our territory.

Kinodvor's investment in this close partnership with Slovenian distributors has also been essential in programming for our young audiences. The programmes – consisting of release titles, school and kindergarten programmes, as well as a special teen film label/festival, *Kinotrip* – represent a solid third of our total attendance (which, for several years now, has reached its annual ceiling at around 120,000 admissions). Receiving the Europa Cinemas *Best Young Audience Activities Award* in 2010 gave us a boost of confidence,



encouraging us to continue spearheading activities and policies to secure a diverse and quality cultural film offer for the youngest film audiences in Slovenia.

Annually, we screen between three and four hundred features (or feature-length programmes of short films). This diverse offer is, significantly, catered for by our festival programmes. Currently, thirteen different festivals are hosted at Kinodvor. In addition to this, we temporarily import films for special events, which we organise both at Kinodvor and at other venues and with pop-up screenings across the city. For instance, to celebrate the art of cinema with the widest possible audience, we offer a number of free admission open-air screenings of film classics on one of the largest squares in Ljubljana's city centre during the summer. These nights, where over two thousand people share a magical communal movie-going experience, are wonderful opportunities for audience building and film culture.

Offering a maximum in programme diversity without compromising quality is what has been, and continues to be, one of our principle programming strategies. To treat each and every film, as well as the audiences in whom we hope to enthuse to see those films, with the utmost respect is a principle that is precious to us. We are convinced that it is because of these values that our audience trust us and continues to come to Kinodvor. And this is what gives us the confidence to collaborate with our founder, the City of Ljubljana, on an exciting new project: plans to open another Kinodvor cinema, a new arthouse multi-screen cinema complex, exactly one hundred years after Kinodvor first opened its doors.

Metka Dariš Director Koen Van Daele Head of Programme











# **Best Young Audience Activities Lux (Caen, France)**

The LUX is an association, celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2020. With 140 members, this independent enterprise owns its premises, manages three screens, and has a video club, cafeteria and shop located in its lobby. The LUX hosts between 160 and 170,000 visitors each year, more than a third of which are young audiences.

As a genuine institution in the territory, the LUX has always had a deep connection and wide ranging involvement in the local community. Our range of activities gives us the opportunity to collaborate with the city's many cultural partners, and we are especially actively engaged in reaching out to new audiences. First, we expanded our programming reach to include a network of four cinemas (Douvres-la-Délivrande, Lion-sur-Mer, Ouistreham, Falaise). Next, we engaged directly with the local community by screening films outside of our main venue, setting up open air screenings and at other indoor locations (which amount to some hundred or so screenings in 2019). We also engaged with the university through a regular programme of screenings and activities and, finally, engaged with screen education through

a wide range of awareness workshops—from the creation of optical games to filmmaking—alongside film screenings. In offering the audience quality films and supporting activities, the LUX aims to strengthen its role as trailblazer, inspired by the mantra: make cinema shareable.

This work is achieved through national programmes for screen education such as École et Collège au Cinéma, Lycéens et Apprentis au Cinéma, Passeurs d'Images and through supporting activities around our film programme for children, teenagers and students, as well as initiatives to engage people with screen history and cinematic language. These initiatives engage large numbers of children and young audiences with our programming. We also hold very special relationships with youth and community centres, educational institutions and associations whose activities are related to children's leisure and education. For example, in 2018, LUX screened 77 films for school audiences, organised 285 screenings, hosted 26,342 pupils from some 180 schools and 1,800 classes.

This endeavour also extends to regular events such as an Italian Focus, Encounters with German Cinema and the Movies Children Festival, the 23rd edition of which will take place in December, bringing more than 20,000 visitors each year to see films from a range of nationalities.

The LUX has anchored a determination to connect with young people in our work and cultural project. The volunteers and members, most of whom are students, are actively engaged in monitoring daily activities, participating in the general assembly and electing a representative for the executive board, where a position is reserved for a minor.

We engage interns of all ages and from different backgrounds, with a number of aims; discovery in general, an introduction to the workings of cultural enterprises, an introduction to projection, and the monitoring and development of projects.

Finally, in 2017, the LUX established a pioneering scheme in partnership with Caen la Mer and the Rectorat of the Academy of Caen: the creation of a community of Young Ambassadors for Culture (JAC in French). The project works directly with the 20 secondary schools in the local community. The goal is for each of these young people to be an ambassador for one of the 28 participating cultural organizations in the territory. With unfettered access to the cultural offer, these ambassadors share their experiences with their school peers, friends and families, both in their home cities and on social networks. Thus, they help increase accessibility of our cultural offer for young audiences. Since its creation, the number of participants in this scheme has doubled and it was awarded many times, notably with a Prize, for the best innovative cinema from the CNC.

The LUX has managed to create a sort of virtuous circle within the framework of a screening or an activity: a child discovers cinema and the venue with their parents; later



on, they participate in screen education programmes and workshops; then, when they reach the end of junior high school or complete other courses, they learn about the workings of a cultural organisation; once in high school they are able to take part in the JAC scheme and many other initiatives; later still, they may ask to become a volunteer and member, promoting the screening at university and joining the general assembly, finally, being elected for the executive board. And, maybe one day, they will become an employee at the LUX. This is the more or less straight path paved by the staff of the current LUX team!

# **Gautier Labrusse**Director







# **Best Young Audience Activities**Café des Images (Hérouville-Saint-Clair, France)

With its innovative movie theatre, sustainable restaurant, and community spaces, Café des Images has spent 40 years reinventing itself through original projects that are deeply attuned to the world and society. These varied, collaborative and reflective initiatives aim to create a better future for both the region and the film theatre.

The cinema is located in a diverse, working-class neighbourhood in the centre of the multicultural suburb of Hérouville-Saint-Clair, on the outskirts of Caen in Normandy (France). Every year, it hosts more than 350 events and 6,000 screenings, and welcomes more than 120,000 spectators into its building, which is listed for its "Remarkable Contemporary Architecture". The cinema's salle à fleurs, salle coupole, salle Tati and social spaces have seen several generations of children, from the region and further afield, grow up over the years. Today, almost 30,000 children visit the venue annually, in their spare time and on school trips, including 18,500 who come just to see European films.

Ahead of its time, Café des Images has become a significant venue that every resident in the urban district has visited at least once in their childhood. From the very beginning, the cinema has been keen to explore the emerging profiles and behaviours of all audiences and has patiently built a creative ecosystem with a firm focus on young cinemagoers. Very often throughout its history, the original projects it has launched, for all age groups from young children to teenagers, have been rolled out across the whole country.

Café des Images' long-standing, behind-the-scenes contributions to developing activities for young audiences are driven by the belief that, to attract new cinemagoers, it is essential to introduce and educate children about film from an early age onwards. By forging a special relationship with children, young people and adults (parents, teachers, activity leaders, mediators, educators, etc.), and bodies that work closely with them (associations, leisure centres, youth organisations, etc.), Café des Images strengthens the impact of the initiatives it develops, either on its own or in partnership.

In a space which has been thought out, adapted and equipped for all ages, Café des Images offers:

—Out of school hours: a programme of films, interviews with filmmakers, workshops (arts and crafts, cinema, cookery) and specially-priced events likely to appeal to a wide audience of children (film concerts, film clubs, teatime screenings, birthday screenings).

—During school hours: screenings and/or themed sessions for school groups, which Café des Images co-develops with teaching staff, for whom it also organises regular preview sessions.

It is only natural that this film theatre has become regional coordinator of the educational initiatives *Students and Apprentices in Film* and *Primary Schools and Film*. It also jointly organises the *Film and Audiovisual Teaching options* at two secondary schools and coordinates film review competitions in Spanish for all secondary school students in the region.



As a testament to its European influence, at the end of 2019, the Café des Images team was invited to deliver film education training around the world to cultural officers from the European Union's diplomatic service.

Today, Café des Images is tasked with educating young audiences about film and citizenship. Its activities are firmly anchored in children and young people's realities and favour a *hands-on* approach that fosters autonomy, exploration and an openness to diversity. For the oldest in this age band, the cinema is also a place where they can learn about the film industry. In addition to accepting school and college students all year round for work experience, the venue organises general and professional courses and welcomes students as volunteers. These young people are given the opportunity to co-create emblematic projects from start to finish, such as film history sessions, "open screen" workshops and short film screenings, which are then opened to all members of the public.

To promote its activities, Café des Images has developed targeted communication tools such as dedicated pages in the paper programme, specific newsletters for parents and mailshots for childhood professionals. It pays particular attention to the cinema's spaces; providing play areas, drawing materials and tailor-made decorations to publicise films. Its menus and musical selections have also been thought out to make the place as welcoming as possible to children and young people.

Café des Images' work with young audiences is best characterised by the diversity and high number of events organised, but some activities are particularly impressive:

—To make sure that their first experience of a dark film theatre goes as smoothly as possible, Café des Images organises monthly film and storytelling sessions for 2 to 5-year-olds in conjunction with the neighbouring multimedia library. To begin with, the very young cinemagoers hear a

story in the multimedia library. They then move to Café des Images where they can watch an animated film and discover the film theatre (projection room, lights, etc.) together. As a group, the children signal to the projectionist to begin the screening, which will be linked to the story they heard. At the end, they are encouraged to put this first experience into words and symbols.

—To include all children in its programmes, Café des Images tailors its schedule and film education activities to specific audiences. Since the beginning of this year, it has been trialling a programme of sign language-interpreted public screenings. It has also developed a number of projects for children and parents living in exile in the Caen region. This has included arranging screenings for young audiences in squats, welcoming children to cinema screenings through a pay-it-forward ticket scheme and setting up a music laboratory project.

—To create a cinema fit for the future, this summer, Café des Images began an extensive consultation with children to design a cinema for tomorrow. This project will continue for one year. On a large canvas depicting Café des Images and its many activities, children are encouraged to express what they would like to see, do or create in their cinema.

Café des Images' 40th birthday is not just a time to look back on its rich past. It's also a time to look to the future. The challenges we face today are also an opportunity to shape what tomorrow's cinemas will be. Instead of just thinking about this and expecting it to happen, Café des Images plans to make it happen with young people in the region.

**Elise Mignot** Cinema Manager



### **Entrepreneur of the Year**

# Lucky Home of Cinema, Cinemagic (Plovdiv/Targovishte, Bulgaria)



Lucky Home of Cinema in Plovdiv opened in 2014 and was the first of 12 cinemas and open-air venues launched by Yanaki Dermendzhiev in small towns across Bulgaria. Lucky in Plovdiv, however, was restarted. It was originally established, after the fall of communism, in November 1997 as the first private cinema in the city, but it was bankrupt by 2009, shortly after a multiplex opened in the city. In 2014, together with Mr. Borislav Lalev, they completely renovated the cinema and reopened it with 2 halls (210 and 70 seats). Last year, they renovated the smaller of the two, replacing the chairs with 56 luxury recliners and, this year, they built an extension to the venue to add another luxury room with 32 seats.

Cinemagic, in Targovishte, a sleepy town in Northeast Bulgaria, opened in 2014, in place of the local community centre. With the old cinema in town sold off, there had been no cinema in Targovishte for five years. Cinemagic opened boldly with as a single screen with 206 seats and, in 2016, a second auditorium with 70 seats was added.

It is a true story of many towns in Bulgaria. At the fall of communism in 1989 there were over 3,000 cinemas in the country. After large scale privatisation, they were sold off, one by one, due to their attractive locations. In 2004, there were only 25-30 movie theatres still in operation throughout the country, some of them with only occasional programming. With the advent of digitization in 2009, there were only two major cinema chains in the country, and cinemas were concentrated in only six or seven major cities as movie

theatres in other cities gradually closed their doors.

In 2013, working in partnership, Yanaki launched a new initiative in the form of a travelling cinema that would visit cities where cinemas were no longer open. "Within a year, we toured twelve cities where cinemas had already been closed for ten to fifteen years. We wanted to show that people's interest in cinema could be revived. A year later, we opened four cinemas: Plovdiv, Vidin, Vratsa, Targovishte," Yanaki explained.

Together with Yanaki's brother, Christo, they currently operate eight indoor cinemas and four summer movie theatres.

For the two brothers, love for cinema in all its forms started long ago. Christo Dermendzhiev is also a film distributor and film producer. Owner of "A Plus Films", his company distributed the most successful Bulgarian titles, four out of the ten most successful in 30 years at the box-of-fice, including *Mission London*, *TILT* and *Heights*.

"Over time, I found that I couldn't do without the movies. When there were no movies, we started to import them. When there were no cinemas, we began to open them. There are no subsidies in the country for opening movie theatres. But when you love what you do, nothing can stop you," Yanaki said.

What should young people do in cities where there is no cinema, where the theatre is only open five to six days a month and there are around ten food & drinks venues? Well, they will go to a bigger city where there is more entertainment on offer, leaving small towns and villages all but deserted. Centralisation is indeed a big problem in Bulgaria.





Of a population of six million people, around three million live in the four biggest cities.

"And so I started thinking, 'How can I open as many movie theatres across the country as possible?', because cinema is the most accessible and dynamic entertainment," Yanaki said. Over the years, they have opened or helped open a total of 20 cinema venues, a feat that would not be possible without the support of Europa Cinemas.

There are only a handful of arthouse cinemas in Bulgaria and they don't show enough European films, festivals aside. For distributors of arthouse content, then, there are not enough venues in which to show their films. Thus, the problem becomes a vicious cycle. All this is aggravated by piracy, which constitutes almost 90% of viewing in Bulgaria, making the purchase of independent content a very big gamble. Even the majors sometimes refuse to release more arty films in Bulgaria.

For example, the local distributor for *Black Swan* and 127 Hours refused to release them in Bulgaria. "Then 20th Century Fox called us offering us the local release of those titles. We agreed without blinking. We paid minimum guarantees and released them," Yanaki said.

They started getting as many titles as possible, or as much as they could afford. "By correctly positioning the films, we have shown that any movie can make money. We have had many successful titles and we have shown that it makes sense to buy more and more interesting titles." As of now, there are six to seven more companies buying films, which has resulted in a significantly higher number of titles on the market.

This year, Yanaki completed another very difficult project. Completely renovating the Iskra cinema in Veliko Tarnovo. It was a passion project, with the building dating back to 1896, the third cinema opened in the history of Bulgaria. After the fall of communism, it was turned into a casino and then a second-hand clothing store. "We repaired



it while preserving the architecture of the authentic building, with four cinema halls and comfortable seating. We hope that next year we will join Europa Cinemas and turn our audience toward European films."

In summer, most people do not want to sit inside movie theatres and so revenue drops. As such, this year, they also experimented with an open-air summer cinema in Veliko Tarnovo. The results were exceptional. People were extremely happy and, next year, the initiative will expand into more cities with cinemas.

They strive to modernize every year, "I would like for people to go to the movies not just for the big blockbusters, but for the experience itself."

### Yanaki and Christo Dermendzhiev Cinema Managers





# **Austria**Das Kino, Salzburg

### A milestone for European arthouse films in Salzburg

The Salzburger Filmkulturzentrum Das Kino was founded in 1978 by two crazy cineastes, Günther Berauer and Michael Bilic, who made an "institution" out of a student initiative, the only one of which has brought film culture and quality arthouse cinema to Mozart's city of birth. The cinema is located in the old town of the city of Salzburg, in the heart of a World Heritage site. The building itself, where Das Kino found its home more than 40 years ago, is from

the 15th century and listed for preservation. Renate Wurm, who had already worked for over 25 years as public relations manager and is the director of the biennial Latin American Filmfestival, has been the CEO of this wonderful house since 2017.

Das Kino is the only arthouse cinema in Salzburg and the only cinema to screen films beyond the mainstream blockbusters. We focus on quality films with diverse cultural content. Austrian and European films, as well as American independent productions, films from Asia, Africa and Latin America are part of our programme. All films - and this is unique in Salzburg—are screened in their original language with German or English subtitles. Some of our movies are even shown with audio description, for the visually impaired. We also have an induction loop for people with a hearing impairment.

Das Kino is also a member of the initiative "IG-Programmkinos"—a platform for all arthouse cinemas in Austria.

For us, it is very important to support the local Austrian film scene and local artists. Discussions, Q&As with directors and artists are a way for us to communicate with our audience to promote the value of arthouse cinema. Being a member of Europa Cinemas highlights our focus on European quality cinema and our artistic direction of programming European independent films.

The Salzburger Filmkulturzentrum Das Kino has monthly programming and curates special screenings, retrospectives, and "film clubs" with introductions. Special focus is given to film classics and film history. One of our new initiatives for 2020 is to curate a program called, "A journey through film history", where we invite festival directors, film journalists and curators to present their favourite movie from film history.

We also programme films for young audiences and children, as well as for communities with special interests and language groups. For example, together with the department of Slavic Studies from the University of Salzburg, we curate and organize a monthly film programme with recent and award-winning films from Eastern Europe.

We are really proud that every year, since 1994, we have organized the unique Mountain & Adventure Film Festival, where we show short films, documentaries and fiction films related to alpine sports, mountains, nature, adventure and the environment. So far, more than 250,000 visitors attended this festival.

The biennial Latin American Film Festival, founded in 1993, shows a variety of brand new Latin American films across socio-political topics and cements the inclusion of underrepresented Latin American cinema in the context of a European, arthouse cinematic landscape. It is the only festival dedicated to Latin American film in Austria and, therefore, an outstanding and inspiring project, developed and organized in partnership with NGO "Lateinamerika-Komitee Salzburg". A part of the festival programme is shown at the arthouse cinema "Filmcasino" in Vienna, where the festival found a "second home" 15 years ago.

We currently face big challenges: we need to position ourselves strategically in light of emerging streaming platforms and digital content available for free and on demand. We also need to be discerning in our programming in the

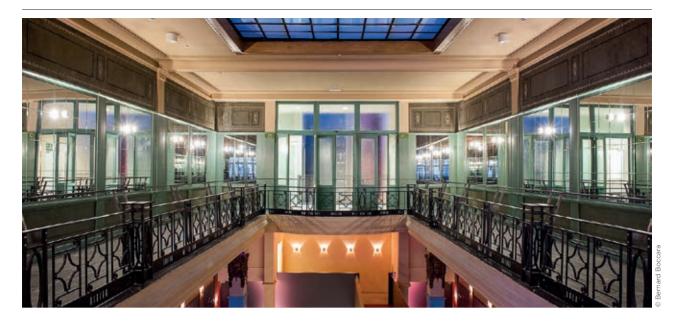


face of a large number of upcoming movie releases, and to put greater effort into attracting a primarily younger audience to our cinema.

As a response to that, in 2017, we started a directive and promising project: "A Mobile Cinema!" With a mobile digital cinema projector, a film screen and a motivated team we bring arthouse cinema to the people, especially those living in the countryside, where there is lesser cultural infrastructure. We mostly screen our films open-air in unique locations such as ancient castles, parks, inside museums, next to lakes or on mountain tops. To date, we have brought enthusiasm for arthouse cinema to more than 25,000 people, and a younger audience are especially thrilled by these kinds of film events.

# Renate Wurm Cinema Manager





# **Belgium**

## Cinéma Palace, Brussels

# An Art Nouveau venue bringing a multicultural audience the best of arthouse cinema

Cinéma Palace was born of the hands of dedicated individuals, united by a passion for culture and cinema. The ambitious project stems from the desire to popularise arthouse cinema by facilitating access to films and providing basic film education.

Palace is not new. Since 1913, at the behest of Charles Pathé, the building has been home to the largest cinema in Brussels. The Pathé Palace, a single-screen cinema, closed in the mid-1970s. After a confusing period, Palace reopened in February 2018. The renovation of the building took many years and was entirely financed by public funds. Today, the Palace complex comprises four comfortable theatres equipped with the latest technology, event venues, and an Art Nouveau hall. The hall has been preserved in its original form, dating back to a period when organisers had to lure the audience and when screening venues hosted a multitude of activities including tea dances, balls and big and small catered events.

Palace programming is both diverse and focused at once. We attract a large audience through big name titles selected by the major festivals including Palme d'Or, Golden Lion and Silver Bear winning films, but also through a selection of more challenging pictures that we keep on the bill for an extended time in order for them to grow an audience.

We place great importance on the quality of our screenings and the reception of our viewers. For us, respecting the audience as well as the film is an essential element in letting everyone enjoy these works of art as close to the way they were conceived of by their creators.

Another essential vector for growing our audiences and increasing diversity is our educational centre. We are developing the latter through school screenings, scheduled every morning, and through workshops and young audience activities led by a dedicated team. We want to attract our young viewers to a space that allows them to develop a critical sensibility and an understanding of the moving image. We also seek to build a loyal audience for quality independent films from an early age.

Our central location in Brussels, the most cosmopolitan city in the world with over 180 nationalities, requires us to show films in their original versions and to offer English subtitles when such a version is available in our territory.

The Palace building urges us to transform the atmosphere of the screening room to create a unique experience. Our reception areas are as large as the theatres themselves and this allows us to develop activities in addition to our moving image offer. We host exhibitions, concerts, dance classes, signings and independent cultural events. We aim to broaden the Palace experience so that the medium itself



The exhibitor Olivier Rey with Dardenne brothers

may regain its original splendour and function once more as a multicultural place.

One of the highlights, since our start eighteen months ago, was undoubtedly the weekend devoted to education, on 23rd and 24th March 2019, titled "Là, faites du cinéma!" ("Let's make cinema"). Over the course of a single weekend, Palace was transformed into a gigantic workshop for families and young people of all ages.

Film education organisations showcased their activities to visitors, setting up workshops to familiarise the general public with their work. Over the course of the weekend, over a thousand people visited the cinema to participate in the workshops, two film concerts and a number of screenings.

In over eighteen months, we have created a community around Palace that follows us and participates in our activities. Our strategy hinges on four distinct points:

- Creating specific events to accompany movie releases
- Personalising our offer, particularly in programming films that cater to the expectations of our neighbourhood and community
- Forming partnerships with major cultural players in Brussels
- Developing our expertise and our proximity to our audience

Nevertheless, maintaining a movie theatre in the heart of a city with a strong cultural dimension is expensive and would not be possible without the support of our local public authorities. We are constantly looking for additional sources to finance our activities, especially through transversal European projects. Arthouse cinema remains a fragile market. We have to fight every day in order to keep our audience alive and to keep our business afloat.

Participation in the Europa Cinemas Network, a wellspring of ideas, encourages shared experiences and exploring



complementary strategies across a range of cinema models. This European philosophy will develop and persist through the sharing and dissemination of culture. Our cinema, its team, its four screens and its infrastructure are at the service of this notion and of all of the inhabitants of Brussels who want to share it with us. There are more of them every week. We plan to end our second year with more than 120,000 tickets sold.

### Olivier Rey Director



### Croatia

# Art-kino Metropolis, Zagreb

### **Against the odds**

Running an arthouse cinema is a tricky business. Add to this that the cinema is placed inside a museum of contemporary art, which is closed and dark during the hours when the cinema is open, with no option to buy or eat popcorn inside the theatre, positioned opposite a shiny shopping mall with a huge multiplex and you have a huge challenge in attracting a spoilt for choice younger audience. But we like challenges.

Art-kino Metropolis was opened on September 2nd 2010 in Zagreb, in the Gorgona hall of the Museum of Contemporary Art, with the Croatian premiere of the critically acclaimed film, *A Single Man* by Tom Ford. From the very beginning, for Metropolis, it was important to create a unique and distinguished programme. The artistic leadership and programming selection for the cinema was, for an entire decade, in the hands of cinema founder Zlatko





Vidackovic, who, since 2005, had been the artistic director of Croatia's oldest and most well attended film festival (Pula Film Festival), and president of the Croatian Film Critics Society.

Metropolis is the only art cinema in New Zagreb, which has more than 100,000 inhabitants. It also provides joint tickets for exhibitions and films: when one buys a ticket for an exhibition, one gets a discount for a cinema ticket. Our mission is not to make profit, but to serve the community.

The new building of the Museum of Contemporary Art was opened in 2009, and met with a polarising public discourse. It was everything you'd expect from a modern architectural marvel, with a facade made of screens and of a monumental size. Perfect for its purpose, it was a modern building that served as a home for modern arts. But what about movies?

Art-kino Metropolis benefited immensely from the highly publicized and well covered opening of the new museum building. Audiences were interested in all the movies we presented for some time, giving us satisfying figures and statistics. However, some visitors found the monumental hallways of the museum empty and cold, the chairs uncomfortable, and the place generally lacking in facilities as offered by the multiplex across the street. The real struggle was about to start.

So we created the slogan, "We don't have love seats, popcorn, 3D... we only have good movies." We screened films that multiplexes did not have.

Metropolis' programming was always high quality, including primarily European, independent American and world cinema, selected from the most prestigious global film festivals (Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Rome, Karlovy Vary, etc.) and from a wealth of repertory European art-house cinema, too.

We like to screen also quality genre European films: history, romance, thrillers, etc. as we believe that it is very difficult to create a quality genre film, and that their artistic value is not lower than the value of dramas. We do not want the audience to associate European cinema with niche arty films only. If the audience identifies European cinema with heavyweight dramas for example, then it creates the wrong image, and it diminishes the chances for European cinema to attract a wider audience.

The aim of the cinema is to create a carefully selected film programme with artistic merit that will enrich the cinematic offer in Zagreb and of the Museum of Contemporary Art. The cinema programme also includes short Croatian films sometimes screened as an introduction to feature films. Our children's programme shows carefully chosen Croatian, European and independent international animated and fiction films.

But the quality programme in itself isn't enough to attract audiences, leading us to adapt our approach. We

started to stage 'event-like' programming, in association with established cinema programmes in Zagreb such as European Film Days, produced by an organization called Culture Club and started in 2013, the positive effect of which led to a long-term partnership between Art Cinema Metropolis and European Film Days. In 2019, we initiated a whole year long 'event programme' called Europe in Cinema + #EUANDME, with the support of the European Commission representative in Zagreb and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The programme presents interesting and attractive, carefully selected short and feature films that point to current social problems in the context of the European Union. It became a success, largely because of the films selected, but, also owing to a planned multi-platform marketing campaign that went out across radio and social networks, on billboards, and with media partnerships and coverage of cultural events. Promotion is the key.

Arguably, the most effective marketing tool is social media. It is fast, convenient, cheap and reaches a broad spectrum of potential viewers. Pairing colourful, shiny pictures with attractive headlines makes visitor numbers double. People love their mobile devices and media platforms, and—as long as it encourages them to come to Art-kino Metropolis to see a great film—we love it, too.

### Zlatko Vidackovic

Director





# **Czech Republic** Kino Pilotů, Prague

### An independent and open platform for an ambitious programming

The history of the Kino Pilotů (The Pilots' Cinema) dates back to 1908, when films were shown in the neighboring garden. Later, the screenings were moved into a wooden shed. The building itself was designed and built in 1937 in a functionalist style by Mr. Štrunc.

The cinema in this building was run by The Czechoslovakian Union of Pilots, hence the name. The original screening room had a capacity of 300 seats and the only renovation of the cinema took place in the 1970s. Some local residents still remember the communist era of the cinema, when they had to come and watch Soviet propaganda films, as young pupils.

The cinema remained open until the mid-1990s, when it was shut down and replaced by squash courts, a gym and, later on, by an illegal underground music club. The current managers reopened the cinema in 2014. The newly opened cinema was renovated as a two screen venue, with 84 and 70 seat auditoriums. The relatively equal size of the two screens enables a wide variety of programming. The cinema usually opens at 3pm on weekdays and at 9am on weekends.

At the close of 2018, a mini-screening room was opened with 15 seats. Despite its limited capacity, this third screening room allows audiences to see a broader range of films. It is useful to extend the life of movies that deserve to be shown longer on the big screen. The cinemas also hosts a nice, cosy bar where visitors can get a drink.

The cinema is managed by film producer Jan Macola

and his wife Alžběta who works as cinema director. Many thought that opening another mostly arthouse cinema was naive and risky. However, in its second year, the cinema's activity showed skeptics that it wasn't such a frivolous idea after all. In 2017, more than 52,000 viewers visited the cinema and, in 2018, the number reached 65,000, which ranked the cinema in 5th place of all independent cinemas in Czech Republic. The beginning of 2019 showed us even higher admissions figures. One of the main goals of the re-opening was to give the residents of the Vršovice and Vinohrady neighbourhoods a chance to see a wider range of films.

On weekdays, Kino Pilotů shows eight or ten films and on weekends that number goes up to 17. According to the statistics of the Union of Film Distributors (UFD) the Kino Pilotů is ranked just below the big multiplex cinemas and tops all other Czech independent cinemas.

The programming is very diverse and addresses all audience groups; the cinema shows one children's film every day, once or twice a week there is a discount screening for senior citizens and there are many school screenings taking place as well. In addition to its role as a local cinema, Kino Pilotů extends its programming to attract citizens of Prague and its surrounding areas.

Among the many activities organized by Kino Pilotů, there are Kolnoa, the festival of Israeli film, and Cyklus Citrus, a programme to introduce new Czech talent with a Q&A after the film. Kino Pilotů also closely cooperates



with Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, where viewers can see a selection of the best Czech documentaries. Our audience can also attend many other festivals, including a short film festival and Iranian, Tibetan and Mongolian film festivals among others. The well-known Mezipatra Queer Film Festival, which shows its films in several independent cinemas in the Czech Republic, is also hosted by Kino Pilotů. Last but not least, the cinema is popular for film premieres of new documentaries and art-cinema projects.

A great advantage of the cinema is its location, near Krymská street, which has recently become a very popular cultural centre, with bars, restaurants and cafés, often populated by university students, artists and expats. Many people call Krymská street a hipster neighbourhood. The cinema is regularly visited by parents with young children, too.

Our motto is "cinemaiscinemaiscinemaiscinema". The aim is showing films that we would like to watch ourselves. We see the cinema as both entertainment and an art. We refuse to choose one or the other. We consider high-quality films as entertainment and vice-versa. We also regard the cinema as an open platform for the films of our friends, fans and fellow workers. "If you have a film worth showing on a big screen for your friends, just call us!" is something Mr and Mrs Macola often say.

Kino Pilotů tries to enrich the film offer with independent films distributed through an affiliate company, Pilot Film. In the autumn of 2018, Pilot Films introduced six films to the screen, including, for example, the Czech minority co-production *Touch Me Not* (winner of the Golden Bear at Berlinale), *Escape* (a Polish film selected for Semaine de la critique at the Cannes Film Festival) and the Czech film, *V Mosulu*, directed by Jana Andert. Nearly all the films distributed by Pilot Film are accompanied by an invitation for the filmmakers to visit Prague and participate in discussions in the cinema.

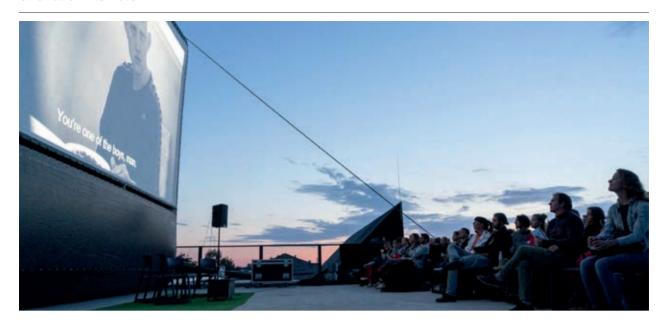
We would like to attract more parents and children to watch movies that are not just big American productions. But, in this instance, the distributors' offer is insufficient. That is why we have decided, over the last three years, to distribute at least one European children's animation film per year.

The biggest achievement of our cinema seems to be the fact that in just three years it earned a good reputation. It is a well-known brand in Prague and the programme is very popular. When people in Prague feel like watching an arthouse film then Kino Pilotů comes to mind.

"We want to go on supporting promising Czech and European filmmakers with the activity of our cinema and the distribution company Pilot Film," says Alžběta Macolová.

Vojtech Landa and Alžběta Macolová Cinema Managers





### **Estonia**

## Elekriteater, Tartu

# From a pop-up screen to a fully running, fast-growing and event-based cinema

Elektriteater is a single screen cinema with 120 seats, located in a church building in the old town where we have screened movies for eight years. Tartu once was host to the first cinema in the country, opened in 1908, but, as the cinema industry changed after Estonia gained its independence, more and more cinemas closed down. As such, Tartu, a town of 100,000 people, had nowhere for independent and arthouse movies to be screened—there were a couple of big cinema chains scattered around but we felt that there was a shortage of screenings not aimed at the mass market. We started out as a part-time cinema and have grown into a full-time independent cinema with a rapidly growing audience.

The backbone of our programme includes lots of European and local Estonian films. Lately, we have been working a lot on extending the cinema run of newly released films. We think that quality films, that touch upon difficult topics and won't give the audience the usual happy-go-lucky experience, need some time to be promoted and reach the target audience. We keep some films in our programme, to screen once a month or once every two months, and very successfully screen those films for a year or even longer. We also screen older films and classics and these titles usually need special attention, so we try to link these screenings with special events. In general,

we try to keep a good diversity in terms of genre and the age of films programmed.

We like to keep our cinema playful, to have a passionate and hand-made feel. People are welcomed to the cinema by an exhibition of hand-drawn posters and a life-size Totoro that we built for the Hayao Miyazaki retrospective we organized some years ago. There are no paid advertisements before films and every screening is introduced by a real person. The projectionists give a short introduction before every screening, giving some background information about the movie, the people behind it and what to notice when watching it. This tradition started in our first year when the person screening the movie was usually the same person who had chosen to programme the film. The response was so great that now it is one of the trademarks of our cinema. This, in turn, ensures our whole team knows the background of the movies we screen and the reason we're screening them.

Another thing that defines Elektrikteater is debates with filmmakers. We host these meetings for almost all Estonian feature movies and documentary films, sometimes even with animation short films.

We also organize an outdoor cinema during the short summers here. We have a regular location where we set up the equipment in Tartu but we also travel with the outdoor cinema to different locations around Estonia.

We are an event-based cinema and creating special events

around movies is one of the things we love the most. On one occasion, we covered our cinema floor with 200 square metres of real grass to create a magical Japanese garden like atmosphere when we screened Miyazaki movies. Then we screened the original *Ghostbusters* in an old firehouse. We also rebuild the screening hall into a restaurant every now and then and screen movies paired with a three-course dinner. Recently, we helped to restore old, rusty Soviet era outdoor cinema equipment and used it to screen 35mm movies in a drive-in cinema built in a field.

2018 was one of the most significant years to date for Tartu Elektriteater. For the first time, we could run a full-time film theatre. The decision to move out from our previous location scared us to some extent but this decision was fully justified. After many years, we have reached a point where we have grown into a full-time alternative film theatre. From once being a small part-time active group of film fans, we have become an efficient organization, growing in size and quality.

Having started out as a part time cinema, we had to set up the screen, projector and sound every day before the screenings started and then pack it all back up again when the screenings were finished, for seven years. Many of us can now probably set up our equipment blindfolded, since we have done it so many times. But, after having moved into our own cinema and looking back, the amount of work it took to just set up the cinema every week seems unbelievable, even to us. This, in turn, has given us an understanding of how our cinema works and how not to be afraid of change.

Our tickets have become iconic: we commission a new hand-drawn ticket illustration every few months. We have been doing this since the beginning and many people collect them. With growing audiences, however, we have started to feel the environmental impact of printing so many tickets and are currently looking for ways to move the ticketing online while still keeping the playful side. In addition, we plan to keep the lovely illustrations going as postcards and art posters.

Elektriteater's admissions having multiplied for a few years in a row now and our biggest challenge currently is in stabilizing both growth and our team. In the near future we will concentrate on these two major aspects:

- Stabilizing growth, for example remapping organizational structure, passing on knowledge to younger team members and reanalyzing the most effective way to run the cinema.
- Keeping the personal connection between the audience and the cinema, even as our audience continues to grow. In the near future, we envisage implementing a customer loyalty system, special events designed for bigger film geeks and more polished communications, so new film lovers can easily find their way around our programme.

This implies learning to work together as a bigger team while not overworking, and learning to delegate tasks as we cannot be an "everybody-does-everything" type of organization anymore. At the same time, we don't want to become too comfortable. We have learned that almost every time we have taken a step into the unknown and dared to take risks we have also seen some of our proudest moments and results. Yet, one should know *when* to take risks.

For the while, we are planning to move into a new venue, maybe even build a new cinema in the next five years, and by the time that Tartu will be the European Capital of Culture for 2024.

#### **Andres Kauts**

Cinema Director



### **France**

# Cinéma de Contis, Saint-Julien-en-Born

### A Global Village: when arthouse cinema meets rural utopia

Labelled as an arthouse cinema in 1996, the Cinema de Contis is said to have an "exceptional soul", described as a "unique, magic and welcoming place". Located in a small village and open every day, this large single screen of 297 seats is just 200 metres from the ocean. Its originality also extends to the quality and diversity of its programme, as it provides the audience with a significant choice of arthouse and repertory film, as well as blockbusters at the time of their national release or as premieres. Thanks to an International Festival and an interest in VR, the Cinema de Contis is a place to experiment, discover and enjoy cinema in all its forms.

In many ways, the Cinema de Contis is an adventure. From Bordeaux, if you head south and cross a large pine forest you'll reach the small and traditional beach village of Contis. There, you'll encounter fishermen, surfers and ramblers. Soon you'll see that most of them are film enthusiasts. If you come off season, you'll realize that this art-house cinema is the only place open all year round in this remote area; a shelter for the local community where you can discuss, have a drink and enjoy art-house movies. Built as a summer cinema in 1963 by the iconic Secretary General of the French Cinema Federation, Léo Dupis, it was later purchased by

Betty Berr and Rainer Wothe, in 1996. That same year, those two artists launched the International Contis Festival, which became an instant a success. As Betty kept saying, "We are open to our neighbourhood and to the world". Indeed, over the years, we became partners with European festivals including Lichter Filmfest Frankfurt International (Germany) and Visioni Italiane (Bologna, Italy), but also international festivals including Fespaco (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), Incubadora de artistas (Atibaia, Brazil) and, most recently, Cinekour (La Réunion). Those partnerships have given us the opportunity to exchange creative works and promote the transnational circulation of artists. Thanks to our work on cultural diversity, we received the support of the French commission for UNESCO, including art donated by performing artists, which are now part of the decoration – and the soul - of our cinema.

In our neighbourhood, we are considered a platform for democratic debate and creation. We work closely with local associations to organize Q&As, inviting skilled speakers to enhance the public experience. Every inspiring movie is an opportunity to enter into discussion with the local community on subjects such as ecology, organic farming, forestry and social movement but also art and surfing. In partnership with Landes department and Saint-Julien-en-Born, we launched a filmmakers residency in 2011 titled *La Maison Bleue*, a unique opportunity to strengthen the relationship



Julien P





between artists, young people and the audience. Some of them are now part of our "family" as with, for example, Annarita Zambrano, who wrote and shot her feature film "Dopo La Guerra" (Un certain regard, Cannes 2017) in Contis. Through an initiative called "Talents en court" we offer inexperienced young people the opportunity to work with these filmmakers on short film scripts they can present to regional producers. Some of them are now working in the cinema industry, of which we are really proud.

As many independent cinemas, we are facing new challenges such as trying to capture youth attention, in competition with a wide range of screens. We believe our mission is to make our cinema an attractive place where our public can mingle and watch a film but also discover exclusive content and innovative technology under the best conditions. This is why we want to develop new spaces dedicated to VR, mashup-tables and video games. For three years now, and

thanks to VR producers who introduced us to this technology, we have experimented with different ways to display VR during our festival. From an individual experience we moved on to collective "screenings", now using twenty headsets at the same time. All the screenings were sold-out and our audience was very enthusiastic about it. It encourages us to continue in this way in order to develop new audiences. Now, we want, on a regular basis, to stage curated programmes (short-movies, documentaries, art exhibition, video games) in connection with our film programming for our public of students, school groups and regular cinema-goers. Our goal is to gather people in a living venue where they can discover a wide range of cultural experiences.

# **Mathias Fournier**Project Coordinator



# **Germany**

## Endstation Kino, Bochum

# A space for communication, where films meet people and people meet people

From the very start, in 1988, Endstation Kino had an artistic and political understanding of cinema. The single-screen venue was founded by film enthusiasts showing subtitled films at a time when they were still hard to find, and programming retrospectives for which prints and film rights required international searches. Located in an urban area with many competitors in the cultural sector – including, but not limited to, many other cinemas – Endstation Kino was known for its special programme including international documentaries, children programmes and a local film festival focusing on our region. The screenings were often followed by Q&As with directors, actors or screenwriters, or discussions with the audience.

Following on in this tradition, we consider our cinema a space for communication. Here, films meet people and people meet people. In our space – on and off screen – we make room for differing points of view to be presented and discussed. Films here are understood as tools to start discussions on how we live together, on society, politics, art, environmental issues and even personal stories. The best way to start a conversa-

tion with your audience is to make them feel at home in your cinema and a part of a community where they can hear different voices and voice their own.

In 2015, we started reaching out to a new audience. Germany, like the rest of Europe, became a new home for millions of refugees, and one of the many refugee camps was located near the Endstation Kino. With the help of a regional fund, we started a project for the children in the camp. We showed them mostly short films without dialogue and offered them and their families creative workshops following the screenings. Over the years, this grew into a film education scheme that is now one of the most important parts of our cinema project. Monthly screenings, under the banner of our film club for young adults, endstation.club, is one part of it. These screenings are curated by club members, who also prepare Q&As and discussions with the audience. Once a year, we publish their texts in the endstation.magazine.

During the year, we also offer a variety of week-long workshops for children and young adults. Together with the very talented filmmaker Anna Sowo Koenning, who fortunately joined our team, we teach them to make their own short films and to curate their own film festival in our cinema or to make their own music videos. We are very lucky to be able





to do all of this as part of a local network. The cinema is located in a social and cultural centre, benefitting from contacts with various political initiatives, a refugee support group and self-organised migrant groups. The funding for most of the film education programme is provided by social and cultural funds focused on intercultural activities.

The intercultural focus of our activities is a meaningful complement to other cinemas around us. Above all, it is a necessary means through which to gain new audiences in our multicultural society. Migration has always shaped society and we believe that this should also influence programming in cinemas. The people living in Germany should find themselves and their stories represented on stages, screens, in newspapers, online and in books. At Endstation Kino, we try to give a multicultural audience a home. In the long term, we want our programme to become more diverse and to be influenced by the people attending our screenings, workshops and festivals.

One of the best things coming out of this, for us, is that some of the film club members have become part of our team and now enrich our work. One of our staff members, for example, is not only a passionate film aficionado but also a very talented host. He introduces and discusses films with profound background knowledge and adds a personal touch. This approach is very well received by our audience, encouraging them to join the conversation. We strive to be open and personal in all our communication channels. Our social media accounts have become more important than ever, but we also still depend on a printed programme distributed monthly. Despite our efforts to gain a younger and more diverse audience, the majority of our audience is still older in age. Nevertheless, sometimes we do manage to bring different audience groups together and into discussion.

We are very pleased to have teamed up with Deutsches Filmmuseum & Filminstitut in Frankfurt to start Mini Film

Club in the near future. This project is aimed at pre-school children and their educators. Together, they will watch a series of avant-garde and experimental short films in our cinema and join in creative workshops afterwards. It's an artistic approach to film that also establishes the cinema as a space for young children. At a time when different types of media are more immersive than ever in our lives, it's a necessary investment in the future of cinema.

Nina Selig Director



### Greece

## Mikrokosmos, Athens

### A zeitgeist cinema fully committed to its social role

Mikrokosmos opened its doors in October 2004 to establish a new, alternative art-house cinema in the centre of Athens. Many of the films screened, including documentaries, are released exclusively in our cinema. Mikrokosmos has been a member of the Europa Cinemas Network since 2005.

Built specifically as a cinema in 1956, Mikrokosmos was, when we moved in, a closed-down theatre. We demolished it and built a new cinema where we could host carefully chosen films in the best technical conditions (image and sound), as well as festivals, art exhibitions, parties with DJs, seminars and all kinds of art and performance.

We organise or co-organise a number of festivals in Athens including: Latin American Film Festival, Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, Spanish Film Festival, Panorama of European Cinema Film Festival, Science Fiction Film Festival, Digital Wave, Betting on Shorts, Adaptation Film Festival, Sunday Narratives, Fair Trade Film Festival, Big Bang International Short Film Festival, International Schools Film Festival among others.

Mikrokosmos is also the place where new directors have an opportunity to showcase their films and connect with a wider audience. We also believe in the importance of building new audiences, which is why we always welcome young people. In 2017, we created "818 School Film Festival" with free and reduced price screenings, to offer quality European cinema experiences to young audiences without money being a problem. It was a really good experience to have our cinema full of young people every morning, coming to see European films. We expected to cover expenses with an increase in spending at the bar but, it didn't happen, and so, it was impossible to carry on. We are now trying to find a new way to organise the same activity, but with a minimum price per person. This is no easy task as embassies and cultural institutes such as the French Institute and the Cervantes Institute only allow us to screen their films if the sessions are free of charge.

We also celebrate every year the "School Short Film Festival", a festival with short films made at school by children with the support of cinema directors. This year was the 3rd edition of the festival in Athens and we hope to host it again next year.

In 2006, we began distributing art-house films ourselves, handling all rights for Greece and Cyprus. We started our experience as distributors with *Poligono Sur* (Spanish documentary concerning a dangerous neighbourhood in Seville where flamenco music offers new perspectives), *TSIOU* (Greek movie awarded at Thessaloniki Film Festival), Carlos Saura's *Iberia* and *The Wayward Cloud* (Silver Bear at Berlinale, 2005). Our last acquisition is *Jimmie* by Jean





Ganslandt. The economic crisis has forced us to slow down our projects, but, despite this situation, we try to adapt to circumstances in order to maintain a close relationship with our audience.

In a context of economic crisis, people are specifically looking for occasions to express themselves, their thoughts and their feelings, which is why we decided to organise debates after screenings. Talking about the selected films and themes give people the opportunity to discuss and understand a wide range of issues experienced every day. These free screenings garnered a lot of interest probably because we collaborate with three associations of psychologists: "Humanlinks", "Fos se drasi" and "Sumballin".

We also have to deal with distribution companies that have a different view of the market and how to promote a film. They do not give us the chance to screen films as we would like. Instead, they impose the programming period of each film and too few screenings to be able to give the audience the opportunity to choose what movie they want to see. For example, currently in Athens, distribution companies release around ten films each week. This means that each film will be on the screen at movie theatres for one week and, after that, it goes directly to Home Video distribution, TV and other such platforms.

Over the next few months, we are organizing three festival homages: two days dedicated to Greek Cinema with Ermeias (the Greek producers association), a politics-related film festival with "Efimerida ton Sintakton" (Greek daily newspaper), and the 2nd Big Bang Short Film Festival.

Currently we are making some changes at our cinema in order to be able to add one or two morning screenings for the general audience every day. We are expanding the bar and the hall in order to offer snacks and coffee to the audience after the morning screenings. Of course we will not stop the children screenings in the morning but we will try



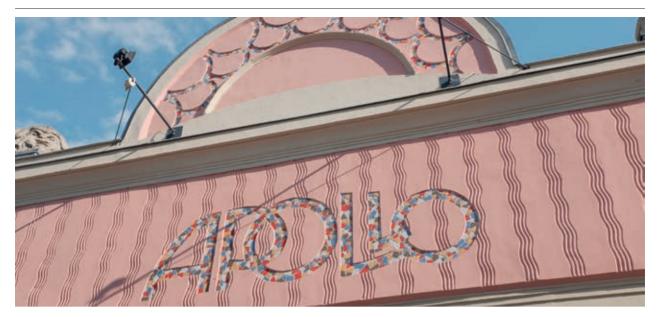
to show children-friendly films, so that young audience can come and enjoy the experience, even if it is not reserved to schools only. In one month more or less we hope to be ready to open Mikrokosmos from 8am without closing until the night.

We are also making changes in the screening room and toilets to make them more accessible for people with physical disabilities.

It is with this spirit we conclude, as we like to say, that Mikrokosmos is a living cinema that fights every day to improve itself.

### **Margarita Macia** Cinema Manager









# **Hungary** Apolló Mozi, Pécs

### Vive la résistance!

In small town Hungary, Apolló is a hub for social connection, public discourse and civil action.

With well over a hundred years of operations, Apolló is the oldest cinema in Pécs—the fifth largest city in Hungary, with about 145,000 inhabitants, located on the slopes of the Mecsek mountains in the south-west of the country, close to the Croatian border. Since 2004, we have operated as the

only arthouse cinema in the region. We don't receive support from the government and are a non-governmental, charitable, non-profit initiative, one of the very few independent arthouse cinemas in the country. Located in the very heart of town, we offer a great range of refined arthouse films along-side a selection of quality mainstream movies, festival favourites, European gems and documentaries, all in their original languages, across two screens, of 100 and 40 seats respectively.

We give prominence to films dealing with themes of otherness and that highlight minority issues. We organize and host a number of special events related to culture, politics, environmental causes, freedom of speech and LGBT+ issues. Team Apolló consists of a staff of five multitasking members.

According and reacting to the current state of the world around us, we believe that cinema, as a mind-setter, must take responsibility, not only for cultural mediation but, also, through cultural mediation, in raising awareness of economic, ecological and social concerns. We believe cinema can help in understanding the causation of such issues, in exploring and revealing systemic oppression, injustice and corruption, especially with regard to minorities, women and the exploitation of nature—locally and globally. Cinema should help us think of alternatives, different approaches, to imagine possible new worlds. Beyond its traditional, entertaining role of adding beauty to the world and as a means through which to better understand life, cinema is an excellent tool for starting debates, expanding critical thinking and questioning the current social order.

Anti-civic rhetoric, rising political pressures, legal restrictions, financial hardships, self-censorship and the resulting isolation have created a tendency of narrowing legroom for community spaces in Hungary. There is an increasing social need to establish and maintain strong and easily accessible networks, with a focus on community-building, across the country. At an organisational level, Apolló considers networking urgent and important: we work hard to establish a wide range of partnerships through which we can ensure the cinema's sustainability and develop new and specifically targeted audiences. This creates an interconnected web of civic activism, with the aim of being alert and ready to reflect on and respond to current issues, to address topics unwelcome in the mainstream public discourse. We strive for our events to generate connectivity, to create communities and social solidarity. In 2018, we founded "Network of Free Spaces", an initiative with around 40 member organisations and public spaces across five cities. It is a countrywide initiative consisting of diverse NGOs where members join forces, working hand in hand to counter the current government efforts to repress civic action.

Community, togetherness, dialogue, outlook, perspective and introspection, physical space, mental space, opinion, questioning and debate, culture(s), otherness, acceptance, freedom, equality, independence, openness, collaboration, courage, democracy, human rights, environment, the future—we chose these words to describe ourselves in 50 seconds, in our current trailer for social media, underlining our values of social activism. How we'd like to be seen by the public is based on ideas of activism, approachability, diversity and honesty: Apolló is not an automated service run by algorithms—we are expressly human. We are edgy, sketchy, brave. We dare to be ourselves. We strive for perfection, we are professional and reliable, generous, kind

and helpful, but we also allow ourselves to make mistakes. We are not a company, and not just a cinema, either; Apolló is a place with its own intellect and heart, driven as much by our idea of it as it is by a reflection of what the public demands. We place great emphasis on communicating that our content is strictly curated by experts, that our programme is the result of careful and competent selection, based on true artistic value and not driven by financial interests. Our promise is that we are present: we put ourselves, our personalities, hearts, values and beliefs into everything to connect with our audience, from programming to box-office, from social media to room temperature. We don't have a standardised customer care policy on how to respond to requests and complaints—we simply give our best in dealing with each customer, as if it were our own personal issue. We do have high standards, but we bear in mind - and we have no problem in reminding our customers – that, at the end, we are just people serving people. We believe our authentic and personal approach represents our idea of a society we'd like to live in.

### **Bálint Rádóczy**Communication & Art Direction





# **Italy** Modernissimo, Naples

### A living force for urban and social regeneration

The Modernissimo movie theatre holds a unique place in the heart of Naples. It is both a sort of historic landmark and a cultural innovative spot.

Opened in 1994, deeply entwined with the neighbourhood's charm and complexity, Modernissimo was built to offer movie lovers the ultimate experience in terms of quality movie selection, comfort, design and technology. It was the first multi-screen cinema in the South of Italy and the only one to provide Dolby Surround, at the time. Conceived as a multifunctional space, it has also housed, throughout the years, very special exhibitions, including Angelo Novi's photos from glorious movie sets. The building has always been a vibrant art installation in and of itself by offering its external walls as temporary murals and other forms of street art. Today we can enjoy the works of three Neapolitan artists: the photographer Massimo Pastore offers a very impressive photo of the Dalai Lama who represents one of the "migrant saints" of the history in the artist's beautiful series Santi Migranti; a large mural of Frida Kahlo by Renata Cagno invites lovers to kiss romantically under her regal approval; and Roxy in the Box pays homage to Chaplin, Hitchcock and Monroe by portraying the three giants of film history together with a great smile, despite the fact that they never won an Oscar.

When it comes to films, Modernissimo has always been on the spot in offering challenging film presentations by international, Italian and local screenwriters and film directors such as: Bernardo Bertolucci, Nanni Moretti, Marco Bellocchio, Paolo Sorrentino, Mario Martone, Pappi Corsicato, Roberto Saviano, Pietro Marcello and Spike Lee; and by actors including: Ralph Fiennes, Harvey Keitel, Fanny Ardant, Valerio Mastandea, Elio Germano, Luca Marinelli, and many more. The passionate debates between enthusiastic audiences and filmmakers and musicians during these events, that are often sold out, offer an important experience, and one that is deeply linked to Naples' cultural tradition, so much so that it is an almost "natural inclination" for locals to turn to the performing arts.

Each employee is appointed, not only for their love of films and different cultural perspectives but, also, for their social skills, enthusiasm and creativity. This makes the Modernissimo community highly original and a proactive family, open and receptive to new needs, models and content. It is also worth saying that we are animal friendly, too. Small sized dogs and other pets are welcome, if well trained by their human partners.

Modernissimo is able to satisfy all ages and needs. For those who prefer to be part of a movie club and want to rely on a weekly appointment, *Cine Club Modernissimo* offers three screening selections: first, international blockbusters and more entertainment driven movies; the second, international independent and experimental films; the third, all time classics.





Buongiorno Mod keeps the morning screening tradition alive and offers quality film selection. Movies are often introduced by their directors and actors and can be viewed in their original language with Italian subtitles.

A lunch break can also be a great opportunity to escape from routine and dive into a good movie. *Il film e' servito* ("The film is served") offers both food and films. Ticket prices range from 5 to 12 euros, depending on the menu selected.

Children can always rely on a great selection of classics and new films, ranging from animation to family entertainment movies, thanks to *Bimbi Mod*.

Movie lovers can enjoy movies in their original language with Italian subtitles on Thursdays.

Last but not least, *Ubriachi di Cinema* is another unique way to relax and enjoy movies, once a month, for a sophisticated and curious audience. This combination offers renowned films, often belonging to Bologna's film archive, and combines them with a curated cocktail.

Modernissimo isn't just a commercial company that started twenty years ago, it's a dream, a state of mind, a concept, a political need to develop and merge different cultural traditions and complex social realities in Naples through a common passion for films. Its cultural standpoint is substantiated by young, enthusiastic and determined minds, hard at work to offer new and original ways not only to enjoy films but also to promote social integration and employment.

"Ciak ... si cuce: bottega artigiana di design sartoriale tra cinema e intercultura" by Dedalus Cooperativa Sociale is a perfect example of this. Modernissimo and Stella Film Productions are proud to be part of the project by donating movie banners for a tailoring workshop to produce design objects (handbags, wallets, clothing and houseware). An opportunity for the fragile and invisible part of our society, Neapolitans and immigrants, to be creative, learn

and develop professional skills through legal training and employment.

The workshop is open to participants between the ages of 16 and 30 with the goal of creating a brand called *Immagina* for limited edition products which can be purchased in movie theatres and other selected spots. This experimental project is part of the Centro Interculturale Officine Gomitoli (financed by Fondazione con il Sud, Fondazione Charlemagne, Fondazione Alta Mane).

Modernissimo is not just a movie theatre, it is a driving force for urban and social regeneration, a beacon for active citizenship and cultural integration through the arts and a big creative family of movie lovers.

Long live Modernissimo and Naples!

### **Gerardo Devivo** Cinema Manager





# **The Netherlands**Rialto, Amsterdam

### Diverse and inclusive, alive and kicking!

Amsterdam's Rialto cinema opened in 1921, at a time when cinemas were springing up all over Europe. Film was new and exotic and this is why our cinema, like many others at the time, was named after an exotic location: the beautiful Rialto bridge in Venice, the city with the world's oldest film festival.

Rialto has a long tradition of screening films of social and political relevance. For example, in 1948 Rialto was the only cinema in Amsterdam to programme Vittorio de Sica's classic masterpiece *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*). Into the late 1970s, Rialto was also well known as a children's cinema. Children celebrating their birthdays would be called to the front to receive the famous Rialto lapel pin. In 1982, Rialto, like many local cinemas at the time, was threatened with closure, at which point our foundation decided to take over the cinema. In the years since then, Rialto has become a flourishing modern film theatre with a leading position in the Netherlands thanks to its deliberate focus on independently produced European films and world cinema.

Our aim has always been to offer our audiences fresh perspectives on the world; to open up new outlooks and broaden everyone's horizon. At our low-threshold cinema in the multicultural world city of Amsterdam (home to no fewer than 180 nationalities!), we do this by offering a programme that reflects the character of our city: diverse and inclusive. Rialto is alive and kicking!

Rialto applies one firm criterion when selecting its films:

artistic quality. Luckily, there is no shortage of this, as a large number of exceptional films are made every year in Europe and in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Naturally, we take our audiences into account in our programming, for example, by programming lots of films by female directors or that tackle subjects of particular interest to women, which is only logical when you consider that 60% of our audience is female.

We also aim to attract younger film enthusiasts (age 18-29) to Rialto, so we also take their preferences into account in our choice of films. But what exactly are their preferences? To obtain insight into this, some years ago we set up a film blog run by students, titled LA RIOT. On this blog, these highly motivated students write about the Rialto films they find interesting. Sometimes their reviews are glowing, sometimes highly critical, but always well argued. Once a month, LA RIOT also takes over the theatre itself in organising a special evening around a preview screening. Not only are these evenings always very well attended, but they also lead to more visits to our cinema in subsequent weeks. At Rialto, we give films the space-and above all the time-to really reach the audience. Here, every film runs for at least four weeks from the date of its Dutch premiere, plenty of time to let the grapevine spread the word.

As we said above, Amsterdam is a hugely diverse city and Rialto seeks to reflect this in its programming. We are also constantly innovating: in 2018 we started a new programme *Rialto for Short*, which gives young and new filmmakers – often from bi-cultural backgrounds – an





on five screens, along with a great café, roof terrace and facilities for open-air screenings.

Rialto will continue to innovate, also in terms of construction. Both of these new locations will be realised taking the highest sustainability requirements into account: Breeam Excellent for the VU site and Breeam Outstanding for the Silo.

Rialto has now been in existence in its present form for 37 years, as a cinema with three screens attracting more than 100,000 visitors a year to a programme of the very best films from around the world. We are able to do this thanks to the efforts of a small team of highly motivated permanent staff and more than 100 volunteers. The Rialto volunteers really are our ambassadors!

opportunity to present their work to audiences and to an expert jury. Another brand new programme is *Queer Pioneers*, which, every month, puts a film tackling issues surrounding sexuality, sexual orientation and gender in the spotlight. This programme, aimed at the LGBTQ+ community, was launched last October with a special preview of *Portrait de la jeune fille en feu* by Céline Sciamma, a prize-winner at the Cannes Film Festival in 2019.

One of the jewels in Rialto's crown is without any doubt our very own festival, *World Cinema Amsterdam*, which, each summer, brings together exceptional films from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. These films are often European co-productions or represented by European sales agents. The festival is not only a real treat for citizens of Amsterdam with roots in those parts of the world, but also an opportunity for everyone else to get to know these wonderful films. This year saw the tenth edition of the festival, an anniversary celebrated with a special focus programme on cinema from Indonesia, a country with which the Netherlands shares a painful colonial past. Of course, many Dutch filmmakers also have roots on these continents, and our new festival programme, *WCA Presents*, provides a showcase for their work.

There are exciting times ahead for Rialto, as it looks forward to realising one of its biggest ever ambitions in the form of two new Rialto cinemas on the periphery of Amsterdam, in neighbourhoods currently lacking in cultural amenities: Rialto VU and Rialto Silo. Rialto VU, scheduled to open in 2021, will be located on the VU Amsterdam campus in the South of the city. We will serve both the 25,000 VU students and local residents with four screens.

The following year, Rialto Silo will open in the East of the city. Over the coming ten years, the population of this new area of Amsterdam is set to rise to some 70,000 people, who will be introduced to Rialto's films and programming

### **Raymond Walravens**

Director



Melanie Lemanieu



# Portugal

# Cinema City Alvalade, Lisbon

### Restoring a prestigious cinema spot for all in Lisbon

New Lineo Cinemas entered the Portuguese cinema market in 1997, bringing a history of international experience in film distribution and production, and the construction of entertainment multiplexes.

The company started Portuguese operations with the opening of three multiplexes in the North of the country. During that time, the company was also developing a new concept of theatres in Israel—Cinema City, the main goal of which was to offer different experiences to audiences, with high quality and diverse movies, comfort and technology that would create a unique entertainment experience. Cinema City became a success in Israel and, by 2004, New Lineo Cinemas were able to bring the Cinema City concept to Portugal. The brand was received with great excitement and, by 2008, we had opened four Cinema City multiplexes.

From our experience with previous operations and new multiplexes, we realised we were missing a fringe audience. We were mostly screening blockbusters in theatres located in shopping malls. We didn't have a suitable theatre for cinephiles, who were looking for arthouse and independent films.

With this challenge in mind, we realised that a theatre free from shopping malls, in the centre of Lisbon, would fill the gap.

Cinema City Alvalade opened in 2009, in the exact same

place as 'Cinema Alvalade', which used to be a beautiful theatre with a capacity of 1,485 seats. It operated in Lisbon for 31 years, from 1953 to 1984. When the theatre closed, the location also declined and, over 25 years, became an all but abandoned cult venue.

When Cinema City started renovations, it discovered an emblematic artwork from the 1950s. It was a mural, an allegory for cinema, from artist Estrela Faria. This mural was an integrant part of the original theatre decoration and was left behind, almost ruined. Cinema City restored the mural and reintegrated it into the new building, where it stands today, as a tribute to its history.

The venue reopened as Cinema City Alvalade, a boutique theatre located in one of the most prestigious residential neighbourhoods in Lisbon. There are 381 seats across four halls, offering a diverse film programme to suit all audience targets. Due to the theatre's characteristics, we decided not to compete with the multiplexes and their blockbusters. Our strategy is to offer a wider film selection, including different genres and nationalities—mainly European and domestic films. We also host a range of festivals, such as Indie Lisboa, Doc Lisboa, Festival Monstra and a various cinema programmes, including Israeli Film Days organised by New Lineo Cinemas and our partners United King.

When analyzing our results, we realized that we can boost



specific screening slots for selected audience targets, which is how the project "Alvalade 19h" came to light. "Alvalade 19h" refers specifically to the 7:00 p.m. movie session and is a project that we are very proud of. It consists of a daily screening that runs from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., mostly with exclusive film previews, for which we have the opportunity to invite guest speakers, such as film directors, producers and actors, among other specialists, promoting debates and Q&As around the film's theme.

This specific strategy for Cinema City Alvalade has not just increased admissions but also brought a specific niche market back to the theatre, a connoisseur audience who like to deep dive into topics. The exclusive offer of selected independent and arthouse titles also piques the interest of high-schools, Universities and Associations, for whom we offer private screenings. Cinema City Alvalade is currently hosting the only Spanish Film Festival in Portugal, Cine Fiesta. In a couple of weeks, we will also host Festival MENTAL, focusing on European short films about mental illness.

Since 2010, we have proudly been a member of the Europa Cinemas Network. This membership strongly contributed in placing Cinema City Alvalade as a quality brand with an offer suitable for all audiences.

In bringing cinema back to Alvalade, offering the population a place for arts and culture, we have also contributed to bringing life and action to one of the most prestigious neighborhoods of Lisbon. Thanks to our wide ranging cultural cinema programme, it is not only the loyal Alvalade audience who have embraced the concept, but it has also became a prestigious cultural cinema spot for all cinema lovers in the Portuguese capital.

The staff at Cinema City Alvalade are highly motivated and an increase in admissions was registered this year, breaking records, such as 'best day ever" and 'best week ever' since its opening in 2009.



These numbers prove that our planning and marketing strategy, based on our background and experience, are working and delivering results.

**Tânia Fragoso**Programing Department **Andreia Pinto**Marketing Department







### Romania

## Cinema Arta, Sfantu Gheorghe

### Fostering the love of cinema-going

Sfantu Gheorghe is the capital city of Covasna county, located in the central part of Romania, in the historical region of Transylvania, with a population of 55,000 inhabitants (23% Romanians and 77% ethnic Hungarians).

Cinema "ARTA" is a municipal property built in 1969 that functioned as a 500-seat single screen until 2006. Although the cinema was used as a disco club between 2006 and

2016, the community of cinema lovers founded "Huszárik Cineclub", (named after the Hungarian director Huszárik Zoltán), to screen diverse art films and host various events. The community of cinema lovers were excited when city-hall authorities decided to start extensive work on rehabilitation of the old cinema.

Following a three-year renovation procedure, ARTA's big hall was divided into one theatre room (for live action plays every weekend) and two cinema halls. The ARTA Cinema was reopened on 27th of January 2017, the two halls now named Chaplin (80 seats) and Fellini (76 seats), after two great filmmakers, representing right from the beginning a double statement of our mission: to screen both commercial and arthouse films and to become a cinema for all.

For efficiency reasons, we have three screenings per day during the week and five on the weekend, totalling 44 screenings each week. The films are selected to present a wide variety of genres, across features, shorts, animation, documentary and experimental films.

We were able to foster a habit of going back to the cinema for all age groups, bearing in mind that an entire younger generation has grown up without a movie theatre in their town. What we think sets us apart is the number of movies screened each week: for example, this October, we programmed 27 different titles each week. This is our strategy for developing audiences: carefully selecting movies and screening them only once or twice a week, for a minimum of four to five weeks, creating the possibility for them to be seen by as many moviegoers as possible.

We promote the cinema programme in local media and participate in local radio film debates.

We promote animations and youth movies in kindergartens and schools and organize on demand screenings for groups outside of normal cinema operational hours. This flexibility and rich programme has brought us a lot of fun and many visitors come from surrounding towns.

The reopened ARTA cinema is young, yet old in tradition, so, in 2018, we organized a 1st year Anniversary Event focusing on the history and tradition of cinema in our town. There was a vintage film poster exhibition, a book on our cinema history was presented and a Gala premiere in the presence of the director with a debate took place, but, the most successful event was a party on film music for young audiences and a live concert of a children's cartoon.

When the cinema was first reopened, in 2017, we only screened films with Romanian subtitles. But we soon realized that Hungarian subtitled films would bring in more viewers because 77% of the population are Hungarian speaking. The problem was that a legislative initiative had to be introduced for us to be able to screen films subtitled in other languages together with the Romanian subtitled movies. This happened in January 2018, when an article was issued on the Cinematography Law, which meant we could increase the number of viewers by almost 40%. Distributors were receptive and immediately responded positively to the demand, since ARTA was not the only cinema needing double subtitling to serve Hungarian communities.

In 2018, we started a tradition to celebrate "The Romanian Culture Day" on January 15th each year and, on January 22nd, "The Hungarian Culture Day", each showcasing special Romanian and Hungarian films on their

respective anniversaries. This allows an opportunity for the two communities to get to know each other's most successful films of the past season. We also organized a Polish Film Day and French Film Festival, having partnered with cultural institutions including the Polish Cultural Institute, the French Institute in Bucharest and Balassi Intézet from Hungary.

We put in a lot of effort in organizing these events and we are proud of our work, although we are not always rewarded by large participation. Still, we are confident that in repeating these events every year we will gain reputation and appreciation.

Sfantu Gheorghe is a cultural old town where various free of charge cultural events are organized outdoor during the summer. Unfortunately, our targeted audience only represents a maximum of 7-10 % of the whole town's population. What we are deeply concerned about is movie piracy and a lack of education that could impact on our future box office. Finding movies on the Internet, sometimes even before the national premiere, is relatively easy and many are tempted to download illegally rather than paying for a ticket to come for a wonderful cinema experience.

#### Endre Lázár-Prezsmer

Cultural Programs Coordinator





## **Spain**Golem, Pamplona/Bilbao/Madrid/Burgos

#### An ever-expanding and innovative Spanish film theatres group

Golem opened its first cinema in Pamplona in 1982. This first project was based on an innovative complex made up of four screens, a pioneering idea at a time when the concept of the multiplex had just arrived in Spain. This first cinema, called Golem Baiona, is also where the company's main office is situated. Six years later, the complex added two more screens, making for a total of 1,200 seats.

The opening of this first multiplex meant a new way of understanding and engaging with cinema. From the outset, Golem wanted to offer a rich, varied and interesting cinema programming to the public. For us, cinema means more than a mere succession of titles, as we have demonstrated over the thirty-five years since we started as exhibitors, distributors and producers.

Based on the above philosophy, Golem strives to create and maintain a distinctive identity. On the one hand, our theatres combine a high technical quality of screenings with a high level of comfort; a place to enjoy good cinema while feeling at ease. On the other hand, we are committed to an exclusive choice of films, showing significant titles and genre films in a range of special programmes.

In 1992, Golem opened a second multiplex in Burgos, thus expanding its philosophy to other Spanish cities.

In order to widen Golem Baiona's programming aims, Golem Yamaguchi opened its doors in 1996 with five screens and 450 seats to show a more alternative cinema, where films would be screened with subtitles. Finally, to complete our cinema offer in Pamplona, we opened Golem La Morea in 2003, hoping to reach audiences living on the outskirts and in nearby towns. This last multiplex consists of twelve screens with 2,800 seats and the latest in digital technology, 3D screenings included.

In 2006, Golem opened its first complex in Madrid whereas, in 2010, Golem Alhóndiga arrived in Bilbao, while keeping its unmistakable identity.

We now have 42 screens across six venues in Pamplona, Burgos, Madrid and Bilbao, most of them situated in downtown areas.

In 2013, Golem was awarded the Europa Cinemas Award for Best Entrepreneur, acknowledging our work as exhibitors and our contribution to the promotion of European films through our cinemas and independent distribution company, Golem Distribución, S.L.

Despite the 2008 economic crisis and, taking into account that most of our screens happen to be in downtown areas, we are proud to say that we have been able to resist real estate speculation and continue to promote culture through films.



We believe that the strength that enabled us to carry on as we did is the fact that we are lucky enough to have a team that are fully involved with Golem and who firmly believe in the importance of promoting culture, doing everything in their power to offer the best to audiences.

Another crucial point is our diverse programming which includes film cycles designed to attract new audiences, as well as alternative content such as art documentaries and operas.

For more than thirty years, every June, the Women's Cinema International Festival takes place in our Pamplona theatres, an occasion to show the best cinema directed by women that year. We also collaborate with social groups in every city where we have screens in order to offer them the chance to discuss the current issues through films. "El Cine, El Mundo Y Los Derechos Humanos", "Cine Y Acogida", "Udako Golem Verano", "Mendi Tour", "Zinegoak, Zinebi" and "Fant Bilbao" are examples of some of the partners that can always count on coming to Golem's screens.

We have just hosted the 10th edition of "De San Sebastian A Pamplona/Madrid/Bilbao/Burgos", a now classic event that starts right after the San Sebastian Film Festival closes, between the end of September and the beginning of October, where we screen some of the best films from the festival.

At this yearly event, film buffs can enjoy films before their official release. We have always strived to offer the most varied programming possible, including titles from all nationalities in their original versions, in order to get to know other realities, as well as gems from independent cinema in a more artistic sense. Our audiences consider this event a privilege and wait for it with increasing appetite each year.

Every screening is introduced and commented on by an expert, such as the director of the San Sebastian Film Festival, members of the Selection Committee or someone from the film itself.

Taking into account the present situation, our main challenge lies in continuing to promote culture as much as possible, while incorporating innovative technology as well as new content and turning our cinemas into cultural centres.

Maintaining and increasing the number of visitors is no easy task as digital platforms and piracy are tough competitors in our country, but we fully trust the strength of cinema and are certain that no one can remain indifferent to the experience of seeing a film in a darkened theatre.

### Beatriz Ardaiz Project Coordinator





## **United Kingdom**Watershed, Bristol

## Curated programmes, festivals, inclusion and accessibility are on the agenda!

Watershed opened in 1982 as Britain's first media centre in a converted warehouse in a dilapidated post-industrial part of Bristol. Since then the historic Harbourside has been completely regenerated and in 2019 is now a thriving social and cultural destination. Watershed is now one of the leading UK independent cultural cinemas dedicated to screening the broad range and diversity of British independent and world film. The building is also home to a flexible events/festivals suite of three interlinked rooms, the Pervasive Media Studio, the linked Studio 5 workspace for freelance creatives and micro companies, workspace for young people, and a large café/bar, all fully accessible.

We are distinctive in our attitude towards programming and innovate across art, technology and society: playfulness, relevance and care are key. We respond to emerging opportunities and develop new mechanisms to support the people we work with. We work with schools, school leavers, universities, graduates and early career artists to support people in discovering and developing their creativity. For example, Watershed hosts RIFE, an online magazine that covers stories that matter to young people with content created by under 24s.

Watershed plays a vital connecting role in the city region's cultural and creative economy, creating pathways to new knowledge and new practice. Since 2018, Watershed has become the lead organisation for Film Hub South West, one of eight regional Film Hubs which make up the BFI's Film Audience Network (FAN) which develops audiences across the regions and nations. Film Hub South West is also now home to a BFI NETWORK Talent Executive, creating opportunities for regional filmmaking talent.

Partnerships have always been key to Watershed's cultural film programme which includes Filmic, an exploration of the creative connections between film and music in partnership with St.George's and Colston Hall and Cinema Rediscovered, a festival showcasing the history of film, platforming new restorations, contemporary classics and film print rarities. From the past to the future of filmmaking, Depict, Watershed's international short film competition as part of Encounters Festival connects fresh voices across the globe.

"Bristol is rapidly becoming Britain's most cinematic city. Designated a UNESCO City of Film in 2017, its reputation for great cinema screenings and heritage is growing and growing. One of the newest, shiniest gems in its movie crown is Cinema Rediscovered a kind of West-Country offspring of Bologna's Il Cinema Ritrovato." Pamela Hutchinson, Silent London, July 2019.



New initiatives include a collaboration with curated streaming platform MUBI through their sponsorship of repertory Summer programmes from May to August. This supported repertory programming on Peter Strickland, Eric Rohmer, Yann Gonzalez. MUBI cross promoted the strands with a focus on their MUBI Go offer through their mailing list, socials and an outdoor campaign.

A recent programme success has been with *Bait* directed by Mark Jenkin. The film was produced by Bristol based Early Day Films and made in Cornwall. We have been supporting the film and its producers since the film premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in February. Bait has been a critical and now a commercial success with Watershed and the wider South West region taking the highest opening weekend admissions in the UK. *Bait* opened on 18 prints (compared with *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood's* 600) and is now widened to over 40 and currently taking £300,000 box office.

"The best cinema, @wshed in Bristol is only £5 for under 24's, a great way to get them into foreign, independent and documentary cinema. They take part in multiple events/festivals, throughout the year for cheap prices, and it's run by people who clearly, genuinely love cinema," state some visitors on Twitter

Communicating our work requires passion, expertise and a high level of care in nurturing creatives that produce new work and the audiences that will attend. Marketing and communications for artistic programming and projects are delivered across almost all channels available, include outdoor advertising, local and national PR, an on-going process of email and social media communications, reciprocal arrangements with other organisations and, when necessary, by engaging directly with those audiences that are being targeted.

Our aim is to be as inclusive as we can be for everyone and attention to detail when it comes to the experience of

our visitors/audiences is paramount—from gender neutral toilets, to regular Monday morning screenings for parents and carers of babies, to training 60+ staff in Deaf Awareness, basic skills in British Sign Language, learning how to be more Dementia Friendly and introducing relaxed screenings.

The screening of a film is the springboard to a deeper discussion with audiences and we provide a range of opportunities through our Conversations About Cinema strand for debate and discussion.

#### Mark Cosgrove

Programme Director





## Spotlight Bologna Lab Germany Yorck Kinogruppe, Berlin

### Yorck's evolving social media strategy

Founded in 1978, Yorck Kinogruppe has always been a neighbourhood-focused group of arthouse cinemas. Over the four decades it's been in existence, the group has, like Berlin itself, experienced many changes, but has always relied on a loyal Berlin audience. Today, the network is Germany's largest group of independent cinemas, with 14 venues in Berlin and sister companies in Dresden and Munich.

For most of its history, regional media including newspapers, radio stations, and city guide magazines have been the most crucial platforms for programming and marketing. With the changing media consumption of younger generations, however, Yorck Kinogruppe was quick to realise that digital tools would become key in attracting younger moviegoers.

The first step was the establishment of a Facebook page in 2009. Facebook represented almost all of Yorck's social media efforts, with a general focus on trailers and the upcoming film programme. But, from early on, Yorck considered social media to be more than purely about marketing, and instead as an extension of the cinema brand in the digital sphere. As Yorck needed to compete with cinemagoers' friends on Facebook, it needed to be at least as personable, interesting and entertaining as them. In the early years of Facebook, Yorck enjoyed instant success, generating 27,000 followers

who appreciated the mix of movie news, cinema enthusiasm and an occasional political statement.

A refreshed focus on our social efforts came in establishing a single full-time position to manage all our digital marketing efforts, in 2018. At a one-day workshop, participants re-evaluated both the existing platform strategy and expectations for audience development. It quickly became apparent that even though the Facebook account already had many followers, Facebook was no longer the primary platform of choice for young moviegoers. Instagram was gaining popularity in Berlin, yet Yorck seldomly posted there.

The proposed platform strategy saw different goals and tactics for each platform: on Facebook, most efforts would focus on promoting singular events via the Facebook Events function; Twitter would be a primary medium for communicating with expats living in Berlin; and the primary focus for Yorck's social media strategy would be in building a new community on Instagram.

The goal was clear: the Instagram account should feel like a digital version of a cinema employee who gives tips on which films to see. And, by building a community around it, the account could become a meaningful way to interact with audiences who don't use traditional media outlets.

One thing was evident early on: to build that community, the account would need to be authentic for younger

generations. Like arthouse cinema in the real world, it had to differentiate itself from streaming and big brands that populate social media platforms with big budgets and output. The account had to feel vibrant, young, and authentic for it to succeed.

For that reason, it would focus less on advertising specific films and showtimes and more as a general editorial "magazine", accompanying casual moviegoers throughout the year. It would talk about the moviegoing experience, fun pop culture news, what young actors and actresses were up to, and a carefully selected number of films deemed fitting for an 18-35-year-old audience. That led to the exclusion of many films playing at Yorck cinemas, but it also meant it stayed relevant to younger generations. One of the leading mottos for the account is, "Craft content for our audience, not for our programming office."

It is also vital for our Instagram strategy that we speak the language of the Internet. This meant using slang, memes and jargon that would be recognised and loved by regular users of the platform. To clarify the tone and voice of the account, the Yorck team crafted a so-called Instagram persona. This process mainly consisted of finding answers to the question, "If our account was a real person, what would they be like?" The answers consist of both company values, stemming from our history and employee spirit, as well as topics our target audience cares about.

Around 68% of the 7,000 Instagram followers are under 35 years old, with 62% of them identifying as female. The benefits of our Instagram strategy can be felt in many ways. One meaningful way is the introduction of English subtitles at Rollberg Kino. After A/B testing content in both English and German, the language for our Instagram channel was changed to English. Subsequently, Yorck Gruppe introduced a new programming format that screened international arthouse hits like Pain And Glory or Burning with English subtitles. Only advertised on Instagram, these shows are now







among the most popular in Rollberg.

This is also what Yorck recommends to cinemas with a limited marketing budget: experiment, experiment, experiment. You will have to invest time and be prepared to fail but, once you find something that works that you can build upon, the payoff is enormous.

Marvin Wiechert
Digital Marketing Manager
Daniel Sibbers
Director of Marketing



# Europa Cinemas/Institut français: beyond Europe, to the world!

In 2015, Europa Cinemas and the Institut français concluded an agreement to professionalise some forty cinemas in the French cultural network of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) in Europe and on other continents.

In 2019, 56 cinemas in the Instituts français or Alliances françaises are equipped with professional standards, 21 of them thanks to the support from the CNC (Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image animée).

They present a wide variety of situations: from the Ciné Lumière in London, which has just opened a second screen, to the cinema Elvire Popesco in Bucharest, which won the prize for the best programming in 2017, to the Kino 35 in the heart of Prague and the Paris cinema in Berlin under the responsibility of a German exhibitor, the same desire is clearly expressed: to disseminate as widely as possible recent French and European productions, as well as heritage cinema.

In addition to these four flagship cinemas, members of the Europa Cinemas/Media network, more than 50 venues operate worldwide in the same way as many Art et Essai cinemas and open their screens to French and European films, as well as to national productions and African films from the Cinémathèque Afrique of the Institut français.

In several capitals, they are sometimes the only gateways to an auteur cinema that is totally ignored by main stream theatrical distribution. Some cinemas, such as the Ciné IFAL (Instituto Frances de America Latina) in Mexico City or the Institut français in Libreville, the only cinema in the Gabonese capital, have an annual audience worthy of commercial theatres. Others, such as the Institut français in Spain, are innovating in the search for local partnerships: the Madrid venue recently joined forces with MK2 Spain to program some of its sessions.

Film education is a priority to renew and rejuvenate the public with programmes for schools and universities. The network of 9 cinemas in Morocco under the impetus of Casablanca offers an ambitious programme of image education sessions specifically dedicated to young audiences.

The joint action we are carrying out with the Institut français enables Europa Cinemas to re-establish a foothold on continents where our association had been active for some ten years thanks to the Euromed Audiovisual, Africa Cinemas and Media Mundus programmes. This international openness, combined with that of Eurimages, gives the professionals in our network an additional capacity to enrich their experience with examples of the screening of European films far from the conditions of exhibition they are familiar with on their own continent... and the officials of the Commission or Parliament the idea of reinstating an action to support the international screening of European productions.



### **Europa Cinemas Label Winners 2019**













For 16 years, Network exhibitors have been awarding the Europa Cinemas Label to the best European films at major European festivals. The Europa Cinemas Label aims to enhance the promotion, circulation and box-office runs of European award-winning films on the screens of member cinemas across Europe.

