

SOMETHING NEW IN THE STATE OF DENMARK: EBELTOFT OFFERS THE FIRST COURSE FOR EXHIBITORS

The first training course for cinema exhibitors throughout Europe within the framework of the MEDIA Plus Programme will be held from 5 to 9 June 2002 at the European Film College in Ebeltoft, Denmark. Based on the idea that the last "link in the chain" of the cinema industry's circuit, at least chronologically, is by no means the least important, the course sets out to offer cinema exhibitors the opportunity of constant up-dating in their profession, both from a technical point of view and in terms of a close examination of the dynamics that draw increasingly diverse audiences into the theatres.

The programme includes lessons on marketing and promotional techniques for the cinema, management and programming in the theatres, the international dimension and how to select films that correspond to the interests of different segments of the general public, as well as the new frontiers of digital film.

The choice of themes has been derived from an examination, during various initiatives, of the demands of the exhibitors themselves and has already been experimented in the pilot version, also held in Ebeltoft, last September with thirty participants from nine European countries.

True to the style of the European Film College, the pace of work is intensive and life on the campus encourages participants to continue sharing their different experience and skills outside the classroom schedule. The project is promoted by MEDIA Salles, which draws on a threefold partnership: the Danish exhibitors' association, Danske Biografer, the European Film College, the independent film school under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Education, and Audiovisual Eureka, the inter-governmental association to which 35 European countries belong.

The main objective of the latter organisation is to promote cooperation and exchange in the field of audiovisuals in an ever-increasing area of Europe, with particular regard to helping involve Eastern, Central and Southern European countries more closely in audiovisual projects and in the Union's support programmes.

This is an idea that deserves mentioning here: the new cooperation with Audiovisual Eureka does, in fact, make it possible to

open the training course to professional operators from countries outside the European Union, who are thus not members of the MEDIA Programme.

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MEDIA Salles at Cannes Film Festival 2002

18 - 25 May 2002

Stand at the International Village
 MEDIA Pavilion
 Esplanade Georges Pompidou.

The "European Cinema Yearbook"
 2001 edition
 will be available at the stand.

22 May

Audiovisual Eureka - Palais des Festivals,
 stand 21.02, floor 01
 MEDIA Salles "Spotlight Day":
 a day dedicated

to meetings with professional operators from
 Eastern Europe, from 11 a.m. onwards.

MEDIA Salles presentation at 4 p.m.,
 followed by an apéritif.

23 May, 5.30 p.m. onwards

Apéritif at the MEDIA Pavilion for the
 presentation of the MEDIA Salles Newsletter
 "European Cinema Journal" no.1/02
 showing data on cinema-going in 2001.



MEDIA Salles' stand at Cannes Film Festival in 2001.

THE GROWTH OF MULTIPLEXES IN EUROPE IN 2001

2001 has been another year that has seen the opening of a great many multiplexes in Europe. The number of complexes with at least 8 screens – this being the criterion adopted by MEDIA Salles for defining a multiplex – had risen to a peak of 710, for a total of 7,574 screens, by 31 October 2001. On 31 October 2000, the same figures were respectively 599 and 6,338, or approximately 22% of the total number of screens in the thirty-two countries of Western and Central-Eastern Europe surveyed by MEDIA Salles. In the space of twelve months a 19.5% increase in screen numbers and an 18.5% increase in number of complexes was thus recorded.

From this data, it also appears that the average size of the complexes in operation in October 2001 is slightly bigger than that of the multiplexes operating at the end of October 2000. They have grown from approximately 10.5 screens per complex to over 11. Megaplexes, or those complexes housing at least 16 screens, have grown more than the average rate: in 2000 there were 31 of them (601 screens), whilst there are 43 in 2001 (825 screens). The growth rate is thus 37% for screens and 39% for number of complexes.

The megaplexes represent only 6% of the total number of multiplexes, but 11% of screens. Amongst the megaplexes opened in 2001, two striking examples are the Kinopolis of Valencia (Spain) and Poznan (Poland) which, apart from the high number of screens (respectively 24 and 20), can seat a correspondingly high number of spectators (8,194 and 7,338).

It has been stated that on average complexes with at least 8 screens have grown by approximately 19%. Examining their geographical distribution in more detail, it can be seen that the growth rate has been higher on some markets than on others. Most prominent is the case of Turkey, where screens in multiplexes have more than doubled. Multiplexes in Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic have also increased more than the European average. In a twelve-month period screens in Italian multiplexes have increased from 196 to 304 and the number of complexes from 19 to 29.

In Poland the number of complexes has risen from 10 to 15, whilst the number of screens has increased from 107 to 170.

In the Czech Republic the increases see 6 complexes instead of 3 and 55 screens instead of 32. Also worth noting are the growth

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Screens in European multiplexes as at 31 Oct. 2001

Country	8 screens	9 screens	10 screens	11 screens	12 screens	13 screens	14 screens	15 screens	16 screens	17 screens	18 screens	19 screens	20 screens	21 screens	22 screens	23 screens	24 screens	25 screens	30 screens	Total
A	72	18	40	11	36	13	14							21						225
B	24		20	11	48	13	42		16	17							24	25		240
CH	24		10			13														47
CZ	16	9	30																	55
D	344	279	180	55	96	26	42	30	16		18	19								1,105
DK		18	10	11						17										56
E	344	270	230	121	144	52	28	60	32	17	18		20				72	25		1,433
EE				11																11
F	216	117	120	77	348		168	120	64	34	18	19	20		22	23				1,366
FIN		9	20				14													43
GR	8	9	10	11									20							58
HU	16	18	40	22			14													110
I	24	90	60	22	36	26	28				18									304
IRL		18	20	11	36		14													99
L			10																	10
N	24					13														37
NL	24	9	10			13	14													70
P	8	18	30	11									20							87
PL	24	9	30	11	36	26	14						20							170
RO			10																	10
S	64	9	30		12		14		16		18									163
SI					12															12
SK	8																			8
TR	16	18	20	11																65
UK	200	315	270	132	300	117	210	90	48		18		60						30	1,790
Total	1,456	1,233	1,200	528	1,104	312	616	300	192	85	108	38	160	21	22	23	96	50	30	7,574

rates of multiplexes in Spain (around 21% in terms of screens) and France (around 20%). Whilst Turkey, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic are countries where multiplexes were decidedly less widespread than the European average in 2000, Spain and France are those where the number of screens in multiplexes

were already respectively 35% and 24% of the total in 2000. Lastly it should be noted that in October 2001 25 countries had at least one multiplex: the three countries that had joined the list since October 2000 were Estonia, Slovenia and Slovakia which witnessed the opening of a complex housing at least

eight screens in their respective capitals.

Elisabetta Brunella

Further information on multiplexes in Europe is available in the "European Cinema Yearbook" – 2001 edition –, elaborated by MEDIA Salles, which can be consulted at the website www.mediasalles.it

EXHIBITORS' COURSE: HOW TO ENROL

For the participants coming from the countries that are members of the MEDIA Programme, the course participation fee is Euro 120 and includes the accommodation at the European Film College. Travel costs are at the participants' expense. For further information:

- about the training course organisation, the programme and the participants' selection: Danske Biografer

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- about the project:
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- about the trip and the accommodation at the College:

European Film College
Irene P. Paaske
phone number: +45 86340855
E-mail: insec@efc.dk

Professionals coming from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe can participate to the training course thanks to the agreement with Audiovisual Eureka. For further information:

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Eric Foucher
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E-mail: e.foucher@aveureka.be



DIGITAL PLANNING: FROM PROJECTS TO EXPERIENCE

What might be the function of digital film in the evolution of the cinema market? And what role might it play in promoting European films?

Around these and other core issues a module will take shape on what represents, without any doubt, a new frontier for the cinema.

The speaker is Marc Tijssens of Kinopolis, one of the chains which, like Gaumont and Arcadia, have already started to explore the field of digital film.

From these recent, but already significant experiences have developed the first reflections on the planning aspect, new models of market strategies, the motivation for entering the world of digital film. Part of the course will be based on reflections of this nature.

It is, in fact, necessary for those who are in the position of managing the promotion and offer of products in movie theatres, to know and be able to evaluate the possible risks and the many opportunities which digital film represents.

It's evident that digital technology changes the way a film is made in the production studios.

We must as well analyze and evaluate which changes this technology will make on cinema distribution and exhibition.

Those who manage the delicate moment when the film meets the public thus have a duty to reflect on the new forms that this encounter may assume.

EUROPEAN FILM COLLEGE

Why Ebeltoft? The June 2002 version of the training course for exhibitors will retain several aspects of the "pilot" version, including the College chosen as the venue, which is also one of the promoters of the initiative: the European Film College of Ebeltoft, in Denmark. Founded in '93 by a group of Danish film producers, writers and intellectuals, with the aim of contributing to the creation of a dynamic cinema culture and successful European cinema industry, the European Film College deals with the complete cycle of education and training in the field of audiovisuals, both for young students and for professional operators and those who are simply film-lovers. The "camation in its buttonhole", and the main course of the year, is the "eight-month foundation course" which, from September to May every year, provides students from all over the world with an intensive training programme in all aspects of the art and profession of the cinema and television. Based on the classical principles of Scandinavian free education, it encourages students to build their own professional skills, working 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 32 weeks, as members of a group in which they will test their talent, creativity and motivation "in the field". No examinations or tests at the end of the course: each student is responsible for his/her own learning and the way in which (s)he uses the time spent at the Ebeltoft College. In the same spirit, the European Film College opens its doors to professional operators: courses, seminars, debates, up-dates, all in the form of modules involving full-time schedules and a pace that encourages discussion outside the classroom, too.

Further information at the website: www.efc.dk

A FOCUS ON EUROPE EVENT FOR THE VERY YOUNG

Focus on Europe also takes into account younger audiences. Since the end of 2001 this MEDIA Salles initiative for the promotion of European cinema has taken place in a special version at "Castellinaria", the International Children's Film Festival, now in its fourteenth year.

During the Festival which took place from 17 to 24 November 2001, MEDIA Salles organised two days, dedicated to the promotion of European films, for those exhibitors who, throughout Europe, offer programming especially for children and schools. The event is the natural continuation of the annual meeting of exhibitors belonging to the Euro Kids Network. Although the new conditions foreseen by MEDIA Plus for support to theatres no longer make it possible to finance the circuit as happened in the past, MEDIA Salles has not ceased to act on behalf of children's cinema: proof of this is the new Focus on Europe initiative which has sealed the collaboration between MEDIA Salles and the "Castellinaria" Festival.

The aim of the event is to sustain and extend the interest, on which Euro Kids Network was founded, in film culture for younger people, too often the victims of a cinema market that pays little attention to their needs. It is no coincidence that, as emerges from the MEDIA Salles survey "Little Viewers. Big Screens", dealing with audiences aged 8 to 11, 34% of European children consider films "far removed from real life" and 14% of them consider that only stories relating to adult life are told at the cinema.

From 16 to 18 November over forty exhibitors from Scandinavia to Cyprus, who screen or organise series of quality films for children in their theatres, took part in the Focus on Europe event. During the two days of concentrated discussion, they shared views on the best strategies for promoting European films and attracting the attention of younger spectators, joining the "Castellinaria" audiences to watch a number of screenings. That experience is not negligible: with 800 young spectators in their cinemas, the exhibitors have been able to gain first-hand experience of their reactions, listen to their immediate comments and acquire an intuitive knowledge of which films most capture the attention of their young audiences. For the children, who also liked the idea,

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TO OUR READERS

2001 brought some pleasant news for European films: the Golden Palm for *The son's room*; the award to the moving *No man's land* by Danis Tanovic, winner of the award for best screenplay at Cannes and at the Berlin "European Film Awards", as well as winning the Oscar for the best foreign film; the audience's award at the Toronto Festival for *The wonderful world of Amélie*, followed by its international box-office success. We can only hope that 2002 is an even more fortunate year for European films. Whilst we apologise for the delay in bringing out this edition, we are happy to announce an important innovation regarding the "European Cinema Journal". To allow for quicker delivery and consultation, the Newsletter will, in fact, be sent via e-mail to all those who let us have their address.

Anyone who nevertheless wishes to receive a copy on paper, will be able to obtain one through the usual channel, on demand. Those who wish to inform us of changes to their address, or to subscribe to our Newsletter are asked to send a message to: infocinema@mediasalles.it.

it was an important occasion for becoming acquainted with suitable quality films which are not always sufficiently well promoted on commercial circuits. This emerges from MEDIA Salles' research. Part of this research was, in fact, carried out during the thirteenth "Castellinaria" Festival where, out of 296 questionnaires returned during the event, as many as 64% of the children indicated the cinema as their favourite channel of narration, denying the supremacy of television as being the most entertaining and involving channel, although all the respondents proved to be assiduous TV viewers.

The young audiences showed interest in the screenings organised especially for schools, both in the cinemas belonging to Euro Kids Network and at the Festival, declaring that they were "very" (28%) or "extremely" (36%) satisfied with the initiatives they had taken part in. Significantly, those children who were most interested in increasing their cinema-going were "extremely" satisfied with the screenings in a striking 39% of cases, as against 25% of those who show no interest in visiting the cinema more often in the future.

Lastly, the research clearly shows that the Network's initiatives have succeeded in reaching their goal in terms of educating and sensitising children to the cultural value of seeing films at the cinema, since, amongst the European films mentioned as their favourites, the children quoted – after *Astérix et Obélix contre César* and *Chiedimi se sono felice*, films that had been box-office successes in their countries of origin – the films that they had seen during the screenings organised with their schools, their favourites being *Chicken run*, *La vita è bella*, *The nightmare before Christmas* and *La freccia azzurra*. The appointment, then, is next November in Bellinzona, for Focus on Europe at "Castellinaria" 2002.

EURO KIDS AWARDS

In 2001, MEDIA Salles continued the young, but significant tradition of making an award to a European film for children selected amongst those which were most-widely seen in their country of origin, as well as able to be appreciated abroad. An important new feature was added: an award to a theatre belonging to the Euro Kids Network that had carried out effective promotional work on behalf of European films for

children during 2000. The occasion was Focus on Europe at "Castellinaria".

Awards were thus made to the film *Manolito Gafotas* by Miguel Albaladejo, particularly appreciated by young Spanish audiences and with excellent potential for distribution in the rest of Europe, and the Italian theatre Cinema Fantarca from Modugno, which had distinguished itself in organising initiatives relating to visual education for children and numerous workshops for schools.

EUROPEAN CINEMA AT SHOWEAST 2001

Last year's ShowEast – the annual meeting of distributors and exhibitors from the North East of the United States –, which took place from 31 October to 3 November 2001 in the city of Orlando, Florida, was also attended by numerous operators from the Latin American movie industry. MEDIA Salles could not fail to be present and this time created for the occasion another Focus on Europe event for the promotion of European films in America. Over the past few years MEDIA Salles' stand has become a meeting point, where information is exchanged and shared, for exhibitors committed to bringing European films to those American audiences that are more attentive to what is offered by international cinema.

At the stand the "European Cinema Online Database" – the web archive listing over 5,000 European films and around

12,000 companies operating in the film industry of the 'Old Continent' – could also be consulted. During the meeting the "advance edition" of the 2001 "European Cinema Yearbook", with its analysis of the cinema industry in 32 countries, was also presented.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Sunshine Group Worldwide, MEDIA Salles presented a pre-screening of the Spanish-Mexican film *El Espinazo del Diablo* directed by Guillermo del Toro and produced by El Deseo, the company belonging to Pedro Almodovar and to his brother Agustin.

Another pre-screening was that of the English film *Crush* by John McKay. Both films have been in distribution in America by Sony Pictures Classics, since 21 November 2001 and 5 April 2002 respectively.

The awards for the most significant promotional work on behalf of European films were then presented by the President of MEDIA Salles, Jens Rykaer: Diego Lerner of Buena Vista International collected the international award for distribution, whilst the prize for exhibitors went to Victor Carrady of Caribbean Cinemas.

After Orlando came Washington. Faithful to tradition, the Focus on Europe event concluded with a meeting in Washington DC where, on 5 November, representatives from the cinema industry and from American and European political institutions took part in a round table on the theme "Film distribution and audiovisual policies in the digital age".



MEDIA Salles President, Jens Rykaer, presents Diego Lerner (right) and Mark Zoradi (left), of Buena Vista International, with the award for the promotion of European films, at the Focus on Europe event at ShowEast.