



Annual Report

2018-19

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Introduction



Dorothy Wilson
Chair of Trustees, Independent Cinema Office
Independent Consultant, Coach and Producer

With cinema admissions on the rise, the power of cinema and the collective viewing experience is as relevant now as it was when the first cinema opened.

As well as offering escapism, film – especially independent and world cinema – has the power to enlighten and transform people's views; to shine a light onto little known subjects, and be an agent of social change; to elicit empathy and promote understanding – all in the space of a couple of hours. As Haifaa Al-Mansour, Saudi Arabia's first female director, perfectly put it; *“Art can touch people and make them open up.”*

ICO believes that engaging audiences with the best possible viewing experiences doesn't just stem from showing a wide variety of films on screen, but encompasses everything from ticket prices to the cultural ethos of the promoting organisations themselves. More than ever venues must be welcoming and inclusive spaces for everyone, requiring a continued emphasis on accessibility and ensuring people are aware that their local cinema is for them and serves the whole of their community. Independent cinemas play a vital role in diversifying the types of films shown in the UK and encouraging substantial audiences for titles outside of the mainstream blockbuster offering.



Catharine Des Forges
Director, Independent Cinema Office

Now in its sixteenth year, the ICO continues to see growth across all areas of its activity, with more new staff members joining the team, more training courses being developed and more ICO client cinemas than ever before. We are thrilled to have been able to increase our activities supporting our key goals, in enabling everyone in the UK to access a communal experience of life-changing cinema.

We have also been delighted to see impressive admissions for a number of foreign language titles this year, with films such as Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Shoplifters* generating vast audiences. Independent venues across the UK are able to offer something different for audiences and it's these kinds of films which we will continue to champion.

Our work lies not only in diversifying the films shown on screen but also the people who get to show them. Currently the UK exhibition sector is not reflective of the country's population, and this is something we are working to address via a number of bespoke workforce intervention schemes that open up the sector and create direct change in who gets to participate. We are preparing to deliver new editions of Women's Leadership and FEDS (Film Exhibition, Distribution & Sales) as well as launching a new course – FEDS Elevate: Leadership Programme for Cinema

Professionals – and a new Online Learning Platform to offer affordable and flexible training options to those who may find it difficult to attend training in person.

We are always proud to champion female filmmakers and this year toured some remarkable works by the New German Cinema director, Margarethe von Trotta, by bringing some of her most explosive and resonant titles to UK audiences in partnership with StudioCanal. We will continue to showcase films by directors not yet given the recognition they deserve and those who are just breaking through with new stories and ways of seeing.

Finally, the ICO continues to create and showcase archive materials and to develop new audiences for archive film, proving how important and relevant these materials still are for screening in cinemas and more widely within the community. We have released two new Britain on Film titles, as well as *New Towns, Our Town*, focussed on the UK's New Towns movement, this year.

A big thank you must go to our main funder, the BFI and all our other funders – Creative Europe, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England and ScreenSkills – as well as our collaborators, supporters and friends who enable us to keep developing a thriving and open exhibition sector.



1

Programming

The ICO currently works in collaboration with 24 client cinemas in the UK as one of the country's biggest independent cinema networks.

OUR NETWORK PROGRAMMED 902 FILMS FOR OVER 1 MILLION PEOPLE; GENERATING NEARLY £6.5 MILLION IN BOX OFFICE REVENUE.



Pain & Glory, courtesy of Pathé / Twentieth Century Fox



Hyde Park Picture House, credit Tom Joy



Developing Your Film Festival 2019, credit Anna Pomichowska



Woman at War, courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment

2

Training

Our diverse and innovative training portfolio offers film exhibition professionals the opportunity to benefit from high-level knowledge, ensuring our sector is successful, innovative and progressive.

IN 2018-19 WE TRAINED NEARLY 100 FILM EXHIBITION PROFESSIONALS FROM 60 ORGANISATIONS AND OVER 50 COUNTRIES.

3

Screening Days

Screening Days are one of our main activities and certainly our most popular. A fixture in the UK film exhibition calendar; Screening Days are industry events at which we preview key upcoming features.

IN 2018-19 727 PEOPLE FROM 328 DIFFERENT VENUES ATTENDED AN ICO SCREENING DAY EVENT.



Credit Paul Johnson

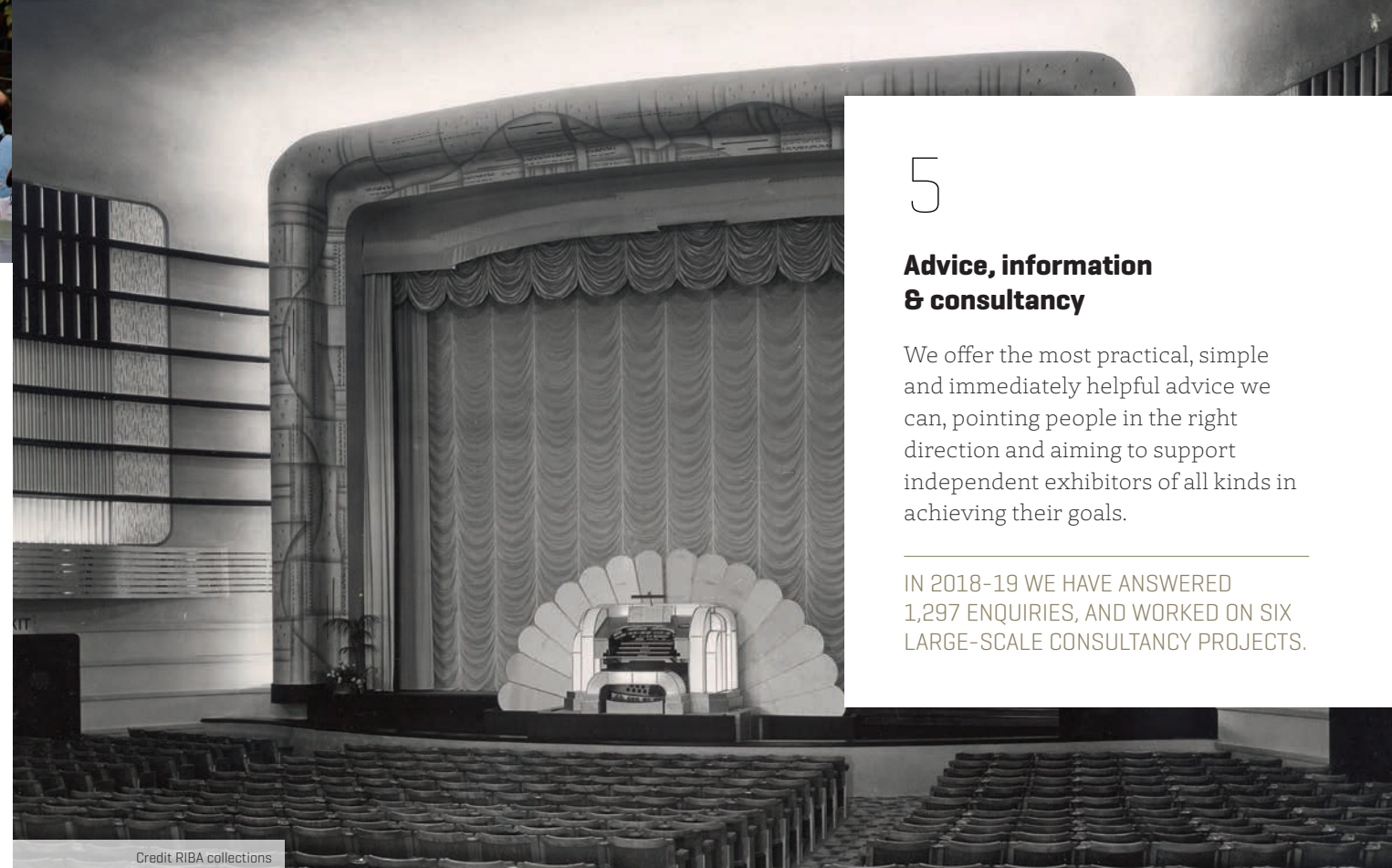
Credit Colin Davison

4

Film Hub South East

As managers of Film Hub South East, part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), we are working to develop and strengthen our network of South East exhibitors to build a vibrant and active community.

OPEN PROJECTS, FILM FESTIVALS AND OUTDOOR SCREENINGS FUNDED BY FILM HUB SOUTH EAST HAVE GENERATED OVER 61.8K ADMISSIONS.



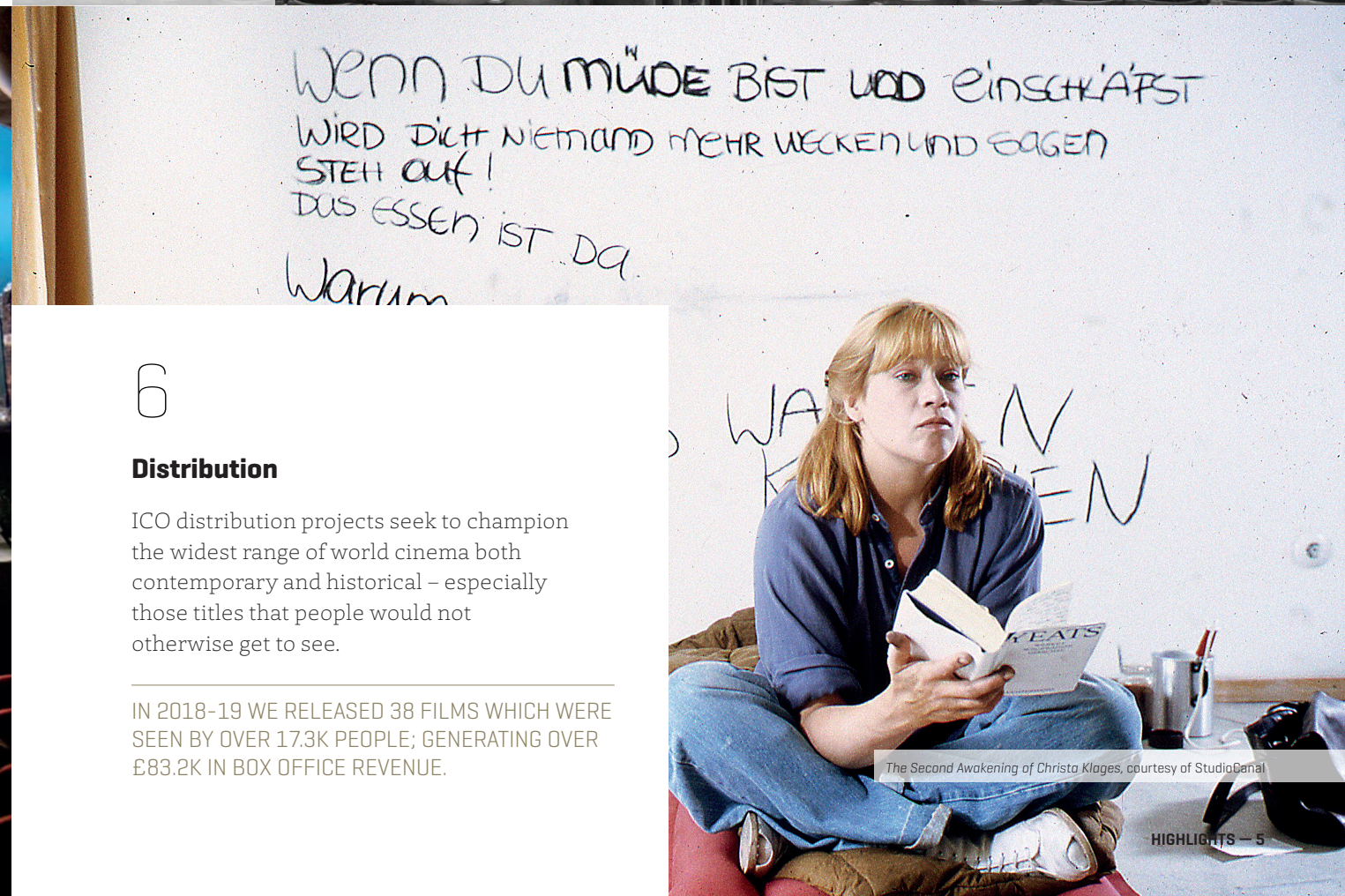
Credit RIBA collections

5

Advice, information & consultancy

We offer the most practical, simple and immediately helpful advice we can, pointing people in the right direction and aiming to support independent exhibitors of all kinds in achieving their goals.

IN 2018-19 WE HAVE ANSWERED 1,297 ENQUIRIES, AND WORKED ON SIX LARGE-SCALE CONSULTANCY PROJECTS.



6

Distribution

ICO distribution projects seek to champion the widest range of world cinema both contemporary and historical – especially those titles that people would not otherwise get to see.

IN 2018-19 WE RELEASED 38 FILMS WHICH WERE SEEN BY OVER 17.3K PEOPLE; GENERATING OVER £83.2K IN BOX OFFICE REVENUE.

The Second Awakening of Christa Klages, courtesy of StudioCanal

Programming

The ICO believes everyone should have access to life-changing cinema. We help cinemas everywhere – from major cities to rural communities – to access the best of cultural cinema and take their programming to the next level.

**OUR NETWORK
PROGRAMMED 902
FILMS FOR OVER 1 MILLION
PEOPLE; GENERATING
NEARLY £6.5 MILLION IN
BOX OFFICE REVENUE**



Courtesy of Pomegranate Theatre & Cinema

The ICO currently works in collaboration with 24 client cinemas in the UK as one of the country's biggest independent cinema networks.

Our overarching goal with ICO programming is to drive audiences to be more adventurous. We are focused on long-term audience development and on building meaningful relationships with audiences; so that when they visit one of our client cinemas they trust that we are showing them the very best films on offer.

The collaboration with each cinema is very much a partnership, a peer-to-peer conversation; starting with a shared understanding of what the cinema's programme and audiences can be, and leading to the mutually beneficial outcomes of an increased range of films and audiences. In 2018, there were over 800 feature films released in UK cinemas, at an average of around 16 per week. For most independent cinemas, those with single or multiple screens alike, there is now almost too much choice and this makes collaboration with a well-informed, highly experienced programme advisor increasingly valuable.

The ICO programming team offers a 'Programme Advice and Film Booking' service and it's worth taking a look behind the terminology to understand its real value. The programme advice originates from the track record of the ICO programming team, which has over 60 years' experience in programming across a range of cinemas and film festivals of all sizes and types. The advice given by the team is always as informed as possible, sharing details of release plans, critical reception and other intelligence. In making film bookings, the team also acts as a consistent intermediary between cinemas and film distributors. Regular contact with film distributors enables the ICO to give our client cinemas early access to release information, special events and advance screenings.

Over time, the ICO has also developed a clear model of booking terms for its network of cinemas, whilst preserving the individual integrity of each venue.



Shoplifters, courtesy of Thunderbird Releasing



Everybody Knows, courtesy of Universal



Capernaum, courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment



Woman at War, courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment



Cold War, courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye



Pain & Glory, courtesy of Pathé / Twentieth Century Fox



Burning, courtesy of Thunderbird Releasing



Border, courtesy of MUBI

A year in cinema

Highest performing foreign language films at ICO client cinemas 2018-2019

Film	Admissions
1 <i>Shoplifters</i>	9,639
2 <i>Everybody Knows</i>	6,867
3 <i>Woman at War</i>	6,013
4 <i>Capernaum</i>	4,408
5 <i>Cold War</i>	4,269
6 <i>Pain & Glory</i>	4,084
7 <i>Burning</i>	3,992
8 <i>Border</i>	3,586
9 <i>Dogman</i>	2,973
10 <i>Faces, Places</i>	2,308

Foreign language cinema such as *Shoplifters*, *The White Crow* and *Pain & Glory* gave independent cinemas a boost at vital points throughout the year.



Free Solo, courtesy of National Geographic

Standing out from the crowd

As the UK box office continues to be dominated by a handful of mainstream studio films, independent cinemas are looking elsewhere to boost audiences and offer something different to discerning viewers.

One of the success stories of the last 12 months was the strong performance of documentaries. A combination of beautifully restored archive footage, critical acclaim and word of mouth helped films such as *Free Solo*, *Apollo 11*, *Amazing Grace*, *Diego Maradona*, *Three Identical Strangers*, *They Shall Not Grow Old* and *Marianne & Leonard* capture the imagination of audiences at independent cinemas, with some of these titles also breaking out of their traditional home to play at multiplexes across the country, eventually grossing over £5 million between them.

Breaking the window...

One of the biggest conversations across the exhibition sector in 2018-19 was around the prevalence of online streaming services and their place alongside the UK theatrical market. Netflix, Amazon, MUBI, Sky Cinema, Curzon and others have all been producing and acquiring content for their own digital platforms for a number of years now, with films released day and date (simultaneously theatrically and online). The high-profile nature of recent titles has made this an urgent issue for independent cinemas, who want to give their audiences the opportunity to see these films on the big screen.

After the clamour to screen Alfonso Cuarón's award-winning *Roma*, which received only a very limited theatrical release in 2018, Netflix is now working with Altitude Film Entertainment to release titles such as *The Irishman*, *Uncut Gems* and *Marriage Story*, with a three week exclusive theatrical window before the films appear on their online streaming platform. These somewhat unconventional release strategies could become more commonplace over the next couple of years, as distributors and exhibitors explore new models in a fast-changing landscape.

The majority of UK cinema circuits choose not to screen films that break with the traditional theatrical window – in which films are available in cinemas only for 16 weeks – but with the introduction of new online streaming platforms from Disney, Apple, Warner Bros, Universal and more over the next 12 months, one of the big questions is whether the studios will choose to break the window with one of their major film releases by showcasing it on their own platform. If this happens, it will be interesting to see if the circuits can resist screening these films.

However, at the moment, with independent cinemas, operating more flexibly, the opportunity for them to play these films exclusively and generate new audiences is greater than ever.

Successes across the ICO Programming Network



Peterloo, courtesy of eOne

Over the past 12 months ICO client cinemas have made significant contributions to the success of numerous independent film releases, many of which are aimed at audiences that are not regularly served by commercial mainstream cinemas.

The achievements of ICO client cinemas include strong grosses for major crossover films (such as *The Wife*, *Peterloo*, *Wild Rose*) and out-and-out indie hits (such as *Burning*, *Shoplifters*, *Bait*); plus highest-in-the-UK opening weekend grosses for independent films aimed at very specific audience segments (such as *Mrs Lowry and Son*, *Red Joan*).

In addition, ICO cinemas have contributed to the theatrical success of key feature documentaries (such as *Amazing Grace*, *Three Identical Strangers*, *Free Solo*) – which, through the support of independent cinemas generally, continue to achieve box office grosses previously considered unfeasible.

We continue to work closely on many releases with UK independent distributors to help them raise the profile, create strong word of mouth around and in the end find audiences for their

films, which will in turn fuel the ongoing release of independent films and support a thriving independent cinema sector.

ICO Programming Clients 2018 – 2019

- › **Artrix**, Worcestershire
- › **Barn Cinema**, Devon
- › **Borderlines Film Festival**
- › **Broadway Cinema**, Nottingham
- › **Pavilion Arts Centre**, Buxton
- › **Catford Mews**, London
- › **Chapter**, Cardiff
- › **Depot**, Lewes
- › **QUAD Derby**, Derbyshire
- › **Forum Cinema**, Northampton
- › **Hebden Bridge Picture House**, West Yorkshire
- › **Hyde Park Picture House**, Leeds
- › **Kiln Theatre**, London
- › **Ludlow Assembly Rooms**, Shropshire
- › **mac**, Birmingham
- › **Malvern Theatres**, Worcestershire
- › **Phoenix**, Leicester
- › **Pomegranate Theatre**, Chesterfield
- › **Rhodes Cinema**, Bishop's Stortford
- › **Saffron Screen**, Essex
- › **Showroom Cinema**, Sheffield
- › **Stoke Film Theatre**, Stoke-on-Trent
- › **The Ultimate Picture Palace**, Oxford
- › **Watershed**, Bristol

CASE STUDY



Bait, courtesy BFI Distribution © Early Days Films Ltd

Bait

The ICO programming team tracked *Bait* – a stunning black and white film shot on a vintage 16mm camera, which with humour laced throughout, looks at the issue of unwelcome change in Cornwall – from its Berlin premiere, identifying it as a title that would work particularly well in many of our client cinemas.

For some months before the film's UK release, we worked closely with BFI, its distributor, to not only support the film with bookings in our client venues, but also to build awareness with other UK exhibitors via preview screenings at our Screening Days event in July 2019, as well as including it in our Film Hub South East Programming Group.

While *Bait* could have been seen as a niche proposition, we recognised its potential as a unique arthouse film that as well as being formally interesting, was timely in subject, exploring the

effects of austerity in the UK with a geographical focus on Cornwall. We were right to think the film would have an appeal to arthouse audiences, as it scored highly at Screening Days and went on to enjoy fantastic runs in many of our client venues.

Audiences continued to grow to week six of release and beyond, through holdovers in some venues, with others bringing the film back for a second run later down the line. Working with the BFI, we were also able to secure Q&A screenings with director Mark Jenkin, which were well-attended and gave audiences greater insight into the film.

By October 2019, after the film opened in the UK on 30 August 2019, ICO client venues accounted for just over 20% of *Bait*'s total UK box office, with Watershed – located in the South West – the top grossing cinema in the UK.

20%

of the market share delivered by ICO client cinemas

“

We were delighted with the support that Bait received from the ICO, from showing the film at Screening Days and the South East Programming Group, they then played the film widely and have kept it on some of their screens since it opened. Bait is an extraordinary success story.

— Julie Pearce, Head of BFI Distribution

CASE STUDY



Shoplifters, courtesy of Thunderbird Releasing

Shoplifters

After seeing the film at Cannes Film Festival 2018, the ICO programming team identified *Shoplifters* as a key arthouse title for our client cinemas. Directed by prolific Japanese filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda, *Shoplifters* had its world premiere in Cannes, where it ultimately took the Palme d'Or. This was followed by a nomination for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards in 2019, and the acclaim certainly helped elevate the film's profile in the UK with both new and existing audiences.

After previously screening Kore-eda's films at ICO client cinemas, we knew that there would be an interest to programme this title, and we worked closely with Thunderbird Releasing, its UK distributor, to not only support the film with bookings in our client cinemas but also to build awareness with other UK exhibitors via preview screenings at our Screening Days in October 2018.

Released on 23 November 2018, *Shoplifters* also received funding from the BFI Audience Award to support the film's release campaign in order to engage with audiences and work with partners across the UK. These factors, combined with critical praise and strong word-of-mouth meant that *Shoplifters* went on to play long runs in our client cinemas, which represented nearly 9% of the market share of the film's box office. *Shoplifters* was also a great addition to Borderlines Film Festival 2019, where the Festival's non-theatrical venues were able to play the film and benefit from its recognition throughout the awards season. The box office total for the film now stands at £772,993, making it Kore-eda's highest grossing film in the UK to date. Furthermore, between the period of September 2018 to August 2019, *Shoplifters* was positioned as the highest performing foreign language title at the UK box office.

9%

of the market share delivered by ICO client cinemas

“

Cinemas programmed by the ICO made a significant contribution to the overall success of Shoplifters which went on to become one of the top three highest grossing foreign language films of the year.

— Edward Fletcher, former Managing Director, Thunderbird Releasing

CASE STUDY



Catford Mews, courtesy of Taran Wilkhu

Catford Mews
– New ICO client cinema

Catford Mews – the first new multi-screen cinema in Lewisham in over 20 years – opened its doors in September 2019. With a firm focus on being both an inclusive and community-minded space, we're thrilled to have Catford Mews on board as one of the ICO's most recent client venues.

An independent entertainment venue with aims of becoming an invaluable asset to the local community, Catford Mews boasts a café, bar, local food vendors, a community room, and a live music space alongside its three cinema screens. The venue feels unique in terms of its space and offering with large open areas for the local community to roam around and explore. They also keep their prices affordable for cinema tickets, food and drinks.

Taking them on as a client venue at the end of 2018, the ICO has supported them to achieve their vision in numerous ways – from getting them set up with distributors and advising on what equipment to buy to helping interview the staff who now run the venue. From very early on, the venue had a few non-negotiable aims: to be truly inclusive; a cinema for the community in Catford; to offer an exciting programme; and

to serve as a platform for local talent and entrepreneurs.

Aiming to be as inclusive as possible during the planning stage, venue accessibility was a big consideration before opening. They also found that through aiming to be community-led first and foremost, both their programme and the audience members they have attracted have been naturally diverse and widely representative of the community they wish to serve. Catford Mews have found audiences by reaching out to a number of local groups and having ongoing conversations with them regarding the programme. Being more focused on specific groups as opposed to casting the net wide has meant they've seen success with engaged and returning audiences.

Currently we continue to work closely with the team at Catford Mews to develop a programme that appeals to the widest possible range of local audiences. Over the course of this partnership, as we learn more about the wants and needs of the community, we hope to see the cinema programme become increasingly ambitious and popular.

“

Working with the ICO and receiving such experienced and knowledgeable support both before and after opening has been really valuable. They've listened to and understood our mission statement from the start, meaning we're on the same page with programming choices and decisions. They help us to deliver the diverse programming we've always envisioned, while we've learned that supporting independent cinema can be both profitable and also something that the local community is interested in and actively seeks out when presented with our offering.

— Isra Al Kassi, Programme & Marketing Manager, Catford Mews



Amazing Grace, courtesy of StudioCanal



Green Book, courtesy of eOne



System Crasher, courtesy of 606 Distribution



The Favourite, courtesy of Fox Searchlight Pictures



The Wife, courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment

Training

Our diverse and innovative training portfolio offers film exhibition professionals the opportunity to benefit from high-level knowledge, ensuring our sector is successful, innovative and progressive. We are continuing to develop and expand our professional development opportunities to ensure everyone has the chance to participate.

IN 2018-19 WE TRAINED
NEARLY 100 FILM
EXHIBITION PROFESSIONALS
FROM 60 ORGANISATIONS
AND OVER 50 COUNTRIES

The ICO has had another busy year delivering training and professional development opportunities for the film exhibition sector in the UK and beyond.

Established ICO programmes such as Cultural Cinema Exhibition and REACH: Strategic Audience Development have been joined by new opportunities such as FEDS International Training & Development Placements and, in partnership with Film Hub Scotland, a FAN Innovation Lab for Young Audience Development. The latter initiative brought together venues from across the UK with a focus on sharing, learning and developing ideas, with presentations from specialists outside the film exhibition sector such as Mark Miller, Circuit Programme National Lead and Convenor: Young People's Programmes at Tate Modern and Tate Britain and Debbie Ramsey, Editor, BBC Radio 1 & 1Xtra Newsbeat.

We have already secured support to continue this wide-ranging training portfolio into next year, including the return of our transformative FEDS (Film Exhibition, Distribution & Sales) Trainee Programme. Since 2015, FEDS has recruited 30 ambitious trainees from groups currently underrepresented in the UK film industry. In 2020, FEDS will be supported by the BFI Audience Fund. Participants will receive hands-on paid work experience in their chosen area of the film exhibition sector alongside career coaching and monthly industry training sessions. In addition to this, the first iteration of the ICO's FEDS Elevate: Leadership Programme for Cinema Professionals, supported by the ScreenSkills Film Skills Fund and the BFI Film Audience Network, will provide an opportunity for professionals in the early stages of their film exhibition careers to develop robust management skills through a holistic approach with expert support. Along with our FEDS International Training & Development Placements, these programmes are part of the ICO's ongoing commitment to increasing diversity at all levels of the workforce and making a real change to organisational structures and access into more senior roles.

Our Women's Leadership professional development course will return for its third edition, now delivered with support from the BFI Film Audience Network. This programme strives to address industry inequality and the lack of female representation at the top; working with women in senior management positions who would like to take creative control of a major venue or step up into a top role at a film festival. Since 2015, 16 women have completed the Women's Leadership programme, 81% of whom have subsequently been promoted to a more senior role either within their original organisation (a number of them becoming CEOs) or in a new one.

Lastly, thanks to funding from the BFI and Creative Europe, the ICO is taking its training expertise online, via a new Online Learning Platform. Here, trainees unable to attend ICO training in person or who want to expand their knowledge further can access invaluable teaching from leading industry experts via carefully curated online training courses.

The courses will also be available to access worldwide, greatly expanding the reach of ICO training while providing affordable and flexible training opportunities that will widen access into the industry. We have always prioritised making our training accessible, with the majority of our courses offering bursaries towards fees, travel, accommodation and childcare or caring responsibilities. This new platform ensures that cost is even less of a barrier – removing many of the above expenses entirely – with both free and paid-for courses available so everyone is able to participate.

We are grateful to the continued support of all our funders as we continue to work towards our aim of creating bespoke training opportunities that address the particular challenges of our sector.

Our aim is to enhance both the quantity and quality of available programmes and highlight the importance of upskilling and diversifying our workforce to achieve this.

We'd like to thank our funders

Co-funded by the European Union





Credit Katja Ogrin

REACH: Strategic Audience Development course

REACH is an intensive project-based course for independent film exhibitors who want to increase the sustainability of their businesses by stimulating attendance, attracting new customers and deepening the connection between venues and the communities they serve.

The course has now run for four editions, with the first taking place in 2014. Including this latest cohort, REACH has been attended by 66 film exhibition professionals from 62 different organisations, including film festivals and independent cinemas. This edition ran for seven months from September 2018 to March 2019 and was attended by 14 participants working in independent film exhibition venues and film festivals (including community venues, local film clubs and societies where appropriate) across the UK.

Our objectives were for participants to:

- **Embed** an audience development strategy in their organisation
- **Create** and implement realistic, and realistically resourced strategies that have an increased chance of

engaging and developing new diverse audiences for specialised film

- **Confidently** conduct their own primary and secondary audience research
- **Develop** a deep insight into audience behaviour and consumption
- **Understand** the landscape of film exhibition on local and national levels and where their organisation and audiences fit in

The training offers a bespoke experience to each participant as, alongside taught classroom-based modules, they are supported by a selected advisor to develop their own audience development projects – enabling them to put their learnings into practice. At the end of the course, participants reconvene to share their final project findings, learnings, and future plans.

REACH is one of the ICO's most effective courses, with previous participants further benefiting from events bringing alumni together to share new experiences and insights, and reinvigorating them to continue the work they started on the course.

66

film exhibition professionals from 62 different organisations have attended REACH

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It has given me a great deal of depth in how to attract audiences who we wouldn't normally reach.

— Helen Campion, Rheged Centre, Cumbria



Disobedience, courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye



Utoya, courtesy of Modern Films



Widows, courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

242

people have been trained as part of the ICO's Cultural Cinema Exhibition course since its inception in 2004

Cultural Cinema Exhibition

In operation for over a decade, Cultural Cinema Exhibition is widely-regarded as the essential training programme for professionals forging a career in the cultural cinema sector. The course features a range of carefully curated sessions on programming, distribution, marketing, festivals and audience development. Previous alumni have achieved top jobs at the BFI, Picturehouses, Curzon Cinemas, Thunderbird Releasing, Watershed, the Barbican and film festivals around the world.

In October 2018, the ICO ran Cultural Cinema Exhibition without subsidy for the first time. This did not affect recruitment, with the course's international reputation ensuring we received a record number of applications from countries around the world including the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Indonesia and South Africa.

The course took place over six days, comprising presentations and panel discussions; practical workshops (including a final group project); screenings, peer discussion and networking opportunities. We were joined by industry experts from 20th Century Fox, BFI National Archive, Empire Cinemas, Glasgow Film, Paramount Pictures, the Royal College of Art, *Screen International* and Watershed.



Credit Umulkhayr Mohamed

FEDS International Training & Development Placements

The ICO's FEDS (Film Exhibition Distribution & Sales) scheme has been running since 2014. It seeks to diversify personnel working in the sector by recruiting ambitious trainees from groups currently under-represented in the UK film industry and providing them with hands-on paid work experience in the film exhibition sector alongside career coaching and monthly industry training sessions.

In 2018 the British Council generously supported the ICO to enable us to create new opportunities for selected FEDS alumni to secure short term training and work shadowing placements with an international exhibition partner to develop knowledge, skills and contacts, build exhibition experience and contribute to their overall professional development.

Applicants were responsible for securing their placement opportunity, liaising with the host and organising travel and accommodation. The fund was intended to be highly responsive to the ambitions and specific needs of individual alumni and they were encouraged to identify a host organisation aligned with their own areas of interest. This organisation had to be based outside the UK, enabling the participant to benefit from an experience currently unavailable to them.

Maria Cabrera (FEDS 2017) undertook a placement at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), New York. Maria was inspired by BAM's diverse and socially engaged programming, noting that in recent years the cinema has become a hub for black filmmakers and other global majority talents and has continuously proven that there is an equally diverse audience for these films.

As part of her original FEDS placement at the Barbican, Maria successfully coordinated the Young Programmers scheme and helped run their first youth panel. Working closely with BAM programmers, Maria was able to contribute to individual projects such as working with the archive team on a display of the history of film in the institution, and researching and shorts pre-selection viewing for their upcoming film festival, BAMcinemaFest, which she then returned to attend in May 2019.

Umulkhayr Mohamed (FEDS 2018) proposed a placement at DOCLAB (Documentary Filmmaking and Video Art Centre) based at the Goethe-Institut in Hanoi, enabling her to explore her interest in alternatives to western perspectives in cinema. Through the opportunity to learn

“

I knew that it would be worthwhile for me to get a greater understanding of how my own ‘western(ised) gaze’ informs how I engage with cinema that depicts other parts of the world... I wanted to get a better understanding of parts of the world that I don't have any personal connection with, as I knew that could highlight and counterbalance problematic portrayals when I'm confronted with them...

— Umulkhayr Mohamed, FEDS 2018

first-hand how both programmers and audiences engage with film in Vietnam, Um hoped to develop a clearer understanding of new ways in which film exhibitors in Britain can encourage wider engagement.

During her time at DOCLAB, Um coordinated a series of artists' moving image screenings, developed her curatorial practice by independently organising four 70 minute long screenings, visited the Vietnamese Film Institute to learn about the country's film history, and distilled observations of the local arts scene in a workshop she delivered to 15 Hanoi-based arts professionals on the theme of 'Removing the barriers that stop local audiences engaging with the arts'.

The ICO is delighted with the success of the first FEDS International Training & Development Placements. Both participants reported that they were inspired by organisations that have diversity at the heart of their decision-making process, and can approach their work with greater confidence and ambition after witnessing the success of their approach. They returned invigorated about the possibilities film exhibition offers for meaningful understanding between cultures.



Developing Your Film Festival

The 9th edition of Developing Your Film Festival (DYFF) took place in Wrocław, Poland, from 22-28 July 2019. DYFF is a residential training course designed to professionalise the film festival sector by equipping film festival professionals with the essential skills, knowledge and confidence they need to strengthen their festivals' business models, build audiences and maximise professional relationships. The course also fosters international networking, collaboration, information sharing and partnerships.

Since its inaugural edition in 2011, 197 film festivals worldwide have taken part. DYFF is funded by the Creative Europe – MEDIA Programme of the European Union and the British Council, and supported by New Horizons and Vilnius International Film Festivals.

In 2019 the course was attended by 29 film festival professionals from 22 countries including Colombia, Indonesia and Nepal. In total we received 67 applications from 34 different countries. DYFF has become increasingly competitive, as we have

seen a significant increase in the quality of applicants. Increasingly, applicants are coming from more senior roles and are therefore in a stronger position to create meaningful change within their organisations. Festival average attendance figures have also increased substantially, as bigger and more successful festivals are joining the course. The average total admissions figure from festivals applying in 2018 was 6,800; in 2019, it was 10,650.

On the course delegates learn practical lessons about sponsorship, partnerships, audience development, programming, press strategy and income building. We were delighted to welcome returning industry experts and speakers from Toronto International Film Festival, Vilnius International Film Festival, Il Cinema Ritrovato in Bologna and *Screen International*, as well as three first time speakers from International Film Festival Rotterdam, Hamburg International Short Film Festival and Göteborg Film Festival.

100%

recommended by all 252 participants to date. We are looking forward to returning to Wrocław for the 10th anniversary of the course next year

“

DYFF is a once in a lifetime opportunity to connect with film festivals and organisers on a professional and most importantly human level.

— Kinga Binkowska, Victoria Film Festival [Canada]

It's totally worth it to fly all the way from my country. All the sessions are very well taught and the speakers are really the best in their fields. Most unforgettable training I've ever had!

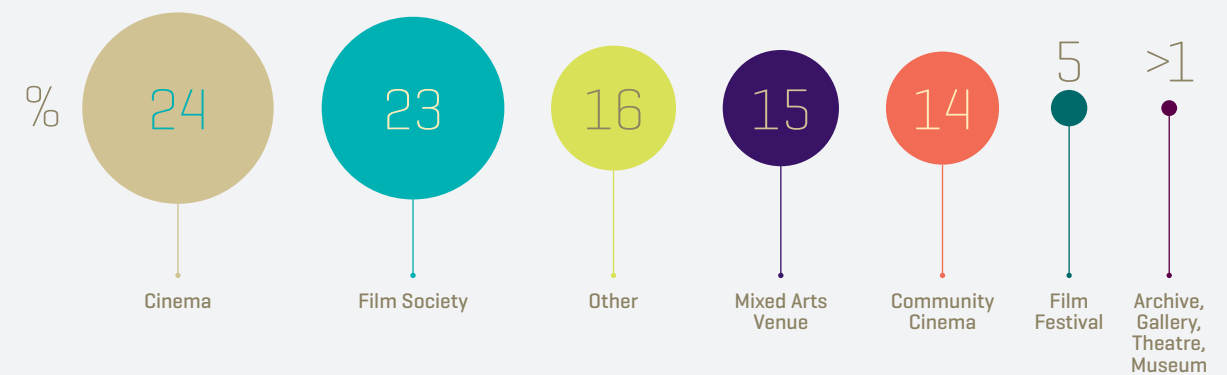
— Andhika Annas Satria, Europe on Screen [Indonesia]

Screening Days

The UK's largest events for exhibitors, Screening Days give exhibitors a cost-efficient way of seeing as many key films as possible in a cinema context, with a carefully curated selection put together by ICO programmers.

**IN 2018-19 727 PEOPLE
FROM 328 DIFFERENT
VENUES ATTENDED AN ICO
SCREENING DAY EVENT**

Type of organisations attending ICO Screening Days



Screening Days are one of our main activities and certainly our most popular. A fixture in the UK film exhibition calendar, Screening Days are industry events at which we preview key upcoming features to UK exhibitors so they can decide what to programme in their venue.

It's often hard for staff of independent cinemas, film festivals and film societies to make it to film festivals or weekly preview exhibitor screenings. Whether this is due to location, time, cost or other constraints, Screening Days help by giving exhibitors a time and cost-efficient way of seeing as many key films as possible in a cinema context, with a carefully curated selection put together by ICO programmers from those slated for release over the coming months.

As well as being a great way for exhibitors to preview films, Screening Days also offer exhibitors – many of whom travel to the events from remote regions of the UK – the chance to discuss their venue, its programme and current challenges with peers, meet distributors and representatives from exhibitor organisations and make new industry contacts.

In addition, as we hold Screening Days in locations around the country, they get to visit other venues to see first-hand how they operate, gaining ideas and inspiration as a result.

This year we held three 'national' Screening Days events, which run over three days and focus mainly on upcoming feature films – Autumn Screening Days in October 2018 at Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle, Spring Screening Days 2019 at BFI Southbank in London and Summer Screening Days 2019 at Depot in Lewes; visiting Tyneside and Depot for the first time. In addition, we held three 'specialised' Screening Days, which comprise capacity-building sessions alongside film previews around a particular theme – a one-day Archive event at BFI Southbank, a Young Audiences event at HOME in Manchester and a two-day Inclusion & Diversity (I.D.) event at the Broadway in Nottingham.

We are very grateful to all the distributors who supplied films to these events, without whose continued support Screening Days would not be possible; to the staff of all the venues who hosted them, and to the speakers who lent their expertise to our specialised events.



A line up of films to rival any film festival, alongside meeting the best cinema people from across the UK, all organised with attention to detail and friendliness.

– Screening Days participant

Seeing films in advance really helps with our marketing in terms of identifying key audiences, copywriting and working up any potential campaigns we might come up with.

– Screening Days participant

Autumn Screening Days 2018

For the first time, we ran Screening Days at the Tyneside Cinema. We were delighted to take Screening Days to the North East and to visit this beautiful and historic cinema, where we screened 22 films to a sold-out audience. Our excellent line-up featured highly acclaimed foreign language titles including *Capernaum*, *Shoplifters* and *Burning*; early awards season contenders including *The Favourite* and *If Beale Street Could Talk*; new British features *Wild Rose* and *Pond Life* and independent art-house documentaries such as *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* and *Hale County: This Morning, This Evening*.

Spring Screening Days 2019

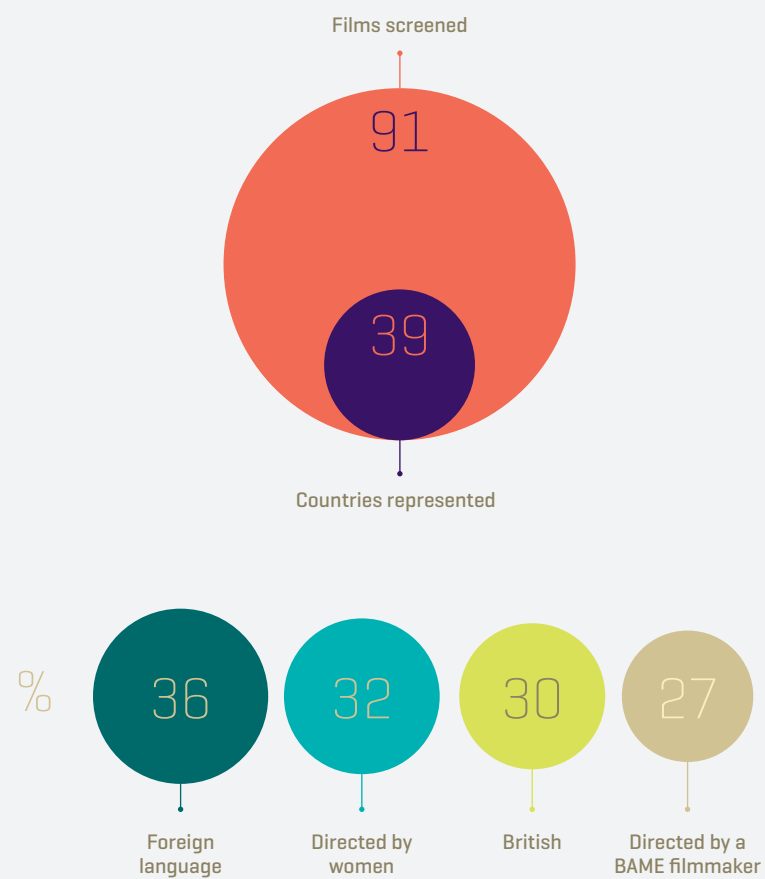
Our flagship event and always our busiest, Spring 2019 was also our biggest Screening Days to date with 354 delegates in attendance. Together with a wide-ranging line-up of 25 films, we hosted talks on topics including best practice in theatrical marketing and how to put on outdoor screenings. As usual, we welcomed a wide variety of distributors to introduce their films and outline their release plans, with the director Carol Morley also attending to introduce a screening of her new film, *Out of Blue*.

Summer Screening Days 2019

We had a wonderful summer event visiting Depot in Lewes for the first time, with a film programme that boasted key British (Ken Loach, Joanna Hogg, Gurinder Chadha, plus newcomer Mark Jenkin) and world cinema filmmakers (Pedro Almodóvar, François Ozon, Christian Petzold) amongst its highlights.

Depot has won awards for its environmentally friendly design and operations. In concert with this and in response to the ongoing climate crisis, we began a new sustainability focus at this Screening Days, taking measures to reduce our printing and encouraging delegates to reduce waste; while at the event, Depot's Director Carmen Slijpen delivered a talk on how cinemas in attendance could encourage sustainability in their own venues.

Screening Days Statistics



The highest rated films across the events

Film	Admissions
1 <i>Capernaum</i>	90%
2 <i>System Crasher</i>	87%
3 <i>By the Grace of God</i>	86%
4 <i>Woman at War</i>	85%
5 <i>Green Book</i>	85%
6 <i>Hail Satan</i>	84%
7 <i>Shoplifters</i>	83%
8 <i>The Biggest Little Farm</i>	81%
9 <i>The Favourite</i>	79%
10 <i>Pain & Glory</i>	79%



Archive Screening Day 2018

Our Archive Screening Day, held at BFI Southbank, welcomes experts from regional, national and international film archives and regular archive exhibitors to discuss their work and lead practical workshops alongside screenings of new archive programmes and feature restorations.

Our delegates enjoyed sessions including a keynote from Robin Baker, Head Curator of the BFI National Archive on how to maximise the audience development potential of the archive; an inspiring discussion on the creative possibilities of combining music and archive film with Gary Thomas (Film Programme Manager) and Joel Mills (Senior Programme Manager, Music) of the British Council; a fascinating presentation from Dr Toby Haggith, Senior Curator of the Imperial War Museum on their work on Peter Jackson's ground-breaking *They Shall Not Grow Old*; and a panel exploring the underappreciated women of early

silent film comedy with BFI Curator of Silent Film, Bryony Dixon and writer and critic Pamela Hutchinson. We screened some incredibly rare films, including new restorations sourced from Cineteca di Bologna (*Pixote*) and the Korean Film Archive (*Tuition*) and *The Great Victorian Moving Picture Show*, a programme of early silent shorts presented by Bryony Dixon and accompanied by pianist John Sweeney.

Young Audiences Screening Day 2019

We returned to HOME in Manchester for our fourth event celebrating cinema for young audiences. Alongside a programme of key upcoming films for younger audiences including *We the Animals*, *Teen Spirit* and *Booksmart*, we hosted sessions including a young programmers' networking event, a practical workshop on how best to develop young programmers' groups in venues, and a panel of case studies on successful marketing campaigns to attract young audiences.

94%

said they would show a programme of archive film after the event

“

Creating opportunities for audiences to engage with archive material on a more personal, accessible level is an exciting prospect. Thank you for a fascinating event!

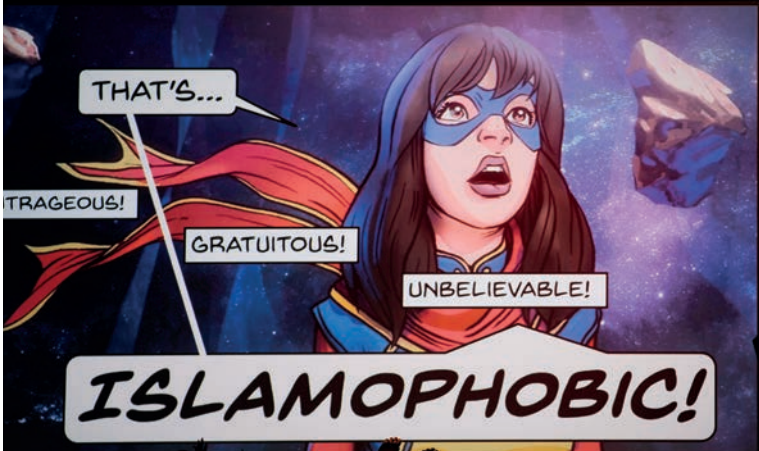
- Screening Days participant

It was great to meet other young programmers and share your thoughts and worries.

- Screening Days participant



Credit Paul Johnson



Credit Paul Johnson



Credit Paul Johnson

I.D. Screening Days 2019

In response to feedback from the last event, we lengthened our third I.D. Screening Days – our event exploring current thinking around issues of diversity and inclusivity in cinema – to two days, held at Broadway in Nottingham.

Seeking to bring new voices into the programme, we held an open call for session curators, resulting in a fantastic array of speakers and topics. These included 'Six Steps to Creating Diverse & Inclusive Events', led by the co-founders of We Are Parable; 'Refugees Welcome', exploring how best to bring refugee and new arrival audiences into your cinema; 'Locality', on how to reach out to your local audiences for truly grass-roots, community-led programming; and 'Muslims in Film', on how to challenge anti-Muslim bias on screen. Our film programme saw us screen features including *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, *Farming and Britishness*, a film by Eelyn Lee exploring what the concept of 'Britishness' means to us now (this last followed by an interactive workshop led by the filmmaker) alongside shorts programmes 'Caribbean Calling', new Caribbean shorts curated and introduced by the Twelve30 Collective, and Neurodiverse Film Talent, a programme of shorts by emerging neurodiverse filmmakers curated and introduced by Alex Usborne of 104 films.

We seek to incorporate a true diversity of cinema into all our Screening Days and more widely, into everything that we do at the ICO, and will only seek to increase this going forward, making it integral to everything we do. We are extremely grateful to our speakers at I.D. Screening Days for their expertise and insights, as well as to our enthusiastic and engaged attendees.

88%

said the event encouraged them to diversify their programme



Hail Satan, courtesy of Dogwoof



The Biggest Little Farm, courtesy of Parkland Entertainment



By the Grace of God, courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye

Film Hub South East

In January 2018, the ICO began managing Film Hub South East, part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN). We are thrilled to be working with cinemas, film festivals, film societies and community groups to develop a thriving and inclusive film exhibition sector across the South East.

OPEN PROJECTS, FILM
FESTIVALS AND OUTDOOR
SCREENINGS FUNDED BY
FILM HUB SOUTH EAST HAVE
GENERATED OVER 61.8K
ADMISSIONS



Credit Resource Productions and Terry Payman. The Curve, Slough

BFI FAN was originally set up in 2012, using National Lottery funds to support a stronger and more connected approach to growing audiences for British and international film on the big screen. It divided UK film exhibition activity into regions, each led by a regional hub, of which Film Hub South East is one.

Since taking on Film Hub South East in January 2018, our vision for the hub remains the same and has two clear aims:

- To enable a wider section of people to watch a greater range of films in a greater number of locations.
- To create a more integrated and better connected exhibition community in the region.

Focussed on these objectives, we have developed stronger relationships

with a number of local authorities on our ambitious New Towns heritage project which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in addition to the BFI; are piloting a new approach to the development of Young Film Programmer's Groups in the region; are working to find and fund new filmmaking talent as well as supporting local networks for creative talent through BFI NETWORK; and are supporting a range of festivals and venues to build new audiences for independent cinema throughout the region.

In the coming year we will continue to support and encourage projects that seek to diversify and provide access to independent and British film, and to cultivate new audiences. We will keep developing and strengthening our network of South East exhibitors to build a vibrant and active community.

Programming Group

We have continued to facilitate a Programming Group of ten regional cinemas, who are supported and encouraged to programme a wider, more diverse range of cultural cinema. The group benefits from regular meetings where they are presented with a menu of 12 upcoming specialised films, with release, programming information and marketing assets supplied on each title. Along with this presentation of film content and bespoke programming support, we have run a series of capacity-building sessions on topics such as audience development, distribution and marketing, whilst also screening preview content for the group. Our Programming Group members have generated over 5.5k cinema admissions from specialist titles.

Programming Group members

- › **Broadway Cinema & Theatre**, Letchworth
- › **Cinema at Campus West**, Welwyn Garden City
- › **The Capitol Horsham**
- › **Chelmsford City Theatres**
- › **Corn Exchange**, Wallingford
- › **Gulbenkian**, Canterbury
- › **Kino-Teatr**, Hastings
- › **Norden Farm Centre for the Arts**, Maidenhead
- › **The Theatre Chipping Norton**
- › **Towner Art Gallery**, Eastbourne

“

Being a part of the Programming Group has enabled The Capitol to significantly broaden its programme of film to include foreign titles, smaller, more niche films and certainly films that people would otherwise not have the opportunity to see in Horsham.

— Nick Mowat, The Capitol Horsham



Credit Chris Payne

Young Film Programmer’s Groups

Over the last year, we have established 12 new Young Film Programmer’s Groups made up of 64 Young Film Programmers. So far the groups have screened over 40 films and generated over 1,000 admissions.

New groups established

- › **The Curve**, Slough
- › **Electric Palace**, Hastings
- › **The Palace Cinema**, Broadstairs
- › **South Hill Park Arts**, Bracknell
- › **Folkestone Harbour Arm**
- › **Deal/Linden Hall Studios**
- › **Trinity Theatre**, Tunbridge Wells
- › **Connaught Theatre**, Worthing
- › **Uckfield Picturehouse**
- › **The Capitol Horsham**
- › **The Maltings**, Surrey
- › **Chichester Park Hall**

“

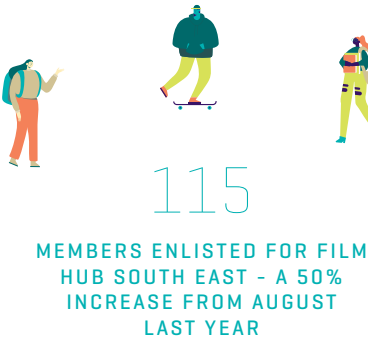
Young Film Programmer’s Groups are an exciting approach to building the cinephile generation of the future. They empower young people to be part of this change – enabling them to go behind the scenes of the cinema exhibition industry, make their voices heard and research, plan and deliver their own screenings, events and festivals.

— Julia Andrews-Clifford, Young Film Programmer’s Manager

Training

In January 2019, we hosted a three-day free strategic development course for South East film festivals, covering business planning, sponsorship and marketing strategies led by expert speakers Sarah Gee, Co-Founder at Indigo; Dagmar Forelle, Former Head of Sponsorship at Berlinale and Sarah Boiling, Independent Audience Consultant. This was a unique opportunity for film festival professionals to work closely with industry experts. We also hosted a region-wide Young Film Programming Networking & Training meeting for facilitators and Young Film Programmers at BFI Southbank.

Our year in numbers



Over 5.5k

SPECIALIST TITLES CINEMA ADMISSIONS VIA OUR PROGRAMMING GROUP



Over £155k

AWARDED TO 16 OPEN PROJECTS, FILM FESTIVALS, TOURING NETWORKS AND OUTDOOR SCREENINGS



12

FILMMAKERS SUPPORTED AS PART OF THE BFI NETWORK



EXPANDED OUR SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS REACH

OVER 9.6K WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS AND OVER 570 E-NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS



1.3k

FACEBOOK

FOLLOWERS

4k

TWITTER

700

INSTAGRAM



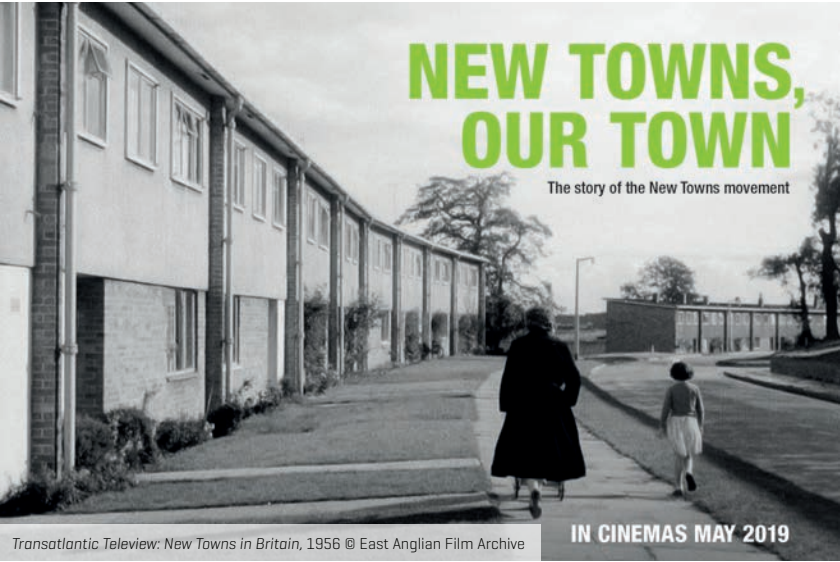
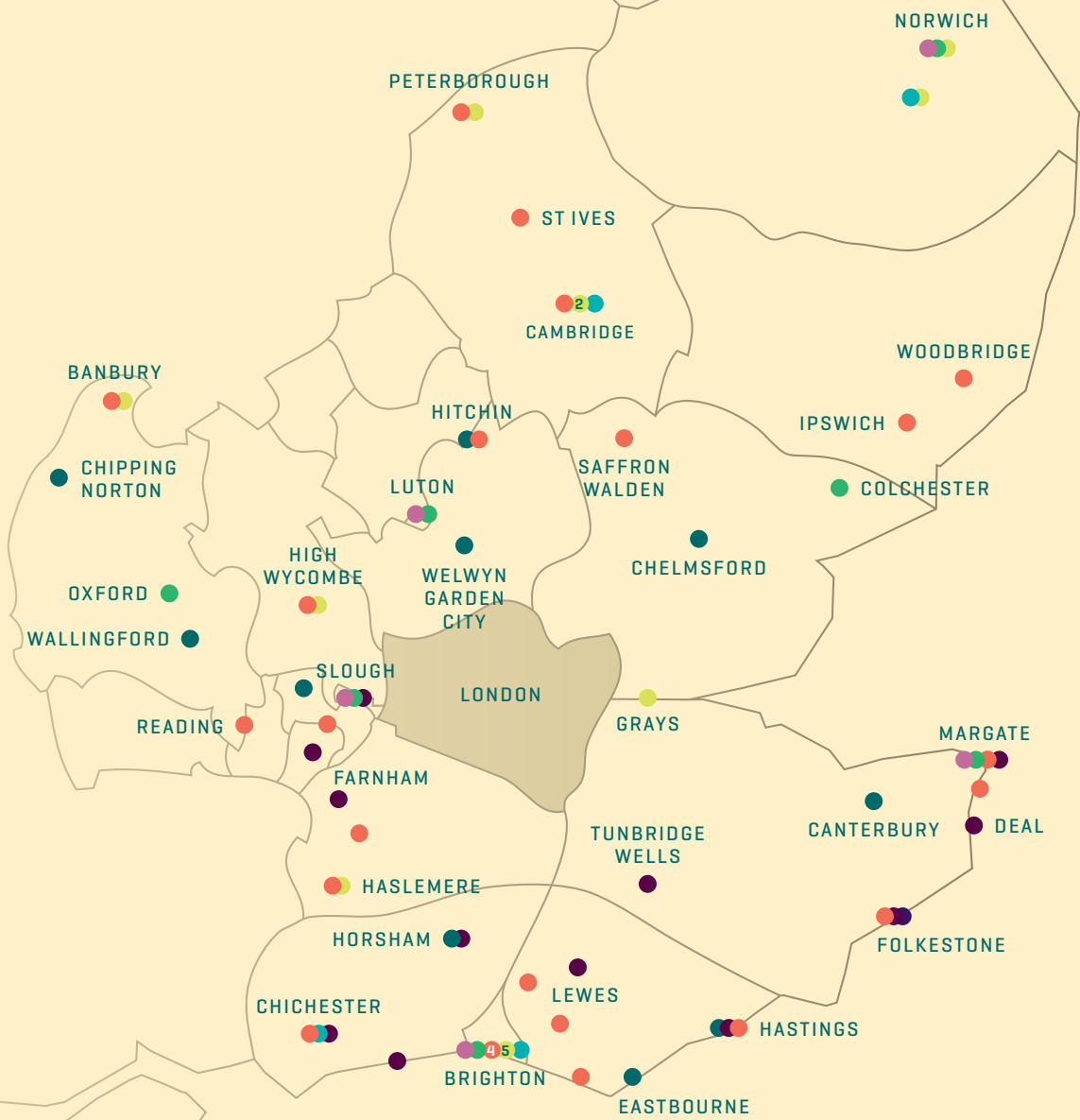
35

BURSARIES AWARDED FOR TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Geographical Impact

- Open Project Support
- Film Festivals and Touring Network Support
- Outdoor Screenings Scheme
- Programming Group
- Young Film Programmer’s Groups
- Training & Professional Development Bursary
- BFI NETWORK Talent Meet-up
- BFI NETWORK Project Lab



Screen Heritage

Whilst developing our Film Hub South East activities we decided to take a strategic approach to our screen heritage work through the creation of *New Towns, Our Town – Stories on Screen*. The New Towns movement is one of the South East’s most significant shared stories, with a legacy and an impact that are still felt and discussed today.

With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and working closely with the BFI National Archive, the East Anglian Film Archive and Screen Archive South East, this project sought to increase the visibility of the New Towns movement and to celebrate the unique social history and heritage of these pioneering towns with specific film exhibition activity in Crawley, Harlow, Hemel Hempstead and Stevenage – the UK’s first four New Towns.

In December 2018, we took the archive material directly into busy public spaces. For two weeks we

continuously back-projected the footage onto empty shop windows in Harlow’s main shopping centre, and on Stevenage Borough Council windows facing the town’s busy bus station. In Hemel Hempstead we were given exclusive access to screen the footage on their town’s ‘Big Screen’ and in Stevenage and Crawley we also had one-day events in their town squares. Footfall counters showed that this activity reached over 200,000 people across the four towns.

Our community screenings, taking place between January – March 2019 in a range of spaces across the towns including museums, galleries, churches, community centres and care homes, were attended by over 1,000 people.

From these screenings, our team of 31 volunteers (39% of our volunteers were aged between 16 and 30) recorded 40 oral history interviews

“
A new compilation of archive films from the Independent Cinema Office chronicling Britain’s pioneering postwar New Town movement – and our ongoing love-hate relationship with it.

— The Guardian, 15.5.19

with audience members, using the archive footage as a trigger for memories, stories and valuable information to further contextualise the archive films and expand on current records. They also informed educational resources created through the project to support the use of this archive material in local schools.

The project has generated wide interest beyond its original scope, including being examined and presented in PhD research, and at town planning events and symposiums – clearly demonstrating the value and potential use of archive film beyond the film exhibition sector.

The project culminated in a national touring programme which was covered in *The Guardian* and is available to book across the UK until May 2021. So far, the film has already been booked by 23 venues, including a sell-out screening at the Barbican.



The Lost Land Girl by Shakira Francis, credit Dan Bold, Bold Visuals

BFI NETWORK

Film Hub South East continues to work with BFI NETWORK to provide support for new and emerging filmmakers across the region. The vast majority of UK film talent is still sourced and developed in London, and we are working specifically to find and support talent outside of the capital, which we believe is vital in broadening who has the opportunity to participate and what gets seen on screen.

Tom Wightman is our dedicated BFI NETWORK Talent Executive for the South East. Thanks to National Lottery funding he has been able to offer advice to regional filmmakers on their creative development; hold regular events across the region to encourage networking, filmmaker collaboration and skills development, and recommend filmmakers for BFI NETWORK funding.

Project Labs & Talent Meet Ups

In the past year, Film Hub South East has held eight Project Labs centred on producing and script writing with 129 attendees and 26 Talent Meet Ups with 1,420 attendees. The Project Labs were created to offer a focussed day in a specialist area of production, led by industry experts. To complement this activity the Talent Meet Ups offer regular spaces for filmmaking talent to hear from different people from within the industry, but more fundamentally for

them to connect with other talent, share ideas and hopefully form teams to apply for BFI NETWORK funds in the future.

We're working to deliver these events across the region and so far have hosted training in Luton, Slough, Margate, Brighton, Oxford, Norwich, Colchester, Suffolk and Folkestone. Working in different areas has allowed us to develop new partnerships with Bute Street and Signals in Colchester to deliver these events.

Filmmakers supported

So far we have funded 12 filmmakers from across the South East as part of BFI NETWORK, including eight short films and four early development treatments. In many instances the filmmakers are making their second short film and certainly their first funded project. A number of the titles deal with contemporary issues including social exclusion, youth violence, austerity, disability and racial inequalities.

The films are all expected to be completed in January 2020, after which we will continue to help the filmmakers with festival support and future screenings. Through all of this work, we aim to help South East filmmaking talent gain a national and international platform and to create a regional filmmaking community.

In the past year, Film Hub South East has held eight Project Labs centred on producing and script writing with 129 attendees and 26 Talent Meet Ups with 1,420 attendees.

“

My experience with the Film Hub South East BFI NETWORK has been very positive. They have given me support and guidance as well as allowing me to express my full creativity. Most importantly they believed in me and my story.

— Shakira Francis, filmmaker



Faces Places, courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye



Yuli, courtesy of Modern Films



At Eternity's Gate, courtesy of Curzon Artificial Eye

Advice, information & consultancy

The ICO is available to support venues and exhibitors of every size across the UK. Our advice and information service is open to all, with many key resources available to access free on our website. With over 30 years' experience in the business, we also provide bespoke consultancy services.

IN 2018-19 WE HAVE
ANSWERED 1,297
ENQUIRIES, AND WORKED
ON SIX LARGE-SCALE
CONSULTANCY PROJECTS



We offer the most practical, simple and immediately helpful advice we can, pointing people in the right direction and aiming to support independent exhibitors of all kinds in achieving their goals.

The ICO offers free, impartial advice to the public via telephone, email and our website's extensive resources. We receive an incredibly wide variety of enquiries each week, from industry newcomers to seasoned programmers; from people keen to put on a single DVD screening in their local town or village hall to those hoping to start their own full-time cinema. We offer the most practical, simple and immediately helpful advice we can, pointing people in the right direction and aiming to support independent exhibitors of all kinds in achieving their goals.

Having launched a new website in 2017, this year we have worked to update key resources in its *Advice & Support* section, in particular putting plans for new PDF guides together so people can download, retain and print a copy of our more in-depth resources. Our first such guide, 'How to Plan an Outdoor Screening' covers all aspects of outdoor screenings including planning, licensing, equipment and health & safety considerations, so anyone can take away a complete document to help them plan their own outdoor screening event.

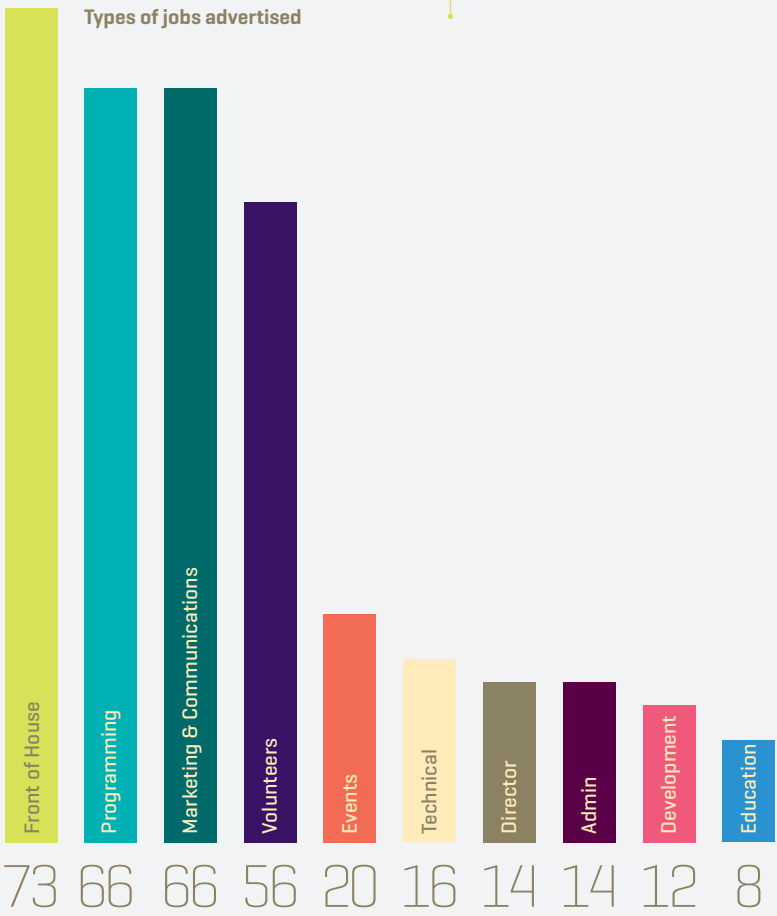
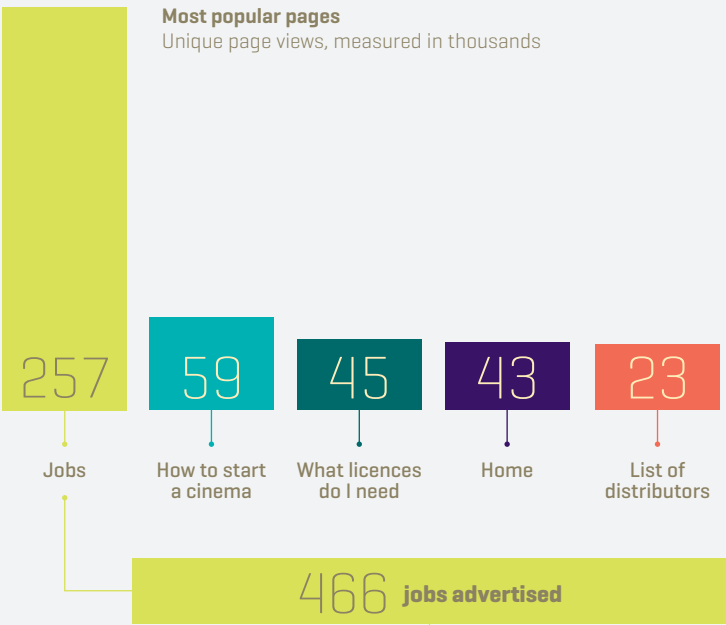
We have also been developing an updated, downloadable PDF version of our much-used 'How to Start a Cinema' guide, due shortly on the website. This incredibly valuable guide, full of expert insights into all aspects of starting your own theatrical venue, remains our most popular web resource; with our alternate section on how to get started with approvals for beginning non-theatrical screenings, 'What licences do I need', close behind.

Our website's 'List of distributors', which offers contact info for key UK distributors; helpful, accessibly written 'Screening films in community cinemas' guide and 'Useful exhibitor resources' section (which last offers concise advice on practical matters such as subtitling and audio description, how to access promotional materials and box office statistics, etc.) are amongst its most regularly visited and frequently updated pages.

As well as occasional roles at the ICO we publish jobs and opportunities from across the industry and across the UK on our website's free-to-use jobs board, the most popular page on the website. We include all roles and opportunities in film exhibition we come across – with a wide range of roles including management, front of house, programming, marketing and projection. We also list roles in related exhibition organisations and occasionally in key distribution companies; and circulate all jobs listed on the website in a daily digest to email subscribers, while those hoping to identify future careers in film exhibition can browse our web section outlining what these roles entail.

Along with our multitude of free resources and advice services, we offer a bespoke consultancy service to support the UK exhibition sector by working both with existing cinemas to operate more effectively, and with people who dream of creating a new cinema, helping to turn their initial vision into realistic plans for a sustainable operation.

Most visited online resources



Worthing Cinemas Appraisal

In February 2019, Worthing Borough Council commissioned the ICO to carry out an extensive appraisal of the cinema market in this West Sussex town, looking at both existing cinema provision and projecting the scale of the potential market, to arrive at an indication of additional capacity for cinema in the town.

The study looked in detail at existing cinema provision in Worthing and especially at The Connaught, a fine example of a much loved, heritage cinema building successfully adapted into a contemporary, digital age venue with a mix of live events, event cinema and traditional film screenings. The Connaught is managed by the Borough Council and has enjoyed increasingly strong support from the cinema going public in the town and beyond for many years.

The study also looked beyond the boundaries of the town to arrive at a better understanding of cinema provision across the Sussex coastal region, and at existing patterns of cinema-going here.

The aim of the report would be to give the Borough Council evidence either way of the potential for further cinema provision in the town, and if there is sufficient demand identified, to look at the range of options for practically meeting this demand.

The appraisal was completed in April 2019, and has been used by the Borough Council to start the process of looking at not only potential additional cinema provision, but also the development of other cultural and public amenities in Worthing.



The Embassy Cinema Restoration Project

When the Embassy Cinema in Chadwell Heath opened in 1934; it was described by the local press as 'the last word in splendour and comfort'. With over 1,800 seats, it was designed to be a 'super cinema', offering audiences not just films, but also a programme of theatre and live performance in its art deco style building.

Fast forward 85 years and The Embassy, now known as The Mayfair, is currently in use as a banqueting venue, even though it remains largely intact as a cinema building, retaining a single auditorium and many other original features.

In order to take the first steps towards returning the building to use as a cinema, and to better understand its potential as an amenity for the local public, Chadwell Heath South Residents' Association and the national community-focused charity Locality commissioned the ICO to produce a feasibility study reviewing the business viability of running a cinema and live arts programme in the building, and the architectural feasibility of turning this distinctive building into a contemporary cinema and arts space.

The ICO carried out the study in partnership with the architect Stefanie Fischer from July to September 2018, incorporating new research into the cinema market in the boroughs of Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham alongside early stage designs for cinema facilities in the building, with these shaped by the research and the modelling of a viable cinema for Chadwell Heath.

The study concludes that the building could be developed into an accessible, two-screen cinema with a café and other facilities for local community activities, whilst preserving the integrity and desirable features of its public spaces and the very grand main auditorium. The addition of a second screen and café-bar is critical to the viability of the new venue; with the development of other spaces that could be used by a range of local groups critical to re-establish the profile of the building as a shared community asset.

The study also points the Residents' Association towards next steps, providing them with the right advice and evidence with which to make their case to prospective partners and funders in order to advance this ambitious and potentially town-changing project.

ICO consultancy supports the UK exhibition sector by working both with existing cinemas to operate more effectively, and with people who dream of creating a new cinema, helping to turn their initial vision into realistic plans for a sustainable operation.

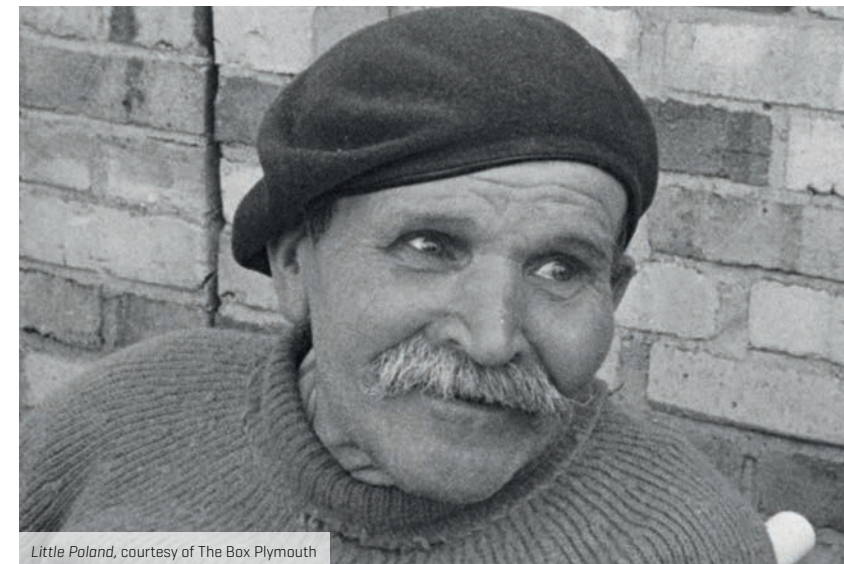
The ICO is at the forefront of providing professional consultancy services in the UK, and we were thoroughly pleased with the Feasibility Study that was produced. The successful results of the Study have provided us with a platform to launch the next fundraising phase of the project, and enabled conversations with our neighbouring local authorities to progress even further.

– Rama Muraleetharan, Chadwell Heath South Residents' Association

Distribution

Our distribution projects make a direct intervention into the marketplace and contribute to the diversity of cinema culture in the UK; expanding what is commercially available in cinemas and increasing audience choice. We aim to celebrate the widest possible array of voices and stories from past to present.

IN 2018-19 WE
RELEASED 38 FILMS
WHICH WERE SEEN BY OVER
17.3K PEOPLE; GENERATING
OVER £83.2K IN BOX
OFFICE REVENUE



ICO distribution projects seek to champion the widest possible range of world cinema both contemporary and historical – especially those titles that the market would not otherwise support. We give space to work that has been traditionally excluded from the canon and/or deserves a wider audience. We intervene when we see the opportunity to profile new or unconventional voices; showcase underseen voices or historical stories; increase diversity in representation on-screen and engage with key works of cinematic heritage.

This year, the ICO has continued to tour the original six programmes from our popular Britain on Film on Tour – extending the rights so they can be enjoyed by more audiences until 2021 – and in March 2019, releasing two new programmes, *Britain on Film: Welcome to Britain* and *Britain on Film: Protest!*

We also created a bespoke tour, *The Personal is Political – The Films of Margarethe von Trotta*; bringing four of the ground-breaking New German Cinema director's underseen titles to UK cinema screens.

Finally, as part of the BFI blockbuster season, Comedy Genius we toured 12 films across the UK from October 2018 – January 2019.



Campaign to Organise the General Strike, courtesy of the BFI National Archive

Britain on Film

Due to popular demand, and thanks to support from the BFI, the ICO was delighted to extend the rights of our original Britain on Film touring programmes: *Black Britain*, *Coast and Sea*, *LGBT Britain*, *Railways*, *Rural Life* and *South Asian Britain*.

These curated packages are now available to book until 2021, giving audiences the opportunity to enjoy archive material collectively in cinemas, mixed arts venues, museums, libraries and a wide and diverse range of other community spaces across the UK. The level of engagement in this ground-breaking distribution project has been truly remarkable and with 613 screenings and over 19,500 audience members to date, continues to achieve its core aim of developing more audiences for the UK's rich and broad screen heritage.

Alongside the funding for the continuation of this project, we were delighted that the BFI supported us to devise, develop and deliver two new films for the tour.

Launched at the Migration Museum in March 2019, *Britain on Film: Welcome to Britain* charts a century of arrivals to the UK; utilising rarely-seen archive footage to tell these stories through the voices of different generations of British immigrants. Released in the same month, *Britain on Film: Protest!* explores the varied and fascinating history of over 100 years of protest in the UK.

During a period in which some UK residents are being asked to re-frame their presence in the country, and at a time of intense public activism both at home and across the globe, these new programmes demonstrate the unique value of screen heritage as a lens through which to review, discuss and debate contemporary events.

Britain on Film on Tour is one of the ICO's most successful distribution projects to date. With the extension of the original programmes alongside these new titles, we look forward to continuing to grow audiences for archive film, demonstrating the power and importance of enabling people to see their own lives reflected on the big screen.

We have been delighted to work with many individual rights holders and archives across Britain on Film on Tour including:

- Archbuild / Associated Rediffusion
- BFI National Archive
- The Box Plymouth
- Brent Museums and Archives
- Butlins Archive
- The Campaign for Homosexual Equality
- FremantleMedia
- London's Screen Archives
- Maya Vision International
- Media Archive for Central England at the University of Lincoln
- Moving Image
- National Film and Television School
- Northern Ireland Screen
- Ulster Television
- Wessex Film and Sound Archive

19,500

audience members across
613 screenings to date

“

Travelled 160 miles for this screening, have never watched archive film in a communal setting before.

— Audience response

Enjoyed it very much, let's have some more please. Brought back great memories.

— Audience response



The Last Honour of Katharina Blum, courtesy of StudioCanal

The Personal is Political – The Films of Margarethe von Trotta

Our dedicated tour celebrated the works of Margarethe von Trotta, who created some of the most trailblazing films of the past five decades. The first female director to win the Golden Lion at Venice Film Festival, von Trotta is one of the most gifted – but often overlooked – directors to come from the New German Cinema movement and a significant female auteur. At the ICO, we knew we had to bring her films back to the big screen for the recognition they deserve, and the fact that they had been newly digitised by our partners at StudioCanal was an opportunity not to be missed! We were delighted to thrill audiences with our tour, which saw over 3,300 admissions across 78 screenings, generating over £22.4k in gross box office.

Von Trotta's films are so resonant for the times we live in now – exploring as they do the politics of domestic life, of terror, of history, of the role of the media; all refracted through a resolutely feminist lens. The titles we selected for the tour represent the best of New German Cinema and von Trotta's exceptional talent in portraying how the personal is political: *The Last Honour of Katharina Blum*, *The Second Awakening*

of Christa Klages, *Rosa Luxemburg* and *The German Sisters*.

Ensuring a legacy to the physical tour, the films were kept in distribution for a year and made available on a wide variety of formats, ensuring that the widest possible audience had the opportunity to experience them collectively in the cinema, with screenings across the UK from Falmouth to Inverness. The tour generated multiple conversations and exchanges around the particular relevance of von Trotta's films to the current moment. Working in partnership with StudioCanal on the project, we were also grateful for additional support from the BFI Audience Fund and the National Lottery, which enabled us to deliver additional resources as well as facilitate panel discussions and introductions.

Alongside our work championing these incredible films across the UK, we commissioned new writing on the influence and importance of Margarethe von Trotta from academics, curators and writers across different generations. These pieces continue to be made available on a bespoke microsite, see essaysaboutmargarethevontrotta.org.

£22.4k

generated in gross box office,
across 78 screenings and 3.3k
cinema admissions

“

I loved the film and want to see more films by this director now. Very pleased to have been introduced.

— Audience response



Nine to Five, courtesy BFI Distribution ©1980 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved

£43k

generated box office revenue
across 65 venues, with an
attendance of over 6.8k

“

So thrilled to have a chance to
see these films. Thank you!

— Audience response

Comedy Genius

In 2018, we produced a touring programme of 12 films in conjunction with the BFI's Comedy Genius blockbuster season. The aim of the tour was to broadly reflect the themes of the BFI programme, whilst at the same time providing UK exhibitors access to a wide range of films reflecting different voices from the comedy genre. The programme represented comedy at its all-time best; highlighting early film comedy pioneers and innovators, world cinema classics and blockbuster talent from the 80s and beyond. We were delighted to take 154 bookings from 65 venues, with an attendance of over 6.8k, generating over £43k in box office revenue.

We secured rights from international sales agents to bring two films back into UK distribution for the length of the tour. Pedro Almodóvar's *Women on the*

Verge of a Nervous Breakdown proved as popular as ever with contemporary audiences; with cinemas also taking the opportunity to show Charles Lane's modern silent classic, *Sidewalk Stories*, for audiences to rediscover. We worked with celebrated musician Stephen Horne, who performed his live score alongside selected screenings of *Sidewalk Stories*, giving cinemas around the UK the opportunity to create truly memorable and special events.

Other notable successes of the tour were Japanese 'ramen western' *Tampopo*, which drew the second largest audience of the tour; the BFI's celebration of silent-film actress and director Mabel Normand's films; and Howard Hawks' screwball comedy *His Girl Friday*, which was booked in to 17 cinemas, from Aberdeen down to Dartington and beyond!



Tampopo courtesy of Park Circus



Sidewalk Stories, courtesy of Carlotta Films



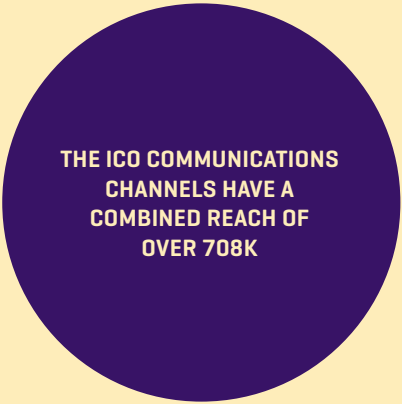
Duck Soup, courtesy of Universal



Blazing Saddles, courtesy of Park Circus

Marketing

The ICO create and disseminate regular content across our communication channels, including updates on all ICO activities and the latest news from industry partners, as well as guidance and best tips for the film exhibition sector.



1.4 million
page views

Online

Social

We've seen continued growth across our social media channels with followings of:

- **Over 16k** on Twitter
- **Over 7.7k** on Facebook
- **Over 2.2k** on Instagram
- **Over 1.7k** on LinkedIn

E-newsletters

We now have over 7.9k subscribers on our e-newsletter list. Subscribers are regularly updated with ICO news across our film releases, training courses, Screening Days, job alerts and blog updates. We have an engaged list with an average open rate of 40% (industry average is 21%).

Website

In the last year our website has attracted over 1.4 million page views, 672,800 of which were unique. Our most popular pages include jobs, advice and support and distribution.

Blog

The ICO posts regular blog pieces, commissioning writers and staff members to share their knowledge and insights across topics around improving the cinema experience; highlights from the ICO programming team; accessibility; attracting younger audiences; workforce issues in exhibition; broadening the content shown on screen and all the latest opportunities in the sector. This year our top five popular blog posts are:

1. **How BFI NETWORK can help South East filmmakers** by ICO's former Marketing Coordinator, Maria Pirkkalainen
2. **How to build and run a sustainable cinema** by Depot's Green Ambassador, Natasha Padbury
3. **Was our attempt to attract younger audiences an #epicfail** by Thomas Humphrey, Marketing Manager at Bertha Dochouse
4. **Starting a Cinema from scratch: The story of Catford Mews** by Isra Al Kassi, Programme & Marketing Manager at Catford Mews
5. **Berlinale 2019 wrap-up: Ones to watch** by ICO Film Programmers Heather McIntosh and Isabel Moir.



About the Independent Cinema Office

The Independent Cinema Office (ICO) was founded in 2003 with a vision of giving everyone the opportunity to see life-changing cinema on the big screen.

The ICO is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. We are based in London, but our work is national with a goal to help create an open, thriving and challenging film culture everywhere in the UK. Our work wouldn't be possible without the help and support from our partners including funders, distributors, cultural organisations, our clients, and most especially cinemas.

Launched with three members of staff and £120,000, the ICO now employs 18 members of staff with an annual turnover of £1.6 million. The ICO is committed to a film industry that is inclusive and reflective of everyone in society. We are working towards this goal with all our activities, as well as our own staffing and structure.

Our Funders & Partners

The ICO is proud to partner with a variety of national and international agencies and funders to deliver our ambitious programmes. The BFI has supported the ICO since its inception and is now a major funder of programming, information and training services to the independent exhibition sector through a range of our activities.

We are one of eight national hubs in the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), tasked with supporting audience development across the UK. Our other major partners are ScreenSkills (who support our professional development projects), Creative Europe and the British Council (who support our portfolio of activities supporting European film festivals), the National Lottery Heritage Fund (who support our film heritage projects) and Arts Council England (who support our artists' moving image projects). Approximately 25% of our income is self-generated.

Our Board of Trustees

Dorothy Wilson (Chair)
Independent Consultant, Coach & Producer

Sudha Bhuchar
Actor/Playwright; Co-founder, Tamasha Theatre Company & Artistic Director, Bhuchar Boulevard

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