

Rapport Italie

FICE

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ARTHOUSE CINEMA IN ITALY: 2014 DOWN, GOOD PROSPECTS FOR 2015

In 2014 the Italian market recorded a downturn. According to Cinetel data (90% of the full market), tickets sold were 91.4 million (- 6.1%), box-office takings were 574.8 million of Euros (-7%).

The **Italian cinema** is rated 27.7% (in 2013: 31,1%). 5 Italian films ranked among the first 20, with two comedies, **Un boss in salotto** (*A boss in the kitchen*) and **Il ricco, il povero e il maggiordomo** (*The Rich, the Poor and the Butler*) ranking second and fifth. US cinema too registered a decline: 49.6% of attendance compared to 53.4% in 2013.

The Italian market is still strongly unbalanced between the autumn-winter season featuring too many releases squeezing the average life of a film, and a summer season featuring - especially in 2014 - only a few notable releases, including art films. In 2014, as much as 470 films were distributed. The average ticket price remained unchanged (6.02 euros).

In 2014 the **Festa del Cinema** took place again (May 8-15), with tickets at 3 Euros and about 2 million moviegoers: that could have gone better (-11% compared to Festa 2013) if the film offer had been more interesting. In 2015 a new edition is foreseen with a renewed formula, taking place in October, and with a higher budget.

The **digitalization** process has basically been completed, except for a few single screen theatres in small towns. A fundamental role to this regard has been plaid by special support funds set up by almost all Italian regions and tax credit on the first investment.

The approval of the **regulation against on-line piracy** by the Authority for Communications Guarantees was welcome: a first outcome was the exclusion of Italy from the "watchlist" of the US government about counterfeiting and piracy.

2015 is encouraging: +7.2% admissions from January to April, although the Italian market share is stuck at 25% (the release of Moretti's, Garrone's and Sorrentino's films competing in Cannes is encouraging).

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In 2014, 763 screens received the **ministry prize for 2013 activity**, sharing as much as 2,100,000 Eur – one of the lowest sum ever awarded to this sector, an average of 2,750 Eur per screen. A slightly higher sum was allocated to the special project "Quality Screens", encouraging the programming of Italian and European art-films. At the moment, a reform of the decree on art-house theatres is being debated with the Ministry.

FICE has rolled up its sleeves to overcome the **challenges of art-house theatres**: in 2015 too it supports the summer release of quality films with a promotion concerning 10 independent films. Besides, the distribution of shorts in the associated theatres continues, and, after the good response of 2014 partnership with Cinecittà Luce, also the distribution of 15 documentary films from June to December.

On May 28th, FICE will celebrate the 30th anniversary of VIVILCINEMA, the art-house theatres journal with a circulation of 50,000 copies distributed in hundreds of Italian film theatres: this date will be the occasion to announce current and future activities. Among the topics of discussion: CICAIE, LUX Prize (2015 finalists will be supported by FICE), Incontri del Cinema d'Essai in Mantova (the 15th edition, October 5-8, with previews and meetings open to the public and FICE Prizes).

Finally, an agreement is expected with the Associazione Italiana dei Festival (Italian Festival Association) for the distribution of works shown at the festivals but never distributed, in order to address the growing difficulties of the independent auteur production: art films are less requested, lower sums are invested for their promotion, “proximity theatres” are closing down and audiences lose the habit of going to the movie theatre.

An issue which is not only an economic, and age problem but also a cultural one: it is essential to promote art-house cinema with partnerships and a continuous dialogue with the authors, the producers, and the distributors.

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