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Strong Momentum for Arthouse Cinemas at Lumière Summit CICAE President Dr. Christian Bräuer welcomes the IRIS Initiative and the Summit's Declarations as a Strong Global Signal

Arthouse cinemas stood at the centre of the first Lumière Summit, the international gathering of heads of state and government, industry leaders and decision makers convened by French President Emmanuel Macron and co-chaired by Korean President Lee Jae-myung at the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence. The summit's most concrete result for the sector is IRIS, a new international initiative dedicated to independent screens, which Dr. Christian Bräuer, President of the *International Confederation of Arthouse Cinemas CICAE*, warmly welcomed.

In his opening address, Macron returned repeatedly to arthouse cinema, describing the independent-cinema model as essential to the reach of films and to a cinematic pluralism that is under threat today, and its preservation as a shared responsibility. He called for a new multilateralism to shape the industry and the cinema of tomorrow.

IRIS is where that ambition takes concrete form. The initiative aims to protect, strengthen and connect the independent cinemas, distributors and non-profit networks that keep film diversity alive, and to act quickly where local players are most isolated or under threat. Representing more than 2,400 arthouse cinemas in 47 countries, CICAE has pursued precisely this mission for decades. Its most recent Arthouse Cinema Training has just concluded, with more participants and from a wider range of countries than ever before; some of them are building arthouse cinemas from scratch in their own regions, from Rwanda and the Ivory Coast to Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

Christian Bräuer: *"The Lumière Summit sent a strong signal to our sector: arthouse cinemas are not a niche, but essential infrastructure for a diverse film culture and a healthy film economy. Films reach their audiences where cinemas know how to connect them with people – and nowhere is that more true than for independent film. We will gladly and actively support an international mechanism that stands behind independent arthouse cinemas."*

For CICAE, what matters most is that the Summit set out to shape the future of cinema and, in doing so, acknowledged the part cinemas play in it. CICAE firmly supports the Summit's recognition of the lasting value of the cinema experience, and of the singular place cinemas hold among all screens – among the last places where films are watched together, with phones switched off, and, in many countries, among the first cultural venues to be found locally. It shares the Summit's commitment to make image-literacy education part of going to the cinema, bringing school groups in to discover films as they are meant to be seen, and so helping to shape both the audiences and the citizens of tomorrow. And it echoes the Summit's central conviction: diversity needs cinemas if it is to thrive, and cinemas

need diversity to fulfil their cultural, economic and social role.

Bräuer sees the Summit as a mandate to act on what independent exhibition needs:

"The freedom of cultural venues to curate, programme and distribute according to our own judgement is fundamental to artistic freedom and a diverse film culture. Arthouse cinemas, with their curated programmes, distinctive brands, dedicated audience development and close relationships with their public, are what give independent films visibility and the conditions to succeed. Creative independent production, festivals, world sales, distribution and cinemas form a single, interdependent ecosystem whose importance only grows as market power concentrates and artificial intelligence advances. Public support for arthouse programmes and investment in cinemas must therefore be recognised as an integral part of film policy – an area where, as the Summit made clear, too many countries still fall short. Professionalisation, network-building, shared practice and innovation remain the key to keeping cinemas resilient."

CICAE is ready to take an active role in the industry's future and to work with everyone who shares this mission and believes in a strong, diverse and independent cinema landscape.

About CICAE

The CICAE (Confédération Internationale des Cinémas d'Art et d'Essai) is a non-profit association representing over 2,400 arthouse cinemas with more than 4,400 screens in 47 countries. Founded in 1955, CICAE promotes cultural diversity in cinema and advocates for independent exhibition at national and international levels.

For further questions please contact info@cicae.org / +49 (0)30 43 97 101 54