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Unifrance: Promoting French Cinema Worldwide

This month, in conjunction with the 10th Rendezvous with French Cinema, SEA-Images meets with Yann Raymond, International Festivals Manager at Unifrance, the organisation whose aim is to promote French Cinema internationally.

Could you introduce the background of Unifrance, its history, its status and its organisation?

Unifrance is a non-profit organisation created in 1949. It is supervised and subsidised by the Centre national de la cinématographie (CNC).



The Mission of Unifrance is to promote French Cinema worldwide.

Its budget comes from the public fund received from CNC, and private sponsors are also contributing for some operations and events.

Its members are composed by film sales companies, producers and artists.

Our main office in Paris has around 30 staff people, and we have local offices in New York, Beijing and Tokyo.

What are the specificities of Unifrance, compared to its other European counterparts?

The force of Unifrance and its ability to organise different events come naturally from the capacity of the French film industry. France produces a grand variety of a large number of films—an average of 240 films per year. Films are exported and recognized at major international festivals, and there is a niche market for French cinema in several foreign countries.

What we have in common with our counterparts in Germany, Korea and Italy is that there is a public/state support for film productions.

How do you contribute to the promotion of French cinema? What are your main activities?

One of our main activities is to support the presence of French films in different festivals. It can be the major international film festivals where we can coordinate the presence of artistic delegation, but we also support festivals dedicated to French cinema organised by our embassies, cultural centres or private operators. And we also fully organise film festivals abroad, in Budapest, Mexico, Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Wuhan, Tokyo, Osaka, New York, Moscow, and recently in Mumbai. For the festivals that we organise, we work closely with local distributors, and most of the time, we program films which are going to be soon released in a given country. With the platform of the festival, these films are given a better visibility because we are providing media support and facilities to give the best exposition.

For our major festivals that we organise in Tokyo and Beijing, we also try to show films that we think have a market potential in the country.

Another activity is to support distributors abroad. We can help them with the travel expenses of talents, directors and actors, when their films are going to be released.

For European distributors and media, we organise an event dedicated to French films, “the Rendezvous

with French Cinema” in January every year.

We invite to Paris more than 400 European film buyers and 150 journalists from the major Medias. During the 4 days of event, 80 new films are shown to buyers, and press can meet the artists from the films that will be released in the months to come.

Another important activity is to support the French film sales companies. It can be a support for their presence in the major film markets and fares. For example, for the Hong Kong Filmart (every year in March), we accommodate all the French sales companies at the unique and large booth of Unifrance. We also offer plane tickets for them to be present in other markets such as Pusan's Asian Film Market. Unifrance also provides an international market analysis and monitoring. Economics studies are published and circulated to our members and partners.

How do you work with distributors and festival programmers?

We just opened our new version website. We provide the contents in Spanish and Japanese as well as French and English.

The website contains a lot of information about French cinema and film festivals, French film box-office reports from all over the world as well as an important database on French cinema. The website has a dedicated section for short films.

In addition, we welcome and receive every year delegates from more than 25 festivals to assist them in their screening schedule of new French films. When a festival programmer is about to visit Paris, we contact different productions and sales companies to inform them and see what titles they can propose. We then see with the programmer which ones s/he has already seen and which ones s/he wants to watch. Then we put our 35mm screening room at his/her disposal. We do not select or suggest any particular films, but we serve as a relay between the festivals and the sales companies and producers.

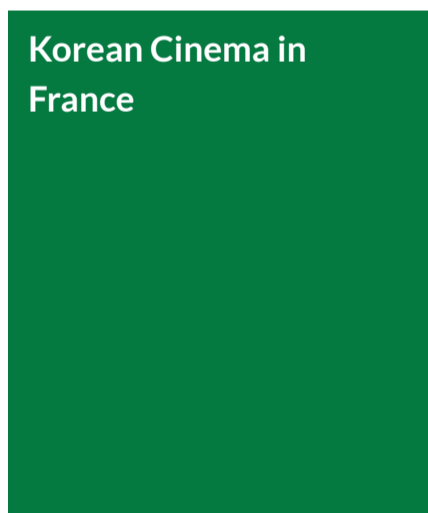
For more information, click on www.unifrance.org

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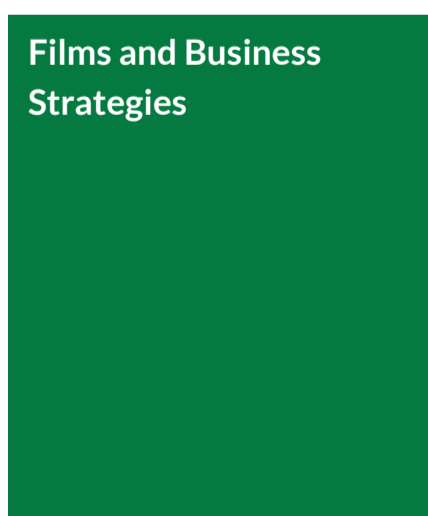
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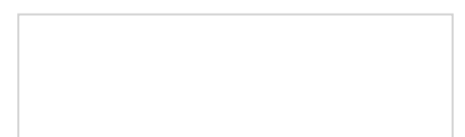
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