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MEDIA

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MEDIA SALLES

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As the third issue of our Newsletter goes to print, I am re-reading the report that MEDIA Salles has prepared for the seminar on the promotion of European cinema in the United States, to be held during the TaorminaFilmFest on 30 and 31 July.

The flourishing state of health of American exhibiting theatres is clearly to be seen here: American audiences continue to grow, as does the number of screens. But which films are watched on the other side of the Atlantic? How much space is there for European works? The data confirming the success of "La vita è bella" in the United States is certainly comforting: the film, which was distributed on its first release in 6 theatres, soared to the top of the box-office ratings, appearing on over 1 100 screens, won three Oscars and will shortly come out in a dubbed version. Its earnings on the United States market totalled around 60 million euros, that is as much as in Europe.

Nevertheless the market share of non US films in the United States does not amount to more than 3%. Those who, like MEDIA Salles, are closely concerned with the fate of European cinema, for both cultural and economic reasons, cannot refrain from asking themselves the reason for this.

This is why we have chosen to deepen and to extend our research on the North American market and create – as we did at Cannes '99 – opportunities for professionals from Europe and from the other side of the Atlantic to meet and discuss joint projects, as well as launching the "Focus on Europe" events for the promotion of European cinema during the most important meetings of the exhibiting industry.

This is our contribution towards making the "exchange" between the United States and Europe in the field of cinema not only better balanced from a commercial point of view, but also a true means of self-measurement and enrichment in terms of ideas and cultures.

Romano Fattorossi
 President of MEDIA Salles

Cinema-going on the major world markets

In this issue we are presenting a rough comparison between the situation of European cinema exhibition and in three of the most important world markets: the United States, Australia and Japan.

This comparison requires the utmost caution, both because it deals with situations with completely different problems and characteristics and because of the influence that exchange rates may exert on the figures for gross box-office and average ticket price.

A positive trend emerges from the comparison: all the markets prove to be growing both in terms of cinema-going (number of admissions and average frequency) and in terms of structure of offer (number of screens). The Western European market crossed the 800 million tickets mark in 1998 (admissions proved to have increased or remained stable in all European countries with the exception of the UK). Average frequency, although remaining decidedly lower than the standards of the American market, has now settled at above 2 tickets per capita.

The number of screens has also increased considerably, at a rate of slightly below 6%; moreover this increase has been more than compensated for by the increase in admissions and the box-office income of the market, and the average profitability per screen is therefore on the increase, too.

The number of screens is also increasing in the United States: although of all the countries under consideration this is the one offering the highest number of screens (or the lowest number of inhabitants per screen), the growth rate in number of theatres is still very high (over 8%).

The increase in the number of screens has, however, been accompanied over the past year by a dip in the average admissions per screen, whilst the box-office per screen remains basically the same (in the table the slight decrease in the figure given in Ecu does in fact correspond to a slight increase in the figure calculated in home currency: from 201 to 203 thousand dollars).

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MEDIA Salles coming events

International Venice Film Festival, Venice, 1-11 September 1999

MEDIA Salles is present at the MEDIA Programme stand in the "Industry Office" area, with a work station for navigating the "European Cinema On-line Database" and with the 3rd issue of the "European Cinema Journal".

Eurovisioni Rome, 26-29 September 1999

The eighth edition of the "European Cinema Yearbook" will be released. This MEDIA Salles publication offers the most comprehensive and up-dated overview of the exhibiting industry in the countries of Western, Central and Eastern Europe.

MIFED Milan, 17-22 October 1999

MEDIA Salles is present on the MEDIA Programme stand.

Euro Kids Network Days at Kid Screen Como, 15-17 October 1999

There are two MEDIA Salles initiatives: the annual meeting with the exhibitors belonging to the Euro Kids Network circuit; the seminar on the promotion and dissemination of cinema for young people in Europe, in collaboration with the ECFA.

ShowEast Atlantic City, 18-21 October 1999

With the sixth edition of the "Focus on Europe" event, MEDIA Salles promotes European cinema on the North American market. This occasion will coincide with publication of the 4th issue of the "European Cinema Journal".

Shanghai Film Market Shanghai, 22-24 October 1999

MEDIA Salles is present with an information stand and a work station for navigating the "European Cinema On-line Database".