



Art Kino, Rijeka

Coastline Cinema, Croatia

Interview with Alen Munitic, Kino Mediteran

by **Stjepan Hundic**

Alen, tell us more about yourself and the partners involved in this project?

Coastline Cinema is a collaboration project between independent cinemas on the Croatian side of the Adriatic, which was created with the aim of networking and developing a joint business model to encourage audiences back into cinemas after a global crisis. I am the director of Kino Mediteran, a network of small cinemas on Croatian islands. Kino Mediteran is coordinator of this project and our partners are coming from bigger cities on the coast: Art-kino in Rijeka, Zlatna Vrata in Split, and Kinematografi in Dubrovnik. In this project, stretching from north to south Croatia, our aim is to connect the audience with film and cinema culture. This is why we named the project Coastline Cinema, to cross the 700km between our cities and islands with the help of great films!

Why did you choose to launch this project?

All the partners in this project connected over a strong belief in European programming, but also owing to the seasonality of our work: for one quarter of the year we use outdoor cinemas. This uniqueness comes from the rich tradition of open-air cinema in Croatia. We survived the

pandemic because of these two factors, and we decided that the Collaborate to Innovate scheme could help us, not only to connect more but, also, to develop a new approach that will motivate the audiences to return to the cinemas and to contribute to overall audience development, especially future generations of cinema-goers.

What was the need for it in your country?

Our cinemas are often the only oases of cultural life in their communities, and we need to raise awareness that going to the cinema and the experience of watching a movie on a big screen have both social and educational value. This is really important to emphasize at a time of global pandemic, and we need projects like this to help us think out of the box – to help us improve things and to implement them on a local and on a national level as well. Our programmes are rooted in European cinema and our target is a general audience, but with a strong focus on developing new audiences, especially children and youth.

What are your expectations?

This support is a huge opportunity for all partners to significantly improve the innovative practices they are

already implementing in their communities and to expand them further. In our proposal, we try to emphasize that each partner in this project can benefit from this collaboration and that each partner can learn something from other partners. We are all very successful cinemas within our communities but are now faced with new challenges. Coming together with a firm plan for this innovative strategy of audience development, and methods that will help bring audiences back to the cinemas, we can make a significant step for the whole southern region of our country.

What could be its impact at the local and national level?

We have developed the programme elements primarily by target group: children, youth, and general audience. We've added innovative parts to each element we are working on. This approach will help in the additional engagement of the audience and in education, in the context of European film. The participation of the audience in each element is the greatest value of the project, which will not only bring new audiences, but will also improve their attitude towards cinemas. We hope that our activities, if proved successful, can easily be adapted for any other members or groups of cinemas in the Europa Cinemas Network.

Please elaborate on planned activities to increase children and young audience engagement in local cinemas.

First, curated content for children will be developed in partnership with local schools. We want to make Adriatic the first region in Croatia to implement a joint-designed

school film catalogue, with titles for all ages, and a teacher's manual will be prepared for each title. The development of a young audience is the biggest challenge of our project. We will try to engage them in their final years of high school through "Film Graduation", a programme that will be fully designed and created by students, and our staff will only provide logistical support. The final part of this programme will be held at our open-air cinemas in the form of a public event for their friends.

Can you tell us more about the #kinostalgija initiative?

#kinostalgija is the segment of the Coastline cinema project related to raising awareness of the importance of cinemas, and will serve as a public campaign to encourage and invite audiences back into cinemas. Through personal stories and reminiscences related to movies, cinemas, and open-air venues; we want to awake memories across generations of our audience. By collecting stories, photos, and videos from our cities and islands, we want to create a virtual exhibition of cinemas on the Adriatic coast. This will also be a testimony to public cultural spaces, some of which have disappeared, others that are in danger of disappearing. We are really looking forward to this initiative and all the great memories we will collect!

Partner cinemas:

- Kino Mediteran (Split)
- Kinoteka Zlatna Vrata (Split)
- Art-kino (Rijeka)
- Kino Sloboda (Dubrovnik)



Ljetno kino Bačvice, Split