

**MEMORY! Cinema actions in Myanmar**  
**Achievements and 2017 objectives**  
**SUMMARY**

**Context :**

In Myanmar, the country lived for several decades with limited access to Culture, whatever Myanmar or Foreign. This is indeed valid for cinema. And one must keep in mind that Myanmar had in the past one of the most prolific and vibrant movie industries in Southeast Asia in particular during the first half of the 20th century, where rivaled international imports in local popularity for years. The result was a film-oriented culture that supported over three hundred theaters throughout the country, of which only a fraction remains today.

Cinema is a key part of Memory and Culture and is clearly part of the Myanmar DNA. The 100th anniversary of Myanmar cinema will be celebrated in 2020: the objective is that the Myanmar Cinema heritage is reconstituted as much as possible. Due to the importance of cinema, an art both noble and popular, the Access and Preservation programs could clearly have a unifying impact on the various communities in the country and also represent a crucial source of inspiration for the emerging filmmakers. Hence, in 2016, the programs related to the past were enlarged to the films of tomorrow for the new generation of directors and writers. MEMORY Cinema started working in Myanmar in 2014. The NGO runs several programs since then, in close liaison with the Union Ministry of Information under the kind supervision of HE Dr U Pe Myint. MEMORY Cinema works closely with Myanmar Motion Picture Organization. Special advisor to MEMORY Cinéma Projects : Ms Grace Swe Zin Htaik.

**Achievements**

**1/ Access to Worldwide cinema heritage and to memory: annual event, unique in Asia**

**MEMORY International Film Festival**

- 4th Edition in 2016 with an audience of 17,000 and prestigious guests of honour, making MEMORY Festival the largest cinema event in Myanmar, as well as the sole event of this type in Asia
- Annual event that is already well identified in Myanmar and in Asia
- Films of the past as a window to the world in a country that has been deprived of access to foreign films for 5 decades, but also a source of inspiration for new generations

**2/ Education of young filmmakers to nurture the re-birth of an independent cinema industry in Myanmar:**

**Myanmar Script Fund**

- First Edition of MSF with an international Jury of industry professionals chaired by Oscar-Winner Director Michel Hazanavicius (The Artist)
- 2016 MSF finalist projects have already been selected to participate in international film festival structures such as Festival de Cannes, Festival Locarno...



3/ **Reconstitution and preservation of Myanmar Film Heritage**, that is currently in very poor condition and/or mostly dispersed:

#### **Myanmar Film Heritage Project.**

- Milestone restoration of the most ancient Myanmar Classics: Mya Ga Naing (1934), by Maung Tin Maung.
- Lost Film Search Program: in progress, starting from a scary but motivating assessment of the State archives: 12 films remain out of almost 100 years of cinema in Burma.

### **2017 Objectives**

#### **Festival / ACCESS TO CULTURE-EDUCATION-URBAN & RURAL AUDIENCES - RECONCILIATION**

##### **Open door screenings development**

Following the first ever authorised open door screening in Mahabandoola Park in November, MEMORY Cinema will extend to 2 to 5 evenings.

##### **Exhibition Myanmar Glorious Past in Cinema**

Cinema started in 1920 in Myanmar. And film industry was one of the most active in Asia at the time.

##### **Travelling MEMORY Show:**

An extension of the main edition of the Festival in rural areas, including the various communities in Myanmar for the development of Education, Access to Culture. Cinema is both a noble and popular art.

##### **Involvement of Universities and Schools**

Young generations are the main target of the MEMORY Festival. MEMORY Cinema is currently creating partnerships with Private and public universities/schools, both in Myanmar and abroad.

##### **Partnerships with other complementary festivals in Myanmar**

As MEMORY Festival creates a permanent link between films of the past and films of tomorrow, we are currently building partnerships with existing Festivals such as Wathan Film Festival or Human Rights Film Festival. The objective is that they can be part of the Film selection through « carte blanches ». MEMORY Cinema has already started to involve some of the teams of those festivals in order to create a network of well-trained profiles qualified to run culture events in Myanmar.

##### **Myanmar Script Fund/EDUCATION-COMPETITION**

Development of the international Jury

Development of the candidates and follow-up mentoring after Competition  
Myanmar Script Fund for emerging filmmakers aims to not only give up-and-coming



filmmakers the tools to advance in their industry both in Myanmar and abroad, but also to promote freedom of expression, through film, which is essential in this new democracy. This is in line with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech at the 2017 Academy Awards Ceremony in Myanmar.

We believe more than ever that Cinema can convey the values of peace building and reconciliation, emphasizing the need for young filmmakers to be trained and coached so they can create cinema for local and international markets but also gain international recognition for their work through festivals. It is a long road but the success of Myanmar Script Fund in 2016 is really encouraging, with crucial support from international film festivals highly recognized such as Locarno Film Festival that will be joined by Berlin Festival in 2017.

### **Journalism and Culture in a new Democracy / EDUCATION**

Partnership with the Myanmar Journalism Institute (MJI) to offer journalist students specific training in covering cultural topics. It is within this context that we aim to encourage and train MJI students to cover the MEMORY International Film Festival 2017. The best coverage will be awarded with a Culture Journalism Award. We believe that Culture is not only entertainment but it is also a key pillar for all democracies...

Deliverables would be:

- Daily coverage of the Festival and Myanmar Script Fund by MJI Students (TBD)
- Digital circulation through Facebook within a specific frame "MJI News"
- Printed circulation through a daily printed A3 format
- Total immersion of the students within the festival hosted inside the Festival venue(TBD)
- Sessions with foreign reporters specialised in Culture (each year foreign media sends their Culture Editor to cover the Festival).

### **Myanmar Film Heritage Project / ACCESS TO MEMORY-EDUCATION-RECONCILIATION**

#### **Restorations:**

For 2017 we are in advanced negotiations to restore a 1935 Burmese feature (first sound film shot in Japan) and a 1950 feature.

International circulation of Mya Ga Naing (International film festivals)

Myanmar circulation of Mya Ga Naing (Travelling MEMORY Show)

#### **Lost Film Search Program**

In order to reconstitute the national collection of Myanmar films we are launching:

- Training to create a dedicated team
- Creation of a National Register of films
- Identification of the most important elements to be preserved

