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Since Cannes Film Festival will soon announce its selection, it is high time to give to our readers some basic explanations about what is known to be the biggest film festival in the world.

What is the Cannes Film Festival anyway?

The Cannes Festival was created by the French government in 1939 as a riposte to the Venice Film Festival which was under the influence of the fascist governments of Italy and Germany in

the period. Because of the beginning of World War 2, the Cannes Film Festival was postponed, and its first edition was held in 1946.

In its early years, the festival was principally a social event since almost every film screened walked out with a prize.

In 1959, the Film Market was officially created and quickly became the leading market place for international film business.

In 1962, the International Critics' Week was established beside the official competition, followed by the Directors' Fortnight in 1969. These two parallel sections are organised by independent organisations, the Association of French Critics and the Society of Film Directors respectively.

In 1972, the official festival established its own non-competitive section, Un Certain Regard.

What is commonly called "*Festival de Cannes*" is the ensemble of these different film events: the official selection, comprising of the **competition films**, the **non-competitive ones** and **Un Certain Regard**, **Directors' Fortnight**, **International Critics' Week** - those which represent the artistic side - and the **Film Market** which is the business side of the festival.

Other official events have been added as time goes by, such as **Cinéfondation** (a selection of short films from film schools), Cannes Classics dedicated to newly restored old films, and more recently, **l'Atelier du Festival** (the Festival Workshop - where selected directors can introduce their projects to potential co-producers).

In addition, since 1994, the Association for the viewing of independent cinema (**ACID**) is organising the screenings of 9 feature films and documentaries taking place in small theatres in Cannes and its suburb.

Apart from the cliché of the red carpet, the Festival is also the stage of heavy film promotion with all the facades of luxurious hotels and every spot of the streets transformed into billboard announcing future projects and releases.

With more than 30 000 film professionals (including 1000 directors, 5000 producers and 4000 journalists) Cannes Film Festival is basically the place where all the film industry gather for 10 days of celebration of cinema, as well as for business, meetings and public relation events (the famous Cannes parties...)

What should I do if I want to attend the Cannes Film Festival?

The Cannes Film Festival is a professional festival, which means that only those whose profession is related to cinema can have access to accreditation. There are many different types of accreditations (badges), which can be classified into 3 categories (each category has different levels): Press accreditations, Festival accreditations and Market accreditation.

Foreign producers, directors, film professionals, and journalists have to apply before April 1st (later deadline for journalists) online on the following website: <http://www.festival-cannes.com>

This application is submitted to an approval from the festival office. These accreditations are free of charge.

Another way to get accredited is to register for a Market accreditation. This has a cost (328.80 euros per person if registered before April 28, walk-in registration is 380 euros), but gives you the guarantee to be accredited. You get your name and contact listed in the Market Guide (if registered before April 8, and you can access all market screenings (films shown by sales agents and producers).

You can register for Cannes Market online at the following website:

www.marchedufilm.com

If you are a producer with credits on a theatrically release film within the past 3 years, you can apply for **Producers Network**, a networking service offered by Cannes Market.

Please check this website if you wish to have a booth for your company or organise market screenings during the festival.

Any of these accreditations will give you access to the main areas of the festival (Palais des Festivals, International Village, the Film Market venues, etc.) but not automatically to the screening rooms. Any festival accreditation gives access to the screenings of International Critics' Week and Directors' Fortnight venues.

For every section, except the Competition and the Out of Competition screening, you can access the screening room by lining-up before the screening. Depending of the level of your accreditation, you can queue in different priority line.

To attend any of the Competition and Out of Competition screenings, a ticket is needed. The official way to get tickets is to apply the day before, using the electronic machines in the Palais (or online), and pick up your ticket the next morning at a specific counter in the Palais des Festivals. However, it is more or less like a lottery since the system of attribution and priority is a well kept secret. There are other ways to get tickets; you will increase your chance if you know the producer, the French distributor, the sales agent, or the PR agency of the film you want to see. Please note that evening Competition screenings are very formal, so "gentlemen" need to go in a tuxedo, and "ladies", an evening dress. Journalists have access to press conference and to the press screenings of the competition films, and they usually take their place early in the morning or late at night.

Another Cannes difficulty is accommodation (either hotels or apartments) since prices are often outrageous. The best deals are booked months (if not years) ahead. So do not forget that Cannes is

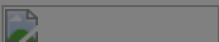
a costly festival to attend. Food is no exception.

For most cinema professionals, the Cannes Festival is an important investment since, besides seeing many films, the possibilities of meeting people and making connections are wide and beyond compare.

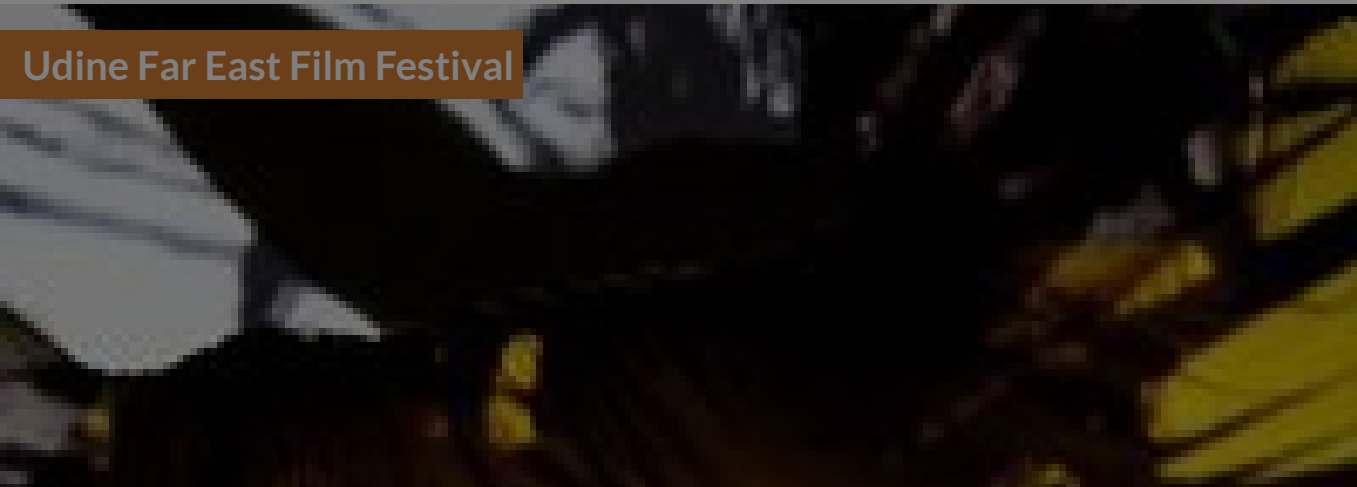
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