

SPEAKERS OF THE 23RD EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 1, 2024, VILNIUS



EUROPA
CINEMAS
Network Conference

MODERATORS

Dr. Martin Blaney - Journalist, Screen International, Germany



After completing a Ph.D. on the relationship between German cinema and television, Dr. Martin Blaney moved to live in Germany in 1988. Since then, he has worked for, among others, the Berlinale, Filmfest München, and various initiatives of the European Union's MEDIA Programme.

In 1990, he became the correspondent for Germany, Austria, and Switzerland at the British trade magazine Screen International and has also written for such publications as German Films Quarterly, Kino: German Film, Blickpunkt: Film, and Europa Cinemas Newsletter. Apart from his journalistic activities, Dr. Blaney has also been a jury member at numerous international film festivals and served as a moderator for various panels and pitching events throughout Europe, including the Berlinale, MIP TV, Connecting Cottbus, Sofia Meetings, Visions du Réel, Directors Across Borders (Yerevan), Transilvania International Film Festival, Moscow Business Square, Locarno's Open Doors, Nordic Film Days, Baltic Event (Tallinn), When East Meets West (Trieste), Odesa International Film Festival, and Heart of Europe (Warsaw).

Michael Gubbins - Analyst, journalist and consultant, United Kingdom

Michael Gubbins is an analyst, journalist and consultant, who has been working in the film and media sector for more than 15 years. He has a long association with Europa Cinemas, chairing conferences since 2004 and authoring a number of reports on change in European exhibition. Gubbins was editor of titles, including Screen International and Screen Daily, and Music Week in a 25-year career in newspapers and magazines. He was also chair of regional screen agency Ffilm Cymru Wales until 2019. He writes influential reports on the changing media and cultural environment in Europe; and is a sought-after and experienced moderator, keynote speaker and organiser of conferences, Think Tanks and events around the world. He has worked in more than 30 countries with organisations and businesses along the film value chain and across media sectors, including music, games and television.



Metka Dariš - Director of Kinodvor, Slovenia



Since 2019, Metka Dariš has been the director of Kinodvor, a public institution founded by the Ljubljana municipality. She is also active on the board of directors of the Slovenian Art Cinema Association. Before 2019, she served as the head of the Museum Department of the Slovenian Cinematheque. Prior to that, she was part of the core team that conceived and launched the Slovenian Cinematheque (now Slovenia's national film museum) in 1994 and undertook the renovation of the cinema that became Kinodvor, an art-house cinema, in 2003.

Since 2008, Kinodvor has been a city cinema that offers a diverse program of screenings and events celebrating film. It provides programs for young audiences with film education and hosts or co-produces more than ten film festivals yearly. The cinema experience is at the heart of all its activities. After two of the worst years in cinema history (due to COVID), Kinodvor is stronger than ever. In 2023, it already reached pre-COVID numbers, and 2024 looks to be even better: the number of visitors even exceeds that of 2019, the best year on record.

MODERATORS

Irene Musumeci - Marketing Director, Global, MUBI

Irene Musumeci is Marketing Director, Global at MUBI, a streaming service, production company and film distributor dedicated to elevating great cinema. In her role she oversees teams working on content marketing and film release campaigns across several territories. Born in Italy and trained in the UK, Ireland, Belgium and Spain, Irene has been involved professionally in the European culture sector for over twenty years. Her career in the film industry includes roles within leading companies such as Dogwoof, Fandango and Curzon. She is an alumna of Europa Cinemas' Innovation Labs and the NEXT/CHANGE project, CICA's Arthouse Cinema Training Programme, as well as professional development courses in Cultural Cinema Programming and Digital Marketing at the ICO in London. Irene holds a BA (Hons) in English and Theatre Studies from the University of Warwick; an MA from RADA & King's College London in Directing and Dramaturgy; and a PhD in Film Studies from the University of Essex. Prior to working in film she was a theatre director and dramaturg, and she is also an experienced stage practitioner, lecturer, and workshop facilitator.



Javier Pachón - Co-founder and Executive and Programming Director, CineCiutat, Spain



Javier Pachón is a strategic consultant in the audiovisual and cultural sector. He is co-founder and Executive and Programming Director of CineCiutat, a non-profit cinema pioneer in Mallorca, Spain, for its management model and community participation strategies. Among others, he is vice-president of Promio (the Spanish network of independent cinemas) and has been a regular speaker, advisor and consultant at conferences, festivals and trainings for the cultural sector around the world for over a decade. He has collaborated with the European Commission's DG Connect, and now with Europa Cinemas as a member of the board and developing several Innovation Labs; as well as with the International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas (CICA) as a member of the board and consultant for their Arthouse Cinema Training programme.

FOCUS ON THE “BALTIC COUNTRIES” SESSION – STRONG AND RESILIENT TOGETHER!

Overview of the production, distribution and exhibition markets in the Baltic states & future prospects.

Eda Koppel - Industry@Tallinn & Baltic Event Project Manager, Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, Estonia



Eda Koppel has over 20 years of experience in the film industry, including roles at the Estonian Film Institute and nearly 13 years with the Baltic Event co-production market. She is well-versed in the Estonian, Baltic, and European film industries, along with international festivals, markets, and key players like institutions, press, producers, and sales agents. Her expertise lies in distribution, marketing, and PR. This year, Eda Koppel joined the Industry@Tallinn and Baltic Event team as Project Manager of Tallinn Industry Academy, a training programme for emerging professionals in the field of film circulation.

Miglė Morkūnaitė - Head of Theatrical Marketing and Distribution at ACME Film Baltics, Lithuania

Miglė Morkūnaitė is Head of Theatrical Marketing and Distribution at ACME Film Baltics. ACME Film is one of the leading film distributors in the Baltic states. Established in 1999, ACME Film distributes movies theatrically, on home video platforms and TV. It represents major studios, such as Warner Bros. and Sony Pictures, and is the largest independent film distributor in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. It also works closely with Baltic film producers on local film releases.



Gintaras Plytnikas - CEO at Forum Cinemas, Lithuania



Gintaras Plytnikas has been working in the cinema industry since 1998. He started as a distributor (UIP, Independent films) and director at Bomba Films. He is also one of the founders and the first chairman of the Lithuanian Film Distributors Association in 1999.

Gintaras shifted to theatrical exhibition in 2001 (Vingis Cinema Development Manager since then). In 2002, his cinema joined Finnkino, establishing the Forum Cinemas brand in Lithuania, which later became part of the Nordic Cinema Group (2013), Odeon, and AMC (2017). In 2021, Forum Cinemas was bought by MMG (Apollo), an acquisition later banned by the Lithuanian Competition Council (2023).

Gintaras is currently running 4 key cinemas in 4 key cities in Lithuania, accounting for 50% of the theatrical market.

Kristi Porila - Head of cinema & programmer at Thule Kino, Estonia



Kristi Porila is an experienced professional in arthouse cinema with over 15 years of expertise. She spent five years with the "Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival" as a program secretary, where her passion for arthouse cinema was ignited. She then dedicated nearly nine years as an acquisition and distribution manager at Estonia's leading arthouse company at the time, "Must Käsi," which also operates the iconic "Kino Sõprus" in Tallinn's old town. She founded her own small distribution company, Filmstop, whose most successful titles have been Triangle of Sadness and Fallen Leaves. For the past five years, Kristi has been managing and programming "Thule Kino" on the picturesque island of Saaremaa, a proud member of the Europa Cinemas network.

Māris Prombergs - Director, Kino Bize, Latvia

Māris Prombergs is the co-founder and director of the arthouse cinema Kino Bize in the city centre of Riga, Latvia. Māris started "Dirty Deal" cinema club in 2009 with weekly screenings in collaboration with embassies and film institutions. Cinema Kino Bize, with daily screenings, was founded in 2012. Riga Pasaules Film Festival, Design Film Festival and Doinel Film School were started as part of initiatives led by the team of Kino Bize and its friends. The cinema has expanded its scope of activities by becoming a film distributor in Latvia and providing an online home cinema platform.



Algirdas Ramaška - CEO of Vilnius Film Festival & Kino Pavasaris Distribution, Lithuania



Algirdas Ramaška is an award-winning creative entrepreneur and the CEO of the Vilnius International Film Festival 'Kino Pavasaris,' the largest annual cultural event in Lithuania since 1995. Under his leadership, the festival has become one of the most significant cinematic events in the region.

In addition to his role at the festival, he serves as the CEO of Kino Pavasaris Distribution (CJSC Europos Kinas), a film distribution company that operates in the Baltic States. His company specializes in distributing both national and international independent films, including those that have received awards at prestigious film festivals across the world.

Algirdas also consults on organizational matters for various film festivals and cultural institutions across Europe. He is a respected lecturer at international seminars and a frequent conference speaker, contributing his expertise to the cultural community. His dedication to advancing the film and creative sectors has earned him recognition, including letters of appreciation and awards from the Vilnius City Mayor, the Lithuanian Parliament, and the President of Lithuania.

OPENING OF THE 23RD EUROPA CINEMAS NETWORK CONFERENCE

Mathias Holtz - President, Europa Cinemas



Mathias Holtz is a Programmer and Cinema Consultant at Folkets Hus och Parker (FHP), a position he has held for 19 years. He is responsible for programming FHP cinemas across Sweden: from art house theaters in major cities to rural cinemas and community centers in small towns. He also manages international relations and actively contributes to initiatives in audience development, film education, and the diffusion of alternative content. His diverse academic background includes university studies in cultural history, theater, and cinema.

Lucia Recalde Langarica - Deputy Director Media Policy & Head of Unit Audiovisual Industry and Media Support Programmes, DG CONNECT, European Commission, Belgium

Spanish born Lucia Recalde Langarica is Deputy Director for "Media Policy" and Head of the unit "Audiovisual Industry and Media Support Programmes" in charge of Creative Europe MEDIA and Multimedia actions in the Directorate General (DG) for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CONNECT) of the European Commission. Prior to that, she was a part of the management of the DG for Education and Culture (EAC) as Head of Unit for Higher Education, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and the EIT (the European Institute for Innovation and Technology). Ms Recalde joined the European Commission in 1995 and until 2006 served the DG for Employment and Social Affairs in various positions. She started her career as policy officer at the Directorate of European Affairs of the Basque Government.



Simonas Kairys - Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania



In 2007, Simonas Kairys graduated from Vytautas Magnus University with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. In 2011, he earned a Master's degree in Law from Mykolas Romeris University. Since 2008, he has been a member of the Liberal Movement. Between 2007 and 2011, he worked as an Assistant to the Deputy Mayor of Kaunas and as a Project Manager at the Institute of Liberal Thought. From 2011 to 2019, he served as a member of the Kaunas City Council. Between 2015 and 2019, he held the position of Deputy Mayor of Kaunas City Municipality. Since December 11, 2020, he has been the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

SESSION 1 - GREAT EXPECTATIONS - WHO ARE TODAY'S AUDIENCES AND WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Ben Luxford - Director of UK-Wide Audiences, British Film Institute (BFI), United Kingdom



Ben Luxford is Director of UK Audiences for the British Film Institute, the UK's lead organisation for Film and the moving image. He oversees funding and policy for the Distribution and Exhibition of independent UK and international film across a variety of platforms and leads the BFI's immersive cultural partnerships. During COVID, he oversaw the Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England on behalf of the UK Government. Pre-BFI Ben was an independent UK film distributor for companies including Studiocanal and Curzon.

Julien Staartjes - Marketing & Communication, FilmHallen, the Netherlands

Julien Staartjes works as a marketer for Amsterdam cinemas FilmHallen & The Movies and for FilmKoepel in Haarlem. He is specialized in digital marketing with a focus on audience development and community building. He believes that data is key to understanding your visitors and is always experimenting with new creative campaigns to engage audiences.



Giuliana Fantoni - Director of Cinema Edera and Cinema Manzoni, President of FICE, Italy



Giuliana Fantoni, born in 1975, has been directing Cinema Edera in Treviso and Cinema Manzoni in Paese (Treviso) for 25 years, managing programming, events, and school projects. In 2023, she served as a mentor for LED, the first project dedicated to female operators, supporting the personal and professional growth of entrepreneurs and workers and bridging the gender gap in the film industry. Since June 2024, she has been President of the Italian Arthouse Cinema Federation (F.I.C.E.).

Elise Jalladeau - Director, Thessaloniki International Film Festival, Greece

Elise holds a Diploma from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques and a Master's degree in Audiovisual Law from Pantheon Sorbonne. She began her career in film production in 1992, joining Artcam International in 1996, where she championed a new generation of international directors, including Ildiko Enyedi, Petr Vaclav, Rodrigo Moreno, Jia Zhang Ke, Darejan Omirbaev, and Jérôme Bonnell. In 2005, she founded Charivari Films and collaborated with Memento Films International to develop international co-productions.

In 2010, Elise was appointed Audiovisual and Creative Industry Attachée at the French Embassy/Institut Français in Athens, where she also served on the board of directors of the Greek Film Center. She has been instrumental in leading and expanding the Ateliers Produire au Sud program for over a decade and has served as a group leader for the EAVE "Ties that Bind" Asia-Europe training program since 2010.

Since 2016, Elise is the General Manager of the Thessaloniki Film Festival, a cultural institution encompassing two international festivals and their respective markets (Thessaloniki International Film Festival and Thessaloniki international Documentary Festival), four year-round cinema screens, and the Thessaloniki Film Museum. She is a member of the Board of Europa cinema.



SESSION 2 – RE-ENERGISING YOUR BUSINESS MODEL: INVESTMENTS, BRAND IDENTITY AND PROGRAMMING CHOICES

Christof Papousek - CFO, Constantin-Film & Cineplexx Group, Austria



Christof Papousek joined the Constantin Film & Cineplexx group of companies in 1999, after working as tax and audit consultant. In 2004, he became managing director & CFO and in 2008 he co-founded the group's international cinema operation – Cineplexx International - as entrepreneur and co-shareholder. Since 2008 the company has developed and acquired nearly 40 cinemas in the SEE region in 11 different countries. At the same time, IMAX was introduced in the Austrian home market, but also a process of refurbishment and implementation of a new corporate design has been executed. Cineplexx is an important partner of shopping mall operators and a reliable and sustainable part of the entertainment offer in real estate developments, a business primarily looked after by Christof. Since 2018 he is also shareholder in the Group-Holding entity Constantin-Film-Holding GmbH. Christof Papousek represents the cinema group also in several trade bodies as well as UNIC and GCF. Cineplexx is supporting and hosting film festivals such as Viennale or Sarajevo Film Festival. Christof recently received the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo Award at the 30th Sarajevo Film Festival in August 2024.

Ramiro Ledo Cordeiro – Director of the Duplex Cinema and the Atalante distribution company, Spain

Former film editor and filmmaker, Ramiro Ledo Cordeiro career in the field of film distribution begins in 2014, with the creation and management of the distribution area in the cooperative NUMAX, project of which he was a founding partner and president and to which he belonged until 2021, dealing among other functions of the direction of the exhibition area and the planning and financial management of the company. In 2016 he was selected to participate in the Industry Academy of the Locarno Festival and the Step-In working groups. Guest lecturer at Elías Querejeta Zine Eskola - Tabakalera (San Sebastián), Next Wave - DFFB (Berlin), Europa Cinemas Lab (Seville, Lisbon), CICAIE (Sarajevo, Venice), project advisor (Novos Cinemas, L'Alternativa, MRG/WRK, Mecas, Abycine), jury at international festivals (Locarno, Seville, Pravo Ljudski Sarajevo, OUFF, PortoPostDoc, IndieLisboa, Punto de Vista) and has been a member of project assessment committees for AGADIC and ICAA. Since 2019 he is also managing director and programmer of DUPLEX Cinema, a film exhibition project through which he has promoted the recovery of a two-screen cinema in Ferrol. Founder and board member of Próxima, association of independent and auteur film distributors in original version, and founder and president until 2024 of Promio, network of independent cinema's association. His work in the film industry has been recognized with the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2020 by Europa Cinemas.



Stephanie Silverman - Executive Director, Belcourt Theatre, Tennessee, United States



Stephanie Silverman has been the Executive Director of the Belcourt Theatre for over a decade. The Belcourt is a three-screen non-profit film center dedicated to presenting the best in contemporary & repertory cinema alongside high quality film education programs in the theatre and throughout the community. Housed in a renovated and restored 1925 neighborhood theatre in the heart of Nashville, Tennessee, the Belcourt has been recognized as a national model for sustainable art house theatres by its peers and industry leaders. Prior to her tenure with the Belcourt, Silverman worked for many arts organizations including the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago and The John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Silverman is the immediate past chair of the board of the League of Historic American Theatres and has been active with the Art House Convergence. The Nashville Scene recognized her as Nashvillian of the Year in 2016.

Sylvie Presa - Director-Programmer, Studio 43, France

After studying cultural project management and art history, in 2001, Sylvie Presa took up her first post at the Liévin cultural centre as a mediator in the contemporary art gallery. From that point on, her career path was shaped by the issues of cultural democratization and popular education. In 2002, she became head of the gallery and the art cinema, developing artistic practices and image education initiatives for all audiences, and defining the direction of the visual arts in the town. In 2008, she became Head of the Education department at Le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains in Tourcoing, where she experimented with new content and tools for raising awareness and training in images and sound. In 2012, she took over the management of Le Studio 43 cinema in Dunkerque, refocusing the structure's project on the development of initiatives aimed at young audiences and working on the prefiguration of a modular auditorium, which will be a place for screenings, artistic practices, and experimentation, opening in November 2023.

SESSION 4 – RE-IMAGINING THE CINEMA EXPERIENCE: NEXT STEPS

WORKSHOP 1: MAKING A SUCCESS OF SUBSCRIPTION MODELS

Anna Hartweger - Assistant to the management at KIZ RoyalKino, Austria



Born in 1988 in Graz, Austria, Anna Hartweger pursued her studies in English and American Studies, focusing on film and television, along with Media Science at the University of Graz. During her time at university, she gained valuable experience working at various festivals, events, and venues, handling roles in box offices, press departments, and archives.

In 2016, Anna joined the Diagonale – Festival of Austrian Film, serving as the head of the ticketing department from 2019 to 2023. Her work at Diagonale led to her first job-related encounters with KIZ RoyalKino, where she started at the box office in 2018 and gradually expanded her expertise into back-office tasks. She has taken on a varied range of responsibilities, including program announcements, compiling film information, implementing screening schedules into the ticketing software, and managing the cinema's website and social media platforms.

Samir Azrioual - Managing Director of Cineville BV in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Samir Azrioual is the Managing Director of Cineville BV, a company founded by four friends within the framework of a student-run cinema. Originally established as a community-oriented initiative, Cineville has since evolved into a subscription-based service offering an unlimited pass for independent cinema. The platform collaborates with local cinemas across the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, aiming to foster a vibrant community of film enthusiasts. Cineville's mission is to promote a passion for high-quality, independent cinema. By leveraging its innovative subscription model, Cineville attracts a predominantly young audience, encouraging them to explore a wider range of films and to engage with cinema in ways they might not have otherwise considered.



Katrina Mathsson - Marketing manager of Cineville Sweden at Zita Folkets Bio, Sweden



Since 1982, Katrina Mathsson has played a pivotal role in shaping Folkets Bio into Sweden's leading arthouse film company. In 1993, she oversaw the transformation of the Zita cinema in Stockholm, converting a single-screen adult theatre into a three-screen arthouse cinema with a restaurant. This bold project significantly influenced the Swedish arthouse scene. Throughout her career, Mathsson brought hundreds of Swedish and international films to audiences of all ages, spanning a wide range of genres. After more than 42 years in the industry, she has retired from her full-time position, allowing her to focus on introducing Cineville to Sweden.

Mirjam Haas - Managing Director of Cineville, Germany

Hailing from Hanover, Germany, Mirjam holds a degree in Linguistics and Film Studies from the University of Bremen. Since 2013, she has worked in theatrical sales and distribution with several independent distribution companies in Berlin, gaining expertise in the national film and cinema market. She has also served as a key account manager and producer at a creative agency, working with clients across the culture, tech, and mobility sectors. Mirjam is currently the Managing Director of Cineville Germany. In addition to overseeing the organization's operations, she is leading Cineville's expansion and marketing strategy. Launched in August 2024 in five German cities, Cineville aims to be available in more than 10 cities and 50 cinemas by 2025.



WORKSHOP 2: NEW TRENDS IN AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT: RETHINKING PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

Maddy Probst - Head of Film at Watershed, United Kingdom



Maddy Probst is an experienced producer of film events, talent and people with extensive experience of advocating for the cinema sector regionally, nationally and internationally. As Head of Film at Watershed, she manages the cinema team, leads on major cinema programmes such as Cinema Rediscovered; and oversees the Film Hub South West initiative which supports regional exhibitors as part of BFI Film Audience Network as well as various regional talent development initiatives such as BFI NETWORK and BFI Film Academy. She has been actively involved in Europa Cinemas for over a decade, initially as a participant in a lab in Bologna at Il Cinema Ritrovato, leading on various labs, as Vice President (2014 - 2020) and continues to be involved as a board member.

Ioana Dragomirescu - Manager of Cinemas Victoria & Timiș and Studio, Romania

Ioana has over 10 years of experience in the European cinema industry and is currently the manager of three newly reopened public arthouse cinemas in Timișoara, Romania: Victoria and Timiș, both already Europa Cinemas members, as well as Studio, opening in the beginning of December 2024. Two more venues are set to be renovated and reopened in the coming year.

Between the years 2018-2022 Ioana coordinated the Elvire Popesco Cinema, one of the main independent cinemas and the most visited single screen venue in Romania, as well as the French Film Festival in Romania, which took place in 12 cities simultaneously.

Before 2018, she lived, studied and worked for 11 years in Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin. After graduating from Sciences Po Paris University, Ioana initially worked for Europa Cinemas, and then for the independent French Distributor Le Pacte, in the international sales and marketing department. Over the last years Ioana has also had the opportunity of leading workshops and presentations for professionals in the cinema industry, in Sarajevo IFF, Sevilla IFF, Valladolid IFF and Transylvania IFF.



Züleyha Azman - Marketing Director of KINO Rotterdam, the Netherlands



Züleyha Azman's aim is to inspire in others the same enthusiasm for films. Her expertise lies in developing unique visual content, tone of voice, and storytelling. For KINO this approach has resulted in bringing curated classic programs and special events to a new and younger audience. She is convinced that in today's cinema landscape marketing tools, special programming and events are essential for achieving success. Thus, she produces and creates innovative and compelling visual marketing assets that captivates audiences. These include trailers, posters, photography and merchandise. These establish KINO as the ultimate destination and resonate with the fear of missing out.

In recent years she has also started specializing in curating film programs, organizing exclusive events with artists such as Gasper Noe, Anton Corbijn, Fatih Akin, and photo exhibitions. Her expertise in both cinema and marketing has demonstrated to be a potent mix. Prior to KINO, she gained a wide range of experiences in the film industry, having worked for various cinemas, film distributors, film festivals, and produced short films.

Axel Scoffier - General Secretary, Unifrance, France

Since 2019, Axel Scoffier is General Secretary of Unifrance, where he is in charge of various topics including public affairs. He previously worked for the French National Centre of Cinema where he was Head of the Funding Department (tax credit, private funding, grants to NGOs...). He studied at Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon, holds a Degree in Geography and also graduated from HEC Paris.



Sylvain Pichon - Director of operations and Head for programming, Le Méliès, France

After a first job in the video department of a supermarket, Sylvain Pichon discovered the job of cinema operator thanks to an internship at the Méliès in Saint-Étienne, his native town. He then joined the very first promotion for Distribution/Exhibition of La Fémis, National Public Cinema School with the desire of returning and developing arthouse cinema in his city of heart.

In order to open his horizons, he worked at multiplex UGC Ciné-Cité in Strasbourg (20 screens) and at the Ciné Zénith in Evreux (10 screens) to discover how this type of establishment function.

In 2005, he returned to his first loves by taking over as manager of operations and programming at the Méliès cinema in Saint-Étienne. From 2 screens in 2005, Le Méliès changed location in 2006 to the main square of the city and doubled its capacity to 4 screens. Then in 2011, Sylvain began to take care of the programming of Cinéma Le France (2 screens) also located in St Etienne. In 2014, Le Méliès bought this historic cinema to make it Méliès St François. Since 2014, Le Méliès manages 6 screens spread over two locations in the city.

WORKSHOP 3 - UPDATING AND UPGRADING COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING STRATEGIES**Ian Wild - Chief Executive, Showroom cinema, United Kingdom**

Ian Wild has worked in film exhibition in a variety of capacities for most of his life since the age of sixteen. Starting work as a volunteer usher at a film society in the north of England, he later organised and programmed his university film society. He worked as a cinema manager for a commercial circuit for several years before changing jobs to work in the independent cultural cinema sector. He was then recruited by Sheffield City Council's Economic Development Department to create new funding strategies for the Cultural Industries, which included preparing plans for a new independent cultural cinema in the city centre. After raising finance to build the Showroom cinema which opened in 1994, he was appointed to the post of Cinema Director and later to the Chief Executive position.

Daniel Sibbers, Director of Communications and Board of Directors at Yorck Kinogruppe, Germany

Daniel Sibbers holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Potsdam. Since 2009, he has been responsible for marketing and branding at Yorck Kinogruppe. With 14 cinemas in Berlin and partner companies in Munich and Dresden, Germany's largest network of independent cinemas, the Yorck Kinogruppe was also the first-ever winner of the Europa Cinema Award for Entrepreneur of the Year in 2003. Daniel is a member of the Board of Directors and the company's Steering Committee. Prior to his current position, he was in charge of all regional marketing activities across Germany at CineStar, the country's leading exhibitor. He also worked as the European representative for Material Connexion Inc., a New York-based materials research library for the creative industries.

**Jens Lanestrand - General Manager, Biografcentralen, Sweden**

Jens Lanestrand is the General Manager of Biografcentralen, a Swedish national organization for independent cinemas. He also runs the website www.bio.se, where the audience can find screenings and tickets for over 250 cinemas.

He has led the development of a series of operations since Biografcentralen was founded in 2011, often innovative and challenging for the Swedish cinema sector.

A system for digital transmissions, introduced in 2013, is now in almost every projection room, along with several trainings and programs for exhibitors, including the Digital Marketing for Cinemas, a web training with over 40 lessons also available in English.

Last year, he enjoyed running the Collaborate to Innovate project, where data from over 120 cinemas and the ticketing system Veezi is transferred into the CRM tool Salesforce – making data more open and using segmentation to reach targeted audiences.

Élise Mignot - Director and Programmer, Café des Images, France

Since 2019, Élise Mignot has served as the director and programmer of the Café des Images in Hérouville-Saint-Clair (France), always keeping an eye on broader horizons.

From 2005 to 2016, Élise Mignot began her professional career within the French cultural network, working with French Institutes in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Mauritius. In 2011, she founded the company Stubborn in Dreams, through which she directed the Ile Courts Festival and contributed to the production of the feature film Lonbraz Kann. These experiences solidified her belief in the strength and value of independent cinema, along with the extraordinary richness of Europe's independent exhibition network. As an innovative cinema, a sustainable restaurant, and a hub of solidarity, the Café des Images has been reinventing itself for over 45 years, driven by bold projects deeply engaged with the world and society. Élise Mignot develops an editorial line that seeks to make global cinema accessible to all and steers a cultural project that focuses on youth, diversity, and cooperation. Pluralistic, participatory, and reflective initiatives are hosted there, helping to reimagine both the future of the region and that of cinema.

WORKSHOP 4 - THE INCLUSIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE: COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS**Joanna Stankiewicz - Cinema without Barriers Co-leader, ZAMEK Culture Centre (Cinema Palacowe), Poland**

Joanna Stankiewicz is a project coordinator with a background in film, education, and Cultural Studies. She has contributed to the Animator and Ale Kino! festivals and, since 2022, has dedicated her work to enhancing accessibility in film culture. Joanna is the co-creator of the "Open Cinema," "Cinema Without Barriers," and "Cinema Without Barriers – Polish Edition" initiatives. She is also a co-organizer of Forum Without Barriers, a pioneering event focused on accessibility in the audiovisual sector.

Jean-Marc Lalo, Architect and Professor at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris la Villette, France

Jean-Marc Lalo founded his architecture studio, Atelier Lalo, in 2002, focusing on cultural spaces. His notable renovation projects include the Ariana Cinema in Kabul and the Cinematheque of Tangier. Passionate about cinemas, he has renovated or created over twenty cinemas in France and West Africa. Lalo's architectural approach blends collective memory with contemporary creation, emphasizing spaces that enhance the relationship between film and audience. His work responds to both environmental context and the evolving needs of cultural venues. In addition to his practice, Lalo teaches architectural design at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris la Villette and has established Erasmus+ exchange programs with architecture schools in Dakar and Abidjan.



Maeve Cooke - Managing Director at access>CINEMA, Ireland



Since 2007, Maeve Cooke has been the Managing Director of access>CINEMA, the resource organisation for regional cultural cinema exhibition in Ireland, which provides film programming and audience development support services for its national network of member organisations. She joined access>CINEMA in 2006 as its Programme Manager. In her role as Managing Director of access>CINEMA, Maeve is responsible for agreeing on the general company policy, defining the organisation's artistic programming, implementing company strategies and promoting the organisation. She is also the CFO of the company. In addition, she has programmed the Japanese Film Festival, Ireland's only truly national film festival, for 13 years. Prior to her current role, Maeve worked freelance in film and television production and training, and holds a Master's degree in Film Studies. In a previous life, she worked in the telecommunications industry.

Verena Von Stackelberg - Founder, manager & programmer at Wolf Kino, Germany

Born in Heidelberg, Verena Von Stackelberg moved to Barcelona to focus on photography and film. She completed her studies in London, managing events for Curzon Cinemas and curating films for UK festivals. In 2008, she relocated to Berlin, working in distribution before founding Wolf Kino. Verena served on the Berlinale selection committee for Competition & Encounters (2012-2014 & 2019-2024) and is currently a deputy jury member of the BKM's feature film fund.



SESSION 5 – NO LOOKING BACK: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF CINEMA

Wiktoría Pelzer - Managing & artistic director of Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus & Admiral Kino, Vienna, Austria



Wiktoría Pelzer studied Theatre, Film, and Media Science in Erlangen (DE) and Vienna (AT) and lives and works in Vienna. In 2017 she started working for the Stadtkino cinema & distribution, known for its focus on Arthouse and Auteur film. Here she developed new strategies for the cinema, focusing on political cinema with a collaborative approach, new programming strands and innovations.

In 2023, she took over at Stadtkino as Managing and Artistic Director, and soon after at the Admiral Kino in Vienna. In 2023 she implemented a flatrate cinema subscription for arthouse cinemas in Austria together with a colleague, called nonstop Kinoabo in collaboration with Cineville in the Netherlands.

Before Stadtkino, she was working for the Gartenbaukino cinema in Vienna, in programming and marketing and was also involved in many different short film festivals in Austria and Germany with a focus on experimental and animated film. She worked as Programmer and Program Coordinator for the Crossing Europe Film Festival in Linz from 2010-2017.

Eric Franssen - General manager, Palace, Belgium

Eric Franssen studied communication and cinema at Liège University (Belgium) and graduated with a master's degree in 1995. After a two-year experience in a Minister's cabinet, he joined in 1997 the Audiovisual department of the Ministry of Culture where he was in charge of different matters in the television regulation field. In 2006, he became director of Wallonie Bruxelles Images, the international film agency for French-speaking Belgium where he developed an in-depth knowledge of international markets and festivals. In 2019, he extended its competences to the national promotion. Since August 2020 he is the general manager of Cinema Palace, an arthouse 4 screen complex, located in the center of Brussels.



David Kelly - Film Programmer, Light House Cinema, Ireland



David Kelly has been working for a decade in Light House Cinema in Dublin across the programming and marketing departments. As a programmer he has delivered successful schools programmes, seasons, signature strands and events to a diverse range of audiences. As Digital Marketing Manager he connected to local and global audiences by developing a unique voice for Light House and significantly grew its online reach through a series of successful campaigns. David is currently the Light House Cinema programmer.

Maria-Magdalena Gierat - Director of Kino Pod Baranami, Poland

Born into a film-focused family, Maria-Magdalena Gierat graduated in film history at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, with a thesis on Gnosticism in film. Since 2002, she has been the head of Kino Pod Baranami, an art-house cinema in the heart of Krakow (Poland). She is a member of the Steering Committee of the Europa Cinemas Network, a speaker and facilitator at cinema workshops and seminars in Europe and the USA, and a member of the jury at film festivals.

Recognized as "Personality of the Year" (film portal Stopklatka - 2010), and listed in industry rankings: 40 UNDER 40 (Celluloid Junkie - 2016) and Top 50 Women in Global Cinema (Celluloid Junkie - 2017). She is also the founder of the TVOD platform e-kinopodbaranami.pl.

Kino Pod Baranami is a member of the Europa Cinemas Network and presents a European program, as well as ambitious films from all over the world. The cinema screens feature films, documentaries, animation, experimental films, silent films with live music, etc., and works closely with young audiences.

Kino Pod Baranami is a privately funded, auteur project created with passion. It was awarded for Best Programming by Europa Cinemas (2009) and by the Polish Film Institute (2010).



Metka Dariš - Director of Kinodvor, Slovenia



Since 2019, Metka Dariš has been the director of Kinodvor, a public institution founded by the Ljubljana municipality. She is also active on the board of directors of the Slovenian Art Cinema Association. Before 2019, she served as the head of the Museum Department of the Slovenian Cinematheque. Prior to that, she was part of the core team that conceived and launched the Slovenian Cinematheque (now Slovenia's national film museum) in 1994 and undertook the renovation of the cinema that became Kinodvor, an art-house cinema, in 2003.

Since 2008, Kinodvor has been a city cinema offering diverse screenings and events celebrating film. It provides programs for young audiences with film education and hosts or co-produces more than ten film festivals yearly. The cinema experience is at the heart of all its activities. After two of the worst years in cinema history (due to COVID), Kinodvor is stronger than ever. In 2023, it already reached pre-COVID numbers, and 2024 looks to be even better: the number of visitors even exceeds that of 2019, the best year on record.

SESSION 6 – IS THE FILM ECOSYSTEM READY FOR CHANGE?

Valeska Neu - Management & Sales, Films Boutique, Germany



Apart from her studies in history, journalism, film & cinema in Mainz and Paris, Valeska Neu is involved in the national and international film industry since 2002 in a variety of ways. Among other things, at film festivals, in the promotion of young talent and in the production sector. Since 2010 she has initially worked for the German-French world sales company Films Boutique. First as Festival Manager and since 2016 as a Responsible for International Sales and General Management. During this time she was involved in the distribution of internationally successful titles, such as *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* (Cannes Special Jury Award 2024) and *There is No Evil* (Golden Bear, Berlinale 2020) by Mohammad Rasoulof, *Green Border* by Agnieszka Holland (Special Jury Prize, Venice Biennale 2023), *On Body and Soul* by Ildiko Enyedi (Golden Bear, Berlinale 2017), *The Woman Who Left* by Lav Diaz (Golden Lion, Venice Biennale 2016), *Divines* by Houda Benyamina (Golden Camera, Festival de Cannes 2016) and *Faust* by Alexander Sokurov (Golden Lion, Venice Biennale 2011) and many more.

Furthermore, Valeska is a speaker for different producer workshops and works as an expert for the European Commission and the Austrian Film Institute. She has completed training as a systemic coach and is an alumni of the ShiftF program 'Transformational Leadership, Innovation and Change Management' of the Erich Pommer Institute.

Mark Cosgrove - Cinema Curator, Watershed, United Kingdom

Mark Cosgrove has worked in independent cultural cinema exhibition for over 30 years. Based at Watershed, Bristol, he has curated film seasons and touring programmes ranging from retrospective of French filmmaker Claire Denis and Austrian Ulrich Seidl through composer Bernard Herrmann to films from the New Hollywood. In 2010 he collected the Europa Cinemas award for Entrepreneur Cinema of the Year. He recently founded Cinema Rediscovered, a festival dedicated to restorations and archive film.



Algirdas Ramaška - CEO of Vilnius Film Festival & Kino Pavasaris Distribution, Lithuania



Algirdas Ramaška is an award-winning creative entrepreneur and the CEO of the Vilnius International Film Festival 'Kino Pavasaris,' the largest annual cultural event in Lithuania since 1995. Under his leadership, the festival has become one of the most significant cinematic events in the region.

In addition to his role at the festival, he serves as the CEO of Kino Pavasaris Distribution (CJSC Europos Kinas), a film distribution company that operates in the Baltic States. His company specializes in distributing both national and international independent films, including those that have received awards at prestigious film festivals across the world.

Algirdas also consults for various film festivals and cultural institutions across Europe on organizational matters. He is a respected lecturer at international seminars and a frequent speaker at conferences, contributing his expertise to the cultural community. His dedication to advancing the film and creative sectors has earned him recognition, including letters of appreciation and awards from the Vilnius City Mayor, the Lithuanian Parliament, and the President of Lithuania.

Christian Bräuer - President of the International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas (CICAE), Germany

Dr. Christian Bräuer is a distinguished bearer of the Federal Cross of Merit from the Federal Republic of Germany. He holds a PhD in Political Science and is a banker by professional training. For 20 years, Bräuer, alongside Heinrich-Georg Kloster, has stood at the helm of Yorck Kinogruppe, Germany's largest arthouse cinema group with a network of 17 cinemas with 49 screens in Berlin, Munich and Dresden. His roles as President of the International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas (CICAE), Chairman of the German Arthouse Cinema Association (AG Kino), and board member of Europa Cinemas, illustrate his unwavering commitment to promoting and strengthening arthouse cinemas worldwide. Bräuer, likewise, holds pivotal roles within the board of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK), and the German Federal Film Board (FFA), where he serves as a member of the Presidium and the Administrative Council, and leads the Committee for European and International Affairs.

Mette Schramm - Managing Director Empire Bio and Reprise Teatret, Denmark

Mette Schramm is the managing director of Empire Bio in Copenhagen and the CEO of REEL Pictures, a film distribution company dedicated to bringing great stories and stunning visuals to the Danish Theaters. She has worked in exhibition all her adult life, the last 30 years as a manager, CEO or owner. Her primary focus is programming, and she loves watching movies and helping them find their audience regardless of target group. Mette Schramm represents The Danish Artcinema Association in The Danish National Exhibitor's Association and is a member of the film selection committee for Cinema-club Denmark.



CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE & FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Alessandra Luchetti - Deputy Director of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and Head of Department for Creativity, Citizens, EU Values and Joint Operations



She has previously been in charge of the management of Future and Emerging Technologies and Marie Skłodowska-Curie programmes within Research Executive Agency (REA) and for the latter also in Directorate General Education and Culture of the European Commission. She has also a long experience in various units of Directorate General Research and Innovation.

She holds a master's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Perugia, Italy.