REPORT - AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION LAB - EUROPA CINEMAS

BUILDING INCLUSION AND REACHING OUT NEW AUDIENCES

BOLOGNA, 24-28 JUNE 2017

FESTIVAL DEL CINEMA RITROVATO - BOLOGNA

Day 1 – Saturday, 24 June

Introduction and meet the moderators and participants

The 13th Bologna Audience Development and Innovation Lab was held **between 24 and 28 June 2017.** It was led by **Madeleine Probst** (Vice-President, Europa Cinemas and Programme Producer, Watershed Cinema, UK), in collaboration with **Mathias Holtz** (Director of Programming, Folkets Hus och Parker, Sweden), **Daniel Sibbers** (Marketing Director, Yorck Kinogruppe, Germany) and **Hrvoje Laurenta** (Director, Kino Europa, Croatia and winner of the Europa Cinemas Prize for Best Programming in 2016). Social media expert **Marco Odasso** (Marketing Director, Ventuz, Germany) also contributed with a special presentation. The Lab took place on the occasion of Il Cinema Ritrovato Festival, which showcases and explores heritage films.

The main focus of the workshop programme was inclusive and forward-thinking approaches to develop audiences, in-venue and online, with special attention paid to younger generations of *digital natives* who may not have grown up with the idea that cinemas are for everyone.

The workshop strived to better understand obstacles to cinema-going, such as a multitude of content and competing choices, ticket prices, accessibility for the disabled and minorities, and a lack of visibility.

Discussion also focused on the role the cinema and images can play in creating and shaping our individual and collective memories, which was also a central theme of the Il Cinema Ritrovato Festival. This year's lab attracted **36 participants** from **19 different countries in Europe and beyond.**

Claude-Eric Poiroux welcomed the workshop leaders, attendees and guest contributors. Madeleine Probst, Mathias Holtz and Daniel Sibbers explained how the workshop would run, its aims and "rules of engagement". Participants then introduced themselves and their cinemas. **Elisa Giovannelli** from Cineteca di Bologna gave a quick presentation about the city of Bologna, its cinemas and some useful information about the population.

The first day rounded off with a welcome dinner and the opening of the Festival with an outdoor screening of Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* in the Piazza Maggiore.

Day 2 – Sunday, 25 June

Accessibility, inclusion, discoverability

Participants were given the group task of imagining a new cinema for Bologna – to include finding a site, identifying the district and population, targeting different types of audience and developing suitable communication and marketing strategies to promote the cinema's opening. Their ideas were to be presented at the end of the workshop.
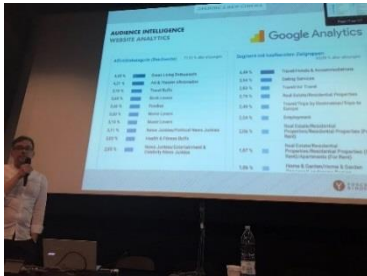
To prepare everyone for this complex challenge, **Daniel Sibbers** gave a presentation, "**Thinking of Opening a New Cinema**?" This covered the key elements to consider before opening a cinema, such as a district's demographic and psychographic data, identifying residents' interests and social profiles and analysing the cinema's catchment area. He also showed how information from Google Analytics can be used effectively. Afterwards, participants formed groups to identify the ideal location in the centre of Bologna for their imaginary cinemas.

Building inclusion and encouraging accessibility

The morning continued with a session on initiatives, projects and tools for improving accessibility and encouraging the inclusion of more disadvantaged audiences. **Margaret Smith** of Glasgow Film Theatre described how the Visible Cinema project organised sign language film screenings for the deaf and hard of hearing. **Mathias Holtz** talked about Accessible Cinema, an app for mobile phones and tablets with audio descriptions for the blind and partially-sighted.

Finally, **Toki Allison** from The Courtyard Cinema, and Access Manager for the BFI Film Audience Network in the UK, presented her work on preparing a toolkit and tips for organising screenings for people suffering from dementia. On the basis of her findings, she highlighted a number of points. These included the need to prepare specific content for dementia sufferers, improving inclusion and understanding, greater acceptance and involvement from the public, a strong commitment to this type of initiative within the team, and providing clear and simple information for this type of audience (clear flyers, good signage, etc).

On the subject of including minorities, **Stephanie Silverman** then described the "I See Me" project which is run by the Belcourt Theatre in Nashville, USA and targets young black teenagers. **Stefania Medda** (Spazio Odissea, Italy) showcased the "Condominio Urbano" project (literally "urban block of flats"), a short filmmaking workshop for young refugees in Cagliari. **Renske Diks** of the Filmtheater Cinecenter in the Netherlands, talked about their Cine Expat film cycle for overseas expats living in Amsterdam which includes a wide selection of films, all subtitled in English.

Discoverability and memory

In the afternoon, we welcomed American filmmaker Bill Morrison, the director of *Dawson City, Frozen Time* for a Q&A session about memories and discovering archives of heritage films, moderated by English film critic Tara Judah.

The next session continued the subject of discovery with **Nick Varley**, director of the distribution company Park Circus which specialises in heritage films, **Sofie Mercier** of the Sphinx Cinema in Belgium, who presented Film « in

Zicht », a cycle of classic films to showcase less known authors and **Mathias Holtz** who spoke about new ways of attracting audiences in Sweden through classic films.

Day 3 – Monday, 26 June

Building relationships

The third day began with a session on loyalty programmes as a way to strengthen relationships with audiences. **Lazaros Boudakidis** of the Olympion, Zannas, Tornes and Cassavetes cinemas in Greece showcased the "We Love Cinema" initiative. This loyalty scheme aims to attract new audiences through a very identifiable promotional campaign that includes special offers, events and competitions on social media.

Daniel Sibbers, marketing director at Yorck, has taken loyalty strategies even further to include unlimited subscription schemes, such as the Yorck Karte, and audience data analysis software such as Movio. Yorck only invested in Movio recently but has already started to see the initial benefits, namely a better knowledge of the age profiles, backgrounds and film interests of their audiences. Movio analyses data collected from traffic on the cinema's website, social media, mobile devices, etc. This information is used to more effectively target and segment the communications sent to filmgoers via newsletters and social media. **Madeleine Probst** wound up the session by describing the Watershed Cinema's "24 & Under" loyalty programme which aims to attract teenage audiences by offering special ticket rates for the under 24s.

To encourage team spirit and prepare for the next session, Madeleine and Jen Skinner of Screen Tiree then introduced the Marshmallow Challenge. Working in groups, participants had to build towers using just spaghetti strands and marshmallows. The group that built the tallest tower won!

Attracting young audiences

Jen Skinner opened the next session which was about including and engaging young audiences. Screen Tiree is the only cinema screen on the Scottish island of Tiree. With a population of 600, there are few activities for young people and no cinema in the true sense of the word. Screen Tiree organises screenings for young audiences, leisure activities and film education events for children, which really enhance the sense of community. **Emese Erdos** of Budapest Film is responsible for young audience initiatives at the group's Puskin Kucko & Suli Mozi cinemas. Respectively, these cinemas have run children's events (with animated films) and programmes for primary and secondary schools. Activities include meeting filmmakers, quizzes, music, drama and poetry workshops linked to films, a festival of classic films for young people and activities for parents and educators. **Elisa Giovannelli** and **Simone Fratini** of Cineteca di Bologna gave an overview of the Cineteca's programmes for young audiences. These specifically target teenagers and focus on film education, discovering films from the past and engaging young people with the cinema.

**Building your staff & organisation's capacity**

Hrvoje Laurenta opened the Monday afternoon session by sharing his experience as President of the Croatian Independent Cinemas Network (Kino mreža). He emphasised the many advantages for cinemas of forming networks so they can pool resources and efforts. Networks are an excellent way to share experiences and best practices. Hrvoje Laurenta then described how he runs his cinema (Kino Europa), which has a staff of 30, including interns. As the manager, he endeavours to give his employees as much responsibility as possible and aims to decentralise tasks and decision-making powers.

Next, **Madeleine Probst** showcased the arts centre model and the challenges of managing a team in a relatively heavy structure –70 employees– (the Watershed manages many different events). To address the challenges inherent in this type of organisation, Madeleine has found a number of solutions including: drawing up a list of shared values with staff (which is included in the strategic plan), holding meetings on company strategy with staff, and asking for their help resolving problems. The most important point, however, is to make sure staff are able to develop within their roles. The second part of the presentation looked at a crowdfunding campaign run by the Watershed and which had attracted more than 1000 donors at the last call. Madeleine Probst emphasised that it was essential to involve the Board of Directors and staff in this campaign, which had also provided an opportunity for them to produce summaries of their work and to better define their achievements.

To follow, **Stephanie Silverman** (Belcourt Theatre, US) described how she was raising funds to finance renovation works at her cinema with a successful campaign to increase audience awareness. They have built a "wall of donors" in the cinema listing the name of every contributor.
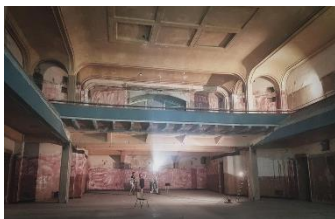
The day concluded with a tour of the site of the historic **Cinema Modernissimo** in the Piazza Maggiore. This underground cinema, run by Cineteca di Bologna, is currently under renovation. It dates back to 1915 and its original decor will be fully restored. Re-opening is planned for the end of 2018 or early 2019.

Day 4 – Tuesday, 27 June

Marco Odasso (Ventuz, digital marketing expert) led Tuesday's session which focused on **optimising cinema strategies on social media.**

He began by setting the context, pointing out that today, markets need to be seen as conversations. In view of this, trust and clarity of information provided are absolutely key. The digital environment is characterised primarily by noise. This first challenge to overcome therefore is how to stand out in this gigantic mass of information.

To build brand awareness and form a critical mass to converse with, it is essential to use all tools available to us, namely a website, social media, SEO, etc. Above all however, it is important to use

media judiciously and according to both the core target we want to address and our key performances indicators:

- **Facebook: the economy of engagement.** Engagement is the way in which the user interacts with the brand. If there is no engagement, there is no impact.
- **Google: the economy of positioning.** To stand out and recruit new users, it is essential to develop a SEO strategy. To optimise referencing, it is important to create enriched content, through a blog for example.
- **Instagram: the economy of lifestyle.** On Instagram, sales are indirect. Brands create attachment through aspirational content.
- **Twitter: The economy of influence.** Everyone wants to be influential. On Twitter we speak to influencers to spread and amplify our message.
- **Blogs: the economy of content and reference**

After this brief overview, Marco Odasso emphasised that as the majority of traffic comes through mobile devices, this type of use should be considered first and foremost when developing strategies. He then gave a summary of the different types of digital marketing campaign and the various indicators (KPIs) that need to be understood in order to measure a campaign's effectiveness (ROI).

Depending on what the goal is, it is essential to make a clear distinction between two main types of strategy:

- **Generating or increasing visibility** - visibility is all about the users who follow us, communicate with us, talk about us, visit our site, etc. The true volume of this data can give us an idea of the scale of our visibility.
- **Building or improving a reputation** - our reputation is about qualitative data we can use to understand what our user community thinks of our brand and products. The aim is to attract as many users as possible who both know about us and talk positively about our brand.

How to segment and target audiences. Various "socio-demographic" criteria can be considered when segmenting audiences (age bracket, gender, etc.). But moving beyond such objective criteria, it is important to ask: who is going to be interested in our product? Which articles, connected to our product, might attract their attention? (Combined relevance) So, we can also segment our audience by interests or "worlds", e.g. films, travel, languages, sport, family, documentaries, science, etc.


The **"content plan"** encompasses all your online activity – website, social media, blog, etc. To develop a plan, you must first choose your main platforms, being realistic about those you can keep up-to-date with new content. A word of advice: "Don't try to do too much as that can be detrimental". Hootsuite is a useful tool, in dashboard form, for managing your overall strategy across different social networks. Remember that website landing pages are a good way to link the public to your social media accounts.

To finish, Marco Odasso had one final piece of advice for exhibitors: "develop your brand, be recognisable, build your reputation and provide useful information for your followers. It is only after you have done this that you can begin to sell your products/services"

## Building a strategy your web presence

Hrvoje Laurenta described his cinema's strategy for building a community on Facebook through segmented messaging. Using practical examples, he showed how Kino Europa segments and addresses its different communities.
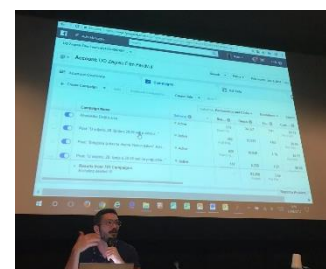
Duncan Carson of ICO, UK, showcased ICO's B2B social media strategy. He stressed the importance of involving every member of the team to help with creating high-quality, convincing, and relevant content. You must be obsessed with clarity of content and make anything difficult accessible.

Matteo Lollini of Cineteca Di Bologna explained how he managed Cineteca di Bologna's successful Instagram account, with modern and historical content, using tags and hashtags as well as catchy texts.
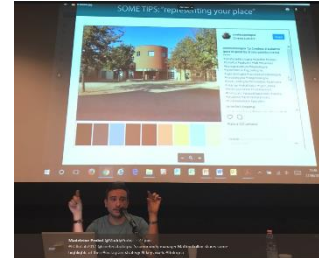
"Open Slot" session

During an open session, **Giuditta Ricci Sebihi** (Cinelux, Switzerland) described her view of social media and presented the platforms she considers to be the most ethical, such as Horyou. Next, **Anna Nita** (Lumière Cinema, Netherlands) presented the DIY promotional videos her cinema posted on Facebook to promote its opening in the summer. To finish, **Tatiana Shumiliver and Aleksandra Geller** (Pioner Cinema, Russia) explained their social media strategy which focuses on diversified content targeted for each platform. In addition to the most popular social media, Pioner is also very active on VKontakte and Telegram+.

Day 5 – Wednesday, 28 June

To start the morning, participants were welcomed by **Gian Luca Farinelli,** Director of Cineteca di Bologna, who gave a brief speech. Next, it was time to look at the projects on a new cinema for Bologna which attendees had been working on over the four days. Six groups presented six very different projects, each vying for originality, to a panel of friendly judges – Madeleine Probst, Mathias Holtz and Hrvoje Laurenta.

The first concept to be presented was "**Greenama**": a cinema-hotel primarily serving visitors to Bologna and with the novel feature of a tree house cabin for children.

Starting from the observation that 15% of Bologna's residents were not born in the city, the "**Originale Cinema**" planned to target expatriates by building a cinema in a former embassy. The next project, "**Living Bridge**", was a suspended cinema in a former railway station – an open space where different stories collide.

"**Labas**" would be a new cinema celebrating the city's values and acting as a bridge between established and emerging communities. "**Move it Cinema**" was to be located in a sports centre with a basketball court, and well-being and yoga centre.

The final group's cinema, **"Mentaperta"**, opened onto a courtyard garden and targeted the student and Erasmus community.

Madeleine Probst closed the lab by summing up the main lessons learned and warmly thanking all attendees and contributors.

Alexis D'Huyteza, Sonia Ragone