

REPORT – EUROPA CINEMAS AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION LAB

FROM SPACES TO PLACES: MAKING THE CINEMA A PLACE FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

BOLOGNA, 23-27 JUNE 2018

FESTIVAL IL CINEMA RITROVATO

Saturday 23rd June 2018

On Saturday 23rd June Europa Cinemas launched its 14th edition of the Bologna Audience Development & Innovation Lab within the dense atmosphere of the 32nd Il Cinema Ritrovato Festival.

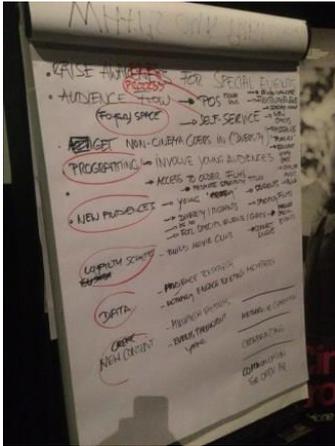


Over 4 days and through 8 thematic sessions, 35 exhibitors and other cinema professionals from all over Europe (and further away) discussed, reflected and shared on the challenges of creating and maintaining a community for cinema theaters nowadays. *How can we ensure cinema spaces remain places that people feel connected with, whatever their age, preferences, backgrounds or access needs? And what can we do better to capitalise on our communities' assets, inspiration, and potential in a context of ever increasing abundance of content and platforms and shrinking*

resources? are the two framing questions this year. The guests provided illustrations of concrete projects already existing and used insights to draw tips and helpful approaches.

On the first day, the participants were welcomed to the Lab by **Claude-Eric Poiroux**, the General director Europa Cinemas who highlighted the idea that the 35 people from 14 countries gathered there were bearers of a unique point of view but also shared common values in believing the cinema theater is the privileged and only way to experience films and the young generations need to be made aware of this. A cinema has an eminently social agenda and is therefore crucial for our collective future. Then, CE Poiroux paid tribute to the work of **Gian Luca Farinelli**, the General Director of the Cineteca di Bologna and of Il Cinema Ritrovato.





For him, Europa Cinemas transforms the potential solitude of exhibitors into a common search for competences and skills. “We keep learning” is his motto.

Then the contents and aims of the lab (sharing, finding inspiration and good practices, making professional and human connections) were introduced further and interactively brought up by the three Lab leaders: **Madeleine Probst** (Programme Producer, Watershed, UK and Vice-President of Europa Cinemas), **Hrvoje Laurenta** (Manager, Kino Europa, Croatia) and **Daniel Sibbers** (Marketing Director, Yorck Kinogruppe, Germany). The 35 participants were immediately put to contribution through pairing to pinpoint the values and expectations around this Lab.

On the evening the Europa Cinemas Lab community had the opportunity to watch in open air the opening film of Il Cinema Ritrovato: *Enamorada* by Emilio Fernández (Mexico/ 1946, 99’), on the stunning Piazza Maggiore. The introduction was by Martin Scorsese.

Sunday 24th June 2018

The second day in the Sala Cervi of Cineteca focused around three work sessions entitled “From Spaces to Places”, where we heard about the successful opening or reopening of cinemas and their impact on the community; “Breaking down Barriers” that separate the cinema from non cinema-goers; and “Include us”, addressing the issues of accessibility and inclusion.



In the first session **Hrvoje Laurenta** from Kino Europa in Zagreb and **Kristofer Woods** from Wolf Kino in Berlin talked about the role their cinema play in the community, the first reopening a cinema and thus impacting the neighborhood; the second starting from scratch, opening a new venue thanks to a crowdfunding campaign and therefore engaging the community and creating strong ties since the beginning.

Success stories and issues with cinema spaces were presented by **Roza Amdilyan** (Pioner Cinema, Moscow), showcasing the impact that open air screenings in Sokolniki Park have on that area; **Nadine Bemelmans** (Lumière Cinema, Maastricht), presenting how moving the cinema in an industrial area, in a bigger venue with a restaurant and café changed the perception of the cinema and the surroundings; **Diederieke van Herwijnen** (Vue Cinemas, The Netherlands) sharing the issues of making empty spaces in the foyers more useful and attractive for the audience.

In the session 2 «Breaking down barriers» some campaigns to encourage cinema-going, increase young audience attendance and build engagement were presented.

Daniel Sibbers (Yorck Kinogruppe, Germany) introduced *Das Kino*, a national campaign to attract young audience in cinemas through an informal and playful language using communication tools which are closer to young audience. **Hrvoje Laurenta** (Kino Europa, Croatia) followed with *Let's go to the cinema*, a Croatian event to create a buzz about cinema-going thanks to the support of Croatian movie stars. **Isabelle France** (Showroom Cinema, UK) presented Cine26, an initiative addressed to the under 26, with targeted events, tailored communication for youngsters and wide social media campaign.

Young audience was precisely considered as a huge concern today since everyone can feel their potential but also how tricky it can be to attract and keep them in the community.

The afternoon focused more on building inclusion and accessibility, showcasing different initiatives. **Nadine Oucherif** (Filmcasino, Austria) spoke about sensory friendly screenings for autistic people, **Madeleine Probst** (Watershed, UK) talked about an initiative for deafs and hard of hearing people called «Deaf conversation about Cinema»; and **Hrvoje Laurenta** highlighted a different type of inclusion: that of foreign people living in Zagreb (students, expats, tourists) by organising a cycle of films in original version with English subtitles. **Bálint Rádóczy** (Apolló Mozi, Pecs) opened the workshop called «a problem shared is a problem halved» by sharing the issues of the lack of accessibility of his cinema, given that all the screening rooms are located at high floors and it is very complicated and expensive to renovate this venue.

The surgery slot session allows participants to ask for feedback and suggestions on specific topics to their fellow exhibitors, the debate being very effective and useful.

Monday 25th June 2018



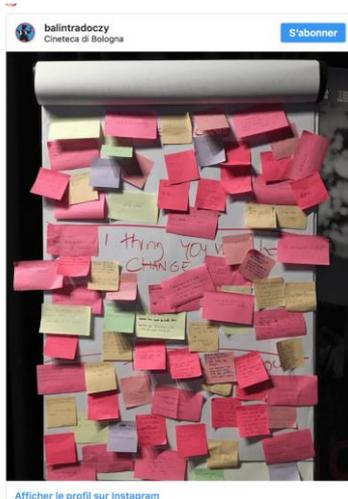
The third day of the lab opened on a visit of Odeon Multisala, art 4-screen venue renovated and rebranded in 2015 with a jazz age style and a strong identity. The idea was to observe the premises, enjoy all its qualities but also to exert a critical mind, which Madeleine Probst would later urge the participants to apply to their own venue.

Our host for the morning Eugenio Fuschini, manager of the Odeon, gave a speech which enlightened us on how large the spectrum is when starting anew: on top of the actual refurbishing, a new logo was designed, entertainments such as Salotto Del Jazz (jazz open air event in June and July) are organized and a whole merchandising was imagined in the style of the venue as if it were a genuine brand.

Getting back to Cineteca, the participants had to name one word to describe the venue, one thing they liked about Odeon and one thing they would change.

Daniel Sibbers shared his experience with the Yorck Kinogruppe, letting the participants know that one should always bear in mind that cinema goes work on an emotional level and that creating a sort of sexy image, package of one's venue is the key. In a nutshell, the audience needs to have a "gut feeling" about your place.





Bálint Rádóczy (Apolló Mozi, Hungary), an independent visual art researcher, art director, curator and performer, told us about the critical time when the operator of Apolló left and the remaining team had to find an action plan to revitalize the place and it naturally implied getting public engagement. They resorted to banners suspended in the streets to collar the passersby with bold messages contending with the municipal positions and creating a strong and identifiable image of the cinema.

Madeleine Probst concluded this session by explaining how the modernisation of the box-office, from a formal bank-like desk with a separation glass into a more welcoming, children and disabled friendly lobby, changed the feeling of the audience in accessing Watershed.

In the afternoon, the session 5 “Campaign building” started with a surprise case study by **Ian Christie**, scholar, professor and pioneer of Europa Cinemas’ Lab. He explained the origins of canons and how a film is given the status of cult work. Ian told us that observing the top film lists of different groups and different periods tells us a lot about contextual, sociological and technical innovations as well (apparition of the VHS and DVDs which for instance helped a lot *Seven Samurai* after its release). The 35 participants were then asked to come up with their individual TOP TEN which will then be compiled and analysed at the end of the lab! After this new challenge, **Barbara Twist**, representing Art House Convergence (USA) explained the success story of raising 8 million dollars with her State Theater campaign based on intense communication strategies.



Daniel Sibbers shared some of the highs and lows of the campaign leading up to the opening of the new Yorck Kino cinema: Delphi Lux. His advice to be “on the map” (using google map and yelp) and his retro planning and targeted social media campaign for the Delphi Lux inspired the participants.

After that, five lab participants showed us some examples of successful communication campaigns:

Züleyha Azman (Kino Rotterdam, The Netherlands) with the Maestro Morricone campaign including interviews and custom trailer, poster and magazine. **Babis Moskofoglou** and **Maria Poliviou** (Olympion & Warehouse, Greece) with their #summerTIFF communication campaign and its challenges to engage an audience in summer and to communicate on different summer screenings with a limited budget for marketing and communication. **Hajna Tóth** (Budapest Film, Hungary) with the “Turn off your phones” campaign showing an animated trailer lade by Moholy Nagy university students screened before movies to encourage the audience to turn off their phones. And finally, **Matthias Elwardt** (Kino Abaton, Germany) gave the participants an idea of their famous Abaton film quiz.



In the late afternoon, the participants had the opportunity to visit de Modernissimo Cinema site. The visit offered an inspiring range of possibilities on spatial invention and recreation as one also discovered during the course of the day that despite financial or political difficulties nothing is quite impossible.

Tuesday 26th June 2018

On the fourth day of the lab, loyalty schemes and projects were first discussed. Session 6 “Building loyalty” started with **Lizelotte De Brujin** (Fimtheater De Uitkijk, The Netherlands) focusing on the “Friends of the Uitkijk” programme and its four different programmes. **Michael Friedrich** (Kino im Schillerhof) introduced Cinuru app (beta version): info about your favorite cinemas, trailer rating, film reminders and a reward system. Then came the Yorck Karte and its very advanced customer data analysis system, MOVIO introduced by **Daniel Sibbers**.

With this system, one can really target and monitor subscription and be playful, surfing on occasions like birthdays or World Cups to get on to customers. The conclusion of this session was that often the apps or technological tools are still on their testing phase, but at least they help reflect on one’s organization about data and information in general.



Session 7 “People make places”. As far as staff managing and its improvement are concerned, the group really had to rely on the trust which was created over the past few days to share positive and less pleasant experience. The belief that binds everybody is that the workers are the soul of the place and in particular the ones who are in the front line: box-office staffers for instance. **Madeleine Probst** underscored the necessity to share purposeful bonding time with one’s staff, to really care, to be a tight group in order to

venture into creativity and new ideas which are always fragile. The way we communicate is at the core of everything, so managing the workflow, through comment lists etc. is crucial. It is a slow work but totally worth achieving.

Hrvoje Laurenta shared that in Croatia there is no actual education for job in the cultural industry so he must find ways to train his staff: trust and a few tricks are the keys for him. Sometimes you have to go on a retreat as well, that’s what **Daniel Sibbers** did to intensively work out some issues and at the same time seeing each other’s positions, choices and emotions under different light. Sometimes, you simply have to admit to yourself you’re “on a same boat”, that’s what **Jakob Beubler** (KIZ Royal Kino, Austria) does.

In the afternoon, session 8 was focusing on “Building audiences through collaboration”. **Jon Barrenechea** (VP Marketing at MUBI) and **Tara Judah** (Programme Producer at Watershed) spoke

about MUBI's partnerships with film theatres, film schools and Cinema Rediscovered festival in Watershed.

After learning more about MUBI, three participants of the lab talked about their collaborations and partnerships. **Annelot Tijds** (LUX, The Netherlands) shared some insights about their partnership with PICL, **Saša Šoltić** (Kino Slatina, Croatia) showed a video about the ART-CBC cross-border partnership between Croatian and Hungarian towns, thanks to which Kino Slatina was renewed. Finally, **Matthias Elwardt** presented "Berlinale goes Kiez" bringing the festival to independent cinemas across the city and the surrounding area.



The day ended with a surgery slot and a great discussion between all the participants.

Wednesday 27th June 2018

The participants spent the last morning enjoying one more occasion to share in groups, before reporting to the leaders and the Europa Cinemas team in the Sala Cervi.

The workshop leaders **Madeleine Probst**, **Daniel Sibbers**, **Hrvoje Laurenta** as well as the Europa Cinemas and Cineteca Teams were warmly thanked by the participants clearly enthusiastic of the experience and moved by the careful benevolence around their workshop: an ideal and reassuring context to move towards new ideas and innovations.



What they will bring back to their cinema is the notion that putting the human at the core of their projects is crucial.

Lisa Kermabon, Sonia Ragone