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MEDIA

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# THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL FILM

In broad terms it is fair to say that the European film stopped travelling across borders big time during the sixties. The general audience simply did not even take the bait from strong classic film-countries like Italy, Spain and France any more. The decline and fall of the European film as an international product became a sad fact talking about exportability. It seemed as if only big city intellectuals found it interesting and natural to get acquainted with the films of their immediate neighbours when these films less and less frequently found their way to the cinemas.

What had happened? The competition from the American films had always been there, but due to the fact that television had now become a highly competitive piece of household furniture over there as well as in Europe the American film industry managed to strike back with even more lavish films in even more impressive formats and managed to uphold the concept of glamorous stars much more intensively than was achieved in Europe. European producers did try out the pan-European model, but generally without success. A bunch of high profiled stars shot in familiar locations known to any tourist around Europe was designed to compensate for lack of content and finesse. Euro-pudding was born but failed to keep up the momentum. In the eye of the general public the European films became less and less entertaining, more and more incomprehensible, more talkative – in other words “arty”. Of course it is not true in detail but what is true is that fewer and fewer European films found an audience elsewhere in Europe. Few solid directors, like Fassbinder, Truffaut, Fellini and Buñuel, broke this evil trend but they were essentially only appreciated by the *élite*. From a strictly commercial point of view they meant very little.

This development increased drastically during the eighties and there was only one answer. The fragmented European film industry had to get to know its audiences better. A much more business-oriented approach had to be defined without of course losing the special European personal touch and flavour compared to the smooth, seamless American mainstream product of formidable production value. In a way the European film had to start all over again if it wanted to expand. It was for every national film industry to re-evaluate their policy and for the politicians to establish adequate funding for development, distribution, marketing and training. It is interesting to notice that in most countries the American market share has been quite stable over the years whereas the national one shows huge movements.

## *MEDIA SALLES COMING EVENTS*

**Venice Film Festival 2002**
**3 September, 5.30 pm**,
MEDIA Salles and ANEC present
their joint initiatives
for the European exhibitors.
**5 September, 3 pm – sala PASINETTI**,
MEDIA Salles workshop for cinema exhibitors:
“Mobile phones and Internet:
will they help boost cinema audiences?”

**Focus on Europe at ShowEast 2002**
**9 – 12 October, Orlando, Florida**
By means of the 6th Focus on Europe at ShowEast, MEDIA Salles promotes European cinema on the North-American market.

**Eurovisioni**
**20 – 23 October, Rome**
MEDIA Salles will present an overview of cinema-going in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Focus on Europe at “Castellinaria” 2002**
**15 – 17 November, Bellinzona (CH)**
MEDIA Salles offers the second Focus on Europe event, specifically addressing European exhibitors who screen films for younger people.

**“Giornate Professionali del Cinema”**
**27 – 30 November, Sorrento (I)**
During the most important meeting for exhibition and distribution in Italy, MEDIA Salles will be presenting the 2002 edition of the “European Cinema Yearbook”.

In smaller countries with a rather modest number of productions it is especially significant. As quality rides on the shoulders of quantity it is vital that the number of productions increases simply to have a fair chance to hold on to a reasonable market share. When a domestic film really hits – and I am not talking about a very local comedy, but of a well-produced, original, ambitious, well-marketed drama – it hits big time. Deep down everybody loves to see their own actors speaking their own language and acting in their own environment dealing with their own problems. *Amélie*, *The Full Monty*, *Celebration*, *La vita è bella* show that it is possible to ship European films across borders if the foundation (content, national originality, professionalism) is there. And if these qualities may sometimes be the result of isolated intuitions, they are more often made possible by the policies put into practice by the cinema market, which are, in turn, the result of a combination of factors, including the size of public and private investments, the public’s cultural awareness, promotion and advertising.

Only if these parts of the mechanism work, can the contribution of valid directors and screenwriters find full expression and be duly appreciated. These are the reasons which have led MEDIA Salles to dedicate a special place in the Newsletter to the situation of the various European film markets, confident that an exchange of information on these themes can be of use to all players in the sector. In the previous issue we looked into the situation of the Danish cinema, which has been making a happy recovery over the past few years, thanks also to the insight of Dogma; in this issue we are again dealing with Northern Europe, offering an analysis of the Norwegian film market.

Jens Rykaer
*President of MEDIA Salles*

# SHOOTING FOR GOAL! WITH EUROPEAN MOVIES
## Focus on Europe at CEI 2002

Admissions are on the increase in European cinemas and in many countries so are admissions to see domestic films. This is the case in Denmark, the United Kingdom and France, for example. Belgium, Switzerland and Finland, on the other hand, do not watch so many, succesful home-produced movies. For all of them the rule is the same: the grass is *not* always greener on the other side of the fence, in that none of them seem to be very keen on seeing films made by other European countries. These are some of the results emerging from the MEDIA Salles seminar “Admissions were up. Was it due to European films?”, which took place during Focus on Europe at Cinema Expo International in Amsterdam last June. We are publishing an explanation of this data from the talk given by Joachim Ph. Wolff, as well as an overview of Norwegian cinema by Tom Remlov, producer of successful domestic films. During the Focus event a pre-screening was also held of the English film *Bend it like Beckham*, already a box-office hit at home (over 17 million euro of box-office at 23 June). Amsterdam also saw the presentation of the CD Rom created thanks to collaboration with ANEC, containing the 2001 edition of the “European Cinema Yearbook” in its full version – i.e. complete with an analytical account of the situation in 18 Western European countries and 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean Rim. This new format makes consultation of the Yearbook and the extrapolation of data for transversal analyses far easier.

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## ADMISSIONS WERE UP. WAS IT DUE TO EUROPEAN FILMS?

The question will be answered for the period 1992-2000, because 1992 was the nadir of cinema attendance in Western Europe (except in the UK where the rise of admissions had begun earlier).

Because the relevant figures for some countries are partly lacking, the figures of ten countries are taken into account.

In European film statistics admissions to European films are divided into admissions to domestic films, including co-productions, and admissions to non domestic films.

Operational definitions of "co-production" differ from country to country and are partly opportunistic, i.e. unjustified. The distinction in the statistics between domestic and non domestic European films is therefore unreliable. For that reason, the question will be answered on the basis of all admissions to European films.

**Operational definitions of co-production**

This matter is discussed in the Introduction to the "European Cinema Yearbook".

A number of operational definitions are brought forward. If a co-production reflects something of a country's culture, then it is right to count such a film as "domestic". However, in many cases where this is not the case, a co-production is nevertheless counted as domestic, for instance if the contribution is only financial, in which case the film is foreign in the eyes of the public. This leads in statistics to market shares of domestic films that are bigger, or, vice versa, of non domestic European films that are smaller than they really are.

These critical remarks have to be kept in mind when comparing the figures in the following tables. Table 2 contains the same information of Table 1 expressed in absolute figures, i.e. in admissions. Striking are the relatively big maket shares of domestic films in France (which also consist of admissions to some co-productions that would not have been counted as domestic if based on a different operational definition[1]).

**Table 1 – Market shares of European films**

| country | 1992 | | 2000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | domestic | non domestic | domestic | non domestic |
| B [1] | 4.2 % | 19.3 % | 2.9 % | 10.5 % |
| CH | 3.8 % | 28.9 % | 4.0 % | 20.0 % |
| D | 9.5 % | 6.2 % | 11.6 % | 6.2 % |
| DK | 15.3 % | 3.4 % | 17.5 % | 8.1 % |
| E | 9.3 % | 13.2 % | 10.0 % | 7.0 % |
| F | 35.0 % | 4.7 % | 28.2 % | 5.6 % |
| FIN | 10.0 % | 25.0 % | 14.6 % | 9.9 % |
| I | 24.4 % | 14.2 % | *17.5 %* | *11.5 %* |
| NL | 13.0 % | 3.0 % | 5.5 % | 11.0 % |
| S | *28 %* | *5.3 %* | 24.8 % | 6.7 % |

[1] Based on figures concerning Brussels only.
Source: "European Cinema Yearbook" 2001
Figures in italics are estimates.

Table 1 indicates that, concerning the position of domestic films, the above mentioned countries can be distinguished as follows:

- relatively strong position of the domestic film: Denmark, France (co-productions!), Italy, Sweden;
- relatively weak position of the domestic film: Belgium, Switzerland;
- in-between: Germany, Spain, Finland, the Netherlands.

**First observation: West Europeans still do not like to see each other's films.**

The unweighted average of the market shares of non domestic European films was 12.3% in 1992 and 9.7% in 2000. Taking domestic and non domestic European films together as one group "European films", it turns out that in 2000 three countries had relatively big market shares of European films: France with 34%, Italy with 29%, Sweden with 31.5%.

**Second observation**

- From 1992 to 2000 in the ten countries concerned total admissions increased by 188.16 mln. (+41.0%).
- Admissions to European films increased by 23.21 mln. (+17.6%).
- Admissions to other films (for the most part US films) increased by 164.95 mln. (+50.4%).

**Conclusion**

A contribution to the increase of admissions in Western Europe is made for about 12% by European films, for about 88% by other films (i.e. for the most part by US films). In the ten West European countries involved in this investigation the average market share of European films (domestic and non domestic) decreased from 28.7% in 1992 to 23.9% in 2000.

Therefore, European film did contribute to the increase of admissions in Western Europe indeed, but considerably less than proportionally.

Dr Joachim Ph. Wolff
*Chairman of the Research Foundation of the Netherlands Cinematographic Federation and scientific advisor of MEDIA Salles' "European Cinema Yearbook"*

## NORWAY – JOINING CURRENT TRENDS

"The Alternative Country" was a catch phrase in Norwegian politics some years back, signifying the majority wish for the country to go its own way and stay out of the EU. And the label was not without substance. With its particular blend of a well established Scandinavian-style welfare state and a still strident sense of national identity, underpinned by phenomenal oil revenues from the North Sea, Norway has continued to set itself apart in many respects. One such area has been the cinema. The most striking feature of the Norwegian industry is that practically all cinemas have been under municipal ownership. This dates back to the 1920's, when the political consensus was to bring under local and democratic control anything that might affect the relatively new nation state – be it harnessing water falls for generating electricity or the establishment of a new and powerful popular art form. A primary purpose was of course to secure maximum profit for the public coffers. But there was also a serious cultural aspect to this, in that industrial development or foreign influences were not to be allowed to undermine the growing sense of a Norwegian identity. And as far as the cinemas were concerned, as they gradually became

[1] A striking example thereof concerning Belgium was given by Professor André Lange (European Audiovisual Observatory, Strasbourg) during the seminar on European film statistics on 26 June in Amsterdam. Caused by the operational definition of co-production handled in France, it is practically impossible to get a Belgian film registered as such in France.

**Table 2 – Admissions (x 1,000): 1992 vs. 2000**

| country | 1992 | | | | | 2000 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | domestic | European (non domestic) | sub-total (domestic+ European) | other[2] | total | domestic | European (non domestic) | sub-total (domestic+ European) | other[2] | total |
| B[1] | 695 | 3,195 | 3,890 | 12,665 | 16,555 | 683 | 2,473 | 3,156 | 20,392 | 23,548 |
| CH | *532* | *4,046* | *4,578* | *9,422* | *14,000* | 624 | 3,118 | 3,742 | 11,850 | 15,592 |
| D | 10,051 | 6,560 | 16,611 | 89,189 | 105,800 | 17,694 | 9,457 | 27,151 | 125,382 | 152,533 |
| DK | 1,323 | 294 | 1,617 | 7,031 | 8,648 | 1,871 | 866 | 2,737 | 7,954 | 10,691 |
| E | 7,747 | 10,996 | 18,743 | 64,559 | 83,302 | 13,539 | 9,477 | 23,016 | 112,375 | 135,391 |
| F | 40,598 | 5,452 | 46,050 | 69,945 | 115,995 | 46,800 | 9,294 | 56,094 | 109,863 | 165,957 |
| FIN | 540 | 1,350 | 1,890 | 3,511 | 5,401 | 1,035 | 702 | 1,737 | 5,354 | 7,091 |
| I[3] | 19,556 | 11,381 | 30,937 | 49,210 | 80,147 | *17,118* | *11,249* | *28,367* | *69,452* | 97,819 |
| NL | 1,753 | 404 | 2,157 | 11,326 | 13,483 | 1,187 | 2,374 | 3,561 | 18,020 | 21,581 |
| S | *4,392* | *831* | *5,223* | *10,463* | 15,686 | 4,211 | 1,138 | 5,349 | 11,629 | 16,978 |
| totals | 87,187 | 44,509 | 131,696 | 327,321 | 459,017 | 104,762 | 50,148 | 154,910 | 492,271 | 647,181 |

[1] Based on figures concerning Brussels only. [2] For the most part US films. [3] Screens with more than 60 days of activity per year.
Source: "European Cinema Yearbook" 2001. Figures in italics are estimates.

less profitable in all areas but the biggest cities, the cultural rationale gained emphasis. The received wisdom has been that public ownership secures a diversity of repertoire equal to none in the world, a much wider distribution of worthy films across a notoriously sparsely populated country, and – the *coup-de-grace* – guarantees unique market protection for domestic films. In the course of the past decade, however, these claims have emerged as more myth than fact, and as a consequence the political support for the old system has dwindled to such an extent that privatisation across the board is now certain. What remains to be seen, though, is whether Norway eventually will fall so completely into line that the country's cinemas are subsumed by international chains. The reason diversity is not expected to suffer, is twofold. On the one hand, research has shown that in comparable but privately controlled markets such as Sweden and Denmark, the repertoire has not really differed significantly. Secondly, there is a very strong tradition of interest in and awareness of foreign trends in Norway, which can be seen in both literature, fine art, television and the theatre, and not only in the cinema – which means a demand for diversity will remain. Indeed, when Norwegian audiences are such keen followers of Swedish and Danish films, it is not the result of a culturally enlightened control of the market, but a reflection of a long tradition of quality films from these two neighbouring territories. It might be added, though, that in this respect "The Alternative Country" conforms strikingly to the most ambitious ideals of the MEDIA Programmes – indeed, might even be termed a trend setter! But in 2001 Norway also conformed to current European trends in a most surprising and encouraging way. As implied above, the cinema ownership had not really secured domestic films any significant advantage. Indeed, most Norwegian producers have in recent years concluded that the ensuing absence of financial involvement – i.e. risk – in production on the part of the cinemas (and, by a slightly curious extension, also on the part of distributors), has been a serious obstacle to the health and strength of the Norwegian film industry. In any case, the fact is that domestic films have continuously found themselves struggling for a decent market share. And whilst this of course is for a complex set of reasons – to do, among other things, with funding, volume of production, competition for talent, and the particular challenges posed by a small but relatively sophisticated audience – there seems little doubt that the definition of our cinemas as "art houses" under public ownership has contributed to the delayed awakening of Norwegian film makers and producers to commercial realities. That these realities are not simple, however, is amply demonstrated by the two huge domestic hits of last year – the romantic comedy *Elling* and the documentary *Cool and Crazy*. Both are small, unassuming and low budget films, and were financed on a modest expectation of 70,000 and 25,000 admissions respectively. The final result is 800,000 for *Elling* and 600,000 for *Cool and Crazy* and a doubling of the domestic market share compared to the average of recent years. But what is perhaps most interesting, is that there is every reason to believe that these two films have attracted another audience than the one that normally frequents the cinemas, and thus should be attributed the major credit for the overall annual increase in admissions which Norway – in line with most other European territories – experienced in 2001. Here, then, surely, is the way forward for European film production: committed domestic films with a potential for spanning a wider audience than the mainstream targeted by the US industry.

And the really encouraging fact is that, if the domestic success is really substantial, those famed and feared market forces seem to provide for a cross over into other territories. Both *Elling* and *Cool and Crazy* have been sold to most major markets – and so far they are also attracting due audience interest. To what extent the Norwegian industry will be able to deliver such wares on a more regular basis remains to be seen. But nobody should be in doubt of the wish to join current trends.

Tom Remlov
*Norwegian producer and partner in the new company Dinamo Story AS. His credits include* Aberdeen *(2000),* Cool and Crazy *(2001) and* Music for Weddings and Funerals*, in official selection at Venice Film Festival 2002*

## THE MEDIA SALLES TRAINING INITIATIVES FOR EXHIBITORS

### DEVELOPMENTS AND NEW PROJECTS

The training course for exhibitors held at the European Film College in the Danish town of Ebeltoft from 5 to 9 June last, with the collaboration of DB, will see an important follow-up in 2003. There will be double the training opportunities next year: **from 4 to 8 June 2003 the second Danish course will be held, whilst a "travelling course" will be held in Rome during the second half of September**.

In this issue we are publishing an article by Emanuele de Plano on the subject of e-CRM (electronic Customer Relations Management). De Plano was one of the course lecturers at Ebeltoft 2001 and spoke about ways of managing information deriving from audience reaction. The other article, by Rita Stella, expresses the impressions of a course member. Awaiting the new year.

### BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Fred made his way to the cinema for what he hoped to be a great night out. As he walked the streets of his city, he thought back on how easy it had been to organise his evening. The cinemas web site was really well designed; it had all the information and film times you needed readily available and most of all no annoying animations or irrelevant adverts. He chose the film his girlfriend had told him about, found the showtime and then by entering her e-mail address the website even sent her a personalised invitation to the film. The website told him that soon he would even be able to buy his tickets online! The latest feature available on the web site allowed you to register with them: by entering his email address Fred would now receive their weekly email detailing the show times and other special events or screenings. He was also asked to complete a short questionnaire on himself including the number of his Cine Point Card that he was given by the cinema a few months ago. He normally disliked organisations probing into his private life but he trusted his cinema and there was also a clear message from the manager assuring him his information was not going to be passed on. The questionnaire was also very easy to fill out with pop down lists and check boxes – the whole process took him less than five minutes, and now Fred secretly hopes his registration will be the winner in the draw for a meal for two at the bistro next to the cinema – his girlfriend would really like that! Fred arrives at the cinema and goes to the box office to buy his tickets without forgetting to hand in his Cine Point Card. The box office attendant swipes his card and tells him that on his next visit he will be able to claim two free drinks at the bar. As he picks up his tickets he notices that on the back of them is the mini-poster for the new French film that is being released next week – he makes a mental note for next Saturday night…

Upstairs in the manager's office, Alice is busy preparing the programme for next month. She has been playing with the idea of holding a Spanish Cinema Week for quite some time but up to now she is not sure her patrons will approve. She has an idea, and looks up the replies to the registration questionnaire: 22% of the responses place Spain in their top three favourite film producing countries. She is sure she can encourage further interest by launching a 'viral' marketing promotion campaign within her registered user group. Alice prepares an email to announce the festival and offers a reduced couples price to any member that generates a online referral registration identified by the promotion code "Viva España". With a click of a button she schedules the email to be sent the following afternoon at 14h00 to the 1,200 registered users of the cinema web site. Alice wants to kick off her Spanish Film Week with a special screening of the latest Almodóvar film followed by a Champagne cocktail with tickets to the event costing 15 € each. She knows that there is a limited availability and so decides to send an SMS text message the next morning giving 11% of users that put Spanish films above all others in their questionnaire a chance to book the event in advance. If the feedback from the Champagne cocktail is positive – Alice has made up her mind – she will launch a new VIP member card that will offer a higher level of service at a premium cost for a clearly identified segment of the cinema's customer base….

Is the technology described in the above story available today for cinemas? Is it a cost effective solution for building relationships with independent cinemagoers? Should the understanding and knowledge of your customers be your top priority today? Can the advantages of such a relationship be measured or quantified accurately? The answer to all

*(continues on page 4)*

these questions is a definite yes. Until recently, Customer Relation Management (CRM) was only cost effective for higher-value ticketing sectors such as performing arts and travel. Today, the Internet, wide adoption of e-mail and modern box-office systems have all contributed to dramatically reduce the amount of investment required to get to know your customers. The online equivalent of CRM, e-CRM, makes extensive use of electronic channels such as websites, online memberships, and email to initiate and develop a lasting relationship with your clients at a significantly lower cost. As access to film copies becomes easier for exhibitors and competition between cinemas or cinema chains fiercer, only a thorough knowledge of your customers' habits and preferences will help you ensure their loyalty, satisfaction and maximise your chances of selling them additional services or products. This knowledge however, can only be acquired by developing many one-to-one long-term relationships built on trust, respect for privacy and not perceived as intrusive by your customers. Further, when implementing changes to existing commercial or marketing strategies of your organisation, it is important to set out clear long-term objectives and define the various steps or phases that are required. You should also prepare yourself for the likely challenges you will find along the way: internal backing from your operational staff, integration with your existing box-office systems, local data protection issues and the inevitable customer support issues that will arise. Finally it is wise to consider the additional costs that will be created by your new strategy as well as any savings or additional revenue that will be generated. A successful implementation of e-CRM should strive to both quantify and maximise the value of the resulting customer data and this value can then be used to measure the success of future initiatives. As the adoption of e-commerce and the Internet takes giant strides into the future, you might find that by introducing an e-CRM strategy before your competition, you will have made your most valuable investment yet!

Emanuele de Plano
*Ticketing strategy consultant and co-founder of TixOS, an innovative ticketing solutions provider.*
*E-mail: emanuele@tixos.com*

## EBELTOFT: I WAS THERE!

I took part in the course for European cinema exhibitors, "*European Cinema Exhibition: A new approach*", organised by MEDIA Salles. A new approach. This is what encouraged me to travel halfway across Europe to spend five and a half days in the heart of Denmark, instead of becoming immersed in the Screenings at Ostia (*ed.* the meeting organised by ANEC, the Italian cinema exhibitors' association).

I had the opportunity to get to know the problems, trends and characteristics of all the components of the market in the different countries of Europe. During our stay we were able to benefit not only from the course itself but also from our free time, when there was the chance for exchanging information and opinions with traditional and multiplex exhibitors, distributors, producers and representatives of important bodies in the field of the cinema coming from countries where there is a far higher rate of cinema-going than in Italy. What was common to everyone, even mature figures with considerable professional successes behind them, was the desire to question our own work and learn from others. It was an important professional experience which will certainly reflect on my own future and that of the Cinema Apollo.

Rita Stella
*Cinema Apollo - Milano*

## FOCUS ON EUROPE AT "CASTELLINARIA" 2002: EXHIBITORS MEET THE YOUNG AUDIENCE

Why do children only visit the cinema a few times a year, on the rare occasions when they find a film of interest to them?
Why do many of them only visit the cinema with their school? What is the difference for younger spectators between seeing a film at the cinema rather than on television?
What sort of film do adolescents and children like best? What do the latter expect to find in a film from the point of view of content, emotions and images?
These and many other questions will be at the centre of the Focus on Europe event organised by MEDIA Salles at "Castellinaria", the International Children's Film Festival which will take place in Bellinzona, Switzerland, from 15 to 17 November 2002. Several initiatives are also planned for Focus on Europe at "Castellinaria" 2002: first and foremost the screening of a series of films intended especially for young people, which the exhibitors themselves will also be able to watch; the presentation of an award for a European children's film amongst those most widely viewed both at home and abroad; the presentation of an award to the cinemas that organised the most significant initiatives for sensitising children and young people to the viewing of films.

*"Castellinaria" 2001.*
*FotoStudio Battaglia.*

### AN AWARD TO CINEMAS

Do you organise specific programming for young people? Do you promote European films? Have you carried out projects on behalf of young audiences in your theatre?
Send a report of your initiatives to MEDIA Salles. The theatre that has run the best activity for promoting European films with young audiences will be presented with an award at the Focus on Europe event during "Castellinaria" 2002. The first award will be of 1,000 euro, the second of 750 euro and the third of 500 euro. Send your material to fax: +39 02 6691574 or e-mail: infocinema@mediasalles.it.
MEDIA Salles, via Soperga 2, I-20127 Milan.

### INTERVIEW WITH GIANCARLO ZAPPOLI, Director of "Castellinaria"

*A festival for children – why?*
In Switzerland children have always watched a lot of television and the limited number of cinemas certainly does nothing to encourage an interest in the big screen. The aim of "Castellinaria" is therefore to attract the children's attention to new films on subjects of interest to them. And I have been able to see for myself that the Festival is an opportunity for the children to learn a lot about the cinema and to gain closer contact with it. I remember their enthusiasm at discovering the way films are conceived and planned: these are things they are not generally encouraged to think about.
*How did the idea of including MEDIA Salles' contribution in a context such as the "Castellinaria" Festival originate?*
For several years we have both been promoting initiatives that have successfully drawn the attention of younger audiences to films where the content is specifically intended for children, and to the various forms of filmic expression throughout the world. A mutual interest, which has resulted in an increasingly closer and more significant link between ourselves and MEDIA Salles, regards European films, even though the Festival is also open to productions from other continents, such as those coming from China. We do not, however, include American films in our screenings. The reason is very simple: they already receive adequate attention and sufficient promotion.
*You have been the Director of "Castellinaria" since 1998. If you were asked to sum up the most significant and interesting aspects of the Festival, which would you mention?*
First of all the creation of audience loyalty, thanks also to the interest on our own part and by MEDIA Salles in the content of the films.
At the 2001 Festival there were 18,000 spectators in a town like Bellinzona, where the population amounts to the same figure: 18,000 inhabitants!
*And in terms of the MEDIA Salles Focus on Europe event?*
Certainly the fact that space is offered for exchanges between different professional players, for example between those who organise screenings in cinemas, experts on the organisation of cultural activities and representatives of film clubs.
*What will be the main changes and novelties in 2002?*
The competitions organised last year met with such success that they will be double the number this year: the films will increase from five to ten and the jury, whose members came from the Canton Ticino only last year, will be nationwide. There will also be a series dedicated to Argentinian cinema and to its recent crisis. A last but no less important novelty was the presentation of our Festival during last August's Locarno Film Festival.