

JOINING YOUNG AUDIENCES AT THE CINEMA

Exhibitors at the Giffoni Film Festival

For the third consecutive year, MEDIA Salles proposes the Focus on Europe – *Kidflix Special* – event. For the occasion, we move to Italy, to a small town at the threshold of the Amalfi coast, where children from all over the world have been meeting regularly for over thirty years, to take part in one of the most important international film festivals, where they are both spectators and protagonists. From 17 to 20 July, it will, in fact, be the turn of the Giffoni Film Festival to host the third edition of this event specifically addressing European exhibitors committed to programming films for young audiences and schools. As well as following a programme that foresees pre-screenings, seminars and discussions on issues linked to programming and ancillary events for cinemas, these exhibitors will also be able to take their seats alongside the young spectators, gain first-hand experience of the Festival's promotional activities and make the acquaintance of a structure at present in its evolutionary stages, the "Giffoni Media Valley", a project already partly completed, which foresees a museum, a reception centre and the Campus for ideas, devoted to training and production, as well as a cinema already in operation.

But what does the GFF represent in the overall panorama of children's cinema and what has it got to offer European exhibitors? We discuss this question with the Festival Director, Claudio Gubitosi.

Mr Director, if you were asked to describe in a few words the GFF, which you yourself promoted and have been involved with since its very beginnings, thirty-three years ago, where would you start?

Rather than just an event, the GFF is an ongoing cultural project, not a seasonal one, concerned with the promotion of top quality cinema for children, where production, distribution, training, travelling events and music come together. This year there will be around 1,000 young jury members from all over Italy and from over 20 foreign countries. Not forgetting that the Festival is counted amongst the 25 most important cinema events in the world.

Unfortunately, however, what festivals offer frequently doesn't correspond to the actual offer accessible to exhibitors and thus to audiences.

This, too, is one of our Festival's commitments: to draw attention to certain titles, freeing them from the niche area of films for a chosen few. After the Festival, we take an interest in the films themselves, as we wish to provide the missing link between the works selected and the audiences they address. In some cases, we have even become distributors, reviving the circulation of films already considered "dead". The titles selected are seen by young people from dozens and dozens of nations and some are bought by as many as 120 different states. As for Italy, once the cinema distribution is over, millions of families have been able to see the finest and most attractive stories on television.

Fifty exhibitors will attend the Giffoni Film Festival for MEDIA Salles' Focus on Europe this July. Will this encounter between the Festival and those who actually take the films to young audiences in the cinemas lead to something?

This is what we hope, because this Festival addresses the children, their sensitivity, their tastes. But then, when they go home, they need to be able to find the variety and quality of films that they have experienced here back in their own cinemas. This means that closer collaboration between exhibitors and the GFF must necessarily be positive for circulating new ideas and going more thoroughly into those that have already been tried out. Like the Movie Days, for example: a complete project which we could classify under the heading of training, which, over the years, has crossed the boundaries of Campania to involve other regions and has brought great satisfaction and results that have sometimes come as a surprise.