

# EUROPA CINEMAS

Network  
Review  
#40

December 2022



Collaborate  
to Innovate

Europa  
Cinemas  
Awards

30th  
Anniversary





## EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK REVIEW

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**Founded in 1992, Europa Cinemas is the first international film theatre network for the circulation of European films.**

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# Editorial

by Claude-Eric Poiroux

Cinema is not an elite luxury. Our film theatres are where people come to dream and enjoy culture – as places of entertainment, they are open to all, for the benefit of everyone, and it is vital that they stay that way.



© Sandrine Jousseume

When we last held our Conference – in Lisbon, November 2019 – little did we know that a global pandemic was about to strike and close the doors of our cinemas for several months, completely or partially. However, our discussions were already focused on

the transformations we needed to carry out at our own venues and on how to make theatres more appealing to their audiences. The Covid episode amplified and accelerated the shake-ups we were actively getting ready to face. We were aware of the multiple media platforms, the vast array of films and games on offer, and the series that are available on people's screens at home. These factors, though, were now being joined by profound changes in audience behaviour, in cinemagoers' tastes and desires and, consequently, their viewing choices. This has resulted in our current need to reposition our film theatres in a spatial and temporal context that has been particularly badly impacted since "normal" life resumed: now, with several months behind us, we are observing a general decline in the number of cinemagoers (although this varies according to country) of 20 % to 50 % across all of our film theatres. Our concern today, therefore, is to secure the long-term profitability of our businesses and, at the very least, ensure that we are able to invest and come up with new ideas.

In response to this situation, things are boding well for the Paris Conference – participant numbers have never been so high! This is clearly an indicator of our desire to pool our experiences and ideas, in a common drive to innovate and get our industry moving again.

After thirty years, Europa Cinemas is really seeing its reputation as a committed, collaborative network coming into its own.

From the very beginning, it has been our desire to be a decisive force for the dissemination of European productions: our geographic locations have increased tenfold over the past decade and we are now a firm presence in towns and cities across Europe. Thanks to a network of 3000 screens in 750 cities, we generate real visibility for filmmakers, producers and distributors among Europe's audiences and bring in more than 250 million euros for the European audiovisual industry. These figures are worth examining in detail, since they do not just concern a handful of blockbusters that tend to monopolise audiences, but hundreds of titles which, every year, are distributed beyond their borders and right across the continent, with the assistance of our film theatres. Congratulations are owed to our exhibitors, who are the real, on-the-ground drivers of diversity, offering more than fifteen European nationalities to audiences every year. Today, more than ever, it is imperative that we keep this plurality of origins, genres and formats going – it is a real asset for reconquering the hearts of our audiences, who are every bit as diverse.

So, in thirty years, we have built up a solid and sustainable network. Crucially, though, we have evolved a decentralised, collective task force: each member pools its experiences in order to drive innovations across the group. We had already been trialling large-scale considerations during the digital transformation of the past ten years: each conference had become a place of communication and dialogue before we committed ourselves to major investments in terms of financing, equipment and skills. This period brought us all together and enabled us to uphold our unity by comparing our points of view, which sometimes differed palpably according to our specific exhibiting conditions in different countries and contexts.

This technological revolution gained us entry into a new era, that of the digital distribution of productions, omnipresent Internet, online communication, social networks and super-



swift audience responsiveness. This is where Europa Cinemas fully plays its role as head of the network, while allowing its members to work towards mutual improvement by intensively sharing experiences, skills and innovations. In Bologna in 2005, we launched our Audience development & Innovation Labs, which went on to set down roots in places like Sofia, Seville, Vilnius, Thessaloniki, Sarajevo or Leipzig and have already enjoyed the participation of more than a thousand exhibitors. Several dozen of them have already



Europa Cinemas Network Conference 2019 © JoanaLinda

sat on the juries of our five Labels, and courtesy of Next/Change we facilitate travel and dialogue among film theatres in a variety of countries. In partnership with the European Parliament and the European Film Academy, we enable 27 young Europeans chosen by our film theatres to sit on the jury of the *Giornate degli Autori* in Venice, under the guidance of filmmakers such as, this year, Céline Sciamma. We are active partners of the Lux Audience Award, European Arthouse Cinema Day by the CICAIE, and European Cinema Night organised by the European Commission. And let us not forget the Conferences and meetings in Cannes... Each and every one of these initiatives allows the members of our network to get to know one another better, grow their skills, share their experiences, and thus consolidate and improve their practice as exhibitors at the heart of the cities where they play a vital role in integration and dialogue.

We recently progressed through new stages in our collective activities. With the implementation of Collaborate to Innovate, we contribute to the funding of shared projects which benefit from investment by multiple film theatres from various cities or countries. A sum of two million euros has thus been earmarked for 28 initiatives, which to date bring together more than 100 film theatres belonging to the network.

They are already sharing their experiences in pitching sessions, which can bring together dozens of potential contact partners via Zoom. In parallel, multiple Focus Groups are working on sustainable development, gender equality and inclusion in order to draw up two Charters which we will implement across the network.

All these tools, along with the Network Reviews, web site and the production of surveys, are clearly intended to specifically feed into our collective considerations and, in particular, engage us in the profound transformations that we are performing at each of our exhibition sites – because that is where all is at stake! Take a trip around and gauge the inexhaustible capabilities of our network's exhibitors to innovate from day to day; build new film theatres; add on catering, gaming, and exhibition sites; host open-access spaces for conversations and debates; invent new communication tools to promote inclusion and dialogue – and, crucially, maintain a reasonable pricing policy. Cinema is not an elite luxury. Our film theatres are where people come to dream and enjoy culture – as places of entertainment, they are open to all, for the benefit of everyone, and it is vital that they stay that way.

That is our takeaway from the two Europa Cinemas Awards this year: the prize for Best Programming, which goes to the Kino Pilotu in Prague, and the one for Entrepreneur of the Year, which goes to the Belgian group Lumière, under its managing director Alexander Vandeputte. Well done to them for their dynamism and achievements!

As we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are keen to thank the main sponsors who have unwaveringly supported Europa Cinemas and its exhibitors in the network for numerous years: the *Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée*, the Council of Europe and Eurimages, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institut Français and, of course, taking pride of place, the European Commission, Creative Europe MEDIA and the agency EACEA, which have regularly augmented their financial support and even provided additional resources for digitally equipping projection booths and, very recently, to help us get through the difficult period of film theatre closures. Exhibitors can be sure of lots of support as we secure the future of the big screen and step up to the challenges faced by European filmmaking!

**Claude-Eric Poiroux**, General Director

# Interview with Lucia Recalde,

## Head of Unit Creative Europe/MEDIA



European Cinema Night 2021 - Urania Nemzeti Filmsínház



**Europa Cinemas celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2022.**

**What are your considerations on the results achieved by the Network in these 30 years and what are your expectations for the years to come?**

In the last 30 years Europa Cinemas has played a pivotal role for the European audiovisual ecosystem; it would be for me impossible to list all the incredible achievements of the network. In short, Europa Cinemas has strengthened the circulation of non-national European film, it has secured the presence of cinemas in all EU member states, it has promoted the diversity and the richness of the European film production, it has secured a bulk of audience for the European films, it has engaged with this audience in a creative and trusted manner. All these achievements make the Commission proud of having supported the network since the very creation of the MEDIA Programme! Yet, the role of Europa Cinemas goes beyond these very important elements.

When people ask me to explain what the Creative Europe programme does for the audiovisual, my simple answer is: "you know when you go to your local arthouse cinema to see *Triangle of Sadness*, this is how Europe is supporting European cinema".

In an ever changing market context, Europa Cinemas will continue to support cinema theatres, while adapting to the new circumstances. Innovation and collaboration are more than ever needed. This is precisely



Triangle of Sadness by Ruben Östlund

what the project Collaborate to Innovate is for: grassroots cooperation among exhibitors representing the full diversity of European cinemas and countries, working together and learning from each other, to boost audience outreach and make the cinematic experience as enjoyable as possible.

**2022 is also a pivotal year, with the Covid-19 and energy crises strongly impacting the cinemas and the whole industry. How do you think the sector will overcome this difficult period? Will the Creative Europe MEDIA programme propose any initiative or financial aid to support cinemas and independent players in this critical situation for the cinema industry?**

When I talk about creativity and innovation, and a changing environment I refer precisely to the effects of the pandemic on the European audiovisual ecosystem. And naturally, the incumbent economic crisis triggered by the energy crisis. These exogenous factors have accelerated preexisting trends in the audiovisual ecosystem, namely the diversification of choices for the audience and the competition of the various windows of exploitation. With supply exceeding demand of European works, the only strategy that pays off is to embrace change. Promotion of films, analyzing audience preferences, making cinema theatres special events, all this should lead to a renewal of the cinema going

experience. Cooperation around shared goals across all segments of the audiovisual value chain is also a must and should be part of an overarching strategy, encompassing also technological change, social innovation and last but certainly not least sustainability. Let me assure you that the Commission will continue to support the network in its renewed visions and endeavours.

**Creative Europe MEDIA is about to launch European MEDIA Outlook. Can you present us this research study?**

As announced in the Media and Audio-visual Action Plan, the Outlook will be a comprehensive market report covering not only the audiovisual sector but also news media. It will present and analyse, in an objective and evidence-based manner, the main market and technological trends in media. The Outlook is not linked to any specific policy issue or instrument. The Media Outlook will cover trends relating to films and cinema. For example, beyond admission figures, we aim to provide a richer picture of audience behavior and preferences. The impact of streaming on the audiovisual ecosystem, including of course cinema, will naturally also be covered by the Outlook. The current target for publishing the first edition of the Media Outlook is early 2023.





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# Young audiences return to cinemas with confidence

by Tara Judah

Cinema closures across Europe as a result of Covid-19 left venues with the task of reinventing cinema-going. Making venues safe was a priority, but the long-term challenge remains age-old: bringing local communities together. A recent survey of a selection of Europa Cinemas' network members indicates that young audiences in particular are returning with enthusiasm.



© Buster Film Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark

In France, cinemas were closed for longer than other public venues, but L'Entrepôt's Director of Programming, Priscilla Gessati, says young audiences are keen to return, "Just after the reopening we felt a huge demand from the audience - especially parents who kept their children home for so many months without any cultural places open." After a period of relative isolation and cultural scarcity, cinema-going has become a beacon of hope. "Children are very happy to come to the cinema," she says, "We can see it when they arrive: they are excited. They are waiting for something special to happen and that's precisely the impression that we need to make."

Teen audiences are also returning, with help from a government initiative called Pass Culture, where every young person between the ages of 15 and 18 received credit on a dedicated app to spend in cultural places (tickets to cinemas, shows, bookshops, etc). "The young generation is really involved in what happens around them and they are

very aware of the impact of their behaviour and how they 'consume'," Gessati says. "A recent survey shows that the youngest are already fed up with platforms (perhaps they watched too much) and they want to engage with real life."

Flore Tournois, Director of Operations at Cinemas Star in Strasbourg also credits the French culture pass with encouraging younger audiences to return, helping them sell subscription cards and providing new credits for school sessions. Cinemas Star has now brought back all of its pre-pandemic young audience activities. From their "Doudou Club" for two- to five-year-olds to their Animastar young audience festival, Tournois says, "The attendance was there as soon as the recovery!"

In addition, Cinemas Star have launched new projects including "Club Jeune Cinéphile", a call for applications for nine young ambassadors, and an introductory animation film course for children.



Kinodvor, Ljubljana, Slovenia © Katja Goljat/Kinodvor



Cinéma L'Entrepot, Paris, France



© Buster Film Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark

Ivar Murd, CEO at Kino Sõprus (Tallinn, Estonia) says they too have launched new initiatives, including children's screenings in the mornings and new local films for schools, "The results for these have been very, very good, filling our screening hall regularly." Anne Kellner, Director at Li.Wu.@Frieda and Li.Wu.@Metropol in Germany has also seen enthusiasm for school collaborations, "We noticed that schools and teachers were very keen and interested in school screenings. They returned to our cinema right after we were allowed to open up again."

In Denmark, concerns about Covid-19 are a distant memory, and Kim Foss, Managing Director at Grand Teatret says young audiences are returning at pre-pandemic levels across all age groups. "Pupils from schools and high schools were eager (and quick) to return," Foss says. Grand Teatret have also welcomed back BUSTER, the Copenhagen International Film Festival for Children and Youth. Established in 2000, this year's edition saw two special screenings of Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* with live dubbing enthral younger audiences. But even if audiences feel safe, cinemas cannot become complacent.

"On the other hand," Tournois says, "we are aware that it takes a lot of work. We even hired a communication apprentice to strengthen the team. It's an investment but it's important especially since we don't release blockbusters. We must constantly encourage young people's curiosity about diversity films and be mobilized!"

Finally, at Kinodvor in Ljubljana, they have also seen hard work pay off and are now approaching pre-pandemic numbers with their three core young audience programmes; Kinodvor school programme, Kinobalon for families and Kinotrip for teenagers. Film Education and Young Audiences Programme Manager Petra Slatinšek says a "Going back to the cinema" advertising campaign and dedicated marketing for young audiences has helped. "Defining target groups for each screening/title and working a lot on communication is what we do and have done for many years now. So, nothing particularly new, but hard work and communication as always, re-inventing all the time."



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a happy 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
to Europa Cinemas**

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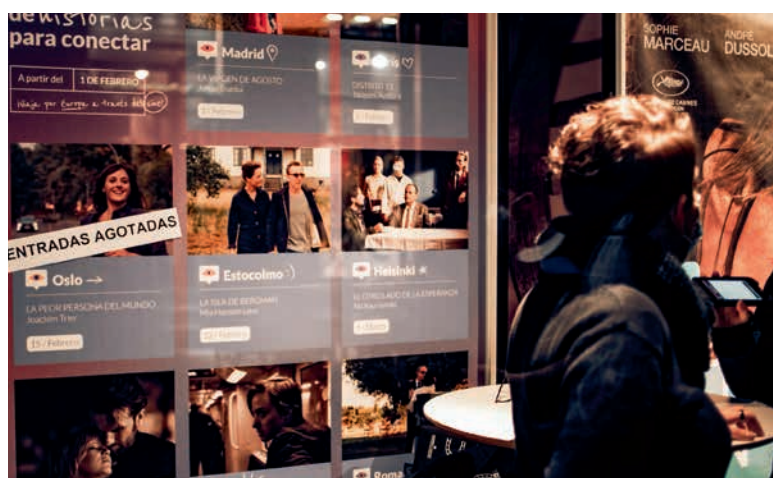
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# COLLA- BORATE TO INNO- VATE



Project Viridiana



Interrail through Europa Cinemas

# Network pioneers share innovation best practice

by Michael Gubbins

Collaborate to Innovate has quickly become a flagship programme. Launched in 2020, it encapsulates much of what today's Europa Cinemas represents – international collaboration and cooperation, shared ideas and fresh thinking, an engaged and proactive membership and a confident commitment to the future of cinema. The guidelines of the scheme were framed by a network focus group, made up of a representative group of network members. It was designed to offer a relevant and realistic mechanism for tackling issues affecting both cinemas and the broader industry, including changing audience habits, an ever-increasing consumer choice and tough economic conditions.

Cinemas also need to innovate to support their own social mission, such as diversity, inclusion and sustainable green practice. Collaborate to Innovate was created to harness the collective knowledge and ideas of one of Europe's biggest and most engaged cultural networks: venues in 750 towns and cities in 38 countries with more than 3,000 screens.

The idea of bringing together all that expertise and energy with a common purpose was an inspiring idea and one that was recognised by the European Commission, which backed the project, creating a €1m fund in year one (which was doubled for the second edition).

What Collaborate to Innovate first required was pioneers, who could turn ideas into practice. Creating a project was never going to be a simple task and it took some participants outside their comfort zone, and the challenge was compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, which was still a seriously disruptive factor for the whole network. But network members from across Europe took the leap in the dark and launched projects – and it is now possible to share their insights to help guide the next wave of participants.

The first two years of projects showed a wide range of interpretations of “innovation” (later projects have also focused strongly on Europa Cinemas' key themes of diversity, inclusion, social responsibility and environmental sustainability).



Travel with film education

## FIRST RESULTS

Measurement is essential to Collaborate to Innovate with projects required to offer benchmarks to evaluate impact. In some cases, targets included creating tools and resources, such as websites, mobile platforms, ticketing systems and streaming services. Others created events, screenings, podcasts and workshops. Among common measures were:

### Increased target audience

Many targeted young audiences. *Travel With Film Education* saw its participant achieving at least a 10% increase in its young audience, while a survey by Serbian youth-focused *European Films For Next Generation* suggested a 10% increase in demand for European film. *Z-Power* got 115 young participants for its programme. *Cinemas sur écoute* saw a 20% increase in young audiences but also a 5% increase in disadvantaged communities.

### Use of new tools and resources

*Imperceptibles* saw 1,600 downloads of a new app for young audiences. Beyond cinemas, *Coastline Cinema* created a catalogue of 49 films with a teacher's manual for schools, while 256 distributors and film institutions registered for the new *Passerelle* arthouse website.

### Increased European film screening and box office

*Project Viridiana* beat its online targets for European film visibility with 63 million page impressions for 11 European films, while Poland's ZEF achieved 1,353 screenings of films with its approved evaluation mark. *Interrail Through Europa Cinemas* analysis showed it exceeded targets for promotional reach for European film. *New Collective Innovative*

*Software for Small-Size Cinemas* created long-term value with data made available on 36,165 ticket sales thanks to new software.

### Social and environmental benefits

*Streaming Technology In Movie Theatres* achieved a 30% decrease in carbon emissions through its streamed screenings. In most cases, targets were reached despite the impact of the pandemic, and set future benchmarks. *Cineville Belgium*, for example, saw some immediate audience increases but said a new ticketing system and loyalty programme gave them the opportunity for long-term growth. Similarly, *Hybrid Features for European Cinemas* said it would measure value created over years, not just for the project duration.

### Audience services and loyalty programmes

**Cineville Belgium**, Belgium. 4 participants. Key goal: Loyalty programme and pass for multiple cinemas

**Cinemas sur écoute (In Extenso)**, France. 3 participants, later 4. Key goal: Enhance use of sound and podcasts to promote European cinemas

**Hybrid Futures For European Cinemas**, Netherlands. 15 participants. Key goal: Live, online and interactive content integrated into cinema websites

**New collective innovative software for small-size cinemas**, Estonia. 4 participants. Key goal: Shared development of ticketing and customer relationship software

**Passerelle**, France. 5 participants. Key goal: Building and enhancing engaged film-loving communities in cinemas

### Young audience development

**European Films For Next Generation**, Serbia. 3 participants. Key goal: Pre-and early-teen audience development programme

**Interrail Through Europa Cinemas**, Spain. 8 participants. Key goal: Cultural programme and community for young audiences

**Travel With Film Education**, Latvia/Lithuania. 3 participants. Key goal: An internationally-focused young audience development programme

**ZEF**, Poland. 5 participants. Key goal: Creating film programmes for educators

**Z-Power**, Italy. 12 participants. Key goal: Building film programmes with young people

### Events and streaming

**Coastline Cinema**, Croatia. 12 participants. Key goal: Curated event screening programme to promote European film

**Imperceptibles**, France/Hungary. 10 participants. Key goal: Secret film screenings

**Live Stream Collaboration Network**, Austria. 5 participants. Key goal: Shared live film events and Q&As across cinemas

**Project Viridiana**, Spain. 26 participants (rising to 32). Key goal: European film screenings and events outside major cities

**Streaming Technology In Movie Theatres**, Spain. 6 participants. Key goal: Installation of streaming systems and streamed programme



## BEST PRACTICE

Europa Cinemas brought together each of those projects to look at the lessons learned from success, and importantly failure.

All the projects have been generous in sharing their experience and it is now possible to create a best-practice guide to follow.

### 1 Choose a long-term objective

An important part of the Collaborate to Innovate mission is to create sustainable innovation. The projects themselves are intended to create a platform for future development and growth.

Selecting a project that addresses a long-term need is important and helps ensure that the work is integrated into day-to-day business activity.

### 2 Plan and adapt

Every success and failure in the pioneer projects has its roots in the planning stage of projects. All projects start with the same levels of passion and commitment but the ones that work best are those that have spent time thinking about potential scenarios. Project coordinators warn against over-enthusiasm and expanding the brief.

A disciplined approach is vital, they say, but suggest that projects consider where they might need to adapt because of changed circumstances. Anticipating problems at the planning stage makes them easier to manage later.

### 3 Create realistic measurements

Every project is obliged to establish Key Performance Indicators – transparent measurements that allow them to track progress and assess outcomes. Getting those measurements right from Day One is important in keeping projects on track and ensuring that value is understood and extracted from the work, both inside the business and later by the network as a whole.

### 4 Appoint a committed project coordinator

The importance of a dedicated leader was a theme from all projects. That leader can ensure that projects stay on track and remain a business priority. Ensuring that someone has ownership of the budget, goals, KPIs and outcomes is critical.

### 5 Build a team and internal buy in

The project coordinator can be a tough role, especially where he or she is juggling other business responsibilities. Having a team that buys into the goals and objectives and is enthusiastic about achieving them is essential. There will be problems along the path and sharing the burden – and finding collective solutions – will be important.

### 6 Find committed partners

The initial projects worked with a wide range of partners, including distributors, producers, schools and universities, software developers, technical experts, etc. Those partners need to be as committed as the team. Consider where partnership might be needed at the planning stage and keep communications open and clear.

### 7 Use external expertise

Often finding external expertise is more reliable, cost effective and efficient than trying to go it alone. Employing existing software, technical specialists, event services, etc. saves time, makes delivery more reliable and, in the end, is likely to save money.

### 8 Share, copy and steal

Innovation is not an abstract concept. It is about new ways to solve problems. Some of those issues may have been around for many years, such as declining young audiences, and others may have arisen recently, such as loss of audiences to streaming. Most cinemas are working towards the same goals and trying to manage them each at local level is impossibly inefficient. Part of the ethos of Collaborate to Innovate is to take innovation in one country and adapt it to another. Future projects may increasingly be about building on previous projects.

### 9 Go for it

The reports of project managers all end on the same note: Collaborate to Innovate is rewarding, not just in the project itself, but in enhancing the way that the business thinks, in building confidence, creating team spirit and finding partnerships. It is an investment in the future.

# Kinoabo Austria

## Interview with Martin Kitzberger and Wiktoría Pelzer, Stadtkino (Vienna) by Birgit Heidsiek

Arthouse cinemas in Austria will get a boost from the Collaborate to Innovate Kinoabo project. The subscription model for a monthly flat rate is aimed at young cinema-goers. Martin Kitzberger and Wiktoría Pelzer from Stadtkino Filmverleih and Kinobetriebsgesellschaft offer insight into the project.



Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus © Viennale

### What inspired you to create the Kinoabo project?

**Wiktoría Pelzer:** The huge success of the collaborative cinema project Cineville in the Netherlands and their impressive numbers inspired us to create the Kinoabo project in Austria. The challenges we face as arthouse cinemas were already there, before Covid – but the pandemic made it even clearer: we need to attract younger audiences – and the older, more vulnerable audiences might not go to the cinema as often as they used to. This needed to be addressed with new, innovative ideas – and a commitment to work more closely together among arthouse exhibitors. We received initial support from the Federal Ministry for Arts and Culture in Austria for the development of the project in 2020.

**Martin Kitzberger:** With the support we commissioned market research to know if the Cineville model would also work in the Austrian market. Indeed, there is a great demand for it, but it must be adapted to our national needs.

From the start of the project, it was clear that our work must be transparent. We talked to exhibitors as well as distributors and production companies to get wider support for the project.

### What is the approach of Kinoabo?

**WP:** Kinoabo offers a monthly paid flat rate subscription. For 22 euros per month, cinema-goers receive unlimited free access at all the participating cinemas in Austria. The economic model is structured in such a way that it is beneficial across the entire value chain.

**MK:** The idea is that independent arthouse exhibitors collaborate in order to reconnect young target groups with the cinemas by offering them a flat rate ticket. It is also a marketing tool for the arthouse cinemas, to create a positive public image. In the Netherlands, Cineville was launched 13 years ago, and it attracts around 55,000 members who attend the cinema, on average, 2.5 times per month.

Cineville members now represent a substantial portion of the audience in participating movie theatres in the Netherlands.

### How can this model be applied to the theatrical market in Austria?

**MK:** According to our market study, in which 330,000 people expressed their interest to buy the ticket, there is huge potential in Austria. The study also showed that many young people are planning to visit cinemas less often now than they did before Covid-19. Therefore, we need to offer an innovative model for these younger groups that will encourage them to attend arthouse cinemas more often.

**WP:** In the development of the model, we were aware that Austria has a different socio-economical structure than the Netherlands – for example it is not so densely populated – and Vienna is the urban centre for cinema culture, so this had to be taken into consideration while planning the project.



Film Casino, Vienna

*nonstop*

DEIN KINOABO  
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### Where are the Kinoabo member cinemas located?

**MK:** About half of our twenty member cinemas are based in Vienna, while the other cinemas are located in smaller cities such as Innsbruck, Graz and Linz.

### How will you communicate Kinoabo to potential cinema-goers?

**MK:** We will launch a campaign for “nonstop – Dein Kinoabo” in February 2023 with a website for the cinema subscription service, social media channels and marketing activities across participating cinemas.

Our main focus is to address audiences between 18 and 30 years of age, who are used to streaming services. We want to create a brand for arthouse cinemas which is colourful, loud and pop-cultural.

**WP:** Our aim is to give arthouse cinemas an image boost without changing their film programmes. It is all about communication. We need to create an urge to be a member of this “cool” cinema club and community.

### What are your expectations?

**WP:** Pretty high. Kinoabo is the biggest innovation since the digitization of the theatrical market. Besides the image boost, the collective marketing activities can strengthen the collaboration of the arthouse cinemas. We also want to attract audiences to attend regular shows and not only focus on events which require a lot of staff. Essentially, we are using the logic of streaming platforms – but on a more personal level with a hand-picked programme instead of an AI curation.

### What might its impact be at local and national levels?

**MK:** We are confident that cinema culture will be strengthened on a local level if cinemas work closer together. On the national level, we hope to sustainably attract young people as well as cinephiles.

### Partner cinemas:

**Stadtkino,** Vienna  
**Burkino,** Vienna  
**Top Kino,** Vienna  
**Schikaneder Kino,** Vienna  
**Votiv Kino,** Vienna  
**City Kino,** Vienna  
**Filmcasino,** Vienna  
**Filmhaus,** Vienna  
**Cinema Paradiso St. Pölten,** St. Pölten  
**Cinema Paradiso,** Baden  
**Kino im Kesselhaus,** Krems an der Donau  
**KIZ RoyalKino,** Graz  
**Movimento,** Linz  
**Cinematograph/Leokino,** Innsbruck  
**Das Kino,** Salzburg



# Back to the local cinema Croatia

## Interview with Helga Lajtman, Centar za kulturu (Čakovec) by Stjepan Hundic



Centar za kulturu Čakovec

### Helga, please introduce yourself.

I am Helga Lajtman and I currently hold the position of Head of Duty at the Centar za kulturu Čakovec (Čakovec Culture Centre), which also coordinates the "Back to the local cinema" project. Since it was founded in 1981, the Centar za kulturu Čakovec has organised cultural events, exhibitions, art and music performances, as well as film screenings four days a week. Film forums and numerous activities are also organized as part of the "Kino Mreža" programme such as "Film Review for Children", "Cinema for Youth" and "Film for Kindergartens and Primary Schools".

### Can you please describe the project?

Innovation is a crucial step towards active film engagement

in the local community. Given that cinema is one of the cultural sectors that has been declining in the last few years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to develop innovative and participatory activities that are specifically aimed at young audiences, and which access the local help that's available. Our "Back to the Local Cinema" project develops innovative educational guides for film engagement and literacy, specially developed for European short and feature films for children aged four to 15. There will be 86 school screenings of 14 European films in local cinemas in Čakovec, Samobor and Novska, and film literacy workshops with local experts coordinated by Centar za kulturu Čakovec. The project is a partnership between local cinemas and public educational institutions, "Pučko

otvoreno učilište Samobor" and "Pučko otvoreno učilište Novska". You can find more information about the programme on our website: [www.mojemalokino.net](http://www.mojemalokino.net)

### Why did you choose to launch this project?

To change our current situation. Innovative educational film programmes, film databases and identifying local film experts are significantly new in Croatia. Interaction, engagement and audience inclusion activities are sporadically developed for particular films and for a particular audience. Film databases for finding European films or anything around film literacy or educational information does not exist in Croatia. Local distributors only list their films' basic information like title, year, director, etc.



### **What was the need for it in your country?**

The promotion of European cinema to preserve, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic audiovisual diversity is especially important among children and young audiences. They are heavily bombarded, daily, by predominantly American culture consumed via mobile phones or tablets, with very minimal critical reflection. It is crucial to develop film literacy and an understanding of film language to appreciate European cinema. This can be done through innovative cinema education programmes, as well as through film critique and analysis classes for younger audiences.

### **What are your expectations?**

Through partnership with local cinemas, we will build

a sustainable network of European film experiences and a foundation for the promotion of European cinema. We expect to achieve this goal by incorporating programmes for younger audiences focused on European film screenings, with workshops and lectures by local experts. We hope to keep the project alive after the project ends.

### **What might its impact be at a local and national level?**

The programme will focus entirely on the promotion of European cinema in local schools and kindergartens engaging children and students, as well as teachers and professors, using the innovative activities aforementioned. Understanding film as an art form will result in more comprehensive and richer

cinema experiences and will have an impact on local box-office numbers. Currently, in the city of Čakovec, we have 5.000 children, students, teachers and professors included in the programme.

### **Partner cinemas:**

**Centar za kulturu Čakovec,**  
Čakovec

**Kino Samobor,** Samobor

**Pučko otvoreno učilište**  
Novska, Novska

# Mieux Manger au Cinéma France

Interview with  
Eliott Khayat, Astrée  
(Chambery)  
by Vincent Leleurch



## Why did you decide to launch this project?

The “Mieux Manger au Cinéma” (Eat Better at the Theatre) initiative was born out of two observations. Firstly, the issue of eating better, although at the heart of health and sustainable development issues today, has not yet really penetrated cinemas. Indeed, when one enters one of the 2,040 cinemas that make up the dynamism and diversity of this art form in France, one is forced to note that, although the audience’s minds are well looked after, the products offered are most often too fatty or too sweet, while at the same time coming from a very polluting industry. Secondly, after a pandemic that has deeply weakened them, and at a time when the whole industry is wondering what measures to implement to fight against the decline in attendance, cinemas must now reinvent themselves. The “Mieux Manger au Cinéma” initiative aims to respond to these two challenges by creating a strong link between food and cinema. Our vision: healthy and ecological confectionery, attractive and adapted to cinemas, a gateway to a global transition.





### What exactly does this project consist of?

Bringing together exhibitors, members of the film industry and the food industry, our project aims to revolutionise the food offer in our cinemas, as well as the way it is distributed and marketed. How do we do this? By offering healthier, more sustainable products that are totally adapted to cinemas (without noise, odour or crumbs), without losing taste or quality. And, to go further, by encouraging the development of new responsible culinary activities in the venues.

The project has several components. Firstly, the creation of a dedicated online platform, accessible to all member exhibitors, which will present all of our products, chosen from across the country for their quality, sustainability and adaptability to cinemas. It will serve as a direct link between exhibitors and producers, but also between exhibitors who will share their experience. Secondly, the creation of an annual competition to stimulate creativity around original products for cinemas. Finally, a connection between cinemas and local chefs, to organise specific events (film-tastings with local products, etc.).

### What are your expectations for the project?

The first edition of the "Mieux Manger au Cinéma" competition took place in May 2022 and was a great success: more than 60 products took part in the competition, with six winners. Since the beginning of the school year, we have worked with a dozen "pilot cinemas" throughout France, so that they can offer these products to their audiences and we can thus gather initial feedback from both exhibitors and audiences. At the same time, we are increasing our catalogue of products and preparing the next edition of the competition. We also aim to have a first version of our central product ordering platform by the beginning of 2023. Within five years, our goal is that the vast majority of arthouse cinemas in France will have joined "Mieux Manger au Cinéma" and will be able to offer our products - with a concrete and verified environmental impact. As the project is easily replicable on a larger scale, we hope in the medium term to become the first European platform for linking cinemas and producers of eco-responsible products, and thus extend to the entire Europa Cinemas network.

### What might its impact be at local and national levels?

By offering a richer experience to the audience and allowing them to diversify their activities, "Mieux Manger au Cinéma" aims to increase the attractiveness of cinemas and the engagement of the audience. Overall, "Mieux Manger au Cinéma" will also contribute to a new sustainable approach in the exhibition sector. In France, the confectionery consumed in cinemas in one year represents almost 50,000 tonnes of Co2, or 300 million aeroplane kilometres per year. With this project, we want to help reduce this figure drastically and raise awareness of environmental issues among exhibitors and their audiences. [mieuxmangeraucine.fr](http://mieuxmangeraucine.fr)

#### Partner cinemas:

**Astrée**, Chambéry

**Café des Images**,  
Hérouville-Saint-Clair

**Cinéma Le Club**, Grenoble

**Cinéma le Star**, Strasbourg

**Lumière Terreaux /**

**Lumière Fourmi /**

**Lumière Bellecour**, Lyon

# Transmit Cinema France

## Interview with Tarik Roukba, Cinéma Studio (Tours) by Vincent Leleurch

### Why did you decide to launch this project?

We launched this project in response to a problem that we observed last year during the Passerelle project (a website for social centres and associations) that we carried out. We meet many professionals from the socio-cultural and medical sectors who are interested in cinema and what it can bring to their users but, more often than not, they know little or nothing about arthouse films. They feel powerless to organise workshops and therefore do not discover these films. What was missing was a component to raise awareness for these quality and accessible films. For us, an approach based on human relations, with an exchange of knowledge has always been essential. We could not defend the films while hiding behind a screen!

### What exactly does this project consist of?

The project consists of offering professionals from social centres (or other structures) and their users a training session about arthouse cinema, across three cities whose cinemas are partners of the Studio de Tours: in Lyon with the Comoedia, in Caen with the Lux and in Gennevilliers with the Jean-Vigo Cinema. The training takes place in two stages: a first stage of "diagnosis" of the professionals' practices with questionnaires, debates and the organisation of a "porteur de parole", which consists of going out into the street to find out how the locals feel about a given issue, in this case the cinema. The second stage brings together

professionals and interested users with the same approach based on exchange, but this time it is around film extracts, trailers and short films which serve as a basis for discussion. These techniques come from popular education and advocate free speech, to help ideas evolve, and to give others the tools with which to identify future films which will spark debate and enable workshops on themes tackled but also on how to make cinema. We always want to maintain a balance between content and form, and what the director has to say and how they say it.

### What was needed to launch this project?

The first need was to find a trainer. We chose to work with Corinne Lepage, a popular education trainer based in Rennes, who proposed the ideas and workshops. On our side, we brought in ideas about cinema and the importance of going to the cinema. We also needed partner cinemas, which was easy to find as many cinemas are currently looking for new ways to attract audiences for arthouse films. Last year's project brought us closer to certain partners who immediately agreed to join us on the training-action aspect of this project.

### What are your expectations of the project?

We hope to initiate a change in the point of view of socio-cultural and medical professionals on arthouse films, so that an awareness is created where they understand that taking a group to the cinema actively participates

in the creation and reinforcement of social links which have been extremely weakened in recent years. Many people have turned in on themselves, which causes a lot of fear and misunderstanding. We hope that the movie-going experience will contribute to a shared discovery of others, their cultures, of inclusion and in the fight against discrimination. In the long term, we hope that arthouse films will not only create a socially advantaged and informed public, but that a social mix will be created around the cinema event, on films that are certainly less publicised but which also deserve to reach the widest possible audience.

### What might its impact be at local and national levels?

We hope that this training will spread and develop to reach as many sectors as possible. The local and national impact will be twofold: on the one hand, a better attendance for accessible arthouse films and, on the other, exchanges and shared cultural experiences that will result in more cohesive living in local neighbourhoods. We have already started creating this in the Grand Est region with the support of the Futur@cinema challenge (<https://futur-cinema.com/fr>).

### Partner cinemas :

**Cinéma Studio**, Tour  
**Cinéma Le Lux**, Caen  
**Cinéma Le Comoedia**, Lyon  
**Cinéma Jean-Vigo**, Gennevilliers

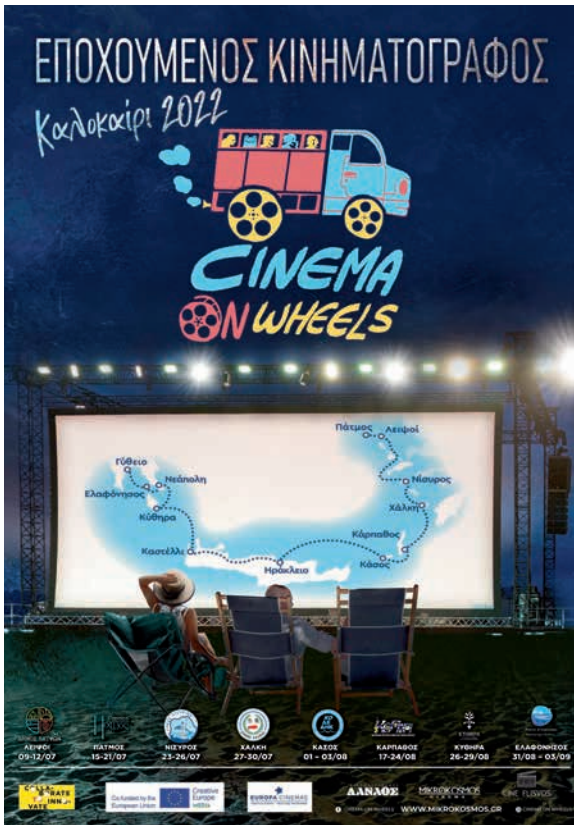






# Cinema On Wheels Greece

## Interview with Margarita Macia, Mikrokosmos (Athens) by Geoffrey Macnab



Cinema on Wheels, which ran for the first time last summer, is a bold scheme to take movies to remote communities in Greece that would otherwise have no access to screen culture. The idea was hatched by Andreas Sotirakopoulos and Margarita Macia at leading art house theatre Mikrokosmos in Athens together with fellow operators, Danaos and Flisvos. Venues this summer included such far flung islands as Lipsi, Patmos, Nisyros, Chalki, Kasos, Karpathos, Kythira, Elafonissos and Gythio. The idea builds on a scheme which has already, very successfully, brought cinema to villages in India.

### Why did you choose to launch this project?

It was a dream, something we wanted to do for a long time. But it was impossible because we needed some financial help. People on these small islands have no cinema or theatre. The most important goal was to reach the children. They really need something like this cinema experience, something different in their lives. We are really happy we managed to do it.

### Can you describe the project and how it works?

We wanted to take the full experience of cinema,

with surround sound and a real dedicated screen, to places that have never had cinema before. This was the first time they could see cinema. It was open air, we had DCPs and 5.1 surround sound. It was a real cinema experience.

### When did you launch the project and what films did you show?

We started in July, after having spoken to all the mayors on the islands. We told them about the project and, of course, they accepted. We put everything in a truck and we went to them. The first place we went was a

really small island called Lipsi. From there, we went to Patmos and then to Nisyros, all by boat. We had nine films, which ranged from *The Worst Person In The World* to films for children, for example *Save The Tree* (a Spanish film), *Icarus And Dedalus*, *Digger* and *The Donkey, My Lover And Me* [a family comedy about a donkey trekking holiday].

### Did the project live up to your expectations?

It was fantastic. The magic was in how people felt about having the chance to see cinema. We would have liked slightly larger



Patmos Island (School)



Lipsoi Island (Square)



Karpathos island (School)

audiences, but the locals on the islands had tourists to cater to and so they had to work all the time.

### **Is this something you will do again?**

We would really like to, but we need financial help. The ships and accommodation for so many people are really expensive. We have to rent all the materials. We would need help if we were to do it again, but we will try, and we will approach the Greek government. We are talking again to the mayors on the islands because they realised that children want and need cinema. If we can't do it again, maybe we can bring

cinema to the mountains, to the small villages there. There are a lot of villages without cinemas or theatres, too. And it's less expensive to visit remote villages in the mountains than to take our trucks and cars onto boats.

### **What was the role of the other cinemas involved, Danaos and Flisvos?**

We needed to have somebody back in Athens to help us. On the date of our second screening, for example, the projector was broken due to the wind. The other two cinemas sent us what was needed to keep the screenings going. Each place was

different and it's not easy to send things to the islands. They have no airports; therefore everything has to come by boat. On two of the islands, we didn't have enough electric power to play the DCP and so we had to speak to the distribution company to make an MP4 for us and to send us the MP4 and a smaller projector. The people in Athens took care of these logistical details.

### Partner cinemas:

**Mikrokosmos**, Athens

**Danaos**, Athens

**Flisvos**, Athens

# Grindhouse The New European Genre Cinema is Coming Italy, Slovenia

Interview with  
**Marco Villotta,**  
**Visionario (Udine)**  
by Stefano Radice

A network of Italian and Slovenian cinemas, coordinated by Udine's Visionario cinema, has created the Grindhouse project, which aims to attract new audiences to horror, thriller and sci-fi films.

An international project, which brings together a number of Italian and Slovenian cinemas, and which was one of the recipients of the Collaborate to Innovate fund from Creative Europe, Grindhouse (The New European Genre Cinema is Coming), was launched by the Visionario cinema in Udine and further involves; Classico Cinema in Turin, Ariston in Trieste, Stensen in Florence, Cinemazero in Pordenone, Kinemax in Gorizia, Kosovelov Dom Sežana in Sežana, Mestni Kino Domžale in Domžale and Mestni Kino Metropol in Celje. We spoke with Marco Villotta of the Visionario cinema about the project.



Cinema Visionario, Udine, Italy

## **What prompted the decision to launch this project?**

The starting point was a conversation with our partners about the presence of genre films in our cinemas. There are numerous festivals dedicated to these films; the problem, however, is that those movies find little space in arthouse and commercial cinemas outside of

the festivals. With Grindhouse, we want to bring these films to our arthouse cinemas. The idea is also to attract a new, different and younger audience. We have offered our experience as organisers of the Far East Film Festival, but our partners also include the Ariston in Trieste, which has organised the Science+Fiction Film Festival for many years.

## **What does the project consist of?**

All together, we are working with a selection of films that do not have theatrical distribution or that are scheduled on streaming platforms; they will be screened in Italy and Slovenia more or less in the same time frame. There will be science fiction, horror, and thriller films. Altogether, there will be eight films that will be divided



into two tournaments of four films. The audience will vote for two winners that will then compete in a final round. Based on the scores collected from the films across all the participating cinemas, the best Grindhouse film will be named. The first tournament will take place in winter and the second in spring, ending in May 2023 with final screenings.

#### **Why did you choose the name Grindhouse?**

We wanted to find a name that communicated the concept of genre cinema. We were therefore inspired by Quentin Tarantino's film, but the subtitle is also important: The New European Genre Cinema is Coming, which makes our concept clearer.

#### **Is this project also a response to the difficulties of exhibition in this period?**

In this already complicated climate, the additional difficulty of ever higher energy costs has been added. I believe, however, that the difficulties facing cinemas are also linked to the films offered to the public. If you want to target new audiences, it is important to do so with promotions, using appropriate tools, social media and big data, but it is also important to focus on programming.

It is difficult to attract young people if you do not show films that are attractive to them. It seems to me that little is said about this issue. With Grindhouse, we try to address this topic.

#### **What are your expectations?**

To build a network of collaborators that can grow beyond this project and that will enable us to come up with new ideas in the coming years that can be extended to other cinemas. We also aim to gain new audiences and to expand our audience. We think Grindhouse will be a great help.



#### **What results is the Visionario cinema having?**

Up until September, attendance was very low. Now, we are starting to see signs of improvement. We have had retrospectives on Cronenberg and Pasolini that have been very well received. The impression is that the events, even those with guests, attract audiences while the daily programming is struggling. Our programming focuses on quality films, but since we have installed the Dolby Atmos system, we also offer blockbusters, giving as wide an offer as possible to audiences in our city.

#### **Partner cinemas:**

**Visionario**, Udine  
**Cinema Classico**, Turin  
**Cinema Ariston**, Trieste  
**Cinema Stensen**, Florence  
**Cinemazero**, Pordenone  
**Kinemax**, Gorizia  
**Kosovelov Dom Sežana**, Sežana  
**Mestni Kino Domžale**, Domžale  
**Mestni Kino Metropol**, Celje

# Move the Movie Italy

## Interview with Anna Torazza, Cinema Elios (Carmagnola) by Stefano Radice

“Move the Movie” is a project that brings four Italian cinemas together and involves the area’s primary and secondary schools. It provides an opportunity to educate the youngest in experiencing the big screen by transforming their drawings into animated films.



“Move the Movie -My European Cinema” is the title of the third edition of a project involving the Elios Cinema in Carmagnola (Turin), the Verdi Cinema in Candelo (Biella), the Solaris Multisala in Pesaro and the Monterosa Cinema in Turin, working with primary and secondary school classes. It is a drawing competition that brings younger audiences closer to cinemas and European films. “Move the Movie”, one of the projects funded by the Collaborate to Innovate initiative from Creative Europe, emphasizes that cinema is not just a theatre but a reality that is in constant movement, entering schools, involving the territory,

associations, and the public. We spoke about it with Anna Torazza of the Elios cinema in Carmagnola.

### How did the project come about?

“Move the Movie” begins with the experience of children who engage with cinema through a drawing that then becomes a cartoon. The idea was born in 2020 during the pandemic. The first edition of “Move the Movie” had the theme “A memory of cinema”; the second was entitled “Help the cinema at home”. This year, after watching a selection of animated European films, children and young people will be invited to represent the

concept “My European Cinema” through their drawings. It’s not an easy theme, but the children will surprise us.

### How will the project be organised?

There will be a two juries: the first will select the drawings and the second, comprised of representatives from the artistic world, will determine which works will be sent to an animator who will bring them to life. The illustrators of the selected drawings will give instructions on what should happen with their drawing; they will become screenwriters. This project can work in collaboration with schools, which provide



a very important catchment for cinemas; talking about films in front of the big screen and not in the classroom is an experience we promote and support.

#### **Where will the animated films be shown?**

The four partner cinemas will screen the films, which will also be broadcast on social media and cinema websites.

The poster for the competition will consist of the drawings and each child will have a video of their individual cartoon. Our intention is to create a network between schools, teachers, pupils and companies in each area, to create movement around cinema and in the cinemas. The competition ends on February 15th and by the end of the school year we will know which drawings will be animated and which will be exhibited in the foyers of the cinemas.

#### **What expectations do you have of this initiative?**

Creating a link with schools is one of the main objectives because we work with young people; making cinemas a place for experiences, emotions and culture.

#### **Does this project meet the needs of the exhibition?**

Right now, audiences are struggling to return to the cinema. The pandemic was the

first problem and streaming platforms are the second. In working with schools, a cinema cultivates its audience. Setting up an exhibition with children's drawings leads families to come to us and then, who knows, they may even enter the theatre to attend a screening.

#### **How do you imagine the future of your business as an exhibitor?**

Our goal is to make the cinema a social place for the community; a space where people can meet, get out of the house and appreciate films that should not be seen on small screens. In addition, we want children to have a place where they can meet.

#### Partner cinemas:

**Cinema Elios**, Carmagnola  
**Cinetatro Monterosa**, Turin  
**Cinema Verdi**, Candelo  
**Cinema Multisala Solaris**, Pesaro



# Rising cinema: a new generation of European film ambassadors Lithuania, Portugal

## Interview with Indrė Mikelaitytė, Cinema Romuva (Kaunas)

by Pavel Sladky

Cinema Romuva in Lithuania's second biggest city Kaunas is ready to roll with a new programme called, "Rising cinema: a new generation of European film ambassadors". This project has been selected as a beneficiary of the Collaborate to Innovate support scheme in 2022 and will take place not only in Lithuania, but also in Portugal. We talked to Indrė Mikelaitytė, who is project manager of the programme.

### **What is "Rising cinema: a new generation of European film ambassadors" about?**

The project aims to create a new model of film education. Young people aged 15 to 20 years old will gain knowledge from professionals and get to know European films more closely through theoretical and practical classes as well as special screenings. By participating in this programme, they will become European cinema ambassadors in each of the three participating cities.

### **The strength of this project lies in the combination of education, entertainment and creative activities. Could you elaborate on that?**

We create a series of lectures that will consistently introduce European films, their history, dramaturgy and representation to audiences. We want to provide a space where both young and mature audiences can meet, appreciate European cinema and understand the influence

of masterpieces of classic cinema on contemporary films. This knowledge will later be applied when the participants learn creative writing, interview techniques, and create a podcast where they can share their insights about contemporary European films and the recently viewed classics as well as meet and talk to professional filmmakers.

We believe that writing for a blog will allow young people to share their thoughts on the films they have watched and analyze them. As young people willingly use various modes of new media, we have also included the creation of a podcast in the project. In it, the participants will talk about the programme, share insights about the things they have learned, and interview people from the world of cinema.

### **Why did you choose to launch this project?**

#### **Who came up with the idea?**

In Romuva we have many educational activities for children and young people. One-off events are very interesting to them but we do not have a series of lectures on offer. This is how the idea was born.

### **There is Portuguese collaboration on this project. How did this happen?**

Our cinema cooperates with embassies and other cultural institutions from various countries. We selected cinemas in Portugal because we found the most similarities in intended goals for young audience film education. The fact that Portugal and Lithuania are on different sides of Europe (Lithuania is at the eastern border and Portugal is the furthest to the West) seems like an opportunity to get to know different viewpoints and experiences as well as try out foreign practices from each country.



Kaunas Cinema Centre Romuva

**Who is an ideal film ambassador nowadays, according to you? Especially when promoting European cinema to young audiences...**

I think that the ideal film ambassador can be anyone for whom cinema is important not only from the entertainment side but also from the artistic side. It is a person who wants to better understand the world of cinema and films and would not be afraid to share that knowledge with others. It is essential that the film ambassadors share their insights about films, ask questions, and are willing to enter into discussion with their peers.

**What are your expectations with the project? What might its impact be at a local and national level?**

We hope that this project will create an environment for young people to grow as film critics and as a voice of European cinema. The website's articles about films and young critics' voices will inspire other young people to discuss cinema and choose to watch more European films. It is the cultivation of a new generation of film lovers, drawing on the experience of different countries and different cinemas. Therefore, their further

integration into the world of cinema becomes self-perpetuating and organic, which guarantees the continuity of the project's activities and its future results.

#### Partner cinemas:

**Kaunas Cinema Centre Romuva**, Kaunas

**Cine-Teatro António Pinheiro**, Tavira

**Cinema Insuflavel**, Porto

# New Reality Netherlands

## Interview with Jan Uttien and Babette Wijntjes, Schoor and Cassette Stories (Haarlem) by Geoffrey Macnab

Jan Uttien runs the long established arthouse theatre Schoor in Haarlem in the Netherlands. He has now come together with the Lux in Nijmegen and LantarenVenster in Rotterdam to form Cinema VRiations, a significant project as one of the first attempts to use VR in cinemas in a commercial way. The scheme was hatched by a prominent local distributor, Babette Wijntjes, of Cassette Stories. The idea is to show VR projects in the main auditoriums of the cinemas to a collective audience of 30 viewers, each with their own headsets and also to set up "interactive VR stations" in the lobbies. [The project, originally known as VRiations, has now been re-named New Reality.]

### Why did you choose to launch this project?

**Jan:** VR has been around for a while now. We hope and believe it has matured enough to come to a theatre near you. When it comes to a theatre near you, it will have a whole new lifespan and a new dynamic. We have to move forward if we want to stay relevant.

**Babette:** We have been looking into the distribution of virtual reality and immersive media on a larger scale. The simple fact is that there are many great projects but hardly any places to show them. I came up with the idea to create locations. It was logical to do this in film theatres because they have experience with cinematic ways of storytelling. Jan was the one who said this idea, this plan, might be wonderful to apply to Europa Cinemas' members. Jan, Pien Houthoff (from the Lux) and Roderick Lentz (from LantarenVenster), all have an interest in trying new things.

### Could you describe the project?

**J.:** We still have to connect the final dots, but we are quite a ways there. The way we see it is that there will be five screenings in the auditoriums each week.

The screenings take about 35 minutes. It will be quite easy to fill those blank spaces that already exist in your programme. Then there is the VR project in the foyer which is more individual. What is important about the screenings in the auditoriums, which will be for 30 people, is that it will be a collective experience. That's different from the VR experience most people know.

**B.:** In a six-month period, we will have two programmes, each running for three months. We will start in December with the actual screenings of these projects.

**J.:** There will be a host in the screening room, explaining how it works. They will remain in the room while the show is running to monitor everything and see that it is going as planned.

### What was the need for the project?

**J.:** That VR is there and not going away is very clear. The question is: in what way is it going to be there? Will it be independent and artistic or fully commercialised? We feel there is a gap in that sense, that VR is there but that the artistic experience of VR is not there for a general audience. We need to fill that gap, we believe. We feel the Netherlands is the perfect place for that as we have a tight network of arthouse cinemas, not just in the biggest cities.

**B.:** Showing structural cinematic VR is something that many cultural institutions want to do. They're thinking about it. They experiment on one or two occasions but nobody is really doing it like these three cinemas.





BeeldCinema VRiations Solo Dagen © W. van Alewijk.jpg

## What are your expectations for the project in the short and long term?

**B.:** For me, one of the short term goals is that the Dutch audience is aware that there is something like artistic VR and that VR is not only gaming and fighting Darth Vader with your lightsaber. This is a new visual medium. Through the pilot, a marketing campaign and simply offering this project, the intention is to create an awareness of this medium. We want to test our thesis that people really like VR; that it is relevant and fits alongside the programme that the theatre offers anyway. No real business model exists for VR because there is no distribution model. This is a very simple but very

pragmatic solution, a test case to see if people are willing to buy a ticket to see wonderful VR projects for 40 minutes.

## What might the impact be on a local and national level?

**J.:** We think we can create a new audience as well, a younger and more diverse audience.

**B.:** We are very proud that we have this plan, that people believe in it and that we are able to produce it. After this six month pilot, we will have a plan in place for how we can continue with the programme in the current three theatres. We are already plotting that. After this pilot has ended, we will share our findings nationally and internationally, from the user experience to how

it works with the team in the cinema as host, to the length of the VR films and the ticket price. Everything will be shared.

## When is the launch planned?

**B.:** It looks, now, as if it is going to be the 22nd of December but, the week before, we will have previews and special events. No Santa Claus in VR this year, but maybe next year!

## Partner cinemas:

**Schuur**, Haarlem

**Lux**, Nijmegen

**LantarenVenster**, Rotterdam

# Europe Forward Cinema Collaboration Netherlands, Czechia, Serbia, Romania

Interview with  
**Stefan Malešević,**  
**De Balie (Amsterdam)**  
by Geoffrey Macnab



De Balie, Amsterdam

Launched by Stefan Malešević at Amsterdam-based arthouse venue De Balie, Europe Cinema Forward Collaboration also involves Kino Pilotu (Prague) Dvorana Kulturnog Centra (Belgrade) and Cinema Muzeul Taranului (Bucharest).

## **Why did you choose to launch the Europe Forward Cinema Collaboration?**

I am a filmmaker myself. I come from Serbia originally and I moved to the Netherlands only two and a half years ago. I have a lot of international experience and also in areas other than exhibition. When the call came up, my colleagues asked me if I could do anything for this and I just grabbed the chance. I really liked the idea. The main motivation for me was that films from Serbia, Romania, Czech Republic and the Netherlands are not distributed widely enough. For example,

Serbia does not have many spots at the big film festivals. I think it's a pity that countries like Serbia and Romania, that are so nearby, don't share more of each other's films. What about all the talented young filmmakers from Serbia who are just not getting enough attention? Funnily enough, the Netherlands is also among these countries whose films are not distributed widely. All of these countries have really great films to offer. The idea is to help these films get wider distribution. Observing the recent developments in audience habits, we realised that people are much more prone to come to special

events. If something has an extra talk afterwards, we get greater attendance. People miss real human interaction.

## **Could you describe the project and how exactly it works?**

We have four countries involved: Serbia, Czech Republic, Romania and the Netherlands. All of these countries are at different levels of integration in the European Union. Netherlands is a founding member, Czech Republic is completely integrated and they're both in the EuroZone and Schengen area. Then you have Romania, which is a member



Cinema Muzeul Taranului, Bucharest



Kino Pilotu, Prague



Dvorana Kulturnog Centra, Belgrade

but not in the Schengen zone or EuroZone. Finally, you have Serbia which is completely out of the European Union and wants to become a member. For me, these four countries are a representation of Europe as a whole. For each country, we choose a burning topic - it could be populism or the rise of the right wing or an ecological problem - and then we choose a film that deals with this topic. In each country, we screen the film and organise a discussion where we invite the director and other filmmakers, and films from other countries. The discussion would be preceded by a three or four day festival. Every director would be in attendance in their own country and would then travel to two other countries. At the end of this series of events, there will be a closing event in Amsterdam in June.

#### Why did you set this up?

One reason is a love for film and trying to help good films circulate more, which is also one of the primary goals for Europa Cinemas. The other is the exchange of thoughts and ideas. With challenging times ahead and populism taking over more and more, some kind of discussion is necessary for us to be prepared. The other side, they know what they are doing - the right wing, the neo-fascists, the Putinists. In every country, they have a different face but they know exactly what they're doing and are devoted to their goals. We are on the other side and we don't even have a name. It's important that people are aware that we have to think about our future. That's why we are hosting talks on these thorny issues.

#### What are your expectations for the project?

Short term, I really hope we get the audiences because that is one of the biggest problems right now. In the long term, I would love to see the idea disseminated further, either with us doing it next year with some other countries or someone else adopting a similar structure.

#### What might its impact be on local and national levels?

To raise curiosity among people for cinema other than American or European commercial cinema, that will hopefully have an impact. And to make people aware of the time in history we find ourselves in, and that we need to act - and to realise it is necessary first to think, in order to be able to act properly.

#### Partner cinemas:

**De Balie**, Amsterdam

**Kino Pilotu**, Prague

**Dvorana Kulturnog Centra**, Belgrade

**Cinema Muzeul Taranului**, Bucharest



# Cinema Open to Youngsters Poland

## Interview with Kinga Plicht, Gdynia Film Centre by Anna Tatarska

### **What did your road to participation in Collaborate to Innovate 2022 look like?**

We are a great example of the old rule: Never give up! We actually applied last year for the first time but did not qualify. It was a great learning curve. I think we were slightly overambitious and applied with a very complicated, international project. This year, the premise was much simpler. Europa Cinemas is focusing on young people and in Gdynia Film Centre we feel the urgency of encouraging young cinema-goers to be more present and active. So, we have focused on them in our second, successful, attempt.

### **What exactly is “Cinema open to youngsters” about?**

We invited school children to apply, then we chose representatives from three different age groups. They will watch films that we get from distributors prior to their national release, which are of course European productions. They will participate in the project throughout the whole school year. There will be six movies in total, three per semester.

### **For children, the opportunity to watch films before release is a big deal, it makes them feel important.**

Exactly, it makes them feel excited, important and special, like their voice really means something. And it does! Our young viewers will tell us what they think about what they saw: what the main topic, or the message of the film is. I feel like we, adult film professionals, often think the film focuses on

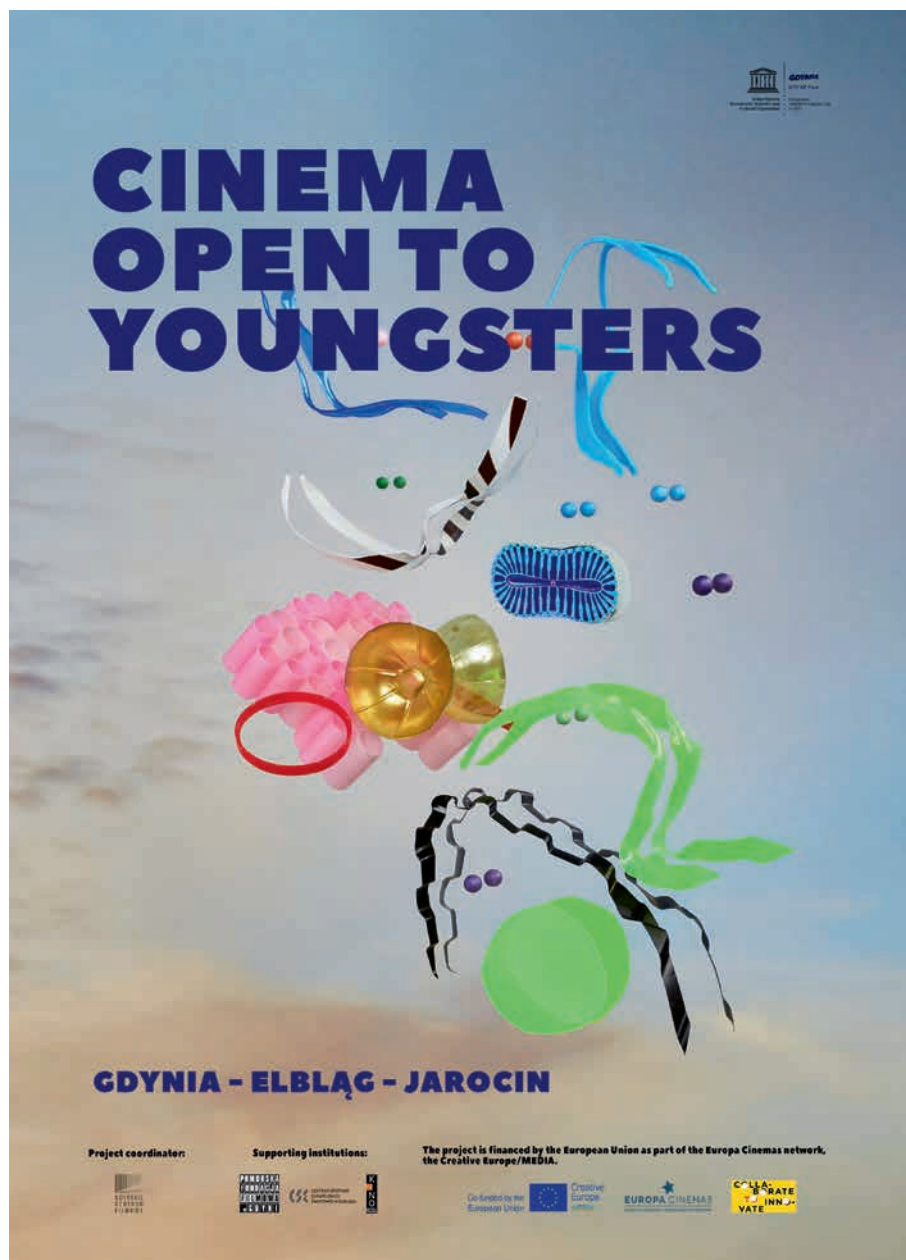
one aspect, while for the film's target audience, the youngsters, the focal points are completely elsewhere. So, we want to know how they understand movies and what they expect from them. Also, how should we, film professionals, promote films to reach the young audiences successfully? Therefore, our participants will also share their thoughts on the film's potential promotion strategy. This feedback will give us an idea about whether to incorporate such films in our screening schedule. I like to think of us as a little research unit. Hopefully, with time, we will be able to expand to different cities, maybe even abroad.

### **Aside from the screenings, what are the other components of the “Cinema open to youngsters” project?**

We will also organise meetings and discussions after each screening. We hope to invite professional guests, directors or cinematographers for example, who can talk about the whole behind-the-scenes aspect with them, and explain how the films are made. Of course, every meeting will be bespoke, depending on the film's subject and the guest's field of expertise. There will also be contests and surveys. We want to know how to keep our youngsters' focus, how to effectively grab their attention, so we listen to their voices.

### **What are your expectations? How do you see your goal?**

We, of course, dream of expanding, but for now are focusing on how to evolve within the current size and timeframe. Even within the given shape we see how many inspirational thoughts and ideas there are for a continuation. A more practical goal would be to have larger young audiences in our cinema. Our dream is that the group of young people that we've chosen for the project will share their thoughts of GCF and European cinema among their peers in such an engaging and interesting way that it will create some sort of buzz marketing. Knowing that children often automatically choose American productions, we hope to evoke a certain need, or maybe even trend for European, ambitious cinema among the youngsters. They are already sharing so many interesting and inspiring thoughts that I am certain that in a year from now we will be in a completely different place.



#### Partner cinemas:

**Gdynia Film Centre**, Gdynia  
**Kino Światowid**, Elbląg  
**Kino Echo**, Jarocin

# ZEF – Film Highway to Europe – More collaboration, more innovation, Poland

## Interview with Agnieszka Piotrowska-Prażuch and Urszula Biel, Amok Cinema (Gliwice)

by Anna Tatarska

**Congratulations on getting the Collaborate to Innovate support for the second year in a row!**

**A.P-P:** Our “Film window to Europe” programme from last year developed successfully and brought very satisfying results, but it has also shown us several paths for development and innovative ideas. That’s why we’ve decided that our ZEF project (abbreviation for “Film educators’ team”) would evolve into “Film highway to Europe” in its next iteration. The positive result of our application was such fantastic news. We are very proud and eager to get to work!

**Your initiative focuses on thoroughly describing and rating films aimed at younger audiences, all done by a group of professional educators. What are the biggest challenges?**

**A.P-P:** We are doing everything we can so that our opinions are objective and thorough. This is why we now have four voters assigned to each title, instead of three. If the result of their surveys is a tie, we know we have to have further discussion. Our surveys are constantly being

improved, to provide insights that are as complex as possible.

**U.B.:** Our efforts never end, because our target group constantly evolves, just like the world around us. There is also a locally specific obstacle, tied with the current political situation in Poland. We want our grades to be a support for teachers but we might have a film that shows all important European values, is artistically great, yet includes a scene that can potentially be viewed as too explicit for sixteen to seventeen-year-olds (like the close-up on genitals in Xavier Giannoli’s *Illusions perdues*). What are we to do in such an instance? Or if there is a film with an LGBTQ+ subject... We know that in some regions it would make the title automatically controversial. On another note, some ecologically engaged films can be very cruel in their portrayal of human attitude to nature. In such instances we try to caution the teachers in our assessment card, so that, after reading it, they can anticipate potential questions and are better prepared for the discussion with their students.

**What is it that makes your project stand out?**

**U.B.:** There are many festivals that offer valuable titles for a younger audience, but not everyone can access them. Later, when such films secure regular distribution, there is a worry they will disappear in the thicket of titles flooding our cinemas. It’s really easy to find big American studio productions in cinemas, but it is much harder for an ambitious European film to be visible, even if it’s supported by a well-established distributor. What we do is make sure the most important of the latter find their audience.

**A.P-P:** We do not create an educational programme. We want to be a signpost, a guideline. We are building a database. There are or were initiatives like that abroad, but at the moment we are the only ones in Poland.

**I remember last year you collaborated with several other cinemas. Who is taking part in Film Highway to Europe?**

**A.P-P:** Amok Cinema in Gliwice is the main organizing body, and ZEF (abbreviation for “Film educators’ team”) is still a part





of it, but we collaborate with seven other cinemas, including a German one, which makes the project international.

### What are your hopes and goals for “Highway to Europe”?

**A.P-P:** We want to go beyond recommending films for schools and teachers, but also to provide valuable information to the parents and children themselves. We hope to be able to collaborate with distributors and also film festivals. Hopefully, a mobile app we're developing right now will help with that. We would love our Quality Label to appear on the posters during the films' promotion and for our trailer to be included in the materials screened before its projection. We have managed to make that happen once or twice already and now we hope to do it more often. This is why we are working very hard on building the consciousness of our very existence, creating visibility. We do this by extensive networking, visiting all the important film events related to children's cinema. We want to be a recognizable brand that people can trust, so that our impact can only increase.



### Partner cinemas:

**Kino Amok**, Gliwice  
**OKF Iluzja**, Częstochowa  
**Kino Sokół**, Nowy Sącz  
**Kino Mikro**, Kraków  
**Kino 60 krzesel**, Gorzów Wlkp  
**Kino Kadr**, Dąbrowa Górnicza  
**Kino Rialto**, Poznań  
**Kino Achteinhalb**, Saabrücken

# Connecting the heritage cinemas of Europe! Romania, Italy, Slovenia, Latvia

## Interview with Monica Sebestyen, Cinema Arta (Cluj-Napoca)

by Stjepan Hundic

### **Monica, can you tell us more about yourself and your partners involved in the project?**

We are four heritage cinemas: Splendid Palace from Riga (Latvia), Nuovo Eden from Brescia (Italy), Mestni kino from Ptuj (Slovenia) and Arta Cinema from Cluj (Romania). Cinema Arta was opened in 1913 and is still running today as an independent arthouse cinema. Probably owing to my background in architecture, I have always been interested in the history of the building and found value in it and its heritage. I wanted to find out more about it and also to connect with other similar cinemas.

### **Can you please describe the project?**

Our project includes three main activities. Firstly, creating an online platform that connects the four cinemas using an online map with locations and a direct link to each of the websites with more information. The websites will include virtual tours containing archival documents showing the communities' connection to the theatres. Secondly, curating a special programme of classic films. Each participating cinema will show five films from past decades that have a unique

relevance for that venue. The films will be contextualized with discussions that emphasize their importance in cinema history and their connection with the venue. Finally, we will set up programmed screenings and activities for young audiences to introduce them to our history and film heritage.

### **Why did you choose to launch this project?**

Heritage cinemas should be preserved and valued, and creating a system that makes them identifiable through a website is an approach that can be replicated both nationally and internationally. The project is an opportunity to deepen our research on each cinema and draw awareness about the uniqueness of these places. When our audience found out that Arta has been open since 1913, they were very impressed and interested to know more. We have already initiated the process of researching its history from the archives and collecting the memories that people have about the cinema (<https://www.cinema-arta.ro/povestea-arta>). We also want to make it available in English.

### **What was the need for it in your country?**

In Romania, a lot of cinemas closed down in recent decades, and multiplexes in shopping malls are widespread. I do believe there is a need for an alternative to these commercial cinemas and reviving heritage cinemas can offer that. This project could be a way to share best practice and inspire other cinemas. At the same time, our cinema can gain visibility and attract new audiences.

### **What are your expectations?**

That our audience gets to know more about our cinema's history and, through the shared memories, feels more connected with it. In the long term, we aim to create a network of heritage cinemas in Europe to build awareness of the richness and long tradition of European theatres. It will be a starting point for further collaborations and exchange of best practice in order to create a sustainable future.





Kino Ptuj, Slovenia



Nuovo Eden, Brescia



Splendid Palace, Riga

### What might its impact be on local and national levels?

Wider knowledge about the history, cultural value and importance of Europe's oldest cinemas for the community. Despite the historical hardships, digital technologies and streaming platforms which make movies available everywhere, and now the pandemic, cinemas are here to stay! We want to bring the audience back by (also) emphasizing the physical space and the special programmes related to it.

We strongly believe that the cinema experience in heritage buildings is unique because of the special atmosphere that characterises these places.



Cinema Arta, Cluj-Napoca

### Partner Cinemas:

**Cinema Arta, Cluj-Napoca**

**Splendid Palace, Riga**

**Nuovo Eden, Brescia,**

**Mestni kino Ptuj, Ptuj**



# Best Programming

## Kino Pilotu, (Prague, Czech Republic)

The history of Kino Pilotu (Pilots Cinema) dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1930s, its auditorium had a capacity of almost three hundred seats, and it was operated by the former Union of Czechoslovak Pilots – hence its name.

A lot has changed since. In the 1990s, the venue was variously transformed into a pub, a music club, and squash courts. Jan Macola and Alzbeta Macolova, a married couple, operate the Kino Pilotu as it is now known. Thanks to their commitment, investment, and vision, it was re-opened as a cinema in 2016, after extensive reconstruction. Alzbeta manages the day-to-day of the cinema and takes care of the programming and film distribution of Pilot Film. Jan works as a film producer for his other company, Mimesis Film, and co-manages the distribution of Pilot Film.

### Higher traffic and sales than before Covid-19

Gradually, the two-screen cinema space that opened in 2016 grew into an establishment with three screens with a total capacity of 170 seats. How does this family business welcome almost 80,000 visitors a year? The major characteristic of the programme is its diversity. Owing to this programming, Kino Pilotu managed to achieve higher ticket sales in the period from April to the end of October 2022 than in 2019 (i.e. in pre-covid times). The cinema shows not only original films and documentaries but also quality mainstream films and blockbusters. Moreover, Kino Pilotu hosts a number of premieres accompanied by discussions with filmmakers, as well as many festivals (10 per year on average). They run a special programme for senior citizens which presents contemporary international and Czech films at a discounted price. In 2022 (from January to October), 627 screenings for children and 44 screenings for senior citizens took place at Kino Pilotu. On average, there are 11 screenings each weekday and, at the weekend, this number rises to an average of 17.5 screenings.



Jan Macola and Alzbeta Macolova, Kino Pilotu

### Varied programme for diverse visitors

Kino Pilotu has a very diverse audience, which is why the selection of films ranges from animation for children, to comedies and independent documentaries to Hollywood blockbusters. Jan, Alzbeta, and their colleagues decide what will be featured.

"No matter whether you are a child, student, adult, or a senior citizen, we want to know what you are interested in and what you enjoy watching. And, if it matches our core values of openness, tolerance, diversity, and artistic quality, we will do our best to deliver relevant films for you. We are curious people and, as such, we tend to work with and meet other curious people. In this way, we multiply our resources through adding topics and stories other people are interested in. Thus, the programming is not 'BY' Kino Pilotu but



‘in’ Kino Pilotu. In a sense, we are a curated open platform,” explains Jan Macola. As Jan and Alzbeta own the cinema, it is extremely important for them to be able to stand behind what they show and to carefully select high-quality content.

#### **The most important aspect is hidden inside**

It is not, however, only the variety of the films that attracts people to this Prague gem. It is also the welcoming atmosphere and genius loci that encourages visitors to return to this well-established space. Locals like to stop by from time to time just for a coffee or a beer. People enjoy talking about films with friends in the welcoming cafe that is part of the cinema complex. In the summer months, the garden in front of the cinema is also open, and it offers the great vibes of Vrsovice, an increasingly popular part of Prague. Over time, the local community of “Kino Pilotu fans” has steadily increased.

“It is the audience and their response to what we play that makes us constantly innovate. 90% of our income comes from the box office and refreshment sales. Therefore, we need to come up with new ideas all the time and, if they do not work, we have to think again and devise something more efficient,” says Alzbeta Macolova, who is in touch with their visitors every day.

#### **Successful storytellers**

Kino Pilotu is part of a family business run by Jan and Alzbeta. The other two areas that they are invested in are film production and distribution.

“We consider ourselves storytellers. We bring people quality films thanks to our distribution company Pilot Film, and we produce our own work through Mimesis Film Production. In the cinema, we also show films by other filmmakers whose ideas we want to bring to our audiences. It’s a big responsibility, but also a source of great joy,” adds Jan Macola, who has recently finished the production of his most ambitious project so far, an historical feature film, *Il Boemo*. It premiered globally as part of the Official Selection in San Sebastian and has been selected as the Czech contender at the Foreign Feature Film Oscars race. The company Pilot Film has distributed the film to most cinemas in the Czech Republic, which enabled them to introduce Josef Mysliveček, the famous eighteenth-century opera composer and a friend of Mozart, who is the main character of *Il Boemo*, to thousands of viewers, from classical music lovers to the general public.

#### **Never-ending challenges**

“There is a considerably higher number of films that do not work at all in theatrical distribution. Fortunately, there are films that perform very well and become hits of a kind. The objective for the programmer is to spot these hits and promote them well enough so that the audience fills the auditorium. This is more important now than ever before, and it involves more risk and more adrenaline!” concludes Alzbeta Macolova.

**Jan Macola and Alzbeta Macolova,**  
Cinema Managers

# Entrepreneur of the Year

Alexander Vandeputte, Jan De Clercq  
(Lumière Cinemas, Belgium)



Cinema Cartoon's, Antwerp, Belgium

Lumière's history began in 1996 when Jan De Clercq and Alexander Vandeputte opened Cinema Lumière in Bruges. They were invited by a local theatre group to use the theatre at times when there were no performances.

When the cinema was up and running, both Jan and Alexander, with their background in theatrical distribution, decided it was time for some additional activities. So, they ventured out into both film production and theatrical and digital distribution.

In the following years, Lumière focused on the production and distribution of films and television series: Belgium is acquainted with Scandinavian crime through series such as *Wallander* and *The Bridge*. Alongside the production activity, Luminvest is created, a financing and tax shelter partner for local and international fiction projects. Lumière Publishing, the distribution arm, sees an opportunity in the exploitation of EST rights, creating a digital distribution platform for series: Lumière Series, now known as myLum.

Cinema Lumière Bruges turned out to be very successful, and so, in 2014, Lumière took over "Cinema Cartoon's" in Antwerp and, in 2019, Cinema Zuid, which became Lumière Antwerp. Finally, in October 2021, Lumière Mechelen was born. Lumière now operates four cinemas.

Lumière became a 360 degree company: a complete ecosystem in which production, film financing, distribution, a streaming

platform, four city cinemas and an animation studio work closely together to bring the best stories to a wide audience in Benelux.

As exhibitors, we want to offer a diverse selection that reflects the best of contemporary local, European and world cinema. The audience's choices are important, but we also ensure the big films don't push the smaller films away.

We aim to be a partner for distributors.

Our cinemas are located in the city centres and well embedded into the urban social and cultural fabric. Each of our cinema has its own specific profile, depending on the environment and its audience. The local character is very important in many ways. The link with local government and its cultural policy and strategy is crucial. Our integration goes way further than the typical school screenings and collaborations with local partners.

On December 18th, 2019, Lumière reopened the cinema in the Antwerp Museum of Photography (FOMU), which was renamed Lumière Antwerp. Lumière cherishes the link with Antwerp Museum of Photography and its bustling neighbourhood. It is a unique collaboration with the museum and the city of Antwerp. FOMU and Lumière Antwerp not only share the same building, but also intend to strengthen each other's operational aims. Lumière Mechelen has great ambition to be a game changer because it's the first completely new city cinema in 25 years.





Lumière Mechelen© Michiel De Cleene

A "purpose built" city cinema is unique nowadays and it means that cinema is once again completely central, literally and figuratively.

In 2015, the City of Mechelen grants a concession to Lumière for the operation of a small-scale city cinema in the historic city festival hall. Since the building cannot meet the strict acoustic standards required, a large box-like structure is placed inside the building, which contains three stacked auditoriums.

The old town hall in Mechelen was built in 1883-1884 to a design by the city architect Victor Louckx. The hall, which combines Italian Renaissance, Classicism and interwar characteristics, was protected as a monument in 2003 but, due to noise pollution, lost its function and fell into disrepair. Eight years ago, the city began looking for a new function for the monument. A partner was found in Lumière and the former town hall was given a valuable repurposing into a new meeting place: an urban cinema with space for exhibitions, meetings and a café, LUX28. The city of Mechelen was responsible for the restoration of the auditorium and Lumière for its new use.

Flanders has struggled with a shortage of screens for years, with only eight city cinemas. In comparison, in the Netherlands, there are over 100 screens and every municipality has one. The result is that there is an "unserved cinema audience".

We hope to repeat the Mechelen model in other Belgian cities and serve that audience. myLum ([www.mylum.tv](http://www.mylum.tv)) is an EST platform (electronic sell-through), where customers can digitally purchase Lumière series and individual films. In a world where 'all you can eat' streaming subscriptions are piling up, Lumière is a film and series distributor that consciously opts for an 'à la carte' service in which (usually brand new and sometimes even exclusive) series can be bought on a pay-per-view basis (and kept forever). We operate a targeted selection of quality films and series for our service [www.mylum.tv](http://www.mylum.tv). This model also ensures that we can always pay a fair share of the proceeds to the makers of the films and series, which is very important to us.

When the world closed down during the first Covid-19 crisis, we used the technical infrastructure of the platform to bring big screen films to our audience's living rooms, and we named this platform "Cinema bij je thuis" (Cinema at home). The platform still exists today, it is now a way for the public to watch a movie they didn't see in the cinema. As a distributor, Lumière focuses on films that we are involved with as a producer or co-producer and on animation films in which our own animation studio, Lunanime, is involved. The release of restored classics is also important. This summer, Lumière successfully brought the digitally restored versions of Yazujirō Ozu classics and Béla Tarr films to Belgian cinemas.

The main challenge Lumière faces, as an exhibitor, is in bringing people back to the cinemas after lockdowns. Smaller films are facing greater difficulties than blockbusters in finding an audience. Fewer people are watching more films. We must find ways to bring in new audiences. People are more selective in how they watch a film, choosing which ones they want to see on the big screen and which ones they want to see on television or mobile devices. We strongly believe that we can best achieve our aims by offering a full experience to our visitors. A new and hopeful phenomenon is that there is a young audience of film lovers who consciously choose to watch films in the cinema.

Lumière is always looking for new opportunities for additional venues, either to renovate old buildings or build new ones. Owing to the shortage of screens, there is certainly a place for new city cinemas that respond to the local character of a city. We keep our eyes open!

**Alexander Vandeputte**, Co-owner

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# Network sets out social sustainability mission

by Michael Gubbins

Diversity and sustainability have been the keywords in the reshaping of European business and culture in recent years. Cinemas have often been at the forefront of progress, but Europa Cinemas recognised that more could be done by harnessing the collective power of one of Europe's largest and most important cultural networks.



Madeleine Probst, Watershed, at the Bologna Lab 2022

With that sense of purpose, two Focus Groups, made up of a representative range of network members, were created – one to consider the best approach to improving gender balance, diversity and inclusion, and another to consider environmental sustainability.

Such groups have been playing an increasingly important role in Europa Cinemas' activity, ensuring the organisation stays close to the realities of members.

These groups were set a clear target: to define a shared set of principles, and to turn those principles into realistic and relevant actions and activities across the whole network.

Both groups agreed that it would be valuable to create Charters to spell out commitments. While many public and private organisations and bodies have created mission statements, manifestos and charters, it was felt that cinemas were in a unique position to take a clear stand. Cinemas are businesses, community organisations and key cultural influencers.

A written commitment was not just "virtue signalling" but a valuable statement of intent for audiences, communities and the wider industry. The two charters set out areas where network members could and should make an impact.

## GENDER BALANCE AND DIVERSITY CHARTER

- Using the unique place of cinemas in communities across Europe to promote diversity, inclusivity, respect, equality.
- Creating and sharing measurable and effective business practices across all countries, recognising different local challenges.
- Encouraging the broad and inclusive participation of cinema audiences in European cultural diversity.
- Leading research, creating innovation and sharing best practice.
- Creating safe spaces: welcoming, respectful, inclusive and social.
- Encouraging audiences of all ages and social backgrounds to engage with film and European culture, with a particular focus on passing on a diverse cinema legacy to younger people.
- Encouraging production and distribution of diverse and inclusive film, with particular emphasis on gender balance, through screening and curation of appropriate works.
- Building fair and balanced representation and participation from cinemas in all European countries.
- Promoting cross-border cooperation and sharing of ideas, practices and processes.
- Supporting international films and language diversity.





Matthias Damm, Casablanca Nuremberg, at the Bologna Lab 2022

## GREEN CHARTER

- Reduction of waste and to reuse and recycle materials.
- Sustainable growth and reducing the network's carbon footprint.
- Consideration of environmental impact in decision-making processes.
- Sharing knowledge and practical advice to all network members.
- Encouraging understanding of environmental issues through programming and curation.
- Setting transparent goals for activity and ensuring that audiences can share in and trust its actions and aspiration.

Those Charters will be submitted to the General Assembly for approval in 2022. The creation of the charters was only half of the task. It was essential to create the tools and pathways for all network members to act on the commitments made.

For that phase, members of the two Focus Groups were united into a single group, with a brief to create a practical plan for next steps. It was a challenging task; the charter meetings had been a reminder of the different context in different European countries, in areas, such as infrastructure, finance and policy.

## What does sustainability in cinema mean to us?

### Resources



Electricity  
Heating  
Print Products  
Office Management  
Cleaning  
Sanitary  
Online Server  
Snacks and drinks

### Waste



Waste separation  
Recycling  
Packaging  
Reuse System

### Mobility



Visitor mobility  
Commuting  
Infrastructure  
Business Travel

### Film and culture



Spots  
Film series  
Special screenings  
Education and exchange

### Social



Working Conditions  
Accessibility  
Integration  
Inclusion  
Neighborhood engagement

### Economics



Sustainable Business Model

And, of course, there was the broader context of economic constraints and changed audience demand in the post-Covid period.

The cinemas in the final Focus Group were fully aware of those challenges but there was also a consensus that meaningful action on diversity and green issues represented an opportunity as much as an obligation. Consumers have demonstrated that they value social responsibility and sustainability and reward businesses that demonstrate it. European film audiences tend to be more progressive and aligning with their expectations can play a role in building a stronger recovery from the recent years of crisis.

The Focus Group saw its main role as creating the simplest possible path to action for all. It created a seven-step programme around six critical areas of action: Content Diversity, Business Diversity, Audience Diversity and Inclusion, Carbon Neutrality, Building a Socially and Environmentally Stable Business, and Green Content.

The seven steps are based on: measuring current progress, creating achievable objectives, team awareness building, KPIs and measurable targets, learning from best practice, communicating with audiences and sharing outcomes.

Europa Cinemas will share much more detail in the coming weeks and months but the network has created a pathway to change for all.



Yuliia Antypova, Zhovten Cinema Kiev, at the Bologna Lab 2022

## FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS:

### Environmental Sustainability

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### Observers

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# European Cinema Night

## Celebrating the richness and diversity of European films.

**European Cinema Night is back in 2022 with 5 days of free screenings across Europe from 5 to 9 December 2022.**

For the fifth consecutive year, Creative Europe joins Europa Cinemas in organising “European Cinema Night – Sharing stories we love”. This initiative aims to bring Europe closer to its citizens, while celebrating the richness and diversity of European film culture.

In ever evolving times, European Cinema Night offers, now more than ever, a great opportunity to highlight the essential role cinemas play in the circulation and visibility of European films. It will also show audiences the creativity of European cinema, raising public awareness of how MEDIA supports Europe’s film theatres and, more broadly, film industry and culture.

The free screenings of European films supported by MEDIA reaches more than 8,000 cinemagoers in 75 cities across Europe, strengthening personal connections around a shared European identity built on diversity. This initiative has grown considerably over the years. The first edition, in 2018, saw 34 participating theatres; which grew to 54 in 2019, then 67 in 2020, and involved no fewer than 71 venues in 2021. In 2022, 75 cinemas across 26 European countries are taking part in the initiative.

The participants, all members of the Europa Cinemas network, located both in capital cities and smaller villages throughout Europe, choose the film that will be screened according to the interest of their public, with the aim of appealing to a diverse audience. All screenings are accompanied by activities such as presentations, Q&As with directors, actors or other members of the film’s crew, as well as discussions with film critics where the audience has the opportunity to discuss the film with other film lovers. European heritage films are also included in the programming of this pan-European event.

This year, cinemas can also organise young audience screenings or school matinees within the framework of European Cinema Night,



to help the youngest audiences discover the best of European productions. For example, Cinema Palace in Brussels is screening the French-Belgian animation *Yuku and the Himalayan Flower* for a target audience of preschool children during the Saint Nicolas season, with an introduction from the film’s director followed by a workshop for children.

In connecting cinemagoers in numerous cities across Europe, European Cinema Night aims to strengthen our shared European identity, rooted in our cultural diversity and values, hence bringing EU policies closer to everyday lives.

European Cinema Night takes place in the broader context of the Month of European Film (MOEF) from 13 November to 10 December 2022, an initiative launched this year by the European Film Academy in partnership with Europa Cinemas. The MOEF begins on 13 November with European Arthouse Cinema Day and the awarding of EFA’s Young Audience Award, and runs through to the week of European Cinema Night, culminating on 10 December with the 35th edition of the European Film Awards Ceremony in Reykjavik.

**Sonia Ragone**



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GROWING FILM IN A CHANGING WORLD

# EUROPA CINEMAS

## 30 years supporting European cinemas!



Over 50% European screenings and 30% European non-national screenings by Network members

22 Network Conferences in 11 European cities, welcoming over 7,000 professionals since 1996

Over 40 Audience Development and Innovation Labs in partnership with film festivals and organizations all over Europe, attracting more than 1,300 participants since 2005

83 European films awarded with the Europa Cinemas Label since 2003

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