

Report Algeria 2014
Filmothèque Zinet, Sofiane Khodja

Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the fight for independence

2014 was highlighted by exceptional events to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the armed insurrection (1954/1962). A significant qualitative increase of the national cinema productions also occurred in 2014, even though history took over usual topics like social investigation, emigration...

Good news are also coming from the Ministry of Culture, which just announced the resumption of 65 cinema halls owned by city councils (Home Office). A structure was created to manage these halls, their restoration and their digital equipment! The commitment was made by the Minister of Culture to give the management of those cinemas to private entities on the basis of a bill of specifications. This measure, as well as the supporting measures, was acclaimed by the distributors. Indeed, the small amount of cinemas since 1990s was an obstacle to develop their activity. The perspectives drastically change with the significant increase in cinema halls and the leap forward of the national film productions. This should continue in 2015 thanks to the special programme: "Constantine: Capital of the Arabic Culture".

The art-house sector, somehow reduced, was actively involved in the different event of the 60th anniversary of November 1st 1954. The Zinet Filmothèque launched 2014 with the "European Film Days of Algiers" and the contest of the European Delegation in Algeria. This programme allowed us to make an assessment of national cinemas implemented in the country, starting with the French cinema.

The other leading event was dedicated to the « Asian Films Days »: with an emphasis on the new Chinese giant, but without forgetting the Japanese or Indonesian cinema. Towards the end of the year, the Arab-Indian cultural festival was the occasion to revisit this other giant of the national cinema production: India. Another homage was paid to the "Arab Spring" with films from Tunisia, Egypt, and Palestine...

As oral historians, we wanted to celebrate the "60th anniversary of November 1st 1954". We came up with a programme under the form of a bridge between Algeria and France. The vision of Laurent Heyneman, author of "Question" (fr.1976) crossed the vision of Merzak Allouache with "The Bay of Algiers". Italian Gillio Pontecorvo, author of the renowned "The Battle of Algiers", crossed path with Mehdi Charef, who wrote "Cartouches Gauloises" (fr./alg.). Last but not least, there was a moving homage from Kupperstein dedicated to a heroine of the independence: Djamila Boupacha (who was raped and tortured by the French army, arrested on February 10th 1960 and sentenced to death on June 28th 1961).