



Locarno Festival
2-12 | 8 | 2017

STEPIN 2017

AN INTRODUCTION

Welcome to StepIn 2017!

Now in its fifth year, StepIn is an interdisciplinary and international think tank where distributors, exhibitors, producers, sales agents, funding agencies, marketing professionals, streaming platforms and film festivals representatives take part in closed working sessions to discuss the state of the film industry.

If you received this program, you are part of a selected group of 50 European and international industry key players chosen among various profiles for their experience, and invited to exchange their points of view and propose practical ideas and strategies to overcome the most pressing challenges they are facing.

Our goal is to offer an intimate space where professionals can openly and freely share their own experience, interact, get inspired by one another, and look at how they can implement new behaviors, practices and business models.

We wish you a wonderful, productive and enriching experience!

Marcello Paolillo
Project Manager

Nadia Dresti
Deputy Artistic Director

StepIn is organized in partnership with Variety

And in collaboration with
Europa Distribution, Europa International and Europa Cinemas



GENERAL SCHEDULE

Date: Thursday, August 3rd, 2017
Location: Belvedere Hotel, Via ai Monti 44, Locarno

Timetable:

11:30am – 12:30pm: **PART I:** Opening Keynote
[Hotel Belvedere, Sala Granda]
Open to all Press, Professional and Industry accredited

12:30pm – 2:30pm: Lunch offered by Eclair
StepIn guests only

2:30pm – 4:30pm: **PART II:** Private round-table session
StepIn guests only

4:30pm – 5:00pm: Coffee break
StepIn guests only

5:00pm – 6:00pm: **PART III:** Wrap-up
[Hotel Belvedere, Sala Granda]
Open to all Press, Professional and Industry accredited



Working language for the whole event: English without translation

To follow:

6:30pm – 8pm Industry Meet & Greet
ICDN Casting Director Award
La Rinascente
Via al Tazzino 3, 6600 Locarno

11:30pm – 4am Industry Days Welcome Party
Lido Ascona
Via Lido 81, 6612 Ascona

THE TOPIC

“THE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE AND THE FUTURE OF AUTEUR CINEMA IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL STREAMING PLATFORMS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS”

These are strange times for all of us involved in auteur cinema. Some would call them challenging, if not downright scary; others interesting, if not even exciting. Contradictory signs are coming from different sections of the industry, and it's no longer a matter of watching the glass half empty or half full. It's the whole system that is radically changing – from how a film is financed to its revenue stream and exploitation opportunities.

We have been told that in the digital age making movies would be easier and cheaper than ever, and yet financing an independent feature has become extremely difficult, and mid-range budget films have disappeared. Festival titles struggle to find theatrical distribution and cinema venues seem colonized by Hollywood tentpoles and remakes, and yet, after many years of theaters shutting down in city centers, or being replaced by multiplexes, we are starting to witness a reverse trend, thanks to innovative exhibitors and courageous arthouse distributors who are experimenting new strategies to enhance the theatrical experience, and remind audiences of the unparalleled pleasure of watching a film on the big screen.

In this complex scenario, global streaming platforms have brought a seismic change in the habits of audiences around the world, radically changing their perception, and most of all fruition, of films. The very core of the theatrical exploitation system, already upset by window and geo-blocking issues, and constantly plagued by online piracy, has been inevitably affected by a business model that appeals to the public's unspoken desire to have access to any content anywhere and anytime, and that attracts producers and filmmakers with significant financing perspectives.

Regardless of one's opinion on the matter, what's undisputable is that this completely new landscape is a reality every one in the film industry has to deal with: producers, filmmakers, independent distributors, major studios, international sales agents, exhibitors, and even film festivals. The “Netflix controversy” in Cannes last May, and the current European debate on the digital single market are just the tip of an iceberg that extends much deeper and wider under the surface, and involves crucial issues inherent to the essence of the film industry as we know it.

As upsetting and confusing this scenario might seem, we are not here to point fingers. The StepIn approach is simple, straightforward and most of all, constructive: there's obviously an elephant in the room. Let's deal with it. Together.

First of all by avoiding generalizations. Under the umbrella definition of global streaming platforms, for example, we find very different companies, some of which are openly seeking a dialogue with the theatrical players, creating strategic partnerships with film festivals, and even moving their first steps into theatrical distribution.

Secondarily, by avoiding catastrophism. Although someone is already mourning the end of the theatrical experience (a recurring temptation - didn't they say the same when the talkies or the television arrived?), the distribution landscape has never been so diverse and active.

Our prestigious keynote speakers are the living proof of this healthy variety, as they comprise one of the most established and celebrated distribution and production company of specialty films worldwide; one of the most innovative and original exhibitor, now also distributor; and one of the most interesting platforms for arthouse cinema, which has recently started to acquire also theatrical rights.

So, to put it bluntly: what's the future of auteur cinema in this new age of global streaming platforms and social networks? Is there still room for independent films in movie theatres? And how will film festivals and the different industry players evolve?

The state of our industry has never been so uncertain, and yet, as we enter uncharted territories, encouraging signs paint a broader, even brighter, and definitely more complex canvas. One that is worth analyzing in detail. For StepIn 2017, we are proud to have assembled an incredible group of people. Thanks to the skills and the experience of everyone, we now have the opportunity to discuss the challenges of this new landscape, and to tackle specific issues from different perspectives.

Marcello Paolillo
StepIn Project Manager

PART I - OPENING KEYNOTE

From 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Open to all Press, Professional and Industry accredited

Moderated by Variety correspondent Nick Vivarelli, during the opening keynote three remarkable film executives introduce the topic of StepIn 2017 and offer their points of view.

Keynote Speakers:

BOBBY ALLEN

Mubi | VP of Content



Bobby Allen has over twenty years of experience in the global film and entertainment business. Currently he is the VP of Content at MUBI, one of the fastest growing independent VOD platforms in the world, where he is responsible for all programming, content and editorial. He is also leading MUBI's move into theatrical distribution and co-production. Before joining MUBI he was an independent film producer and the VP of Sales & Acquisition at Celluloid Dreams. Before that he was Head of Production at MTV Films Europe, Head Of Acquisitions at Film Four and he has held senior executive positions in international film sales and acquisitions at companies such as PolyGram Film International, Lionsgate, and Mayfair Entertainment.

TIM LEAGUE

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema | Founder & CEO



Tim League graduated from Rice University in 1992 with degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Art/Art History. After a two-year stint at Shell Oil in Bakersfield, California, Tim left the engineering profession and opened up his first movie theater, the Tejon Theater. When that theater closed after a short run in 1995, he and his wife Karrie loaded a truck with 200 seats, a projector, screen, and speakers and headed to Austin. They founded Alamo Drafthouse in 1997, where as CEO League remains committed to providing creative programming and a zero tolerance policy for disruption during the theater experience. League also co-founded Fantastic Fest, the largest genre film festival in the United States, and NEON, the newest powerhouse in US Film Distribution with titles such as *Colossal* and *The Bad Batch*.

ROBERT WALAK

Focus Features | President



Robert Walak is President of Focus Features, one of the most important distribution and production company of specialty films worldwide, premier label of iconic movies from fearless filmmakers. Based in London, Mr. Walak was previously Co-Managing Director of Universal Pictures International Productions, and before, Managing Director Europe/President Production, Acquisitions and Television at The Weinstein Company, where he acquired titles such as Todd Haynes' *Carol*, Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth*, Paul King's *Paddington*, Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game*, and Garth Davis' *Lion*. Mr. Walak was also executive producer on Tom Harper's epic miniseries *War and Peace*. He was previously Senior Vice President, Acquisitions & Production at Alliance Films/Momentum Pictures, shepherding projects such as *The King's Speech*, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, the *Twilight* franchise, and Steve McQueen's *Shame*, which he exec-produced.

Earlier in his career, he worked in business development at Endemol and was a producer at MTV Europe. Mr. Walak holds a Masters in Film & Television from the University of Amsterdam.

Keynote Moderator:

Nick Vivarelli

Variety | Italy and Middle East correspondent

Born in Florence to an American mother and an Italian father, Nick Vivarelli has spent plenty of time in both countries. After studying comparative literature at New York University, he dabbled as a literary translator and art gallery organizer before venturing into journalism and film. Since then, he has worked for several media outlets, including The Associated Press and Newsweek. A regular on the international festival circuit, he is currently Italy and Middle East correspondent for Variety. He is also the author of "Slalom," a Tuscany-set thriller published by Manni Editori in Italy.

PART II - ROUND-TABLE SESSION

From 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM

StepIn Guests Only

During this session, the 50 participants are divided in 5 thematic round tables, each one with a Moderator and a Notetaker, to discuss specific issues related to the main topic of the event.

In the following pages you'll find examples of arguments that could be addressed in each table.

TABLE 1: How Global Platforms are impacting Film Production

Moderator: Robert Walak (Focus Features)

Notetaker: Jaime Romandia (Mantarraya Producciones)

TABLE 2: Global Platforms and the Theatrical Experience

Moderator: Bobby Allen (Mubi)

Notetaker: Susan Wendt (TrustNordisk)

TABLE 3: New Strategies of Distribution and Exhibition

Moderator: Tim League (Alamo Drafthouse)

Notetaker: Marc Allenby (Trafalgar Releasing)

TABLE 4: Marketing Movies in the Age of Social Networks

Moderator: Mathias Noschis (Alphapanda)

Notetaker: Jon Barrenechea (Picturehouse)

TABLE 5: The Role of Film Festivals

Moderator: Janet Pierson (SXSW)

Notetaker: Allison Gardner (Glasgow Film Theatre)

TABLE 1: How Global Platforms are impacting Film Production

How hard is it for independent companies, or even Studios, to compete with global platforms on coveted materials and interesting properties? And how difficult is it to attach name directors and key talents to a feature film, as they are shifting towards TV-series which keep them busy for several months? Is the role of sales agents and talent agencies changing in regards to film production? Are pre-sales still a viable instrument to finance an independent film? Global streaming platforms seem to offer a great alternative for film financing, but this is often at the expenses of a theatrical distribution. To which extent do producers and filmmakers consider global platforms an inconvenience or an opportunity to get their films financed? And to which extent are they willing to give up a theatrical release? How are European film funds and associations addressing this issue? Can they offer a valid financing alternative or strict guidelines in order to keep the focus on the theatrical exploitation?

Moderator:

Robert Walak

Focus Features | President

See bio above (Part I - Keynote speakers)

Notetaker:

Jaime Romandia

Mantarraya Producciones | CEO & Founder

Born in Mexico City, Jaime Romandia is arguably the producer who won the most international awards in Mexican film history (more than 130). He founded Mantarraya in 1998, which soon became a platform for a new generation of great filmmakers, such as Carlos Reygadas and Amat Escalante. Named by Variety as one of "10 Producers to watch", Romandia has produced in 19 years more than 35 films, 16 of which by first-time directors. Seven of his productions premiered in the official selection of the Cannes Film Festival, receiving important awards such as a Special Mention for the Camera d'Or (*Japon*, 2002), the Jury Prize (*Silent Light*, 2007), the FIPRESCI Prize (*Sangre*, 2005), and the Best Director Award for two consecutive years with *Post Tenebras Lux* (2012) and *Heli* (2013). *Silent Light* and *Heli* were selected to represent Mexico at the Oscars. His latest production, *The Untamed* (Escalante), won Best Director at the Venice Film Festival 2016. Romandia has also created a distribution arm, NDMantarraya, a film school, Escine, and an animation studio, Fotosintesis Media.

TABLE 2: Global Platforms and the Theatrical Experience

Global platforms have brought a seismic change in the film industry, and even though some of them are favorable to a theatrical release of their films, and even believe that a theatrical run can actually increase the value of their titles, they are still regarded as a disruptor and a threat for the system. Can acquisition departments of local distributors compete with the global streaming platforms, which often have deeper pockets and can instantly snatch worldwide rights? Or can they find a way to work together? And what about the relationship between global platforms and exhibitors? Are they direct competitors or is there room for co-existence? And what about the window and territorial issue? Last, but not least, sales agents used to be a crucial ally for independent film producers, as they were instrumental to the financing of a film and its worldwide sales. Do they consider global platforms a potentially dangerous rival, or, instead, a client who can offer a lucrative worldwide deal and a no-hassle one-stop shop?

Moderator:

Bobby Allen

Mubi | VP of Content

See bio above (Part I - Keynote speakers)

Notetaker:

Susan Wendt

TrustNordisk | Director Of International Sales & Marketing

Susan Wendt started working in the film industry as a sales executive at Nordisk Film in 2000. In January 2008 she became Head of Sales at Trust and later the same year, as Trust and Nordisk merged, she continued as Head of Sales and now Director of International Sales & Marketing at the new powerhouse sales company TrustNordisk, handling a catalogue of more than 500 films from highly acclaimed directors such as Lars von Trier, Susanne Bier, Thomas Vinterberg, Lukas Moodysson, and Tobias Lindholm. Based in Copenhagen, and internationally regarded as one of the leading sales companies in Northern Europe, TrustNordisk, under Susan's direction, is constantly working to exploit any media on the market, and always looking for different ways of distribution, new business strategies and alternatives markets.

TABLE 3: New Strategies of Distribution and Exhibition

It's a general assumption that people don't go to movie theatres as they used to. But are platforms the only culprit? And most of all, is there a way to bring people back to theatres? There are several initiatives that are worth discussing: from the booming Event Cinema experience, to the controversial and on-going discussion on collapsed windows and premium VOD offering; from cinema-on-demand attempts, to innovative business strategies such as a lowered price for tickets pre-ordered in advance; not to mention restaurant cinemas and deluxe theatrical experiences (reclined seats, advanced technology such as laser projections and HDR screenings), and an increased role of exhibitors in the editorial offering: from multi-programming to retrospectives, from carte-blanche initiatives with important directors and critics choosing their favorite films, to Q&As via Skype to make the theatrical experience closer to a live event. Moreover, it's interesting to notice how exhibitors are often becoming themselves distributors, negotiating films directly with sales agents and producers.

Moderator:

Tim League

Alamo Drafthouse Cinema | Founder & CEO

See bio above (Part I - Keynote speakers)

Notetaker:

Marc Allenby

Trafalgar Releasing | CEO

Marc Allenby has 20 years cinema industry experience spanning across exhibition and distribution. Starting at Picturehouse Cinemas he initially specialised in brand activations and then moved into 'event cinema' at its advent, helping establish Picturehouse as the leading UK cinema group in this space, at a high, accounting for 15% of Picturehouse Cinemas box office. As this side of the business began to blossom he switched focus to distribution, initially developing the UK and then the global market. He has worked with all the major arts organisations in the cinema space including the ROH, NT Live, RSC, Met, Bolshoi and Glyndebourne alongside interesting 'one off' cultural events such as Monty Python Live, Andrew Dominic's One More Time with Feeling and Roger Waters The Wall. Most recently Marc helped facilitate the management buyout of Picturehouse Entertainment, re-establishing the company, with its experienced 18 strong team as Trafalgar Releasing.

TABLE 4: Marketing Movies in the Age of Social Networks

As new and less expensive ways of marketing have appeared, thanks to the pervasive usage of social media worldwide, channeling the attention of the right audience to an independent film is still a very complex task. What are the current challenges that film professionals face nowadays to reach the right audience for their film, or even expand it? At this table we will discuss innovative marketing strategies - through viral campaigns, grassroots, social media engagement, on-the-ground activities and so on... - involving distributors, exhibitors and sales agents, but also tech companies specialized in social communication. The goal is to share ideas and experiences, and to look at the most effective strategies to enhance the circulation, visibility and awareness of auteur films.

Moderator:

Mathias Noschis

Alphapanda | Film Marketing Strategist

Mathias is a film marketing strategist specialised in social media. He is the founder of Alphapanda, a London-based agency with team members in Berlin, Warsaw and Geneva. Alphapanda's client list includes 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., the European Film Awards and several independent producers and distributors. Alphapanda's recent projects span from fiction films A Heart of Love (Berlinale '17), The Last Family (Locarno '16) and Orecchie (Venice '16) to documentaries The Trial (Berlinale '17) and Porn to be Free (IFFR '16). Mathias is also a consultant for Creative Europe MEDIA and a marketing expert and tutor for organisations such as TorinoFilmLab, FOCAL, the National Film and Television School, Marché du Film de Cannes and IFFR.

Notetaker:

Jon Barrenechea

Picturehouse | Deputy Director of Marketing

Jon Barrenechea is Deputy Director of Marketing for Picturehouse Cinemas, the UK's largest arthouse cinema chain. He is also a Board Member of CICAIE (International Federation of Arthouse Cinemas), sits on the BFI's Film Hub South East Management Board and is Festival Producer for Sundance London. He frequently speaks on audience development, marketing and cinemas for Europa Cinemas and CICAIE.

TABLE 5: The Role of Film Festivals

In the 90s film festivals were the go-to destination to discover talents and snatch titles before anybody else. Now that everything is easily accessible online, word-of-mouth spreads immediately, and film negotiations happen all year round, what's the role of film festivals? How can they help the distribution, exploitation and overall visibility of auteur cinema? Should they increase their editorial strategy (for example thematic festivals) and raise their bar to guarantee a reliable stamp of quality to their offering? How can they support a film to prevent its disappearance after the festival premiere, considering that most titles are no longer picked up by independent distributors? Should festivals become a digital platform or ally with one, as many are starting to do? Should they become itinerant festivals or even consider the possibility of a live streaming or contemporary screenings in other cities? Can festivals entertain the idea of making their titles accessible online to their industry attendees for a limited time after the festival, to help sales agents reach all potential buyers? Last but not least, considering the Netflix controversy in Cannes, how should festivals handle TV-series and films not intended for a theatrical release?

Moderator:

Janet Pierson

SXSW | Director of Film

Janet Pierson is responsible for the vision, programming, and execution of SXSW Film Conference & Festival. Before joining SXSW for the 2009 event, Janet spent over 30 years championing independent films and filmmakers in a variety of roles - often in conjunction with her husband, author John Pierson - including exhibitor, producer's rep, executive producer, and segment director of the IFC cable TV series *Split Screen*. She appears on screen in the Steve James Documentary, *Reel Paradise* and Andrew Bujaski's *Beeswax*. She loved curating *In The Dark: Filmmakers Illuminate Stories from the Film World* for The Moth, on 6/22/2001. On the 2010 Guardian's Film Power 100, and 2013 Indiewire Influencers, she regularly serves on panels and juries for other festivals and agencies including the NEA, ITVS, BFI, and Creative Capital. She's currently a member of the Austin Film Society Advisory Board and UT Press Advisory Council.

Notetaker:

Allison Gardner

Glasgow Film Theatre | Programme Director & Festival Co-Director

Allison Gardner is Programme Director at Glasgow Film Theatre, a year-round screening programme of world cinema classics and contemporary art house films; and Co-Director of the Glasgow Film Festival, which screens the best of international, Hollywood and Scottish cinema and is the fastest growing film event in the UK (the 2016 edition saw over 41,000 admissions). Glasgow Film also includes a Youth Film Festival and a Short Film Festival, Scotland's largest showcase of emerging film talent, while the GFT's Learning programme aims to teach and cultivate an understanding of the moving image in all its diversity. In addition to her job at Glasgow film, Allison is also director of the film distribution company CinéFile.

PART III – WRAP-UP SESSION

From 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Open to all Press, Professional and Industry accredited

During this conclusive session, moderated by Variety correspondent Nick Vivarelli, all 50 participants gather together once again, as the five notetakers from the previous session present a brief summary of what's been discussed during the round tables, answer questions from the audience, and offer conclusions and comments for further discussion.

Wrap-up Speakers:

Jaime Romandia

Mantarraya Producciones | CEO & Founder

Susan Wendt

TrustNordisk | Director Of International Sales & Marketing

Marc Allenby

Trafalgar Releasing | CEO

Jon Barrenechea

Picturehouse | Deputy Director of Marketing

Allison Gardner

Glasgow Film Theatre | Programme Director and Festival Co-Director

Wrap-up Moderator:

Nick Vivarelli

Variety | Italy and Middle East correspondent

STEPIN 2017 PARTICIPANTS

TABLE 1: How Global Platforms are impacting Film Production

Matthias Bürcher	Federal Office of Culture Chief Analyst - International Co-productions	Switzerland	
Woo Jung Cho	Cinereach Director Business Affairs	USA	
Mike Goodridge	Protagonist Pictures CEO	UK	
Marsel Kalvo	Mars Production Managing Director	Turkey	
Michel Merkt	KNM, Producer	Monaco	
Jaime Romandia	Mantarraya Producciones CEO & Founder	Mexico	Notetaker
Roberto Olla	Eurimages Executive Director	France	
Katriel Schory	Israel film Fund Executive Director	Israel	
Kamiel Van Der Ster	De Filmfreak Managing Director	Netherlands	
Robert Walak	Focus Features President	UK	Moderator

TABLE 2: Global Platforms and the Theatrical Experience

Bobby Allen	MUBI Vice President - Content	UK	Moderator
Lorenzo Fiuzzi	Filmatique President & Founder	USA	
Edward Fletcher	Thunderbird Releasing Managing Director	UK	
Alaa Karkouti	MAD Solutions Co-founder & Managing Partner	Egypt	
Mark Lindsay	Saboteur Media President of Distribution	USA	
Davide Novelli	Vision Distribution Distribution Director	Italy	
Bianca Obermaier	Weltkino Acquisition	Germany	
Ales Stuchly	Film Europe Media Company Program & Acquisition Manager	Czech Republic	
Susan Wendt	TrustNordisk Director Intl. Sales & Marketing	Denmark	Notetaker
Andy Whittaker	DogWoof Founder	UK	

TABLE 3: New Strategies of Distribution and Exhibition

Marc Allenby	Trafalgar Releasing CEO	UK	Notetaker
Edward Arentz	Greenwich Entertainment Managing Director	USA	
Carole Baraton	Charades Co-Founder	France	
Margherita Chiti	Teodora Film Head of Acquisitions & Sales	Italy	
Philipp Hoffmann	Rushlake Media GmbH Founder & Managing Director	Germany	
Tim League	Alamo Drafthouse Founder & CEO	USA	Moderator
Ramiro Ledo	Numax Head of Acquisitions	Spain	
Barry Rebo	Eclair USA Managing Partner	USA	
Fabien Riggall	Secret Cinema Founder	UK	
Matthias Stütz	Union Filmtheater Exhibitor	Germany	

TABLE 4: Marketing Movies in the Age of Social Networks

Jon Barrenechea	Picturehouse Deputy Director of Marketing	UK	Notetaker
Rodrigo Brandao	Kino Lorber VP of Marketing and Publicity	USA	
Andrea Cirila	Fil Rouge Media General Manager	Italy	
Roger Garcia	Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Executive Director	Hong Kong	
Ben Johnson	Gruvi Ltd. CEO	UK	
Mathias Noschis	Alphapanda Film Marketing Strategist	UK	Moderator
Robin Plamondon	Cinéma Le Clap CEO	Canada	
Lorenzo Ricciarelli	Studiocanal Senior Project Manager Intl. Distribution & Marketing	France	
Ryan Werner	Cinetic Media Senior Executive	USA	
Pawel Wieszczeinski	Kinoscope Founder & Executive Director	USA	

TABLE 5: The Role of Film Festivals

Emmanuel Cuénod	Geneva International Film Festival General and Artistic Director	Switzerland	
Daniela Elstner	Doc & Film International Managing Director	France	
Robert Enmark	SF Studios Head of Acquisitions	Sweden	
Giovanna Fulvi	Filmauro SRL Head of Acquisitions	Italy	
Allison Gardner	Glasgow Film Theater Programme Director & Festival Co-Director	UK	Notetaker
Nicholas Kaiser	Memento Films International COO	France	
Marcel Mueller	Swiss Films Film Consultant, VOD & Programmes	Switzerland	
Janet Pierson	SXSW Director of Film	USA	Moderator
Andrea Romeo	I Wonder Pictures General Manager	Italy	
Gilles Sousa	BAC Films Head of Sales	France	