

PasserelleCiné, France

Interview with Philippe Lecocq, Tarik Roukba, and Jérémie Monmarché, Cinémas Studio

by **Melanie Goodfellow**

The PasserelleCiné project involves the creation of a dedicated online cinema resources platform for social workers in priority neighbourhoods, or areas of social and economic deprivation earmarked for special state support.

It is an extension of the PasserelleCiné association launched in 2020 by Tarik Roukba and Jérémie Monmarché of Cinémas Studio in the French city of Tours. With the backing of its director Philippe Lecocq, its aim is to make the venue more accessible to people living in these neighbourhoods.

What was the inspiration behind PasserelleCiné?

Philippe Lecocq: Our location in the centre of Tours means our public tends to be financially comfortable and cultivated. We felt we were missing a connection with people living in priority neighbourhoods. Our films are for everyone, but we rarely get people from those areas through the door.

There are ten priority neighbourhoods in and around Tours. We decided to create an association that would go directly into those neighbourhoods, to connect with the people living there to then encourage them, through different initiatives and events, to come to the cinema.

In the process of setting up the project, we realised that the best way to connect with this public was through the social workers in these areas. They are in daily contact

with the people there, and are in a position to propose group cinema trips or other events including workshops or discussions around film.

How does the online PasserelleCiné platform fit into this initiative?

Tarik Roukba: The idea is for it to be an interactive tool for the social workers so that, in one click, they have all the information they need on a film at their fingertips, which, in turn, will help them organise trips or events around these films, hopefully bringing this audience that we're missing. It will also enable cinemas involved in the initiative to share material around films and events including workshops, discussions, and filmmaker events.



Cinémas Studio, Tours

What is your long-term goal for the platform?

Tarik Roukba: For it to be transposable to other cities in France and the rest of Europe. We already have five other cinema partners in France: Cinéma Les 7 Batignolles in Paris, Cinéma Le Castillet in Perpignan, Cinéma Jean Vigo in Gennevilliers, Cinéma Le Méliès in Montreuil, and Cinéma Lux in Caen.

Do you have any partners outside of France?

Tarik Roukba: We've started talking with a cinema in London and another in Hungary, with hope of expanding the initiative to those places next year.

When will the platform come online?

Jérémie Monmarché: It's still under construction, but we're aiming for end-January, start-February. In addition to Collaborate to Innovate, the project was selected for the Challenge Futur@Cinéma [an incubator event aimed at projects supporting the renewal of cinema audiences running under the auspices of Les Arcs Film Festival]. We will first present the platform at Les Arcs in December.

Tarik Roukba: In the meantime, we're laying the physical foundations for the initiative, talking to social workers and social centres. Even though the platform isn't online, we're already working on films locally as if the platform were live. We're hoping to do a sort of test run with Nabil Ayouch's *Casablanca Beats*. It's a film about hip-hop that touches on a lot of other issues like the place of girls and women in society. There are a number of angles around which we'd like to stage events.

Will the initiative mainly work with films with storylines connected to people living in the priority neighbourhoods or could you select a work completely beyond their realm of experience, like, say, Xavier Giannoli's costume drama *Lost Illusions*?

Tarik Roukba: The aim is to support European arthouse films, but we're sensitive to the fact that some films are more accessible than others. *Lost Illusions* is a fairly accessible film. We're currently considering categorising films along the lines of the colour-coded system used for ski slopes. An experienced cinephile can go down any slope, while groups or individuals with less experience of arthouse cinema can choose a green slope film. This could be useful for social workers when they're trying to judge whether a film will work with a certain group or not.

Jérémie Monmarché: We also take our cues from the feedback and suggestions from the social workers. Sometimes they come to us with films we hadn't thought of. We recently had a request for Vincent Maël Cardona's *Magnetic Beats*, which revolves around the community radio scene. We discovered that interest in the film was sparked because the neighbourhood where the request came from had its own community radio station.



Where do you plan to screen the films being promoted within the PasserelleCiné initiative?

Tarik Roukba: It's important that the screenings take place in a cinema theatre. That is the best place to discover film and that's what we're defending.

Philippe Lecocq: We have a system in France that is very precise about where you can show a film, especially those on general release. You can't just screen them anywhere.

What do you hope PasserelleCiné and its online platform will bring specifically to your theatre?

Philippe Lecocq: The end game is to increase our audience numbers with people who didn't go to the cinema before and, in the process, hopefully create new cinephiles.



Partner cinemas:

- Cinemas Studio (Tours)
- Cinéma Les 7 Batignolles (Paris)
- Cinéma Le Castillet (Perpignan)
- Cinéma Jean Vigo (Gennevilliers)
- Cinéma Le Méliès (Montreuil)
- Cinéma Lux (Caen)