CINEMA D'EUROPA
MEDIA SALLES

an initiative of the European Union
MEDIA Programme with the
support of the Italian Government
Via Soperga, 2 • 20127 Milano • Italy
tel. +39.02.66984405
fax +39.02.6691574
e-mail: infocinema@mediasalles.it
http://www.mediasalles.it

MEDIA

European Cinema
JOURNAL
MEDIA SALLES

International Edition no. 1 – year VI – February 2004

DIGITAL CINEMA: A CHANGING SCENARIO

"This is an area that still calls for more questions than answers": with this comment, Jens Rykaer, President of MEDIA Salles, began his talk on the digital scene at the VIII Euro-Mediterranean Conference on the Cinema. It was September 2002. These words briefly reflected the attitude of exhibitors confronted with a field like that of digital screening, whose outlines seemed then, and still seem today, in need of clearer definition, whilst the prospects it opens up are becoming ever more accessible, thanks to technological advances.
The attitude has certainly altered over the years: the phase of low confidence in the ability of digital film to equal, or even better, the quality of 35 mm images, has been replaced by a more concrete approach, directed at understanding the risks and advantages, costs and benefits.
Lately attention has shifted once again from basic issues – which cannot, however, be neglected, and regard the cost of equipment for instance – to more complex types of evaluation. These include the importance of considering possible changes in traditional business models that may be introduced into the cinema industry by digital distribution. Numerous questions remain. Their persistence seems to explain the highly cautious attitude which contradicted optimistic forecasts according to which, for instance, in 2004 there would be over 1,500 digital screens in the US, whilst in fact there were only 76 by 31st December 2003. Nevertheless, interesting signs are to be noticed from several directions. This is the light in which we can interpret the majors' constitution of Digital Cinema Initiative (DCI), in order to indicate the standard requirements for the digital screening of their films, and the constitution of the European Digital Cinema Forum (EDCF), a European network founded to encourage exchange of views by the various players involved in the development of digital and electronic cinema. Moreover, as regards content, we should note the appearance on the market of suppliers of "alternative content" and the application of electronic technology to advertising or to the distribution of documentaries in cinemas. Lastly, the decision to invest heavily in digital screens is significant – we only need to think of China or the Kinepolis group in Europe.
In this situation, MEDIA Salles has felt prompted to provide keys and market intelligence tools. The Association has responded to this challenge by carrying out its specific task: that of informing and training.
If the first step was to draw up and publish a picture of the development – timid though it may be – of theatres equipped for digital screening and films distributed in digital format, the second was to create a course for exhibitors who wish to know more and get prepared for the new scenarios.
This issue of the Newsletter places itself in this perspective and devotes considerable space to the "digital revolution" in China – as reported by one of the protagonists – as well as a specific angle on the big question of content. Anyone who wishes to go into greater detail can take the opportunity offered by the course: a unique chance for asking all the questions that have arisen over the past few years. And, certainly, to start getting some answers.

Elisabetta Brunella
Secretary General of MEDIA Salles

For a more detailed account of the topic digital cinema, see the "New Technologies" section at www.mediasalles.it

ALTERNATIVE CONTENT: THE EURO1080 STRATEGY

They had announced their "first HD broadcasts" in Europe for 1st January 2004 and they kept their word: the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Day concert, broadcast live and in high definition from Sweden to Spain, was the first event in a programme that promises to be interesting. This is how Euro1080, the first television broadcaster to produce and distribute HD-only content in Europe, aims to impose itself on the market with a project that is being developed on a dual front: television and cinema.
The first of the Belgian broadcaster's two channels, "Main Channel", does in fact currently broadcast uncoded for a few hours every day and reaches households – where television sets are HD and fitted with satellite reception and the special set-top box – but also public places, such as bars, hotels, airports, whilst "Event Channel" addresses only cinemas equipped with electronic projection, supplying them almost constantly with so-called "alternative content". This ranges from live coverage of big events like the European or World Soccer Championships, the Olympic Winter or Summer Games, to the latest Elton John concert. In addition to this, Euro1080 guarantees to distribute at least two events per week, with a broad range of content: classical music performances, operas, jazz festivals, pop & rock concerts and special sports programs. These are completed by regionally specific programs, like a Flemish children's show distributed to Flemish and Dutch cinemas, or the commemoration of a famous Fado singer broadcast to Portuguese cinemas.
An "off-shoot" of Alfacam, a Belgium-based company, with offices throughout Europe, providing TV facilities and services to broadcasters and production houses all over the world, Euro1080 recognises the link to the production world as its strongest point. "Many of the things we do and show are done in co-productions with broadcasters that produce standard definition programs. By sharing (technical and rights) production costs, we are able to deliver content that so far was outside the reach of cinemas. By doing these co-productions we have been able to convince right holders to play the "electronic cinema card", as additional business".
But how much does it cost the spectator to watch an event on the big screen and how much is left in the exhibitor's pocket? "We think that it must be possible to ask a price per ticket that comes with a slight premium over a regular cinema ticket", says Rob de Vogel, Project Manager of Euro1080. "We, and also others with d-cinema and one-time events, have confirmation on this from first experiences, e.g. the David Bowie concert (broadcast by British Quantum Digital last September, *editor's note*) went in average for 14 euro. At 10 euro the split, after tax, is as follows: cinema owner 55%, rights holder 25%, Euro1080 20%". Moreover, for smaller cinemas, or as a first introduction to High Definition, Euro1080 offers the possibility to project events on a daily or weekly basis by renting technical equipment.

More information is available on Euro1080 website (www.euro1080.tv).

Cinemas and audiences are changing. Do you want to know more about European and worldwide cinema exhibition?
Do you want to be prepared for the new scenarios?

MEDIA Salles:
two exhibitor training courses in 2004

DigiTraining Plus:
New Technologies for European Cinemas
Kuurne (Belgium), 31 March – 4 April 2004
at the Head Offices of BARCO
Digital screening: from technology to business models
Enrolments no later than: 27 February 2004; fee: 250 euro.

European Cinema Exhibition:
A New Approach
Budapest (Hungary), 22 – 26 September 2004
Promotion, marketing, programming and theatre management: a European dimension
Enrolments no later than: 2 August 2004; fee: 200 euro.

The fee includes participation, hotel accommodation and meals.

CINEMA D'EUROPA
MEDIA SALLES
European film promotion, exhibitor training courses, information.

Via Soperga 2 – I-20127 Milan
Tel.: +39.02.66984405
Fax: +39.02.6691574
infocinema@mediasalles.it
www.mediasalles.it

Edito da: MEDIA Salles - Reg. Trib. Milano n. 166 del 19.3.1999.
Direttore responsabile: Elisabetta Brunella.
Hanno collaborato a questo numero: Angela De Palma, Maria Vittoria Gatti, Erica Guerini.
Grafica e impaginazione: Genus di Paolo Guidobono - Graphic Team s.n.c. Stampa: Tipografia Restelli - Costa Volpino (BG) - Italia.

HYPOTHESIS OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLUCTUATIONS IN TOTAL ADMISSIONS AND THE SUCCESS OF DOMESTIC FILMS[1]

As is well known, the frequencies of cinema attendance per capita are rather fluctuating. The question arises whether these differences from one year to the next are to a large extent caused by the success of domestic films, or rather to the lack of it. Expecting that this is the case means the implicit supposition that the admissions to domestic films are to be seen, at least partly, as additional figures, in other words that domestic and foreign films constitute distinct categories that do not substitute one another. The supposition that domestic films have a specific force of attraction concerns, of course, films reflecting something of the national culture. An impediment is that in national and international statistics market shares of domestic films are indicated inclusive of co-productions. This would be all right if the operational definitions of "co-production" excluded films that are foreign in the public's eyes, which, however, is often not the case[2].
This qualifying remark has to be kept in mind when taking into account the outcomes of the following analysis.
Frequencies of cinema-going and market shares are quantities with different dimensions. For a comparison the market shares of domestic films have to be expressed in *frequencies per capita of admissions to domestic films* (which has not been customary hitherto). In the table this is done for a number of Western European countries for the years 1998-2002.
Concerning a relationship between frequencies of admissions to foreign films and to domestic films, or the absence of such a relationship, there are in principle four possibilities:
1. Changes in total frequency are mainly caused by more, or fewer admissions to domestic films. This would be in accordance with the hypothetical expectation formulated above. In the table the relevant pairs of figures are linked with the sign ≅.
2. Changes in total frequency are mainly caused by increases, or decreases, of both sub-frequencies of about the same magnitude. In the table the relevant pairs of figures are linked with the sign || (parallel).
3. Changes in total frequency are mainly caused by more, or fewer admissions to foreign films. In the table the relevant pairs of figures are linked with the sign *f* (foreign).
4. Mainly substitution of admissions to foreign films by admissions to domestic films, or vice versa. This would be the exact opposite to the hypothetical expectation mentioned in point 1. In the table the relevant pairs of figures are linked with the sign ≠.

Frequencies of admissions to domestic films and to other films 1998-2002

Frequencies		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
D[1]	total	1.81	1.82	1.86	2.16	1.99
	to dom. films	0.15	≠ 0.24	*f* 0.22	$\parallel$ 0.34	≅ 0.19
	to other films	1.66	1.58	1.64	*f* 1.82	1.80
DK	total	2.08	2.05	2.01	2.23	2.41
	to dom. films	0.30	≠ 0.57	≠ 0.38	≅ 0.68	*f* 0.65
	to other films	1.78	1.48	1.63	1.55	1.76
E	total	2.85	3.33	3.43	3.66	3.48
	to dom. films	0.34	*f* 0.46	≠ 0.34	≅ 0.65	≅ 0.47
	to other films	2.51	$\parallel$ 2.87	3.09	3.01	3.01
F	total	2.90	2.60	2.80	3.12	3.11
	to dom. films	0.79	*f* 0.84	*f* 0.80	≅ 1.30	≠ 1.09
	to other films	2.11	1.76	2.00	1.82	2.02
FIN	total	1.24	1.36	1.37	1.26	1.43
	to dom. films	0.13	≠ 0.35	≠ 0.20	$\parallel$ 0.13	≅ 0.26
	to other films	1.11	1.01	1.17	1.13	1.17
I	total	1.96	1.71	1.70	1.82	1.97
	to dom. films	0.46	*f* 0.41	≠ 0.30	$\parallel$ 0.35	$\parallel$ 0.43
	to other films	1.50	1.30	1.40	1.47	1.54
NL	total	1.28	1.18	1.36	1.49	1.50
	to dom. films	0.08	*f* 0.06	*f* 0.08	$\parallel$ 0.14	$\parallel$ 0.16
	to other films	1.20	1.12	1.28	1.35	1.34
S	total	1.79	1.81	1.92	2.04	2.05
	to dom. films	0.29	≠ 0.39	≅ 0.49	*f* 0.48	≠ 0.35
	to other films	1.50	1.42	1.43	1.56	1.70

Source: "European Cinema Yearbook – 2003 advance edition".
1. For 1998, 2001 and 2002 figures are based on gross distribution revenue.

The figures in the table concern five successive years in eight countries, thus showing eight times four changes for a total of 32 changes. Of these changes not more than seven are in accordance with possibility no. 1 (≅). Five changes can be attributed to more or less the same extent to domestic as well as to foreign films (||). Eight of the changes concern cases where admissions to foreign films were the decisive factor (*f*). Finally, ten changes are examples of the substitution of admissions to foreign films by admissions to domestic films or vice versa (≠). Furthermore, two changes are of a hybrid nature (*f* ||).
The following evaluation concentrates somewhat more on the question of whether admissions to domestic film are the decisive factor for a year being good, moderate or even bad for cinemas:
- Germany: The increase in admissions to domestic films in 2001 (*Der Schuh des Manitu*) contributed only partially to the sharp rise in frequency in that year.
- Denmark, Spain and France: The high frequencies of admissions to domestic films in 2001 were indeed the causes of the high total frequencies.
- Finland: The strong increase in admissions to domestic films from 1998 to 1999 is only partly reflected by the moderate increase of total admissions.
- The Netherlands: The fluctuating total frequency in 1998-2000 was coupled with an unchanging frequency of admissions to domestic films.
- Sweden: The rise in total frequency from 1999 to 2000 is indeed to be attributed to the success of domestic films in 2000.

Although it may seem obvious that an extraordinary (high or low) number of total admissions in a year is mainly caused by the results of domestic films because they are considered to be mainly additional, the outcomes of this analysis gives some, although not strong, support to that idea. (Admissions to very successful domestic films are not only at the expense of foreign films but most probably also of other domestic films). This outcome may be disappointing to producers of national films, for example. However, the impression that there is hardly any direct relation per year does not mean that there is no general relation either. It is even more likely that the opposite is true, because one can expect that a big and generally successful national film production with the related attention in the media is also advantageous for the cinema mindedness in general.

Dr Joachim Ph. Wolff
Scientific advisor to MEDIA Salles' "European Cinema Yearbook" and Chairman of The Netherlands Foundation for Film Research

1. Elaboration of Dr Joachim Ph. Wolff's lecture in MEDIA Salles' seminar during Cinema Expo International 2003, Amsterdam.
2. This is elaborated in Section 6 of the Introduction to the "European Cinema Yearbook – 2003 advance edition".

CINEMA-GOING IN LATVIA

The National Film Centre of Latvia is a public institution under the Ministry of Culture responsible for elaborating and carrying out cultural policy in the film sector. The tasks that the Centre has to perform imply a need for exact information, expressed in comparable figures about the current state of film production and distribution. The data collection has had to be done in a situation where, following the collapse of the previous, state-run system, a completely new one, based on personal enterprise and a free market was emerging. For this purpose a special unit was set up at the Film Centre – the Film Registry – with two main objectives: to collect trustworthy information and to counter piracy.
The Registry was created on the basis of the assumption that every producer or distributor might wish to know the results of his film screenings in Latvia – especially in view of our wish to join the European Union – and that the growing information society is capable of providing the technical means to put the project into practice. So we started from scratch. Fortunately we were members of Eureka Audiovisual, which launched the pilot project of the European Audiovisual Observatory. Our cooperation with this organisation was very useful.
The National Film Centre of Latvia has taken part in MEDIA Salles' activities of data collection and elaboration for the "European Cinema Yearbook" since 1999 and this has been beneficial to the development of our statistics services. During those years, following the demands of MEDIA Salles, we introduced many new items into our databases and started to collect the relevant data. As a result, we now have a sufficiently detailed view of the audiovisual scenario in Latvia and so, hopefully, do the users of MEDIA Salles' "European Cinema Yearbook". This also provides very good feedback for decision-making and policy-making, especially now that our government is orienting the industry towards domestic audiences, after having joined the European film support mechanisms, MEDIA and EURIMAGES.
In order to avoid making unsubstantiated statements, here are some examples. In 2002 403 films, of which 99 new productions, were screened in 103 premises equipped for film projection. 32 of these are in film theatres, 36 in culture houses, 10 in educational institu-

CHINA: THE OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL CINEMAS

In this issue MEDIA Salles look eastward, with a detailed account of development of Digital Cinema in China, to be continued in the next Newsletter. An approach to the East that was already a characteristic of no. 2/2003 of the "European Cinema Journal", where ample space was devoted to the Korean film market.

Since its establishment in June 2002, the Digital Cinema Operation and Management Center (DCOMC) of the China Film Group Corporation, has now distributed 10 films in digital format. The number of digital cinema screens has also increased from an initial number of 13 screens to the present 34 screens with a preliminary scale that ranks China as one of the fastest-growing countries in the world in the field of digital cinema development. In the process, the technology and management of China's digital cinemas have also seen continuous development and improvement. In accordance with the requirements of the China Film Bureau under the leadership of the State Administration of Radio, Film and TV (SARFT) and in order to realize the motto of "reform, development and innovation", the China Film Group Corporation plans to build in China the largest-scale cinema circuit and one of the most significant in the world. The following is a brief introduction to the status quo of China's digital cinema operation and development.

The current operational situation

The digital cinemas in China are now located in 10 provinces and municipalities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Wuhan. Altogether there are 34 digital cinema screens with a total number of 14,818 seats. DCOMC uses the method of "direct book" to provide digital programs to the digital cinemas and then, prior to the actual release dates, notifies the theater circuits to which the digital cinemas belong of the release schedules because, for the theatrical release of films in 35mm print format, China Film is required by the government regulations to distribute only through the various cinema circuits instead of dealing directly with the individual theaters.

All the digital cinema screens in China are installed in the theatres with the highest box-office and with the best locations in their local areas. The technical equipment of the digital cinemas also conforms to the standards for the installation and operation of digital projection facilities. Among the 34 sites, 20 are fitted with Christie digital projectors and 14 with Barco. Their servers include 18 Avica servers, 8 EVS servers, 6 QuBit servers, and 2 GDC servers.

Unlike the conventional distribution system for regular 35mm films, which has to go through the theater circuits as a middle man, DCOMC handles everything involved in the distribution and exhibition of digital titles directly with the digital cinemas, including the supply of programs, the arrangement of screening schedules, the marketing and promotion, and the settling of accounts, which ensures a much better performance for digital cinemas compared to conventional theaters. Now many of the star-rated theaters in the country with good hardware conditions and high box-office revenues have expressed a strong desire to have digital screens added to their facilities. In the past year, the good operation and advanced management of the 34 digital cinemas have set a good example and attracted attention from various production, distribution and exhibition institutions, laying a solid foundation for further development of digital cinema in the future.

Since its inauguration, DCOMC has distributed 10 digital movies including *Star Wars 2: Attack of the Clones, Ice Age, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Phantom over the Louvre, Finding Nemo, K-19: the Widow Maker* and *The Migrant Birds*. Of these ten movies, three are Chinese and seven are imported foreign titles. Seven of the digital titles were distributed simultaneously with the regular 35mm print version. Three were distributed only in the digital formats: *Phantom over the Louvre, K-19: the Widow Maker* and *The Migrant Birds*. Two of the films were completely digitalized in China, with all the D5 master discs and downloading discs manufactured in China. For five of the films, only the downloading discs were made in China from the D5 masters provided by the film owners.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets was the first film exhibited in all the 34 digital cinemas simultaneously with all the other conventional theaters. During the release period, some of the cinemas encountered technical problems, which greatly undermined the expected box-office. Fortunately, the technicians of both the equipment manufacturers and DCOMC solved the problems in time to reduce the loss to the minimum. The film finally grossed 6.97 million RMB yuan (US $ 842,805), which was a fairly good result considering the overall situation of the Chinese film market.

Phantom over the Louvre was the first film distributed only in digital format in China. It was a French movie imported on a revenue-sharing basis. As a result of the timely and efficient marketing and advertising, the film grossed 5.2 million RMB yuan (US $ 628,779), which projects a good market prospect for digital cinema.

When *Finding Nemo* was released in China, it played on 690 regular screens and 30 digital screens (four of the 34 digital screens were not in operation at that time). The total box-office of the movie was 33.80 million RMB yuan (US $ 4.09 million), of which more than 735,000 RMB yuan came from the digital screenings, taking 22% of the overall box-office, which is the highest percentage for digital screen revenue.

A comparison of digital release with conventional release

Percentage \ Film titles	*Star Wars 2: Attack of the Clones*	*Ice Age*	*Rescue over the Edge* (Chinese film)	*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*	*Finding Nemo*
No. of screens	1.7%	1.8%	4%	4%	8.4%
Box-office revenue	11.6%	10.2%	12.1%	14.25%	22%
Admissions per screening	248.8%	173%	143%	290%	151.02%
Ticket price per capita	171.8%	180%	196.3%	138%	155.84%
Revenue per screening	426.3%	313%	311%	247%	234.7%

From the above table, we can see that digital release yields much better results in terms of admissions, box-office revenues, revenues per screening and per capita ticket price, which shows very good business potential for digital films.

Zhou Tiedong
President of China Film Import and Export (LA), Inc.

tions, 2 in public health care institutions and 23 serve audiences belonging to different institutions, enterprises and associations. 21 of the movies screened were produced in Latvia. Total admissions in 2002 were 1,070,672, with a gross box-office of about 3,190,200 euro.

In 2003, admissions increased by 1.7% compared to 2002, totalling approximately 1,089,000; box-office revenues amounted to over 3,340,300 euro, i.e. nearly 5% more than 2002. Moreover, in 2003 the first multiplex – "Forum Cinema" – opened in Riga, the capital of Latvia, with 14 screens, seating 3,200.

Although last year's figures increased in comparison to those of 2002, it should be considered that people in 38 towns and villages out of 70, no longer have the possibility to see films in theatres and that over 90% of the revenues are generated in Riga. These figures show the undesirable effects of the free market and the need to introduce policies able to correct these unwanted consequences. This is one of the most urgent problems the National Film Centre of Latvia is currently trying to solve.

Andris Rozenbergs
Manager of the Film Registry
National Film Centre – Latvia

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Population	2,565,854	2,529,543	2,501,660	2,479,870	2,458,400	2,439,400	2,424,200	2,366,131	2,345,768
No. of cinemas	.	.	137	114	112	115	108	123	103
No. of screens	261	245	137	114	116	119	111	126	107
No.of seats	58,286	53,592	28,892	22,715	23,525	26,094	22,922	25,144	20,099
No. of screenings	39,369	34,763	25,055	27,212	28,668	26,691	28,409	28,113	28,345
Admissions	1,588,300	1,020,500	957,700	1,268,100	1,405,800	1,374,644	1,456,956	1,151,880	1,070,672
Frequency per head	0.62	0.40	0.38	0.51	0.57	0.56	0.60	0.49	0.46
Gross box-office (euro)	1,236,182	971,032	1,099,858	1,897,567	2,475,304	3,039,862	3,805,079	3,287,557	3,190,204
Cinema expenditure per capita (euro)	0.48	0.38	0.44	0.77	1.01	1.25	1.57	1.39	1.36
Admissions per seat	27.25	19.04	33.15	55.83	59.76	52.68	63.56	45.81	53.27

DVD AND THE CINEMA: WHAT'S THE CONNECTION? Research in France by the CNC

Since they have possessed a DVD player, over a quarter of the interviewees visit the cinema less often. Yet it is mainly occasional spectators (i.e. those who go to the cinema less than once a month but at least once a year) and non-spectators (once a year or almost never) who suffer from the "DVD effect", which does not, on the other hand, seem to discourage cinema-going by keen spectators (at least once a month).
This is what emerges from a research paper commissioned by the Centre National de la Cinématographie (CNC) – and carried out by ISL e GFK – to gain an understanding of how the French use audiovisual supports and to measure the impact of DVD use on the consumption of other media: the cinema, television and pay TV.
The study is the fruit of a survey run during September 2003 on a sample of 1,567 people, representative of the French population over 18 and with access to a video-recorder and/or DVD player.
The impact of DVD on cinema-going is thus stronger amongst non-spectators and occasional spectators. 32% of the former and 28% of the latter do, in fact, state that since buying a DVD player their cinema-going has decreased drastically, something that only occurs in 15% of regular spectators. In addition, amongst the latter, 7% state that they visit the cinema more often than before. If the sample of those who visit the cinema rarely since buying a DVD player is then analysed, the "non-spectators" account for as many as 51%, whilst the regulars for only 10%.
The "time factor" also affects cinema-going: one third of French people who have possessed a DVD player for over 2 years state that they go less frequently to the cinema, as against 19% of those who have had one for fewer than 6 months.
Of home video products, DVD is preferred by people between 14 and 34 years old (who are also the keenest cinema-goers). The 35 to 50 age range includes those who have both a video recorder and a DVD player at home, whilst the over-50s use video recorders only and rarely visit the cinema.
Most of the frequent cinema-goers also declared that they had stepped up their purchases of VHS and DVD since they owned a DVD player, whilst for non-spectators purchases have remained stable.

The full text of the research study can be consulted on the CNC website (www.cnc.fr), in the section entitled "Actualités".

DIGITAL CINEMA: NEWS FROM MEDIA SALLES

DIGITRAINING PLUS: The first course on digital cinema in spring 2004

MEDIA Salles youngest creation is called "DigiTraining Plus: New Technologies for European Cinemas": the first ever international course on digital cinema, to be held at Kuurne, in Belgium, from 31st March to 4th April 2004.
This initiative, which is a complete novelty, is financed by the EU's MEDIA Programme with the support of the Italian Government and run in collaboration with BARCO, a Belgian company of worldwide importance in the sector of video-screening, whose headquarters are, in fact, in Kuurne.
"We recognise the importance of MEDIA Salles' role in supporting European cinema – states Sjoerd De Clerck, Director General of Barco Digital Cinema – and we are happy to take an active part in this unprecedented, pan-European approach to digital cinema, addressing cinema exhibitors".
The aim of the course is to convey a detailed knowledge of digital technology and the implications of its use, giving priority to a European point of view.
The topics that will be dealt with are of great current interest: an analysis of the state of the European and international market for digital screening, an overview of the technology, debate on the main business models, the contractual and economic aspects of digital programming, problems linked to piracy and security measures for dealing with them.
"With the deployment of Digital Cinema – says Laura Fumagalli, Marketing Director of the Arcadia in Melzo, Italy – training on technology is even more important than ever before for the exhibition community. Thanks to MEDIA Salles for providing European exhibitors with such an invaluable opportunity".
An international team of experts will explain the situation of the digital market in Europe, Asia and America. The course leader will be Mads Egmont Christensen, no stranger to MEDIA Salles' initiatives. Danish, a film producer and teacher at the European Film College in Ebeltoft, he led the two editions of the training course "European Cinema Exhibition: A New Approach", run last year by MEDIA Salles in collaboration with ANEC, European Film College and the Danish exhibitors' association. First-hand accounts by exhibitors and distributors who have adopted the digital format will also be of significance and useful for encouraging interaction amongst speakers and participants.

The application form for enrolment in the course, to be returned to MEDIA Salles by 27th February, is available on the website www.mediasalles.it

Barco's head offices in Kuurne, Belgium, which will host the exhibitors' training course "DigiTraining Plus: New Technologies for European Cinemas".

EDCF AND MEDIA SALLES

MEDIA Salles' commitment to development and exchange of knowledge in the world of digital screening led to the creation, as early as 2002, of a specific section of the "European Cinema Yearbook" devoted to digital cinemas equipped with DLP Cinema™ technology and digital films throughout the world. Recently this commitment has grown, due also to MEDIA Salles recent membership of the European Digital Cinema Forum (EDCF), where the Association's Secretary General, Elisabetta Brunella, has been asked to coordinate the "Information" sector of the Commercial module.
EDCF was founded in Stockholm on 13th June 2001 as the meeting point for around thirty institutions, companies and business associations operating in the sectors of cinema, television, video and telecommunications. Its objective is to promote the exchange of initiatives and information linked to the development of electronic and digital cinema. The EDCF network is organised into three large sections: commercial, technical and content. The resulting synergy also aims to encourage European digital and electronic cinema production, focusing on quality content.

Further information on the EDCF website: www.digitalcinema-europe.com

KINEPOLIS KORTRIJK: Audiences try out digital film

A visit to the Kortrijk complex, where a Barco DP 100 projector and a CineStore Solo server by EVS are installed, is one of the activities foreseen during the course "DigiTraining Plus: New Technologies for European Cinemas", organised by MEDIA Salles at the Barco headquarters.
The Kortrijk complex – about one hour away from Brussels and just ten minutes from Barco – is one of the ten cinemas chosen by Kinepolis for its "live" experiment with digital screening.
Following the digital programming of *Finding Nemo* in the original version at the end of last year, on 11th February a digital run of *Brother Bear* will begin. Like *Nemo*, the new Disney cartoon will be offered at the same time in a choice of analogical or digital versions. And, as happened for *Nemo*, the management will allow, or even encourage, spectators to move from the "traditional" theatre to the "digital" one – according to the number of seats available. The result: the children stay in the first theatre, where they watch the film dubbled in Flemish, whilst parents "have a taste" of digital screening which offers the original version of the film. "And there they stay, until the end of the film!", adds Diether Thielemans, manager of the Kinepolis complex, who is very satisfied with the audiences' positive response to the novelty of digital screenings.