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## SET THE TREND !

### **Workshop @ Art House Convergence, Midway, Utha, USA**

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« The aim of this panel organized by Europa International is to create an exchange between US professionals and EU sales agents, to gather ideas in order to find ways to do their jobs better and to design a winning distribution strategy. » **Susan Wendt**

« Discussion on how the collaboration with international cinemas, distributors, sales agents can best work with exhibitors and on addressing the challenges, solutions and best practices to make it better. » **Ted Hope**

1 of the challenge = so many great movies each year and from the past (restored and available) but difficulties to access to them

### **Alice Damiani (Executive Sales, Doc & Film Intl, FR)**

IFFR Live supported by MEDIA program  
Day-and-Date releases experimentations  
Festival, screening in theaters, and live Q&A online interaction

### **Ram Murali (Executive Sales, Kinology, FR)**

« There is so much that has still to be formed, how to use the energy moving around for 10 years and how to preserve a certain type of film culture? »

**Observations and perspectives** about film industry at the digital age

- Sales agents are wondering **how to monetize all this new platforms and possibilities.**
- There is **a tension existing between a community sharing contents and curators** such as film festivals and critics. How can they work together? How to define the value of content and agree on this definition? How do you keep the film curators involved in the whole social media dynamic?

- We need to **explore different models** in order to know which one is viable. If we know what question to ask, we need to try to get an answer now.

Foreign languages films are very reviews based so need theatrical releases.  
People in the ground know the community (demography etc.)  
30 – 40 distributors in the US with who to talk to for foreign distribution.

### SUSAN WENDT (HEAD OF SALES, TRUSTNORDISK, DA)

Rights directly to the exhibitors = not same attention as with distributors  
How to combine the balance?

### DAVE JESTEADT (VP OF DISTRIBUTION, GKIDS, US)

NY based distributor, foreign films, Oscar nominated – Timbuktu

#### **Introduction remarks**

- VOD is becoming much popular and accessible in the US. Now, each platform that got 10 films two years ago has today a couple of hundred of films.
- Having a 'big profile' for and on a VOD platform is more and more important for a film
- There are so many different ways to have an access to VOD nowadays from the classic TV cable channels from the growing Netflix platform. It's becoming harder and harder to get people in theaters.

**Ted Hope:** *"it's been said to me that **VOD is a platform of "compromise"** because people decide to watch VOD instead of going to the theater for certain films but still go there for other films. How to better know this articulation? "*

In other words, we know now that certain films get the best traction in theaters: for instance, it is the case of the romantic thriller, the one that pleases to both genres stereotypes. While, at home, films that are preferred are often the ones having really pure gender stereotypes into it like titles of drugs, sex, and local crime...

NY is the most under-screened city in US, especially uptown Manhattan

Foreign films distribution

- 70% NY
- 15% LA
- 15% other US

## [BILL THOMPSON \(COHEN MEDIA GROUP, US\)](#)

Distribution of 50 films per year / 35 films with subtitles = Well aware of challenging of selling foreign films

### Is VOD gaining power and audience?

- **Home entertainment** grew up about 3%. It is still increasing but less than the other years. Are we touching the end of the bottle?
- **Transactional VOD** (buying a movie on I-tunes) grew up about **11%** this year and it will continue to increase.
- The really huge number: **Subscription VOD** (Netflix, Amazon) grew up of **440%** in a year!

Value of film festival = only chance to get foreign films in theaters  
Theatrical release and 7 months later VoD, home video

## [ADELINE MONZIER \(NY OFFICE DIRECTOR, UNIFRANCE, FR\)](#)

**YOUNG FRENCH CINEMA** is a program of UniFrance films, in partnership with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, which aims to bring French films with no US distribution to art house cinemas, film societies, the Alliance Française network, and American universities.

Young French Cinema offers a selection of today's best French films and filmmakers. The program focuses specifically on rising talents from France, from high-profile independent works, to powerful documentaries and quirky discoveries. This program stands as proof that this young generation of contemporary French filmmakers is—more than ever—a genuine melting pot with a global vision and an amazing capacity to combine cultural influences. Across a wide range of subject matter, their work is innovative in both style and storytelling. Most of the films selected in this program have premiered in the US in one of the top US festivals, but do not currently have US distribution.

2015: 53 screenings in 11 cities / venues.

Most programmed films:

1. Grand Central (8)
2. Long Wave (7)
3. Tonnerre (6) - Miss and the doctors (6) - Domestic Life (6) - Age of Panic (6)
4. Macaroni and Cheese (5)
5. School of Babel (3) - The Rendez-vous of Déjà-vu (3)
6. Apaches (2)
7. Party Girl (1)

Flat booking fees (300 doll fee for 2 screenings)  
Hard to convince the sales agents (as usually they want 1000 to 2000 doll)

### **MY FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL**

Global festival on platform in the world

US : iTunes, Hulu etc

Line up of 10 features to represent the state of French cinema out there

+ adapting to local countries

ex 1 : China / Film for free / VoD s beginning

ex 2 : US 2 doll per film

Challenge : Communication which is global communication

### **TED HOPE (CEO, AMAZON STUDIOS, US)**

Importance of the **community** and the **curation**

#### **Comments Netflix / Youtube**

Netflix / *"How I learn to stop worrying an love the algorithm?"*

Netflix = 57 Mio subscribers

To bring efficiency in the market with data

Netflix : no ad, no P&A = As organic advantage

Viewing data, raking data, satisfaction data = to use it

Youtube / About the engagement & the power of new influencers

Not advantage as organic

To take people with huge fan basis community to get them engaged and excited about your film

Youtube : constant event open for top Youtube stars / community

Create the magic happening if you get right people talking about right things

To engage community with audience

To use the data for the programming of Youtube

Note that programming can be from film studios / from filmmakers

#### **Some updates about the current state of VoD release**

- The vision of sales agents, distributors, and producers has changed and this participates helping VoD growing up for two years.
- There are now **two different types of VoD** releases that are used by the film industry:

1. **Day and Date distribution:** movie released on all the platforms and places (I-tunes, cable channels, Netflix, theaters) on the same day → 7 dollars a film
2. **Early VoD release:** movie coming out on the VOD platforms one month before its release in the theaters → 10 dollars a film. *Magnolia Pictures* and *IFC* use this one for movies that may not play well in the US.

### Concrete examples

- **Melancholia** doubled his theatrical revenue by being released on VOD platform earlier than in theaters. We are now realizing that VOD release is good for indie films.
- **Margin Call** is an interesting and successful case to study.  
VOD release: **5 millions** of dollars / Theatrical release: **3 millions** of dollars

#### Why can we say that choosing a VoD release for Margin Call was an incredible opportunity?

Because of a **perfect combination** of all the elements:

1. It was premiered at Sundance during the winter
2. Early VoD release happened after Sundance
3. Screened for the first time in NY at the New Directors/New Films Festival in the Spring
4. Watched by the **Occupy Wall Street** community during the summer in theaters and on VoD.

**The fact that the movie was available on VoD considerably increased the conversation about it on social media**, and then a large audience has been built that way in a short time. This same audience came also to theaters for watching the movie and for participating to the special Q&A's lasting sometimes hours. There was a real debate around the film alimented by the VoD possibility.

## Questions & Answers

**Do you have any ideas of how to convince cinema owners, the exhibitors, they need to embrace the VoD trend instead of struggling with it?**

**Ted Hope:** *"We have to re-engage audiences and the great promise of digital is to make us able to **decide how to disseminate the information**. We can now **FIND the fans** and cinemas can't only do it by their own, they just don't have the means for that. So, the answer is quite simple: **future is about working together and SHARE the information**."*

**"Social media and Facebook are they really helping Art House films too or are they only helping the mass media marketing movies gaining attractions on the platform?"**

**Ted Hope:** What social media had shown is that **the art of communication on filmmaking is the one that needs to encompass all the aspects of it**. For years, we relied on the most obvious ways to promote a film, i.e. trailers and posters and a media campaign launched at least six weeks prior to the release date. Now it is question to use the contents of the whole production process sometimes more than a year before the film release. By designing anything, all this content, promoting a film is also now about **how to keep this movie alive** even after its release date. It is about **making a film becoming like the glue** which gathering people who have common esthetics and artistic interests together. For such a reason, Art House films are commonly the films that really succeeded to become the cement of a community, more than commercial movies.

**"Is English going to become the language of European film industry and community and of films in general at the digital age?"**

It's going to be both: **some films can't travel and don't need to travel** because they are dealing with a very specific cultural aspect of the country they are made in, they can be very popular within this country but not outside. For other films, for those who are made for travelling, they will have to use English. Plus, **social media is not forgetting the original language**: now you can activate an option on Facebook redirecting the user directly from the English official page to his own language page. This is what Starbucks does for example.