CONNECTING, ENGAGING AND ENTERTAINING
IN CINEMAS IN RURAL AREAS

A handbook of activities

CONNECTING

Cinemas

EUROPE

ABOUT CONNECTING CINEMAS

CONNECTING CINEMAS IN RURAL AREAS is a pilot project funded by the Creative Europe MEDIA programme of the European Commission to bring the idea of European cinemas a step further by **connecting the audiences and cinemas in rural regions Europe-wide.**

The project aims at emphasizing the role of the space of the cinema as a cultural hub in rural areas and establishing a networked infrastructure to share digital and cross-border events.
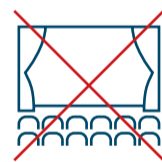
Project partners

Neue Kammerspiele, Germany (lead)
Public Art Lab Berlin, Germany
Fortress of Culture Šibenik, Croatia
Cinema Amza Pellea, Romania
Cinema Star, Greece
Creative Tech Labs M2C Bremen, Germany
Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands
KEA European Affairs, Belgium
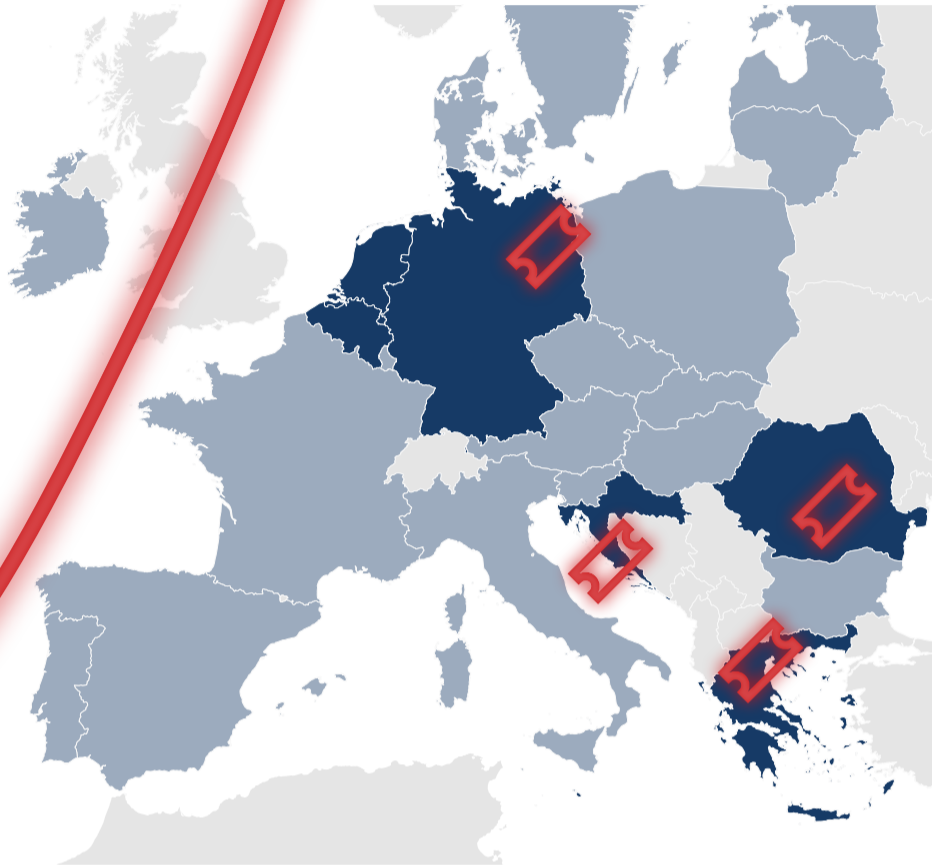
## Something unplanned happened then...

Lockdown measures and travel bans resulting from the spread of COVID-19 in early 2020 constrained and adapt cinemas and the project to shift perspectives to a new situation with closed audiences staying home.

Partners gathered their crea- tive energies in or- der to find solutions to stand their ground as cinemas and cultural hubs beyond the big screen as well as fulfil the aim of the project. With the curatorial strands of **CONNECT**, **ENGAGE** and **ENTERTAIN**, a series of digital events for international audiences focussed on the significance of cinema as a place for critical reflection and dialogue and therefore emphasize the importance of culture for society – especially in times of change – as well as the strength of an international and creative network.
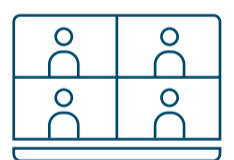
This handbook is the result of the Connecting Cinemas partners' experience in putting forward various types and formats of activities to connect, engage and entertain cinemas and audiences across Europe during these particular times. We hope it inspires other cinema makers and theatres as well as cultural organisations active in rural areas to organise similar interactive activities with their audiences and broaden the network of European rural cinemas.
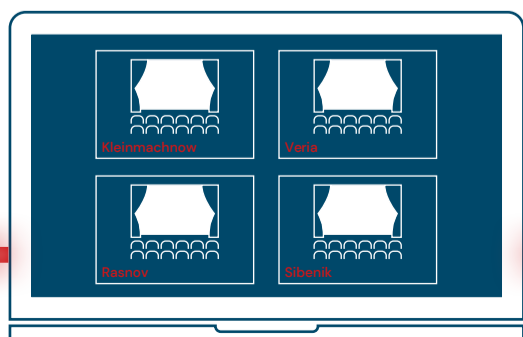
Long live cinemas!

THE HANDBOOK

Through unpacking and explaining Connecting Cinemas activities, this handbook contributes to:

CONNECT

Cinema audiences Europe-wide, facilitating dialogue, exchange of perspectives and cultural values beyond borders through a remote shared programme between cinema partners. While opening the cinema's black box, the big screen can become an interactive media window for debates and discussions to exchange local perspectives and opinions about the film culture.

ENGAGE

Transforming the cinema into a place of togetherness through quality programmes of cultural events and creating a new cinema experience. The project has experimented with ways to transform cinemas into cultural centres with events and playful interactions, especially to attract a younger audience beyond social and cultural differences.

ENTERTAIN

Local audiences in rural areas with tailored participatory forms of community storytelling, marketing strategies and civic engagement by expanding the cinema-making process to the neighbourhoods. Engaging (new) audiences is also about making cinemas relevant places to discuss topical issues such as solidarity, humanity and social inclusion.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK AND WHAT CAN YOU FIND HERE?

→ A playful tool to choose and implement successful participatory activities engaging cinemas and audiences across borders

→ Offers practical advice on developing the most suited formats, tailored to your profile and objectives

→ Provides concrete examples of activities designed to connect, engage and entertain cinemas and cinema audiences across Europe

WHO IS IT FOR?

→ Cinema makers and theatres, in particular, located in rural, peripheral areas

→ Cultural organisations, in particular, located in rural, peripheral areas

→ European projects/networks looking for inspiration to design transnational activities in the field of cinema making, culture and creativity

This handbook is the result of the action research process that has been carried out by Connecting Cinemas partner KEA involving all cinema partners to reflect on their experiences and to draw lessons to share to a wider audience and inspire cinemas in rural and peripheral areas to try out new activities.

We hope you'll enjoy following us on our journey, if you have any questions or would like to know more, please contact us at info@connecting-cinemas.eu

LET'S DIVE IN:
WHICH ACTIVITIES CAN YOU FIND IN THIS HANDBOOK?

This handbook includes activities that have been created and tested in the frame of Connecting Cinemas, in a very peculiar period that is the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2021). We propose a set of 5 categories of activities, each with a different purpose:

①

②

③

④

⑤

A summary table with all activities indicating which ones Connect / Engage / Entertain

	CONNECT	ENGAGE	ENTERTAIN
Building an international network Pit-stop sessions	🎟		
Dedicating time and space Connecting Cinemas Lounges	🎟	🎟	🎟
Designing interactive experiences in the cinema	🎟	🎟	
Building digital tools for cinemas	🎟	🎟	🎟
CONNECTING ACROSS BORDERS – SMALL SCALE ACTIVITIES			
On the way to my cinema	🎟		
Connecting classrooms	🎟	🎟	
Film quiz night	🎟	🎟	🎟
Podcast			🎟

"The idea of Connecting Cinemas was to connect us much more than we are used to connecting because usually a cinema is its own planet: you plan your programme, you have your own audience and that's it. The big benefit from Connecting Cinemas has been to be able to share our experiences, to share our ideas, to get new ideas from each other."

Carolin Huder, Neue Kammerspiele – Germany

Croatia

CONNECTING Cinemas EUROPE

Croatia

1 BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Pit-stop sessions

Any European project or network starts by getting to know each other. Sounds basic but when it comes to organising international activities, exchanging films, proposing new formats, better to know which partner is the best fit, which set would work well in one particular venue, what format or topic would appeal to one specific audience.

THE IDEA / THE MAIN QUESTION

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Connecting Cinemas partners were unable to meet face to face when the project started. However, we took advantage of digital tools to design introductory sessions for the partners to learn more about each other's production conditions, cinema characteristics, challenges and opportunities in an interactive way. The aim was for the Connecting Cinemas project consortium to better understand the local situation of its members and the major strengths and weaknesses of being an arthouse cinema in a rural area, as well as to collect inputs to better define the direction of future Connecting Cinemas activities.

We borrowed the name "pit-stop" from motorsports where it is a pause for refuelling and mechanical repair carried out by experts, the pit crew in a minimum of time.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Each pit-stop focuses on one cinema but all participate in the discussion.

TOOLS Online calls platform (e.g., Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet), online collaborative white board (e.g., Miro, Stormboard, Mural) and SWOT analysis template (see some examples here: https://creately.com/blog/examples/swot-analysis-templates-create-ly/).

TIMMING **1.5 to 2 hour**s including **5 minutes** for introduction and agenda, **15 minutes** for the presentation of the cinema, **40 minutes** for the SWOT analysis, **15 to 30 minutes** of group work on the challenges, **15 to 30 minutes** of wrapping up on the challenges and the conclusions.

STAFF One moderator to guide the presentations and monitor the time, one note taker to report / organise the answers on the online whiteboard.

[TIP]

You can consider asking your partners to connect directly to the collaborative whiteboard but if they are not familiar with the tool you will gain time in having one experienced note-taker managing the answers on the board.

PREPARATION

Each cinema partner receives a set of bullet points in advance that would enable them to present their cinema in 15 minutes, in a structured and comparable way.

Here are the aspects Connecting Cinemas partners considered for their presentations:

→ Context: audience, environment (e.g., rural area, town, city, suburb), local politics, etc.

→ Programming: curation, film distribution, events

→ Infrastructure: venue (e.g., number of screens), technical means

→ Finance and partners: business model, revenue streams

→ Marketing: PR, communication, audience development strategies

→ Staff: number and position of staff employed, volunteers

→ Covid-19 related challenges

→ Connecting Cinemas: expectations and opportunities perceived

Partners are then invited to think about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of their cinemas, briefly answering the following questions:

STRENGTHS

What elements have a positive influence on my organisation?

What do I do well?

What unique resources can I draw on?

What do others see as my strengths?

WEAKNESSES

What elements have a positive influence on my organisation?

What aspects could I improve?

Where do I have fewer resources than others?

What are others likely to see as weaknesses?

OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities are open to me?

What trends could I take advantage of?

How can I turn my strengths into opportunities?

THREATS

What trends (market, context, audiences) could harm me?

What is the competition doing?

Finally, cinema partners are invited to think about their challenges that will then be presented and discussed with the group. Formulate two or 3 key challenges that you are facing and that you would like to be discussed with others.

RUNNING THE PIT-STOP SESSION

Presentation, SWOT analysis and challenges.
In practice: here is a typical workshop schedule

Introduction by the moderator: **2–3 minutes**

Presentation of the cinema: **15 minutes**

Moderated SWOT analysis: **40 minute**s. The moderator guides the presentation, the note taker reports answers on the whiteboard.

Strengths: **5 minutes** for presentation + **5 minutes** for questions/discussion

Weaknesses: **5 minutes** for presentation + **5 minutes** for questions/discussion

Opportunities: **5 minutes** for presentation + **5 minutes** for questions/discussion

Threats: **5 minutes** for presentation + **5 minutes** for questions/discussion

Challenges: **30 minutes to 1 hour** depending on the number of participants.

Presenting 2–3 main challenges, picking one for collective discussion.

Break out group discussion on the challenges: how can other partners be helpful/supportive? Brainstorming on the identified challenge.

Back to the plenary, each group presents its main ideas to help solve the challenge.

Wrapping up of the pit-stop session by the note taker: **3 to 5 minutes**

AFTER THE WORKSHOP

Follow up with your partners if some parts of the presentation or the SWOT analysis are not complete or not clear. Share the results of the brainstorming with all partners. Refer to the SWOT analysis to reflect on your project activities, e.g. thinking about challenges that could be taken up by working collectively as part of the project or network.

RESULTS

You can find next page a table with the outcomes of this reflection from each partner in the Connecting Cinemas project. We used the partners' presentations to reflect on the three curatorial strands of the project and see how each partner connects, engages and entertains with their audiences.

NB: As a truly hybrid project, the goals of Connecting Cinemas – to Connect, Engage, Entertain - often overlap. Although the distinction between these axes is not always clear-cut, we were able to link the points below with the goals that they are most related to, in order to organize the reflection among the partners. However, it should be highlighted that the pillars are organically interconnected and it would be impossible to compartmentalize them throughout the project's implementation.

	Neue Kammerspiele, Kleinmachnow	Cinema Star, Veria	Cinema Amza Pellea, Rasnov	Fortress of Culture Šibenik, Šibenik
CONNECT Focus: networks	× Belongs to the network of cinemas which have hosted the Berlinale. × Organizes the Kinofrauenstammst isch ("Stammtisch" means a regular meeting) which aims to connect and support women in the cinema business.	× Member of the Europa Cinemas network since 2018. × Member of the association of Greek cinemas since 1960.	× In development: partnerships with local schools to turn the cinema hall into a school classroom and to introduce movies as tools in the learning process of pupils. × In development: recently launched public campaign positioning the cinema as "a place for all generations". The main objective will be to increase the attachment and involvement of the local community with Amza Pellea.	× Belongs to the Croatian Independent Cinemas Network. × Soon becoming a member of Croatian Cinema Network – a collective on independent cinema venues that share screenings and experiences.
ENGAGE Focus: audiences	× Offers instrument lessons and musical education for kindergarten kids. × Offers cinema and music themed workshops during the holidays. × Offers private theatre groups. × Organizes monthly meetings for parents with transgender kids and foster parents.	× Hosts film discussion nights every Thursday- usually around a European film. The cinema invites the director or one of the actors to do a Q&A with the audience after the screening.	× Hosts the Film and Histories Festival, which centres around historic films and documentaries. The festival was born out of the idea that history should be approached differently in order to reach out to the larger public and younger generations. The festival proposes a range of events and activities around the main screenings, in order to promote dialogue on fundamental contemporary issues, grounded in solid knowledge and understanding of history. × Hosts public debates (history, politics, economy, education, technology etc).	× Offers a membership programme (the Friends club) – to promote stronger connections with and among audiences. This membership centres the audiences as the cinema's main raison d'être, and seeks to incorporate their needs into the cinema's strategy. The membership follows a participatory model, by which members can choose where the Fortress will invest the financial resources collected through their yearly membership fee. Investments are not connected directly to the cinema – they are mostly used to support renovations and conservation in the old city centre's architectural heritage.

	Neue Kammerspiele, Kleinmachnow	Cinema Star, Veria	Cinema Amza Pellea, Rasnov	Fortress of Culture Šibenik, Šibenik
ENTERTAIN Focus: events	× Hosts the Lieblingsfilm mit Schwips (favourite film with a buzz) – a classical movie with a suitable drink (e.g., Big Lebowski with White Russian) or a film series for seniors. × Hosts about 6-8 other cultural events per month (concerts, lectures, theatre, dance).	× Organizes face painting workshops with schools. × Organizes film screenings and filmmaking workshops for school children. × Organizes special thematic events (for example, costumed screenings of popular sagas such as "Star Wars", or Valentine's Day special programming). × Hosts competitions & quiz nights. × Offers open air cinema sessions during the summer.	× Hosts music concerts in the cinema hall, and other locations across the city- in the fortress (blues, jazz, rock, experiment, silent movies with live music) and in the old church (classic, jazz, experimental). × Hosts a summer school for 45-50 students (from Romania, Ukraine and Moldova). × Hosts exhibitions.	× Organizes cinema screenings as events, including special "features" - presenting for instance the film directors/film critics/actors. × Co-curates special programming with national film festivals. × Hosts "Wednesdays around the world", a summer series of independent and art film screenings on Barone Fortress accompanied by discussions alongside the screenings, hosted by nationally acclaimed film directors, festival selectors, actors and film critics.

"The approach of the Connecting Cinemas project is to transform the cinema space into a cultural space with more topics than movie watching."
Martin Koplin, M2C Bremen – Germany

Germany

Croatia

DEDICATING TIME AND SPACE

The Lounges

Following the closing of cinemas and given the impossibility to meet in person, the partners of the Connecting Cinemas project designed a series of hybrid events as an alternative to the original programme – and that is how the concept of the "CONNECTING CINEMAS LOUNGES" was born. These lounges followed an experimental format that aimed to bring the traditional idea of "cultural salons" into the digital realm.

THE IDEA / THE MAIN QUESTION

Each "Lounge" addressed a specific socially relevant theme and included streaming of the main discussion via the project website (connecting-cinemas.eu), and other activities such as panel discussions, short screenings and interaction with the audience. Not all lounges included screening a feature film or documentary.

In this handbook Connecting Cinemas partners wish to share what made the "Connecting Cinemas Lounges" a valuable experience. How did these events help

cinemas to **Connect**, **Engage**, and **Entertain** – with each other, and with their audiences? In order to develop a framework (see "What makes the perfect lounge?" section below) for other cinemas to implement these types of events, we built on the feedback collected from the partners.

Key points / partner's feedback

CONNECT

How does the Lounge allow the development of new relations and with whom does it connect?

× International connections. Gathering people from different cultural backgrounds enabled a creative and cultural exchange, which generated valuable insights and perspectives for the partners – for example, on how cultural projects and cultural education are organized in other countries.

× Local connections. Connecting with local stakeholders that can become important long-term partners for cinemas, helping them to develop a community-oriented cultural program.

× Connections with other cinemas, projects and festivals. Connecting with other local and international cinemas is an opportunity to learn about new practices and ways of working. This gave everyone a chance to take a step back and (re)consider their own work from a fresh lens.

× Connections among colleagues. Connecting with other cinema owners and colleagues was an opportunity to learn about each other's expectations for the project, as well as their priorities and concerns regarding the future of their cinemas.

× Professional network building. Meeting other cinema professionals and learning from them – but also meeting people from other fields who can be great potential partners in future collaborations and projects that go beyond the core activity of the cinema.

ENGAGE

To what extent is the Lounge engaging the audience?

× Encouraging conversational formats. Enabling people with different backgrounds to discuss a relevant topic, and having an interactive exchange with the audience makes the cinema feel more accessible to the general public and increases audience engagement.

× Brainstorming solutions to bring the audience back to cinemas. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, it was important for cinema owners to discuss new strategies to try to make audiences feel safe in the theatre space again.

ENGAGE

To what extent is the Lounge engaging the audience?

× Tackling social issues. Promoting discussions centred around social and political topics presents the cinema as a "cultural hub". As long as the topic remains relevant for everyone, audiences will feel compelled to participate which can improve their sense of belonging.

× Organizing hybrid events. Hosting hybrid events during or after the film projections can increase audience participation from different places / countries. This further enables the exchange of different opinions and perspectives, which promotes the development of critical thinking among audiences around worldwide topics.

ENTERTAIN

How is the Lounge transforming the cinema experience?
By what means?

× Enabling inspiring conversations. Movies often inspire discussion centring around cultural and political subjects. The "Lounge" leverages this characteristic of movie-going by introducing a component of discussions. This transforms the cinema experience, which goes from being a passive activity to an active and participatory one.

× Sharing the local film culture. The "Lounge" allowed cinemas to familiarise audiences with their national film history by showcasing local films, or hosting film exhibitions focusing on national figures or local attributes present in the cinema of the country. This can make people connect with the broader activity of filmmaking, beyond the audience experience of watching the movie (final product).

× Multidisciplinary events. By combining film projections, concerts, live discussions, and other forms of events, the "Lounge" can present audiences with more entertaining ways of experiencing the cinema. The cinema transforms the audience experience by making it part of the programme.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

A framework to inspire other cinemas to create their very own "Lounge"

WHAT MAKES THE PERFECT LOUNGE?

Some things really make a difference when it comes to preparing a great "Lounge". For example, you will need to take into consideration the topic you want to choose and then select your format and speakers accordingly. But there is a lot more to consider than just the main theme – just like any other event, a "Lounge" requires planning and preparing beforehand. This is why we suggest you create a production plan for your "Lounge", so you can make sure you tick all the boxes in the planning phase, and the event runs smoothly and stress-free.

Wondering what a production plan looks like? Take a look at our example below, and feel free to adjust yours according to the needs of your local context, cinema, and audience. This structure is not meant to be restrictive, but merely a suggestion. **Steps don't always work in steps, and event planning often follows more of an organic process than a rigid framework.** If you need to skip one or more steps, do it! There is no such thing as a perfect event, and you will find that the slip-ups and things gone wrong make for great memories for everyone involved.

A TYPICAL LOUNGE PRODUCTION PLAN

[1] Establish a budget for your "Lounge".
Doing this early on gives you an idea of whether you can dream big or small, and helps you avoid unexpected future expenditures.

How much does it cost to host a Lounge?

The answer is: it depends! It can go anywhere from EUR 500 for an onsite-only local event, to EUR 5,000 if you want to host a hybrid (both online and on-site) event for a European audience. When an event is held online, you manage to save the cost of renting a venue, or handling catering services; on the other hand, online requires more investment in technical equipment and team. For instance, one Connecting Cinemas partner decided to invest in 2 new cameras, another one in a video mixer, and a sound system (microphones) for their "Lounge". It all depends on the equipment you already have and the budget you can invest, so make sure you have a clear figure in mind before you go on to any next steps!

[2] Define the main theme of your "Lounge".
There you have to think about who you are organising your lounge for:

Option N°1   Your local audience only.
Identify the topic that would spark the most interest for your cinema and among your audience.

What are the current cultural and social concerns in your hometown, can people in other towns relate to them? Which topics would your audience be interested in discussing?

[PRO TIP]
Remember to make the most of the resources you already have, and consider striking up partnerships and / or making long-term investments where you can.

[SPONSORING TIP]
In order to lower your costs, you might want to activate your local and national networks to find organisations and companies that can sponsor your event. For example, you might ask a local coffee place to take care of the event's catering in exchange for promotion and the exposure their services will get among your event-goers!

[PRO TIP]
A theme with a connection to local issues might be a better fit to engage people in a live event. A global theme will have higher chances to engage people internationally and online.

Option N°2   A broader audience, in cooperation with other cinemas in your country or abroad?
You have to consider other cinemas' audiences too and choose a global issue or something that speaks to everyone. *What topics could be dealt with from a regional or European perspective?*

Once you have your main theme, find a catchy title and a subtitle to make the topic clear to the audience.

Examples of Connecting Cinemas "Lounge" titles:

× 7th MAY 2021: "Don't stand so close to me"
   @ Neue Kammerspiele Kleinmachnow, Germany – *online*
× 17th JULY 2021: "PUSH – Why we can't afford to live in our own cities anymore"
   @ Fortress of Culture Šibenik, Croatia – *onsite*
× 28th AUGUST 2021: "One of Us – the Brains that Pull the Triggers"
   @ Cinema Amza Pellea Rasnov, Romania – *hybrid*
× 1st SEPTEMBER 2021: "How to get back from the sofa into the cinema"
   @ Cinestar Veria, Greece – *onsite*

[3]   Plan your "Lounge" program.
Film screenings, discussions, debates, forums, coffee breaks, you name it – you should plan your programme so that your events do not overlap, and you can manage to keep your audiences entertained and guide them through the event smoothly. This means avoiding mistakes such as planning a 3-hour long discussion – you should plan for a break every 50 or 60 minutes, to keep audiences engaged and energized.

Example of a "screening" agenda [from the "Lounge" in Rasnov]:

× 16:00 Short introduction to the movie *only for the cinema audience*
× 16:04 Movie screening, Reconstructing Utoya, by Carl Javer, 90 minutes *only for the cinema audience*
× 17:34 Short break for technical arrangements
× 17:45 – 18:15 Introduction of the guests made by Claudia Duca *available online and offline*
× Questions addressed to the director Carl Javer (Sweden), *via Zoom*
× Questions addressed to Kai Brand-Jacobsen (Norway, director of Peace Action)
× Training and Research Institute of Romania), *via Zoom*
× Questions addressed to Emilian Mihailov (Romania, executive director of Applied Ethics Research Center), *on stage*
× Free remarks from all guests
× Final remarks by Claudia Duca

[4]   Build your "Lounge" team and technical requirements.
After establishing your budget, theme, and programme, it should be easier to understand how many people you will be able to allocate to work on your Lounge.

Example of a onsite lounge production team:

1 coordinator / 1 PR manager / 1 technical producer / 2 volunteers / 1 moderator

Example of a online lounge production team with several locations:

1 leading host / 1 host per location with technical producer / 1 global moderator / 8 guests spread through 4 locations

Outsourcing certain services for your "Lounge"

Most CC partners outsourced technical support for their "Lounge". If you do not have a big enough in-house technical team to take on a more challenging event, or if you're missing key technical equipment, it's always an option to outsource this service. Hired technicians usually bring their own equipment with them, but always confirm beforehand.

[5]   Pick the venue and date for your "Lounge".
Take into consideration how many people you would expect to be attending the lounge and choose a venue that can accommodate that capacity as well as your technical requirements.

CC Partners "Venue and Date Check-List"

✔ Be careful not to choose a date that overlaps with other major local cultural events such as festivals or with… football games! That might result in a lower turnout for your event due to competition with others.

✔ For hybrid events: check the Internet bandwidth and overall quality of connection at the place you're considering.

✔ Consider the "atmosphere" you're trying to create: it's not always about how many people you want to invite, but also the feeling of the event (e.g., a smaller venue might inspire a more intimate feeling and greater sense of connection).

✔ #Covid check: Don't forget you will probably need more space than usual, in order to respect Covid-19 rules!

[6]   Confirm your speakers.
After you decide on the programme, think about who are the best speakers to deliver the event's message.

CC Partners "Speakers Check-List"

✔ Make sure you hire an experienced "moderator" who is aware of your lounge theme and familiar with your audience– someone who can help guide the discussion and stir it in the right way.

- Reach out to professionals from outside the film industry to enrich the debates: the more diverse your panel of speakers is, the more perspectives they will bring into the conversation– and the more interesting the debate is likely to be!

- Reach out to your speakers in advance, so you can be sure about the support you can count on. Prepare them by providing a detailed running order of the event. For a nice visual effect, you can share a common background for speakers participating remotely and advice on the dress code to match colours!

- If you're handling a controversial topic, consider bringing in a surprise speaker who can deliver an "out of the box" point of view to fuel the debate.

[7] Develop a communications plan for your "Lounge".
This can be more or less ambitious, depending on your budget. Tailor your messages and tools according to your target audience. You might want to print out posters or other promotional materials and distribute them in key places around your hometown (e.g., high schools, cafés, bars, museums), produce banners for the public space, pay for sponsored articles in local media, and/or plan a social media strategy for the event in order to engage with your audience online on multiple channels.

[PRO TIP]
Consider the topic of your lounge: is it well known to your audience? If not, you will need to communicate well ahead, for instance sharing short videos from the speakers and/or movie you are planning to screen, interviews, documents about the topic to make it more familiar to your audience, spark their curiosity, and help them engage in the discussion.

Best practice example from the CC partners: the "Red Thread" campaign on social media

As part of the promotion strategy for the first Connecting Cinemas "Lounge" in Kleinmachnow (Germany) on the topic of "distance", the CC partners co-produced a small video. In this media piece, members can be seen tossing a ball of red yarn to each other from one location to the other, in order to represent their state of connection, even when physically distant form each other. The video was then shared on the CC project social media channels in order to promote the "Lounge" in Kleinmachnow (Germany). You can watch the RED THREAD TEASER which connected CC partners across Europe here: https://youtu.be/DYWUyiOD5FE, and get inspired to create your own way of connecting!

[TOP TIP]
Use existing networks! If, like Connecting Cinemas, your project is co-funded by Creative Europe, you might want to reach out to the CREATIVE EUROPE helpdesk from your country to attend your Lounge, and (why not) even help with promoting it on their website?

[8] Prepare to collect audience feedback.
An event such as a "Lounge" is a great opportunity for you to collect feedback from your audience. This will give you valuable information on your audience, and how you can better connect with them in the future!

Questions for a possible survey elaborated by CC partners:

Did the theme of the CC Lounge meet your interests and expectations?

☐ Yes, very much so   ☐ Yes, somewhat   ☐ Hardly   ☐ No, not at all

Did the session touch on relevant issues on the topic of distance/distancing?

☐ Yes, very much so   ☐ Yes, somewhat   ☐ Hardly   ☐ No, not at all

Was the format sufficiently interactive for you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Was there enough time to properly discuss the topic?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you find the overall atmosphere?

☐ Informal   ☐ Relaxed   ☐ Professional   ☐ Formal   ☐ Awkward

[FEEDBACK – ONLINE]
You can collect guests' email details during the event, and send out online surveys once the event is over (make sure you get their consent to collect their email addresses and contact them for feedback, to respect the European General Data Protection Regulation). You can also manage a live poll using a tool such as Slido or Mentimeter to enable your audience to answer straight away!

[FEEDBACK – OFFLINE]
You can also collect information on site – for example, by going around the crowd with a tablet or a similar device, asking people to fill in your survey.

[9] "Lounge" rehearsal.
In order to make sure everything works, don't forget to do a "technical crash test" before the event. This will help you spot any technical difficulties and work around them before the "big day".

Final "ASK YOURSELF" list according to CC partners:

- Did you send out all the invitations to your selected speakers and guests?

- Have your guests received information regarding the format of your event? Are they aware of their contribution (content, format, length), if any, to your event?

- Did you rehearse your audience interaction strategies?

- Did you check with the technical team that all functionalities are working appropriately? Example: streaming devices, microphones, cameras.

- Is each member in your cinema team aware of their role during the event?

- Did you go over your planned schedule one last time to make sure your activities don't overlap and you leave enough room for a "break" when needed?

[10] Enjoy your "Lounge"!
Is everything in order? Let the "Lounge" begin!

"We have to develop more activities together, starting from sharing expe-rience regarding the cinema infrastructure but also content development and the most important topic for us: audience development."

Mihai Dragomir, Cinema Amza Pellea – Romania

Romania

Romania

3 CONNECTING ACROSS BORDERS

Small scale activities

The Connecting Cinemas project has developed a series of smaller scale activities compared to the Lounges, which does not make them less interesting! From launching a digital campaign to gather cinema audiences online and reward their creativity to connecting pupils from various locations to watch a film together and discuss, this chapter is full of creative ideas to implement at your cinema.

I   ON THE WAY TO MY CINEMA

THE CAMPAIGN

"On The Way To My Cinema" was a participatory Europe-wide digital campaign that invited audiences to record a video of themselves on their way to their favorite cinema during the Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign asked audiences to shoot a one-minute film with their smartphones, and share it on the Connecting Cinemas platform. The goal of this activity was to connect cinema lovers around Europe in a shared understanding that they were not alone navigating through the newly imposed borders of their neighbourhoods during the pandemic.

Check out #onthewaytomycinema on YouTube and watch the videos of the campaign!

FORMAT OF THE VIDEO

1080p / MP4 / length: 1 minute / free of rights of third parties / landscape format / recorded with a smart phone

Such a campaign can be replicated on the topic of your choice, in relation to the film culture (favourite film scenes, characters, soundtracks, dance moves… everything is possible!) or the cinema as a physical space (hidden corners of your cinema, favourite person in your cinema…).

You can use the campaign as a basis for a quiz, a popular vote to engage with and entertain audiences.

[PRO TIP]

Set the rules and the deadline clear. Communicate widely: find multipliers who will participate and share the campaign with their own communities (local schools, shopkeepers in the area of your cinema, other cultural spaces, social media influencers…).

THE FINAL EVENT

Connecting Cinemas partners held a big finale of the "On the Way to my Cinema" campaign in Germany on the 2nd of November. The initial idea was to screen all the videos in each partner cinema at the same time, thus creating another shared moment of connection but it was not possible due to new Covid-19 restrictions in some partner countries. The videos were shown on the Neue Kammerspiele screen, the event was streamed on Facebook for the audiences and on Zoom for the partner cinemas. Everyone watching the streaming had the possibility to vote online for their favorite video. At the end of the night, the winner of the video campaign was announced: from a total of 24 submitted videos, the prize went to Strand Arts Centre, an independent cinema in Belfast, UK, which won a trip to Romania in the summer of 2022 for the Rasnov Film and History Festival run by Connecting Cinemas partner Cinema Amza Pellea.

II   FILM EXCHANGES

Film exchanges can be a great way of partnering with another cinema while engaging in meaningful conversation and knowledge sharing with audiences in different locations. If you would like to organize a film exchange at your own cinema, get inspired by our case studies below!

Case study N°1

"Connected classrooms", an example of a film exchange between Romania and Germany [held on October 1ˢᵗ, 2021]

Cinemas can be a lot more than just a place to watch movies! Connecting Cinemas partners, Cinema "Amza Pellea" from Rasnov (Romania) and Neue Kammerspiele from Kleinmachnow (Germany) functioned as a Romania–Germany portal for two groups of young students who communicated online, on the big screen, and with ultra-technology on the topic of large carnivores (e.g. wolves, bears). Curious children from Germany had the opportunity to ask how Romanians live with large carnivores.
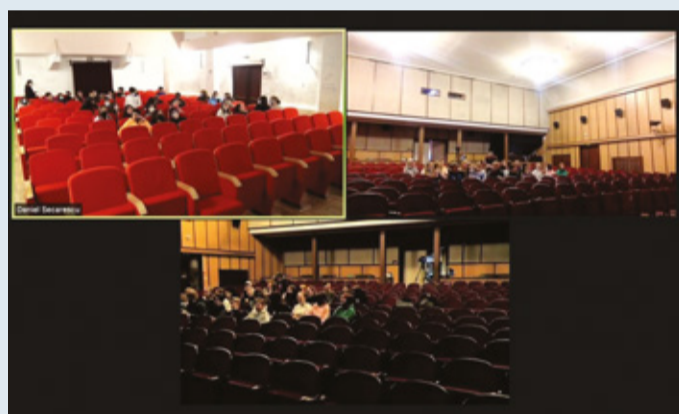
The pupils from Peter Thal School (Rasnov) answered with examples from their own experience and entered into dialogue with the students from Germany. It was an intercultural communication experience from which both sides had a lot to learn- a prime example of how cinemas can – and should – overstep their boundaries in order to become stages of knowledge exchange!

Learning points from the implementation of this activity :

→ Prepare a detailed script of your event with ice-breaking questions and interactive moments using polling tools such as Mentimeter or Slido

→ Connect before the event: prepare questions the kids should work on as teams in relation to the film or topic ahead of the event

→ There should be a moderator (or MC) prepared with questions for both audiences. Some of those questions can be announced before the screening, to allow teachers to better contextualize and prepare their pupils for the interaction

→ 90 minutes is a bit too long for pupils to retain their attention; 70-80 will be better, and 50-60 would be perfect

→ The technical setup is very important. Technical checks are compulsory 10 minutes before the event

→ A wireless microphone like "Catchbox" is better and more practical

→ A close-up camera is needed when the pupils are speaking, to avoid having them go in front of a fixed camera

→ The budget is small (screening fees, technicians, and MC preparation)

→ The event can involve more schools in the same cinema or more cinemas but no more than 4-5 (the more cinemas involved, the less time for a real debate)

→ This format can be adapted for adults, during the afternoons or evenings

Future ideas for Local Cinemas Sharing European Culture

In this film exchange format, any local cinema can decide to propose an event to any other cinema. The cinema proposing the event should:

- Choose a movie (local production, illustrating a local cultural element or highlighting a European value)
- Negotiate with the producers and distributors for a decent fee (or even for free) available for all European countries or part of them
- Prepare a short presentation of the movie in English, some visuals (trailer, poster, pictures) and English subtitles
- Invite the director and/or actors for being available for the online Q&A
- Send the public offer to all cinemas (not multiplex ones)

The invited cinema, upon accepting the offer, should:

- Pay the screening fee and national subtitles (if they are not already available at distributors)
- Promote the event among its audience
- Organize the connection with a video meeting and at least one camera and one microphone

In the end, both cinemas will get a quality event with special guests from different countries (which usually is not available for smaller venues). Through this shared event, cinemas can improve their collaboration skills, diversify their activity and increase their reputation, while strengthening their partnership with national producers and distributors. It's a win-win!

III FILM QUIZ NIGHT

THE IDEA / THE MAIN QUESTION

The idea was to celebrate the European Arthouse Cinema Day on November 8th, 2020 in a playful manner with cinema lovers from all over Europe while connecting across borders at a time when a second lockdown had been imposed in most European countries.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

[PRO TIP]

Note that it takes about 3 to 4 weeks to organise a quiz. If you are not experienced with the activity, we recommend a good 4 weeks of preparation. To shorten the preparation time and facilitate the process, you can join up with an organisation or a professional with experience in pub quizzes and online quizzes.

Connecting Cinemas partner Fortress of Culture in Šibenik, Croatia prepared the Film Quiz that was streamed live on Facebook. For all film and cinema lovers as well as for quiz lovers, 24 questions were asked together with 24 movie soundtrack songs to guess.

32 teams of about 4 people each were connected throughout the event.

Quiz rules

1. The quiz starts at 8pm CET on the Connecting Cinemas Facebook page.

2. At 7:30pm CET the Quiz application form will be made available from the same Facebook page: please open it, REGISTER your team or yourself (pick any name you like) and LEAVE IT OPEN in another tab – you'll need it for submitting your answers!
You can play individually, or you can play as a team – the most important is that only one team member is writing down the answers in the application form.

3. Please write all answers in ENGLISH and in capital letters.

4. Every correct answer will get you 4 points and every guessed singer will get you 1 point.

5. Google is not allowed!

6. If you don't know the answer to a question, please type: – or/into the answer box.

Tips that make your life easier

When filling in the online form, ask teams to respect some rules and be clear about what you want, for instance:

→ Please insert your answers in CAPITAL LETTERS!

→ Questions should be answered under QUESTIONS, Music goes where it says MUSIC :) and we're looking for ARTIST / PERFORMER of the song, NOT THE SONG, NOT THE MOVIE in which it was performed.

Case study N°3

Film Quiz @ Fortress of Culture Šibenik [held on November 8th, 2020] – a step-by-step planning guide for you!

1. Fortress of Culture met with the local Pub Quiz NGO – an organization with expertise in doing online and on site quizzes – to ask them to draft the quiz questions.

2. Upon receiving the questions, Fortress of Culture sent them to their external translators to undergo translation (from Croatian to English).

3. While waiting for the questions to be translated, Fortress of Culture took care of other tasks:

   a Finding an attractive venue for the quiz night

   b Choosing the kind of music they would like to play and making a setlist in collaboration with the Pub Quiz NGO

   c Contacting a musician to play the chosen setlist during breaks in between the questions (participants got bonus points for guessing the songs!). You can just play the music from the internet if you don't have a live musician available and/or are tight with budget but be careful with the music rights, it depends on the venue you have chosen for your quiz.

   d Contacting the technical (live-stream) team – in this case, it was the same one that the Pub Quiz NGO usually works with!

   e Finding a moderator and holding a meeting with them to explain the concept, context and theme of the quiz, and to give them the questions beforehand so they could prepare;

   f Starting a PR campaign (including social media)

4. A few days before the quiz, Fortress of Culture acquired all of the approvals necessary for a smooth live stream on social networks (and tested it!)

5. Finally, Fortress of Culture had a rehearsal a few hours before the quiz to make sure everything was working properly.

6. Let the quiz begin!

Some quiz questions

1. Which country's name can we find alongside a gourmet tradition (considered a taboo in our part of the world) in the title of a Danish 1999 movie, directed by Lasse Spang Olsen?

2. After experiencing all the charms of certain Romanian state institutions, what is waiting for Mr. Lazarescu at the end of the 2005 movie which was awarded at numerous festivals and was declared the 5th best movie of the 21st century by The New York Times in 2017?

3. What is the name of an obviously very fit, we can even say – a potent girl who urgently needed to somehow get 100.000 Deutsche mark in 1998?

4. Whom does Marlon Brando hysterically call out to under the starry sky?

5. Which movies were the source for these popular memes?

Can you answer them? ;)

IV PODCAST SERIES

THE IDEA / THE MAIN QUESTION

This is the latest outcome from the Connecting Cinemas project, and it consists of an English-language podcast series that presents all four partner cinemas of the project individually while connecting them under a common narrative. The slogan of the podcast is "Connecting Cinemas – an EU-funded media program connecting movie theatres and audiences across rural areas in Europe". The podcast series will present the managers who run the movie theatres that took part in the Connecting Cinemas project – the "partners" of this project. The series will take the listener on an inspiring trip across Europe– from a mountain in Romania to a remote town in Greece, passing by a harbour in Croatia, and finally stopping at a village in the suburbs of Berlin.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

The journalist Michaela Vieser has travelled to each of these four cinemas and created a 15–20-minute audio portrait reproducing the history and peculiarities of each location, in a format mixing interviews and reportage. While each episode will have its own focus, some topics will be common to all, and programming (selection of films), networking, events, and local peculiarities will be in focus.

In the first episode, the podcast takes the listener on an audible journey into the cinematic universe of Neue Kammerspiele, with Vieser interviewing Manager Caro Huder and Cinema Operator Valeska Hanel, who talk about their cinema and the love they share for this artform.

Listen to the episodes on SoundCloud:
https://soundcloud.com/michaelavieser

"Connecting people from different cultures, cities and countries shows a way into the future of European cultural networks and projects. We are starting now, it's a pilot project and we are the first ones to connect in that way. But it's very thinkable to keep it going longer than one and a half years, get other projects from other countries involved and build a European network."

Valeska Hanel, Neue Kammerspiele – Germany

Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences

Olafur Eliasson, Earth Speakr, 2020

④ DESIGNING INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES IN THE CINEMA

Students projects

Connecting Cinemas partner, the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences put its experience and visionary thinking at the service of the project to help imagine new experiences in the cinema space that would attract audiences and make them interact in a playful way.

THE IDEA / THE MAIN QUESTION

How to use new forms of **visual media culture** not only to expand the cinema experience but also to redefine cinemas as local cultural hubs?

THE IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the Connecting Cinemas project, a collaboration between the Civic Interaction Design research group and students from the Master Digital Design at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences resulted in a guide to co-designing an interactive experience in the context of the cinema or related to visual culture.

The vision is for this guide to be a starting point for carrying out new, meaningful interventions in the cinema space, to expand the cinema experience and connect, engage and entertain audiences.

Download the guide here:
https://civicinteractiondesign.com/features/connect-ing-cinemas-report/

FROM CASE STUDIES TO DESIGN PROPOSITIONS

The students were asked to consider how digital media can be used to contribute to the goals of the Connecting Cinemas project. They were given the task to explore how to transform the cinema into a cultural centre and connect, engage or entertain audiences with playful interactive installations. Three different projects resulted from this exercise – the CineCube, the Motion Tracking Voting Game, and the Interactive Art Exhibition.

	CONNECT	ENGAGE	ENTERTAIN
CineCube (Bureau Piu)	🎟		
Motion Tracking Voting Game (Lime Productions)		🎟	
Interactive Art Exhibition (Art by us)		🎟	

Team Bureau Piu presents
"CINECUBE"

Problem statement:
How can we expand the cinema experience to connect audiences with each other and the cinema?
[CONNECT]

Which audience need did they address?
Bureau Piu based their idea around the need for adults (25–35-year-olds) to connect with each other. By re-engaging them with their local cinemas, the team hoped to also address the loneliness that this generation can often feel. They saw this as an opportunity to bring more visitors of this age group to these local arthouse cinemas which are facing difficult times currently with online streaming services, larger multiplex cinemas and Covid-19 restrictions. Their task then was to translate these desires into a playful, interactive installation.

Which solution did they create?
Team Bureau Piu designed the CineCube, an interactive cube with music that encourages connection among movie-goers while relating to the film being shown. The cubes are randomly placed on seats in the black box, so not every cinema-goer gets a cube. They are invited to pick them up and explore what they do. Each cube is connected to a music channel and the movements of the cube trigger the sounds. When used together, the cubes create a full melody that is played through the cinema speakers.

How does it work?
Every wooden cube in the cinema is outfitted with its own accelerometer that reads the movement of the user. The sensor is connected to a Wi-Fi board that sends the data to a computer which converts each movement into sound.

What are the main learning points from this project that cinemas can use to? **[CONNECT]**
1   Adding a surprise playful element to the cinema space is a technique that can be used to connect audience members.

2   Incorporating play has the potential to break down barriers and allow people to connect in a new way.

Team Lime Productions presents the
"MOTION TRACKING VOTING GAME"

Problem statement:
How can cinemas utilize interactive installations to connect with local audiences and increase engagement in cinema programming, especially amongst teenagers aged 12–18?
[ENGAGE]

Which audience need did they address?
Lime Productions identified a gap in the wants and needs of teenagers and the offerings of cinemas. They found that teens want a place to socialize with friends and a place for entertainment. In order to fill this gap, Lime Productions came to the conclusion that teenagers should be given a say in cinema programming.

Which solution did they create?
Team Lime Productions designed the Motion Tracking Voting Game, an interactive game where players can use their body movements to vote for whichever programming they would like to see at their local cinema. The installation can be found in the town square or inside the cinema lobby. At the end of the game, players have a chance to win prizes like free tickets or snacks at the theatre. Users are prompted to scan a QR code which takes them to a mobile platform where they can claim their prizes. Additionally, the mobile extension includes a forum where local citizens can talk about movies, view the programme and purchase tickets.

How does it work?
This concept uses motion tracking to enable the users to play the games with only their bodies. An LED screen with an attached webcam is needed to display the game visuals and read to the movements of the user. The game application is run via the web, so it only requires a server and internet connection to run. The mobile platform extension is a website reached by QR code.

What are the main learning points from this project that cinemas can use to? **[ENGAGE]**
1   You can activate a public space and attract new cinema audiences by bringing the dialogue out of the cinema and into the city.

2   It is important to make sure that your installation is strongly linked to the cinema theme when taking an experience into the public domain, so the connection to the cinema is easily recognizable by people passing by.

Team Art by Us presents the
"INTERACTIVE ART EXHIBITION"

Problem statement:
How can cinemas foster awareness of climate change and its influence on the weather and our daily life through an artistic, interactive and cinematic experience?
[ENGAGE]

Which audience need did they address?
The goal of this project was to engage audiences in an urgent local socio-political issue. Art by Us chose to focus on climate change with a particular focus on its impact in Amsterdam and across the Netherlands. Through an installation, they wanted to enable people to "see the bigger picture" of how their individual actions and choices could affect the long-term climate in Amsterdam and the world.

Which solution did they create?
Team Art by Us designed an Interactive Art Exhibition where visitors can experience the effects of climate change through interactive and still artworks. In the exhibition, participants can explore different future climate scenarios as they move around the space. The exhibition is located in the gallery space of the cinema but could be suitable for the lobby space too. It features two parts: an interactive painting and a collection of still paintings.

— The interactive painting allows participants to explore different climate change scenarios by moving around the interaction zone. The left side of the interaction zone triggers positive scenarios of windmills and clean streets to represent a future where humans take charge of climate change. The right side of the interaction zone triggers negative scenes of smoggy skies and plastic-filled waterways to represent a future where humans do not change their current behaviours. The interaction space additionally acts as a timeline– the back of the space is the current year (2021), and the front of the space is the future (2050);

— The still paintings surrounding the interactive painting are well-known paintings that have been altered to depict the effects of climate change. For example, in the painting by the Dutch artist, Vermeer, "The Milkmaid" is shown without milk in her pail.

How does it work?
The interactive painting is projected onto a blank wall in the gallery space. It uses a depth camera in combination with skeleton tracking and processes incoming data in a node-based visual programming software. By calling a weather API, the painting depicts the current weather at the exact location. These technologies allow the experience to be inclusive, anonymous and user-driven for up to two people. The participants' movements in the interaction zone output different painting variations that were created with 3D rendering and Photoshop scripts. The additional still paintings in the room were altered using Photoshop.

What are the main learning points from this project that cinemas can use to? [ENGAGE]
1   Using famous paintings allows the message to resonate with audiences on a familiar and deeper level.

2   By placing the participants into the experience as an active input, they engage with the topic in a visceral and personal way. This results in a heightened feeling of responsibility for their actions towards climate change.

Art by Us held an exhibition at LAB111 (Amsterdam, NL) on June 18, 2021. Visitors' feedback shows that, overall, visitors enjoyed the interactive exhibition experience.

We put together a set of reflection questions to help cinemas that would like to implement similar experiences. The goal is to brainstorm around how cinemas can use these experiences / interactions to better engage with and serve their audiences.

Qualitative feedback	Food for thought
Most visitors found that the exhibition successfully raised awareness about climate change. However, some visitors reported that they did not learn a significant amount of new information, due to their previous knowledge of the topic.	How can cinemas better target their audiences when engaging with social and cultural topics?
Visitors felt that physical interaction with the paintings enhanced their experience. However, some visitors noted that the interaction with the painting was not clear, as they were initially unsure in which direction to move.	How can cinemas build interactive activities that are engaging, participatory, and userfriendly?
Visitors enjoyed the fact that the exhibition took place at a local cinema. Some visitors commented on the fact that this drives the cinema towards being a cultural hub and political player.	How can cinemas develop a socially and culturally relevant event agenda, alongside their main film programming, that elevates the cinema-going experience?
Some visitors noted that this experience made them feel more connected to their local cinema.	How can cinemas build stronger relations with their audiences through cultural events that go beyond the film screening experience?
Overall, visitors would like to have had additional facilitated discussions about climate change after their interactions with the exhibition.	How can cinemas act as facilitators for debates around important social and political issues? How can cinemas affirm themselves as enablers of reflection and agents of change within their own local communities?

If you want to know more about the projects developed by the students check out the design guide online!
https://civicinteractiondesign.com/features/connecting-cinemas-report/

"For our future work it's crucial to have had the exchange of experiences and networking of Connecting Cinemas. Through all activities in the project, we've had the chance to think about and learn how we can connect, engage and entertain our audiences and uplift our future activities."

Gorana Barišić Bačelić, Fortress of Culture Šibenik – Croatia

Croatia

Germany

⑤ BUILDING DIGITAL TOOLS FOR CINEMAS

Tools and prototypes

As part of the Connecting Cinemas project, the M2C Institute – Institute for Applied Media Research in Bremen (Germany) mobilised their team and students to work on digital solutions applicable to the cinema space.

They proposed one tool and three prototypes: a video upload tool and prototypes of digital applications to transform the cinema experience into an engaging and entertaining one and help connect audiences.

	CONNECT	ENGAGE	ENTERTAIN
Video upload tool	🎟		
CineArt		🎟	🎟
Watch and QR	🎟	🎟	
CineFun		🎟	🎟

VIDEO UPLOAD TOOL

💬 THE IDEA / THE MAIN QUESTION

How to facilitate the administration of public calls for short films through an automatic tool? How to streamline the collection of short films for projects such as the "On the way to my cinema" campaign, or for individual cinemas for short film festivals for instance.

✊ THE IMPLEMENTATION

The M2C Institute team worked on the creation of an upload tool integrating cinema websites, forms and server space to make it easier and more efficient for cinemas to run calls for short films.

The upload tool enables the short film maker to register and upload all necessary information about themselves and the film such as rights and to upload the file onto the server of the cinema.

A prototype was created and tested by Connecting Cinemas partner Neue Kammerspiele in Kleinmachnow and in the Digital Impact Labs Bremen that are part of M2C Institute.

The tool is up and running, you can find an example of usage of the tool for a short film competition here: https://impact-lab.eu/video-upload/

MI Toolbuilding, Bjarne Lehmkuhl and Robin Jacobse present
"CINEART"

Problem statement:
How to bring new audiences to the cinemas and how to create new applications to help viewers interact with the movie, the cinema and each other? [ENGAGE] [ENTERTAIN]

Which audience need did they address?
Mobile technologies are largely used nowadays but in a very individual way, this is why the CineArt team

thought to use the cinema screen as a collaborative canvas to get people to create art together in the theatre, using their mobile phones as drawing tools.

Which solution did they create?
The team developed a mobile application turning the main screen into a blank canvas and providing access to users through their mobile phones to be able to draw on it.

How does it work?
The user needs to connect to the app through a QR code displayed in the cinema. The user can track its position on the screen-canvas with a coloured dot or smiley or avatar. This dot shows the position of the pencil on the screen-canvas and the mobile device acts as the controller. The gyroscope of the mobile device is tracked to control the pencil: this checks how the phone is tilted, so for example if you want to move to the left you need to tilt the phone to the left.

The team carried out an in-person test at the Connecting Cinemas partner Neue Kammerspiele in Kleinmachnow. The idea was to use the app prototype to play the game Pictionary, where one person has to draw a specific word while others are trying to guess. However, there were connection issues leading to users losing control over their painting tools. This made playing Pictionary difficult without further testing into connectivity prob-

lems. Instead, the team opened the screen for everyone to jointly draw a collaborative digital art piece on the canvas.

What are the main learning points from this project that cinemas can use to? [ENGAGE] [ENTERTAIN]
1   The cinema screen can be used as an engaging and entertaining space for people to jointly create and have fun, however rules and communication about the aim of the "game" have to be very clear to avoid conflicts over screen space among participants.

2   Further testing with a bigger crowd in an actual setting before a movie screening would give insight into interaction rate and scalability of the application.

3   There should be a further look into the connectivity problems to improve the user experience in the future.

4   During the test, the team received suggestions to better integrate the app into the cinema context by for instance using a still frame of a movie and adjusting the usable color palette to this frame. This would lead to an instant visual connection when entering the screening room.

MI Toolbuilding, Alexander Diener and Daniel Smolen present
"WATCH AND QR"

Problem statement:
How to measure feedback from the audience in real time?
How to know about the emotional engagement of the audience in a film?
How to compare the popularity of a film in various locations such as throughout the Connecting Cinemas network? **[CONNECT] [ENGAGE]**

Which solution did they create?
The solution is based on an easily accessible QR code for the audience to scan in the premises of the cinema

in order to access information about the film they are about to watch and to rate the film and their experience after they have watched it.

How does it work?
Customers of the cinemas can scan a QR code before the film starts from a small screen placed in the hallway of the cinema. This QR code will redirect the user to a website showing general information about the film (director, actors, plot).

The QR code shown after the film ends is displayed on the cinema screen and will direct the user to a poll, which asks how they would rate the movie and their emotional engagement. Questions included in the post-film poll should be simple and easy to ask, for

instance rate the movie from 1 to 5, 5 being the highest mark. The poll should only be available for a short period of time in order to reduce the risk of manipulation.

The ratings of the screening should be regularly updated, so that the customers can see the current state of play. To incentivize participation, customers can get the chance to win a free movie ticket, popcorn or a drink. Only a few customers can win something to reduce the possible costs for the theatre.

MI Toolbuilding, Mert Can and Ahmet Said Özdemir present
"CINEFUN"

Problem statement:

How to fill waiting spaces at the cinema with fun facts and film culture information? **[ENGAGE] [ENTERTAIN]**

Which audience need did they address?
Cinemas are usually full at least 15 minutes before the movie actually starts and people just sit and wait. The team wanted to create an app or a website that people can connect easily to thanks to a QR code that will be shown on the screen so that the waiting time becomes an interactive, informative and fun time.

Which solution did they create?
CineFun is a mobile app that can be used at three break times:

Before the movie
—   Showing general knowledge about the film (where / when was it shot, info about the plot.
—   Sharing information about the director, cast, music producers, etc.

During the break
—   Showing reviews by famous critics can help people reflect on what they like or dislike in the film so far.

After the movie
—   Proposing a trivia quiz about the hidden details and the easter eggs of the movie will be done and the winner will be awarded with a small prize.
—   Giving recommendations for other films on similar topics or films from the same director.

How does it work?
The administrator of the tool from the cinema team schedules the film, fills-in general information about the film on the platform, creates a quiz, and saves the QR code generated.
The viewer just has to scan the QR code, answer the quiz or review the film or can view recommendations.

Notes

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GOING FURTHER...

Looking for the right partner in your country?
Need some support to implement your programme of activities?

Check the Connecting Cinemas website connecting-cinemas.eu
Contact us at info@connecting-cinemas.eu

Neue Kammerspiele, Germany

Fortress of Culture Šibenik, Croatia
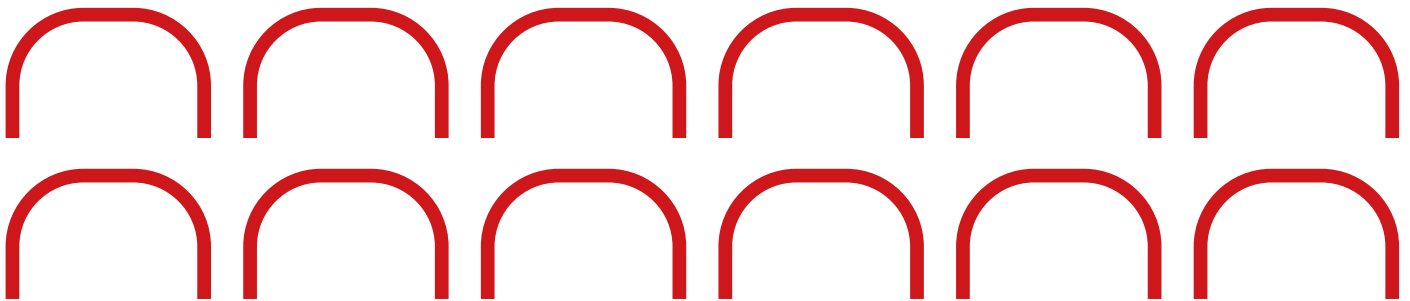
Cinema Amza Pellea, Romania

Cinema Star, Greece

Public Art Lab Berlin, Germany

Creative Tech Labs M2C Bremen, Germany

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands

KEA European Affairs, Belgium

neue Kammerspiele

KEA EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

PLAY & CIVIC MEDIA

PUBLIC ART LAB

FORTRESS of CULTURE SIBENIK

STAR cinema theater

RÂSNOV FILM FESTIVAL HISTORIES

M2C