

Why did you decide to launch this project?

The Cité cinema screens archive films throughout the year, most of them as event screenings. For five years, we've welcomed students from the local media campus but they would only attend the great classics. We launched a film club which is now very popular, but we had to work on building audience loyalty. Students are difficult to attract, as they don't necessarily stay on campus for the whole week, or during the holidays, as there are many other options, some of which are free. The same applies to young working people and young parents. However, we've noticed that they do come to the venue whenever a screening is accompanied by added content, and especially if it is fun and playful. This enables them to make the venue their own, and to have complete confidence in even our most cutting-edge offerings. So, we wanted to develop a cross-disciplinary strategy, livelier than the usual post-screening discussions.

It was then that Anne Pouliquen invited me to join the Futur@cinéma steering committee. It was in this context that I met Laura Blanc from the Cahors cinema (a general cinema), who was asking herself the same questions about building audience loyalty, renewal and innovative events. Accompanied by Eliza Calmat, Tristan Desplechin and Grégoire Nedelcovic from Dreamfactory, who developed the first immersive cinema experience in France around the film *Terminator 2*, we had challenging conversations, and I joined the group to develop the Cinexperience project.



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What is the project about?

Cinexperience is a turnkey kit for exhibitors to create events around heritage films, as well as innovative marketing content for distributors and their new releases, and even for events at festivals! The issue of audience renewal is at the centre of both professions' thinking. As far as exhibitors are concerned, we are sorely lacking in the time to develop and the human and financial resources to put on fun, entertaining events. That's where Cinexperience come in, and that's where we're going to help! We want to help to (re)win over young audiences by through a unique experience and immersive sessions. A kit for all types of venues, all forms of cinema, throughout France and Europe, the concept can easily be duplicated abroad. In an hour and a half, the exhibitor, with or without the help of their team, uses tutorials to set up a system using simple storytelling to help guests enter the world of the film once they have left the cinema.

What was the need for this project in France?

The challenge is to retain and renew our audience. Offering a tool that can meet part of this challenge is a necessity. In our theatres, we're consumed by administrative, human and financial challenges, not to mention programming... in concrete terms: we don't have enough time. I'd like to spend more time developing my cinema's programming strategy, but sometimes it's necessary to use turnkey tools that can be tweaked - we're not specialists in every artistic field. For example, I can't come up with an entire storytelling package for a full evening, as we did for the first Cinexperience event. Using the kit also allowed us to do something we hadn't necessarily planned: it improved team cohesion! So, if on top of that we can solve a few HR problems, we've got a winner!

What are your expectations?

We experimented with an initial version of a Zombie kit at the Cité cinema with several objectives in mind: to mobilise students for a back-to-school event, to make an impression, and to win the loyalty of a new audience. We were surprised by the response of around a hundred people who had booked online, as the audience had very little information about what they were actually going to see. The screening took place on a Tuesday evening, which is not usually a busy day and, for this event, the auditorium was almost full. The collective experience has stayed with us, and many people asked if we would do it again.

What impact could it have at local and national levels?

Firstly, the cinema's image has been rejuvenated and it's more dynamic. The impact on the local cinema is significant: our admissions have increased since this event and, above all, it has developed a habit of online booking. It also created buzz between attendees who responded to the online questionnaires, which also made it possible to collect email addresses (48% of participants) and FOMO for those who weren't able to take part. The cinema's influence across the region has grown. We'll soon be circulating the Zombie kit and developing a second on another theme – which we'll keep secret for a few weeks yet. If any cinemas in the network are interested, please get in touch at contact.cinexperience@gmail.com



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Partner cinemas:

Cinéma de la Cité, Angoulême
(Coordinator)

Le Meliès, Montreuil

Le Rio, Clermont-Ferrand

Le Grand Palais, Cahors