

1 History, Structure, and Practice in the Festival World

Film festivals represent the ultimate celebrations of cinema, not only as a mass medium, but also as collections of creative texts and engaged participants within a larger global framework. Together with institutions like film archives, film museums, cinémathèques, ciné clubs, film societies, and film classes in universities, they constitute a specific stratum of Miriam Hansen's "discursive horizons."¹ Hansen's ideas, which she applied to early cinema, situate the discourses of all cinematic practices within others that refract many processes and consequences of modernity as they participate in them. Film festivals, in turn, form one complex component of this set of discourses and resonate closely with others in social and cultural formations. Within this discursive horizon, film festivals brought cinema away from its roots as a mass medium and endowed it with the "distinction" of serious art.²

At the same time, it would be a mistake to think that film festivals ever have severed their deep connections to their mass roots or to film industries, especially that of Hollywood. In fact, film festivals are too diverse and multifaceted to be painted with a single brushstroke. Major competitive festivals depend on the glamour of stars and spectacles as well as cutting-edge art; thus, they occupy the peculiar role of bridging art and commercial cinemas (both of which in and of themselves have porous boundaries). At the same time, other festivals highlight or unify specific groups, publicize particular social causes, or showcase diverse forms of cinema, sometimes in calculated opposition to mainstream tastes. Festivals link the erudite discourses of archives and scholars with wider audiences but simultaneously facilitate the academization of the popular.

This chapter provides a general historical and sociocultural overview of film festivals, which begins with the many elements that made their emergence possible—the invention of cinema, the debate on what cinema should be, and the demarcation between cinema as a mass medium and cinema as an art form. It is important to understand that the many institutions that have been brought up with the invention of cinema played equally important roles in making the film festival a possible element in the larger film discourse. The magazines (from trade magazines to fan magazines to more high-brow art magazines),

newspapers, and film critics who worked for these publications brought legitimacy to cinema beyond its mass origins, identifying cinema as art. Yet, film festivals are not just about art cinema, a distinction drawn in practice as well as form.

From here I look at the early engagement of film festivals with national and international politics, especially as these surrounded the birth of the best-known festivals of the present, including Venice, Cannes, Berlin, and Locarno, and the atmosphere before and after World War II. Here, I underscore the tensions of art and geopolitics played out in particular on a stage divided by dichotomous power blocks—Allied and Axis giving way to cold war East and West.³

After this, I follow more diffuse strains of globalization and aestheticization that opened up a wider range of festivals during and after the conflictive 1960s, even as established festivals developed important innovations like new sections that accommodate a more expansive definition of cinema—for example, *Un Certain Regard* at Cannes. I continue to show further changes in the 1980s and 1990s, including expansion and changing roles and demands on multilayered festivals and their multiple audiences in a post-cold war world.

Finally, as this history brings us into the contemporary world, in which festivals open somewhere, literally, every day of the year, I balance the continuing unifying roles of the festivals maintained by FIAPF—and more regularly by flows of critics, producers, organizers, and films that sustain a global and local forum for art cinema and mass appeal—as they face new challenges.⁴

This chapter (and to a great extent, this book) examines an emergent global institution—the film festival—which lacks a coherent body of governance or formal codes, yet which occupies a defining role in global cinema, film industries, human careers, and even cities and nations. Festivals encapsulate how cinema can be used to consolidate—to reproduce as well as to question—categorization, interpretation, and hierarchies of film, including its relationship to other media and society. We must begin, however, with the recognition that film emerged and thrived for decades before festivals came to exist.

Before Film Festivals

Film, as one of the first electric mass media, with its bourgeois “inventors,” had its humble beginning among a largely unlettered populace, framed by the gaudy spectacle of vaudeville and the cheap thrills of nickelodeons. Its early history was one of constant invention, with new technologies and cultural products taking shape amid great social changes at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These innovations in product and distribution converged with rearticulations of urban spaces, gender, and immigration, as well as the formation of a modernist aesthetic and sensibility. The emergence of new groups into public spaces, the redefinition of public and private roles of gender, and the nature of cosmopolitan culture were all filtered through questions of who was making movies, where movies were shown, and to whom.⁵

Film festivals did not enter the cinematic field for nearly forty years after the Lumière brothers hosted their first public screening at the Indian Salon at the basement of the Grand Café in Boulevard des Capucines in 1895. In this time, movies matured as a system of production and distribution on national and international scales. There were few studios at the turn of the century. Around 1905, Pathé emerged as a major player in France that was also successful in Europe and the United States. In the United States, Edison, Biograph, and Vitagraph competed among themselves while actively resisting the dominance of Pathé.⁶ It took no time before fierce competition arose between Edison and Biograph, which led to the creation of the Motion Picture Patents Company, the Big Three, and the Little Five.⁷ In Europe, Italy had an industry close to the French in production, while Denmark carved out an astonishing global position as filmmaker and exporter.⁸ Meanwhile, in Latin America and Asia, cinema arrived in metropolitan centers just a few months after Lumière and Edison had screened their products to their domestic audiences in 1896, and national as well as regional cinemas followed.⁹

Film productions soon became industrialized; however, spaces for small producers and minuscule budgets remained accessible to many. Moreover, this early, open ambience permitted opportunities for women as filmmakers, minority and working class voices, and small-scale global productions that would not be recaptured even in film festivals for decades.¹⁰ This early character of open access in film production started to decline by the mid-1910s; by the 1920s and 1930s producers with limited resources were marginalized. Film festivals would thus also serve as one mechanism to address imbalances, creating a space for smaller and alternative productions and audiences.

The First World War interrupted European productions as well as the global flow of imports to the United States. The United States, with its largely autonomous market, not only became self-sustaining but also started to dominate the Latin American market. American producers would use this continued domestic market and production to position themselves strongly in the European and eventually the world market from the 1920s onward. This American dominance created a lopsided playing field in the global film business, with implications for form and aesthetics as well. Hollywood, its textual form, institutions, and commercial business practices, established itself as “the norm,” which, at the same time, has prevented it from ever being the alternative, at least at its initial exhibition.¹¹ Nevertheless, the boundaries between commercial and its alternatives were never rigid; ample examples of Classical Hollywood Cinema have been “rescued” by critics and film festivals and raised to the status of art cinema. Similarly, film festivals are very much a response to this global Hollywood dominance, national as well as artistic, but this does not mean that film festivals have ever been anti-Hollywood.

This period coincides with Dudley Andrew’s classification of the first stage, or the pre-academic period of film studies: “for half a century, filmmakers and

aficionados engaged in zealous discussions in cineclubs and contributed to chic journals or produced mimeographed notes themselves.”¹² This cinephilia or “proto-cinephilia,”¹³ as a practice, crystallized a film culture that eventually would allow film festivals to both thrive and gain “legitimacy.” As Pierre Bourdieu asserts, cinema belongs to the category of “middle-ground” arts.¹⁴ Cinema’s artistic status has always been contested. Thus, early voices paved the way for a diverse and conflictive discourse that has continued to seek to define cinema’s role in the larger social and cultural hierarchy within its *habitus*—a “practice-unifying and practice-generating principle.”¹⁵ At the same time, since cinema is first and foremost a mass medium, different groups in society have projected varied concerns onto it.

When cinema was new, for example, social reformists as well as conservatives fretted over its power to indoctrinate the public. Films could be “bad” for weak women and naive children; of course, film also could be used to elevate the public. When cinema became more institutionalized, the industries started worrying more about film’s low-brow status (and the economic consequences thereof) and wanted to elevate cinema to a middle-class pursuit.¹⁶ Studios like Vitagraph and Triangle started building movie palaces, making films that would be considered high culture, and encouraging middle-class behavior from its audience, while simultaneously maintaining the lucrative mass audience base. This impetus established Hollywood, with directors like D. W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille, as a bastion of solid middle-brow entertainment, expensive and polished yet accessible to a large audience.

While Hollywood was exerting dominance around the world in the early twentieth century, different experimentations of cinema and audience took shape among global artists as well as national populations that had been pushed aside by Hollywood. Surrealist films, for example, were very much the product of their time as elite European artists played with this new medium with scant concerns for mass audience or profits.¹⁷ In the Soviet Union, by contrast, cinema served revolutionary functions both in aesthetics and in distribution in service of collective goals.¹⁸ Weimar Germany’s major studio—UFA, although initially a commercial entity and only later a Nazi propagandizer—differentiated itself from Hollywood by making exportable expressionist films.¹⁹ Back in the United States, meanwhile, Oscar Micheaux and others produced race films that used Hollywood narrative form, but did so with content—and actors—that Hollywood had shunned.²⁰

Many films relied on their own national distribution systems, yet there were also alternative exhibition venues that dealt with films that crossed national boundaries or stood outside mass distribution systems. According to Haidee Wasson, in the 1920s, film societies abounded in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, exemplified by Le Club des Amis du Septième Art, founded in 1920 in Paris. The social construction of this world embodied Andrew’s elite

vision of film as art: Richard Abel asserts that film societies in Paris consisted merely of “an identifiable network of critics, journals, cine club lectures, screenings, and specialized cinemas.”²¹ In New York, the New York Film Society and New York Film Forum emerged at the same time, although neither lasted more than half a year. In the United Kingdom, the London Film Society was formed in 1925; its cofounder was Iris Barry, who later headed the film library of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Its initial members included playwright George Bernard Shaw, author and critic H. G. Wells, and documentarian Paul Rotha. One of its earliest efforts was to show its objection to the 1909 Cinematograph Censorship Law by screening uncensored films. It was also the meeting place for Alfred Hitchcock and his future wife, Alma.²² In Brazil, the Chaplin Club was founded in 1928.²³ As David Andrews points out, these art house groups were far from “monolithic,” but rather a “pluralist bazaar.”²⁴ These places expanded the possibilities of cinema, but did not necessarily dictate a higher form of cinema; this arrangement resonates with similar manifestations of later film festivals.

Unlike the nickelodeons (which were neighborhood-based) and middle-brow movie palaces, both of which had a relatively impersonal relationship with their audience, these film societies nevertheless formed communities of like-minded cinephiles. Cinema, for those who created the film societies, was not escapist entertainment but an object to be studied and appreciated. Cinema crossed boundaries and challenged established orders: the London Film Society screened *Potemkin* while it was banned in regular theaters in England. Donald Spoto also asserts that because of the society’s high-class membership, even the royal family became more interested in cinema.²⁵ These practitioners were projecting themselves as different from the mass working-class or immigrant audience associated with film in the United States as well as middle-brow culture. They wanted different films, different spaces to watch these films, and different social and cultural relationships with their fellow filmgoers (and filmmakers). These film societies even became film schools a sort, where budding filmmakers could learn the craft of other’s works, a role still prominent in film festivals.

More specialized cinemas also functioned as differentiated spaces. The Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, a successor of Club des Amis de Septième Art, opened in 1924, showing revivals like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Studio 28 followed as an avant-garde cinema in 1928 in Montmartre, Paris; it screened the surrealist breakthroughs *L’Age d’Or* and *Un chien andalou*. Richard Roud says that Henri Langlois, who founded the Cinémathèque Française, was a frequent spectator; his visits inspired him to open his own ciné club.²⁶ The roots of the later Cineteca Italiana are found in Italian amateurs of the 1930s,²⁷ while in the United States, according to Haidee Wasson, nineteen small art theaters served various American cities in 1927, screening revivals, experimental works, and European art films. These were very much in the business of “nurturing specialized, intelligent audiences.”²⁸

In Japan, the little cinema movement of the 1920s was closely related to the leftist film movement; it also advocated an alternative cinema form that saw “cine-poems as alternatives.”²⁹ Ultimately, a diffuse but global trend took shape, where some educated audiences were attracted to cinema beyond its mass media manifestations and demanded their own spaces as well as programming, with few commercial aspirations beyond the basic economics of survival and reproduction.

Yet, not all alternatives to Hollywood were art cinemas. Race films—casting ethnically marked actors for audiences who reflected this ethnicization—were screened across the United States, sometimes at racially segregated cinemas, sometimes at midnight shows in mainstream cinemas, and sometimes even in churches. These film practices of African Americans were very much divorced from activities advocated by ciné clubs or film societies. Alternatives also included the international movement of films among migrant communities, including Hong Kong products shipped to Chinatowns across the world or Italian films that found audiences in Italian immigrant communities in New York. One sees a similar separation between the two vaguely labeled alternatives to Hollywood today, one reified as art cinema, patronized by the educated classes, and the other a grassroots cinema of sorts created by a population structurally marginalized by mainstream society as a whole: Tyler Perry and his career spanning from church viewings to mainstream distribution comes to mind.

Another, more shadowy exhibition space of alternative early cinema was that of pornographic cinema. As Curt Moreck notes, as cited by Gertrud Koch, “In most cases, these sodadic films were screened in private societies or especially in men’s clubs founded for this purpose. Tickets in Germany cost between 10 and 30 marks. Prostitutes, pimps, cafe waiters, barbers, and other persons in contact with the clientele handled the distribution of tickets and they earned a tidy profit through scalping. Since vendors usually knew their clientele and its inclinations, they seldom came into conflict with the police.”³⁰ Indeed, the most popular places for such screenings were brothels. This cinema, and the later development of global pornographic circuits, would nevertheless intersect with festivals around issues of sexuality and censorship.

As a mass medium, cinema intersected with other mass media. As film critics in daily newspapers started writing on films, they brought together readers of the two media. Other publications created different albeit overlapping audiences in fan magazines such as *Girls’ Cinema* or *Picture-Goers*, and glossy movie magazines like *Motion Picture Classic*. Trade publications—*Photoplay*, *La Cinématographie Française*, *Movie Maker*, *Experimental Film*, *Moving Picture World*, *Billboard*, *Views and Films Index*—expanded realms of global critical discourse, while more “distinctive” film writing became more prominent in the 1920s.³¹ In France, Louia Delluc’s *Cinéa* appeared from 1921 to 1923. The first British film journal was the idiosyncratic *Close Up* (1927–1933), but numerous newspapers,

from the *Daily News* to the *Daily Mail*, already had dedicated writers for film writing and other criticism.³² According to Laura Marcus, C. A. Lejeune, who wrote for the *Manchester Guardian*, and Iris Barry, who wrote for *The Spectator* before she moved to the *Daily Mail*, both promoted cinema as an equal to other art forms, adding that “a new art form” demands a new critical language.³³ More elite cultural publications like *The Spectator*, *Film-Kurier* in Germany, and *Revue du cinéma* (founded in 1929 and later parent to the distinguished *Cahiers du cinéma*)³⁴ elaborated a multinational critical discourse that museums and academic journals would later join. Within different societies in the early twentieth century, cinema was a much talked about cosmopolitan subject.

The content of discourse about cinema varied widely. Some sources offered apparently mundane readings, instructing the reader how to be a modern woman through multiple acts of consumption or reveling in the dream life of stars and exotic plots. Other writers examined social issues, discussing the themes or effects of cinema. Still others promoted investigation of the medium itself. Many elite discussions were about the art of the film, including film’s relations to other arts, especially theater, photography, or the inherent ingredients of the moving image, movements, forms, and film’s ability to transform time and space. In other words, writers began to study the formal elements of cinema to understand its potential as well as to compare cinema with the other established art forms. Some, like critic E. A. Baughan,³⁵ argued that cinematography is an art and that if cinema had been less dependent on narrative, filmmakers would have started theorizing the unique art of cinematography. Yet, these erudite approaches were cushioned by a wider mass interest in spectacle, stars, and entertainment.

With such growing interest in cinema as high culture, universities also started to offer classes in cinema. Dana Polan’s masterful exploration of the study of cinema in the United States deftly illustrates that the different classes that were offered covered aesthetics, social scientific issues, and practical aspects of filmmaking and the film business.³⁶ As in festivals, different demands on the medium played out in the classrooms—was film art, a social and cultural practice that affected society, or an industrial product that invited cooperation between institutes of higher learning and the commercial entities? Polan’s study ends in 1935, when the film library of the Museum of Modern Art opened, making it more possible for institutions to borrow films from a prestigious high-culture institution that also was interested in preservation, linking the infrastructures of art to films. The diverse demands on the study of film crystallized once again the inevitable multifaceted nature of this new medium—an all-encompassing cultural practice that relied on its mass appeal, yet demanded and sustained more “serious” inquiries from certain classes of people in society.

Museums and archives, in a sense, complete these discursive horizons by creating a permanent and ongoing place of history. While many films were made

before 1930, there was little effort in preservation, although using film as a tool for preservation of historical record came slightly before the preservation of film itself. As early as 1919, the British Imperial War Museum started collecting moving images of the First World War. By 1923, trade magazines such as *Photoplay* argued that “the motion picture needs a museum. . . . The archives and relics of the early motion pictures . . . [are] scattered over all parts of America.”³⁷ According to Roud, the French critic Leon Moussinac coined the word *cinémathèque*—a film library—in a 1921 issue of *Cinémagazine*.³⁸ By the 1930s, with the knowledge that nitrate films were unstable and that silent films would be lost with the advent of synchronized sound film, the idea of preserving films became more urgent.

In the 1930s, three major institutions for film preservation were founded on both sides of the Atlantic. The British Film Institute formed in 1933, and added an archival section in 1935. Henri Langlois and Paul-Auguste Harlé founded the *Cinémathèque Française* in 1936. On the other side of the Atlantic, the Museum of Modern Art established its film library in 1935 under Iris Barry. These three institutions together constituted the founding members of the *Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film* (FIAPF) in 1938. Film and its discourses had been deemed valuable enough for curatorship and preservation.

A final, less erudite institution from this period that has come to play an important role in film festivals over time bears special mention. This is the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF).³⁹ Founded in 1933 in Paris, its members comprised film producers’ organizations from different countries. While it later came to regulate film festivals, FIAPF primarily seeks to protect producers on issues ranging from copyrights and technology standardization to media regulations. In terms of film festivals, the organization specifies its role as being “to facilitate the job of the producers, sales agents, and distributors in the management of their relationships with the festivals.”⁴⁰ The general standards FIAPF expects are logistical and business oriented.⁴¹

Emergent film festivals, then, would fit within the network of these various institutions and discourses, constituted by and for an educated high-brow audience who demanded a more artistic and serious cinema in conjunction with smaller scale, grassroots institutions formed by these audiences, whether *ciné clubs*, small theaters, *avant-garde cinema*, or archives. The increased importance of writing on film in newspapers and the trade press as well as in high-brow art magazines also legitimized cinema as a serious medium. The introduction of university classes in cinema and the incorporation of cinema into established institutions of high culture further endorsed the practice of a more serious and respectable cinema. Ultimately, the first thirty years of motion pictures witnessed a maturation of the medium of film. On the one hand, Hollywood successfully completed its quest for global dominance; on the other hand, cinema became capable of absorbing diverse audiences, filmmakers, and eventually films

that expressed themselves in very different manifestations. As institutions and groups crafted a niche for specialized audiences who demanded a more challenging cinema and in turn sought distinction in such practice, filmmakers and artists who wanted to produce a cinema that might not be very popular found themselves capable of making films. Serious films became sustainable because of the demand of a small but fairly loyal audience nurtured by institutions that provided the structures for such endeavors.

At the same time, film festivals do not replace these institutions; instead, they complement and work with many of them, linking them across cities and audiences. Ciné clubs continued to thrive in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, giving rise to important journals like *Cahiers du cinéma* (founded 1951), which was instrumental in promoting the European art cinema of the 1960s, where film festivals became major players. Museums collect and curate films shown at film festivals; film festivals program retrospectives that bring attention to archives. Interest groups find space in the umbrella of film festival scheduling, while films and critics travel the world linking the discursive horizons of film as art (and as mass medium) in concrete, focused, and glamorous events. And film festivals negotiate audiences—larger and more diverse than those who read critical journals, join film clubs, or search out archival programs—thus sustaining these other places of discourse as well. Having laid forth the sociocultural formation of early film as mass medium, then, in dialectic with the construction of distinctive apparatus of high-brow culture, I turn to the film festivals themselves.

Film Festivals Create Histories in Nations and Cities: 1930–1960

The Origins: 1930s

While appropriating the aspirations of the cinephiles who were debating the art of the cinema and the other film enthusiasts, the first film festival came from a rather different source. The Mostra Cinematografica di Venezia, which began in 1932, was a creation of Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime, which saw cinema as "the most powerful weapon."⁴² Italian Fascists used the rhetoric of film as art to glorify the nation-state and to further their goals, insisting that Italy as a film-producing nation could compete with Hollywood. They proclaimed cinema as a medium was an art to be respected alongside both Italy's glorious heritage and new constructions of civic architecture, education, and music.

To explore the Venice festival, one also has to understand film policies and production in Italy in the 1920s and 1930s. Before the First World War, Italy was one of the major film production nations for the world market, with epics like the spectacular and successful *Cabiria* (1914). A dynamic avant-garde Italy, however, saw a decline in its feature film output from 371 films in 1920 to only eight in 1930.⁴³ Without film production, Italy lost its international market share. The Fascist government not only needed to rescue Italian cinema, but also saw the potential of cinema as a manipulative tool. It was keen in using documentaries

and newsreels to publicize Italian achievements while features entertained domestic and foreign audiences.

In 1926, L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa (LUCE)—a state-sponsored documentary consortium—was founded, promoting Italian successes and fomenting the cult of personality around Benito Mussolini, Il Duce, who fully utilized the visual component of the medium. Not unlike the Nazis in Germany, the Fascist government formed the Ente Nazionale per la Cinematografia to oversee all operations of cinema production, distribution, and exhibition. Various auxiliary organizations to promote cinema were formed, including the Fascist Youth Cinema Club (Cine-GUF-Gioventù Universitaria fascista) in 1933 and a proto-film school, the Centro Sperimentale de Cinematografia, in 1935; the center also published a theory-oriented journal, *Bianco e nero* (beginning in 1937), as well as the more entertainment-oriented *Cinema* (established in 1936). The center became a formative laboratory for Roberto Rossellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Giuseppe De Santis. More importantly, Cinecittà, a massive studio, was built in Rome in 1937, providing the necessary hardware for the development of the Italian film industries.

Instead of artists, critics, and cinephiles promoting institutions to support art cinema as an alternative to the mainstream commercial cinema, the Fascist government formed parallel structures and discourses to support its version of a serious, glamorous, *and* nationalistic cinema. While cinephiles often opposed censorship, the Fascists formed the Direzione Generale per la Cinematografia to control foreign film exhibition in Italy, censoring Jean Renoir's 1937 *Grand Illusion* while funding other more militaristic films, such as *Scipio Africanus* (1937)—a film that glorified a Roman defeat of the Carthaginian Hannibal in the Second Punic War and thus resonated with Mussolini's African colonialism. By 1938, in a desperate measure to compete with Hollywood, the importation of American films was banned.⁴⁴

The Venice Film Festival, an outgrowth of the established Venice Biennale arts festival, thus became one component of Fascist discourses of the Italian cinema and modernity before the Second World War. Unlike the early cinephiles described in the previous section, moreover, the Fascist government became heavily involved in the production of cinema. Identifying cinema as a useful tool to promote its agenda, with a belief that the viewing public would be seduced by the images on screen, the centralized government promoted the production of both fiction and nonfiction cinema by providing monetary resources and a first-rate studio to facilitate the production of desirable films and images. The festival reaffirmed these goals. As Pierre Sorlin states, "The annual Venice Festival, in 1932, was merely an attempt to lure a few European and American intellectuals in the peninsula. But, by 1935, with the institution of awards reserved for Italian films only, the festival was used to promote Italian films."⁴⁵ Still, betraying its initial fascination with Hollywood, Venice awarded Greta Garbo's *Anna Karenina*

with the Mussolini Cup for best foreign film in 1935. Nonetheless, the festival highlighted Italian and German Nazi cinema: *Scipio Africanus* won the Mussolini Cup at the Venice Festival in 1937, and Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* shared the same cup with *Luciano Serra, pilota* in 1938.⁴⁶ The British and American jury members walked out of the festival before the Mussolini Cup was awarded to these two films: *Olympia*, as a nonfiction film, was not even eligible for the prize. The French participants, including the historian and functionary Philippe Erlanger, walked out over the festival authorities' veto of *The Grand Illusion*.

Given the blatant Fascist/Nazi sympathies of the Mostra Cinematografica di Venezia, Cannes must first be read as a national as well as artistic response within this new arena of cinematic debate. Back in France, Erlanger initially wanted to start a Festival of the Free World (FIF). A 1938 FIF document averred, "The major American, English and French film companies would be happy not to return to Venice. . . . If, therefore, the Venice Festival should no longer have the same success and be replaced by a similar organization in another country, it would be desirable that France be called on to take advantage of this."⁴⁷ However, politics was not the only incentive for the establishment of the festival: the French film industry had also faced ups and downs after World War I and the Depression. The Cinémathèque Française, established in 1936, demanded special treatment for cinema in France. For Cannes, meanwhile, commerce and tourism were equally important. A festival in September could prolong the summer seasons of the resorts in France; hoteliers lobbied hard to bring the festival to Côte d'Azur, beating their Atlantic rival at Biarritz. To add historical legitimacy to the festival, Louis Lumière was selected as the honorary president of the festival. Cannes gained strong and immediate support from Britain and the United States. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* premiered on the first and only day of the festival, September 1, 1939, the day Hitler invaded Poland.

Looking at the histories of these two initial film festivals, it is clear that while cinematic art was used to justify the existence of such events, other overwhelming desires propelled them in particular ways. The first was clearly geopolitical: Venice was Fascist and Cannes was anti-Fascist.⁴⁸ Another component was the festivals' desire to court Hollywood. Before Mussolini signed the Treaty of Friendship with Germany in 1936 and formed the "Rome-Berlin Axis," the Venice festival had sought to build international relationships with other major film-producing countries, and especially with Hollywood. The initial Festival of the Free World and subsequent Festival International du Film at Cannes could not have garnered the kind of support it had without the full support of Hollywood.

A third point is the issue of place. Cannes and Venice have been important modern tourist destinations rather than centers of film production or national power. Film festivals formed a welcome addition to the tourist industries, especially when situated in times of low use and when utilizing existing facilities (hotels, cinemas). Inadvertently, with these early locations, film festivals did not

need to be spatially linked to film production centers and thus became free to consider other geographic concerns. Cinema, after all, is an art form that can be mechanically reproduced, and therefore is portable. These three objectives seem far from the desire and discourse of the cinephiles; however, they converged in elevating the status of cinema and facilitated the connection of discourses of criticism, art, and preservation.

Postwar Rebirth and Expansion: 1940s and 1950s

The “Peacetime Remake”⁴⁹ of the festival at Cannes marked the trajectory of festival away from pure politics in a postwar Europe toward serious art. Erlanger invited Robert Favre Le Bret to become the head of the festival. Favre Le Bret was a journalist and director of the Paris Opera; the festival was thus immediately linked with the stature of high art. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of semi-diplomatic maneuvering across the Atlantic even at the early days of the first French festival to make sure mass/middle-brow film was not absent. Hollywood actually did not commit itself to the 1946 festival until it knew that the Blun-Byrnes Accord would be signed in May 1946, opening French cinema to U.S. films every week except one per month in exchange for a partial erasure of French war debt to the United States. Hollywood still did not send any stars except Maria Montez, hardly a major name compared to the group Hollywood had intended to send over in 1939. Despite these diplomatic issues, Hollywood films had quite a strong presence at Cannes. The number of films invited was related to the number of films produced by each country; hence, Hollywood always had the right to select a substantial presence, both in films and in stars.

Venice returned in 1947, with the Golden Lion of St. Mark replacing the Mussolini Cup (and the transitional Grand International Prize of Venice) in 1949. It proved more open to newly socialist influences, awarding its first postwar prize to the Czech film *The Strike* (*Siréna*) as that country tilted toward the coalescing Soviet bloc.

The new Locarno International Film Festival was actually the first international film festival held after the end of the Second World War, slightly before Cannes. Since Switzerland was neutral during the war, there had been sporadic small festivals held in different parts of the country during the war. The Basel film club, Le Bon Film, had organized the Semaine Internationale du Film in 1939. In Lugano, it held the first and second Rassegna del Film Italiano with the backing of a tourist-centered Pro Lugano in 1941 and 1942. In 1944, to make the Rassegna more international, the “Italiano” was dropped and the organizers included films like John Huston’s *Across the Pacific* (1942). The second Rassegna Internazionale du Film in 1945 invited Disney’s *The Three Caballeros* (1944) and Robert Bresson’s *Angels of the Street* (*Les Anges du péché*, 1943). In the meantime, Henri Langlois had organized Images du Cinéma Français at the Musée Cantonal

des Beaux-Arts in Lausanne, which eventually led to the founding of Lausanne Ciné Club, which in 1949 became the Cinémathèque Suisse in Basel.

Organizers for Rassegna continued to search for a permanent home; the city of Lugano did not support the project. Next door in the lake resort of Locarno, some private individuals—local cinema owners, film distributors, tourist groups, and members of Club del Buon Film, later the Circolo del Cinema and Circolo deglo Arti—took over the festival. The first Locarno International Film Festival was inaugurated on August 22, 1946.

Despite Locarno's history of neutrality, just as early festivals divided between Axis and Allies, the rebirth of film festivals in the post–World War II era faced the escalation of the cold war across film as a cultural battlefield. The Soviet Union, for example, complained that the United States had many entries in Cannes while the USSR was only invited to present one film in 1949. Thus it declined the invitation from Cannes and went to Venice instead. Cannes continued to have an uneasy relationship with the Soviet Union for years, marked by the sporadic presence of Soviet films. When they were shown, some turned out to be too propagandistic: in 1951, the festival refused to show *Liberated China* even after the Soviet filmmaker reedited the film and renamed it *New China*.⁵⁰

This struggle shaped the formation of new festivals as well. Postwar Czechoslovakia offered small film festivals in Mariánské Lázně and Karlovy Vary, showing a few films in a few days as the country struggled to remain a bridge between East and West. When the communists consolidated their power in 1948, the Karlovy Vary festival grew into an event that followed the party line of the communist East. In its official history, the Web site states that “the program was put together with an awareness of the propagandistic strength of film and the importance of this medium as a tool in the ideological struggle against the West.”⁵¹ Nonetheless, William Wyler won best director there for *The Best Years of Our Lives* in 1948.

While the festival was primarily a showcase for films from the Eastern Bloc, Western films were included if they were considered “progressive.” Not unlike the Venice festival when it was under Mussolini, where Fascist and Nazi films won prizes, socialist films would always garner one of the many prizes at Karlovy Vary. The festival inaugurated an international jury in 1951: except for Umberto Barbaro, an Italian film critic who had translated works by Vsevolod Pudovkin and Sergei Eisenstein, and Georges Sadoul, a French film historian and communist, all the other jury members came from Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Hungary, and East Germany.

Proliferation also demanded more organization. The International Federation of Film Societies (IFFS) set up in 1947 at Cannes to coordinate interests and events. Together with FIAPF, these two organizations have formed part of a loose-knit network of coordination and legitimization of festivals as a unity as well as diverse group. Karlovy Vary was granted the “A” status by FIAPF the

same year Berlin received such designation in 1956. This reflects how FIAPF tried to make sure that the Eastern Bloc was represented in global film circles. However, with the establishment of the Moscow film festivals, FIAPF mandated that there should only be one “A” festival in the Eastern Bloc each year. From 1959 to 1993, Karlovy Vary and Moscow hosted the festival in alternate years.

The height of cold war cinematic confrontation was reached in Berlin. The Berlin festival was initially an American initiative. Oscar Martay, a film officer of the Information Service Branch of the American High Commissioner for Germany in Berlin, came up with the idea of a film festival in 1950 just after the travails of the Soviet blockade of the city and the dramatic Allied airlift. Newly divided West Berlin formed an outpost of “free” West Germany surrounded by communist East Germany; a film festival, heavily supported by the “West,” would show the oppressed “East” the values of the democratic, capitalist society. Martay called for a meeting in October that included government cultural and tourism officials, journalists, film distributors and producers, representatives of the German film industries, and Martay’s British counterpart.⁵²

According to Heide Fehrenbach, the newly born Bonn government also was interested in supporting cinema as mass culture. Federal funds had been distributed to different cities, and festivals in Mannheim and Oberhausen became aligned with the politics of the city governments. Both cities differentiated their programs from regular commercial cinema and strived to promote Kulturfilm. Berlin was different in that its initial establishment was highly political on a global scale; it was also the first major festival to move beyond a resort location. The festival was established with the help of the city government and of other local Berlin interests who wanted to revive the past glory of Berlin as a cultural center and as the birthplace of German cinema. Yet, its repercussions went far beyond the nation.

While festivals were made possible because films had been promoted to be considered serious art, Martay insisted that the Berlin film festival should not be part of a larger cultural festival week (Festpielwoche).⁵³ From an American point of view, films should remain a mass medium and not be exclusive. The first director of the festival, Alfred Bauer, was an adept administrator and historian of the new art of cinema. He had worked for UFA at the end of its Third Reich existence, was the author of *Feature Film Almanac*, and was a consultant on film for the British. The Berlin International Film Festival was to show the world as well as West Berlin’s immediate neighbor, East Berlin, the films as well as ways of life of the democratic West.

At the very first meeting that Martay called in October 1950, the committee had already decided to have three films each from the United States and England, and two each from France, Italy, Austria, and Germany. An additional film would be included from the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Israel, Egypt, India, Mexico, and Australia. The omission was obvious: there were seven

negative votes to reject admission of films from the Eastern Bloc.⁵⁴ The festival was nonetheless very keen on attracting audiences from the East; it sponsored outdoor screenings at Potsdamerplatz, the border between East and West Berlin, to attract an audience in the East who could see the films from East Berlin.

East Germany reacted quickly to the establishment of the Berlin festival by proposing the World Youth Festival, organized by FDJ, the official East German youth organization, in the summer of 1951. In July 1951, the Festwoche des Volkdemokratischen Films was held in East Berlin. Six films participated, representing Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the People's Republic of China.

While dealing with the political cold war with the Eastern Bloc, the (West) Berlin organizers also had to work with France and Italy to solicit their participation in the first festival. However, both France and Italy refused official participation unless Berlin omitted a competition. Berlin in the end had a German jury, rather than an international jury as in FIAPF-recognized "A" festivals, which at that point were only Venice and Cannes. Unofficially, the producers' associations of the two countries sent films on their behalf to the festival.

The first Berlin festival opened on June 6, 1951. The opening film was Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 *Rebecca*, and its star, Joan Fontaine, attended. While the festival yearned for more international glamour, there was not an impressive international presence. However, there was a great parade of German stars, including Hans Söhnker and Dorothea Wieck. Mayor Ernst Reuter called Berlin an "oasis of liberty and independence, surrounded by a system of violence and oppression, which uses art for the purpose of propaganda . . . [showing] Berlin to be a bastion which the totalitarian powers storm in vain."⁵⁵ His comment was contested, however, by the East German *Tägliche Rundschau* newspaper, which designated the festival as "West Berlin's decadent film façade" and added that "West Berlin Films have given clear proof of the state of affairs of film production in capitalistic countries, especially of the situation in a country occupied by Americans; decadent in content, with petit-bourgeois and placating sentimentality, monstrously dollied-up kitsch, anti-Soviet tendencies and warmongering, nihilistic emptiness and pathological excesses."⁵⁶

Embroided in the ideological struggle between East and West, the Berlin festival also sought a broader European—if not international—recognition for its aesthetic vision. Even before FIAPF rewarded it with "A" status in 1956, the festival, also known as Berlinale, polled the public for best picture for each category, including the three levels of audience-selected "bears" (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) for fiction and documentary films. Audience members were given entrance tickets to rate the film as "very good," "good," "average," or "poor." In 1954, for example, David Lean's comic *Hobson's Choice* won the audience vote for Golden Bear. The festival also used this audience poll to further consolidate its democratic credentials. This audience-centered award can also trace its lineage to

the United States' insistence that the festival remain relevant to the masses. However, the festival organizers yearned for official recognition, so that Berlin could share the international stage with Venice and Cannes: Europe, as we see, defined the cultural world.

After Berlin and Karlovy Vary, Locarno gained this recognition from FIAPF in 1958. Oddly, it followed San Sebastián, which was recognized by FIAPF in 1957, while festivals in Brussels, London, Edinburgh, Melbourne, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Leningrad did not get approved.

One striking outlier to this systematization was the 1949 Festival Independent du Film Maudit (Independent Festival of Accursed Film) in Biarritz, France, with a jury led by writer and filmmaker Jean Cocteau. Cocteau himself declared, "The time has come to honour the masterpieces of film art which have been buried alive, and to sound the alarm. Cinema must free itself from slavery just like the many courageous people who are currently striving to achieve their freedom. Art which is inaccessible to young people will never be art."⁵⁷ This festival had been created by the organizer of the Paris Cine Club Objectif 49, a forum of New Criticism whose members included Cocteau, Henri Langlois, Raymond Queneau, and André Bazin; these highly literary figures took "Maudit" from poet Stephane Mallarmé's term *poètes maudits*. The term *film maudit* (accursed film) and Cocteau's use of words like "buried alive" and "slavery" evoked the idea that the cinema was suffering in chains. Only Film Maudit would free cinema, a quest that could be achieved by "courageous" and "young" people. The first and only festival, in July 1949, was to compete with Cannes. Antonie de Baecque and Serge Toubiana, in their biography of François Truffaut, describe the teenager's correspondence with his friends about the festival, which opened with Marcello Pagliero's *Roma città libera* (1946).⁵⁸ Truffaut also saw Jean Vigo's 1934 *L'Atalante*, Orson Welles's 1947 *The Lady from Shanghai*, and Jean Renoir's *The Southerner* (1945). Other young French cinephiles, including Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, Claude Chabrol, and Eric Rohmer were all there, ill-suited to the elegance of its setting at the Biarritz casino. While this festival was never repeated, its organizers and the Young Turks who attended later became responsible for the development of *Cahiers du cinéma*, the *Nouvelle Critique*, and eventually the *Nouvelle Vague*. Cocteau himself would later head the jury at Cannes (1953, 1954), while Truffaut and Godard would force important changes in the festival in the 1960s.

The FIAPF applications from festivals in London, Toronto, Sydney, and Vancouver underscore the continuing globalization of the idea and practices of the film festival alongside experimentation. The Edinburgh Film Festival, for example, was actually one of the world's first documentary festivals. Founded in 1947, it was part of the Edinburgh International Festival, an art festival aimed at reviving the cultural scene of Scotland after the Second World War. The film festival was championed by John Grierson, the famed British documentarian.

Like Lugano's *Rassegna del Film Italiano*, many film festivals also have emerged as national entities, in the sense that they primarily have shown films from their own country and yet have tried to promote global connections. The Thessaloniki International Film Festival started in 1960 as the Week of Greek Cinema, and became international only in 1992.

The first American festival began in 1957 in San Francisco. It was founded by Irving Levin, a Bay Area theater owner who had visited many European film festivals and wanted to create an event to attract more audience to his theaters. Small theaters like the Vogue, Bridge, and Clay played foreign films to a small audience.⁵⁹ Levin helped organized an Italian film festival in 1956, and the First San Francisco Film Festival was launched in 1957: the best film went to Satyajit Ray's *Pather panchali*, incongruously awarded by Shirley Temple Black. The San Francisco festival has undergone many changes since then, but it has very much remained a festival important to the local audiences as well as the city of San Francisco, which offers a wide variety of cultural activities and institutions. Aesthetics also intersected with globalization in the New York Film Festival, founded in 1963 by Amos Vogel and Richard Roud, who had been involved in the Cinémathèque of Paris.⁶⁰ For its first decade, New York was almost the twin of the London festival. The festival started in a time when European art cinema was at its apex, but in New York the venue, the audience, and associated publicity have always been more important than innovation or cinematic prestige.

These festivals established a common American pattern that I referred to in the introduction. Even for a global location like New York, a selection of twenty films can showcase very innovative art films for a fairly sophisticated audience at a prestige location, the Lincoln Center. In 1972, the festival was able to host the world premiere of Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* because of the friendship between Roud and Bertolucci. However, in general, the New York festival is not a festival for international premieres. The films presented at the New York festival often have been discovered and discussed elsewhere. Even after film scholar Richard Peña replaced Roud in 1988, the present New York Film Festival remains an audience festival. Publicists have told me that the New York festival is an important launching pad for U.S. distribution (even though deals may already have been negotiated at Cannes or Toronto). Today, A. O. Scott of the *New York Times* calls the event "A Film Festival with a Pendant for Making Taste, Not Deals."⁶¹ Most deals have been made before films get to the festival screen, and most of the films shown already have U.S. distribution, so they can be seen in art house cinemas not long after the festival and its intense press coverage. The 2009 edition, for example, included Cannes winner *White Ribbon*, Oscar contender *Precious*, American independent documentary *Sweetgrass*, Polish master Andrzej Wajda's *Sweet Rush*, and *Ghost Town*, a Chinese documentary by Zhao Dayong, which actually premiered at the festival.

By the 1960s, then, a global festival circuit had clearly emerged, dominated by Europe and the global North, although looking beyond this production. While festivals were sites of competitive government investment and sponsorship as well as aesthetic competitions, they were established as places of repeated contact, creative knowledge, and discussion of the past, present, and future of film. The decades ahead would see expansion and even challenges to this framework, with an ever-widening global inclusion of peoples, places, and products in webs that are artistic, commercial, and political.

Globalization and Controversy since the 1960s

Revolution and Extension: The Long 1960s

While it is easy to characterize the 1960s as a decade of global change, this is nonetheless an important observation to apply to film festival history. This decade had already seen the consolidation of a global network of major events. Film debate, to refer again to Dudley Andrew's scenario, had entered its golden age, from the classroom to major publications of theory and history.⁶² But other extra-cinematic currents also swirled around the institution as well. While Cannes in 1968 was, according to one newspaper, "dozing in the sunshine, far from the barricades,"⁶³ the riots of Paris students and workers spilled over into protests that included the young filmmakers who would redefine French film. The festival committee had already withdrawn Peter Brook's controversial *Tell Me Lies* in 1968—before the shutdown—not because of its anti-Vietnam War message but because of the sensitivities of negotiations between the United States and Vietnam in Paris.⁶⁴ Yet as screenings began, Louis Malle, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Roman Polanski, Milos Forman, and others collaborated with director Carlos Saura and his wife, actress Geraldine Chaplin, to block the screening of Saura's own *Peppermint Frappé*. The festival closed on May 19; apparently, some of the exhibitors from the Marché found refuge in Rome.⁶⁵ Its films were only screened at Cannes forty years later, in the 2008 classic section.

These protests led to changes in the function of Cannes as well. The more open and noncompetitive Directors' Fortnight emerged in response to May 1968. Young filmmakers, including Truffaut and Godard, founded the Société des Réalisateurs de Films (SRF), which has been responsible for the Fortnight since its inception in 1969. That year, it showed over sixty feature films: every film submitted was shown.

Locarno evolved in more peaceful ways, but also promoted breaks with the established model. It extended aesthetics into history, a process that many festivals now share with other discursive horizons of criticism, academic scholarships, and museums. In the late 1950s, for example, it tried to launch a retrospective on Jacques Tati, but the rental agent prevented this. Other programs, nevertheless, paid homage to Humphrey Bogart and Ingmar Bergman. In the early 1960s, Locarno held retrospectives on Fritz Lang, Georges Méliès,



Figure 3. Protest at the 1968 Cannes Film Festival.
Source: © Mirkine/Sygma/Corbis.

Jean Vigo, and King Vidor. While some other retrospectives treat genres, themes, or national/regional origins, most retrospectives still focus on—and reinforce the meaning of—specific auteurs. For example, Egyptian director Youssef Chahine was given a major retrospective in Locarno in 1996. He then received the Lifetime Achievement Award at Cannes in 1997, and in 1998 the New York Film Festival also presented a retrospective on him.

Locarno established an important record for extending aesthetic boundaries and debates in other regards as well. In 1963, Lina Wertmüller's *The Basilisks* (*I basilischi*) won the Silver Sail, making Wertmüller one of the first women and the only female director honored by a festival recognized by FIAPF (Riefenstahl had been honored at Venice in 1938). In that decade, some Locarno juries were composed entirely of film directors, showing the festival's respect for the auteurs as it welcomed challenging new works of Pier Paolo Pasolini and Paulo Rocha.

FIAPF, in 1969, also gave Locarno the designation of a festival for First Films, which meant that Locarno could only hold competitions involving a director's premiere work. The festival had hoped to host competitions for films from the third world; nonetheless, this designation recognized Locarno's place in the aesthetic vanguard. Locarno screened Spike Lee's *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads* in 1983, which won a Bronze Leopard and earned Lee his first trip to Europe. Locarno also became one of the first film festivals to investigate and screen Chinese films: in 1985, it showed Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* as well as Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Summer at Grandpa's* (*Dong dong de jia qi*), paving the road for the subsequent success of Chinese-language cinema in Western festivals. The festival pioneered Korean and Iranian cinema on European screens as well. When Marco Müller became the festival director in 1992, after working in Turin, Rotterdam, and Pesaro, he had close contact with Hong Kong programmers and brought even more Asian cinema to the festival. Locarno also published materials dealing with Asian American cinema and Bollywood, among other vanguard areas.

Locarno today is hardly unique in its presentation of different auteurs and national cinemas; however, its development points to how the aesthetic aspects of cinema were used to promote the prestige and connections of the festival through globalization. This is even more evident in one of the first global festivals to transcend national ambitions: Rotterdam, founded by Hubert Bals in 1972. Bals was an enthusiast for "Third World, political, underground, and independent cinema as well as documentary, experimentalism, and avant-garde filmmaking."⁶⁶ After his untimely death in 1988, the Hubert Bals Fund was established to support young global filmmakers and has emerged as a major creative force in this regard, while reinforcing the program and position of the festival even though it has never sought FAIPF accreditation. Over the years, Rotterdam has continued to be a very forward-looking festival and has nurtured a great number of global auteurs, among them Chen Kaige, Moufida Tlatli, Zhang Yuan, and Cristian Miugui.

North American festivals took on new forms after the 1960s that pointed to the diverse strains of change in this time of post-national festivals. Toronto, for example, began in 1976 as a "Festival of Festivals" anthologizing prizewinners from the established network.⁶⁷ The festival has been a promoter of Canadian cinema since its inception; Liz Czach's work on film festival programming at the Toronto Film Festival makes a cogent argument that the festival programmers provide critical cultural capital to Canadian cinema and also addresses the issue of what constitutes Canadian cinema, which is at least bicultural, making national cinema a complicated category. Czach shows that a "festival such as Toronto provides a context in which Canadian films are positioned on an international stage."⁶⁸ This practice links the national to the international: Toronto serves as a platform to showcase a national cinema that does not have a large audience so as to attract national and international attention from the press

as well as the film festival circuit. On its Web site, the festival is billed as the “leading public film festival in the world, screening more than three hundred films from more than sixty countries every September. It is the launching pad for the best of Hollywood and international cinema, enjoyed by half a million enthusiastic film fans each year.”⁶⁹

Toronto has also become a center for business, especially the negotiations of North American distribution—and a precursor for autumnal Oscar buzz. Here, it lays claim to being more than a national festival with regard to an important market and provides a gateway for global films to enter the United States. In 2009, publicized attendees included not only Matt Damon and Mary J. Blige but also Bill Clinton. But perhaps most reflective of the festival’s deep transnational roots was the debate over the showcasing of Tel Aviv in the festival’s City to City Program. Here, protests against this admitted attempt to rebrand Israel after Gaza included Alice Walker, Ken Loach, Noam Chomsky, Julie Christie, Danny Glover, and Israeli filmmaker Udi Aloni. Meanwhile, others who signed petitions against the protest as a form of censorship included Jerry Seinfeld, Sacha Baron Cohen, and Natalie Portman. The presence not only of Hollywood but of a larger U.S. debate was striking. The *Guardian* underscored this point by linking the controversy to Jane Fonda, who stayed out of it, despite her previous involvement in political debate over Vietnam and Iraq.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the United States Film Festival began in Salt Lake City in 1978 as a way of attracting filmmakers to Utah. In 1980 it moved away from the city to the ski resort of Park City, and in 1985, under the guidance of Robert Redford and his Sundance Institute, it became the Sundance Film Festival, focused on the promotion of American independent film. As many commentators have pointed out, Sundance has come to epitomize an anti-Hollywood forum within American filmmaking. Despite continual (American) media hype, it remains the least international of all major film festivals because of its heavy Americanness. Non-U.S. programmers and publicists have expressed the view that Sundance is simply “too American” and see few advantages at Sundance for smaller films from the rest of the world. The Sundance Film Festival did not even add an international audience prize until 1999 or world cinema jury prizes until 2005.⁷¹

After three decades, Sundance now faces considerable pressure because of its role as a market for independent films and because of the complexity of distribution networks that may lead to larger projects (more Hollywood than Cannes). *Variety* critic Robert Koehler excoriated the festival in a 2010 article:

Sundance has become, quite simply, a horror show for cinema: a place where more bad films can be seen under awful viewing conditions than any other festival, and yet which also paradoxically goes the extra mile to bother with a usually fascinating through small section for experimental and non (or semi-) narrative film titled “New Frontier” which is then secluded in such a manner

to ensure that as few people as possible will see it. The largest and most famous American film “festival” has quite possibly damaged the cinema it was specifically designed to support—American indie film—more than any cluster of neglectful studios ever have, because it rejects cinephilia with cool (and in bad years, freezing) disinterest.⁷²

Nonetheless, Sundance has a high visibility across the United States. It has integrated itself into American filmmaking schools and even other popular media through the Sundance Channel, a joint cable television project of Redford and the Institute, Universal (NBC), and Showtime (CBS) begun in 1996. This channel was sold to Cablevision in 2008.⁷³

While film and festivals evolved in Europe and North America, other festivals spread far beyond the producers and audiences of the global North, making diverse claims about nation-states and worlds. The Tehran film festival, for example, began in 1972 under the shah of Iran. Dictatorial regimes have often had a deep but ambivalent relationship with such international showcases, as is evident in these top-down festivals’ evolution over time: as film historian Peter Cowie observed, “Millions of dollars are spent around the world each year by governments—and even dictators—seeking to buy acceptance in intellectual, glitzy, and diplomatic circles.”⁷⁴ The Fajr International Film Festival replaced Tehran in 1982 after the Iranian revolution of 1979. To reinforce the idea of a new Iran, the Fajr (“sunrise” in Persian) festival is held in late January to commemorate the anniversary of the revolution. Given the religious government of Iran, the Fajr festival follows a clear party line based in a particular Shia Muslim worldview and practices; however, the festival has allowed Iranians to see international cinema, including works by Andrei Tarkovsky, Yasujiro Ozu, and Theo Angelopoulos. It has been extremely important to Iranian cinematic culture: local audiences wait in long lines and few Iranian filmmakers want to be screened globally until they have premiered at the festival.

Medhi Abdollahzadeh, a contributor to *Gozaar*, a forum on human rights and democracy in Iran, argues that the festival changed as the political climate in Iran moved from liberalization to hard-line conservatism.⁷⁵ In 2010, with the unstable political climate in Iran, the Fajr festival again became a space for political contestation, including boycotts by both local and international filmmakers.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, “Javad Shamaghdari, cinematic deputy of culture and Islamic guidance minister, issued a message for the 28th Fajr International Film Festival and said ‘We want a cinema for the 70 million Iranian audience. . . . We are proud that we are Muslim. So we struggle to have a cinema under the Islamic culture and knowing relying on Islamic belief and faith. . . . Cinema is art.’”⁷⁷

Manila provides an interesting contrast in global political history. Although the Metro Manila Film Festival showcasing Filipino films began in 1975, Imelda Marcos envisioned a grander world event as the Philippines suffered under

corruption and martial law. A palatial center was built for the first Manila International Film Festival in 1982, with construction problems causing the deaths of scores of workers and making it a symbol of the failure of that regime for years afterward (a point still underscored by guides when I visited the site in 1996). Meanwhile, the festival in Mar del Plata, which had begun in 1954, became a victim of Argentina's dictatorial regimes and did not return to the world stage until the 1990s.

Other festivals developed stages for non-European films that connected with wider festival circuits in different ways. The PanAfrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou, or FESPACO) began in Burkina Faso in 1969 with seven nations (five African) and twenty-three films but has evolved over decades into a showcase for films often neglected in wider international competitions.⁷⁸ The Hong Kong International Film Festival began in 1977. The Havana Film Festival began as a showcase for Latin American films under the Castro regime in 1979. All have fostered different patterns of local and global growth and connection within a larger system.

In this period, then, we see multiple expansions of the festival world in terms of location, filmic interests in the past and present, and even generations. While it would be tempting to read the message of May 1968 or even Sundance as one of independence and democracy, we note that older and European festivals have maintained their hegemony while others have jockeyed for position within particular regional or commercial contexts (e.g., the impact of Hollywood on North American festivals). At the same time, this period marked a proliferation of smaller festivals around genres and interests that have enriched the festival world to the present as well.

Since the 1980s: Diversities of Theme and Place

The best-known festivals are those of large scale and international prestige that include not only systematic screenings of core prestige products (films in competition) but also multiple entries and arrangements that include sections for new cinema makers, retrospectives, sections devoted to particular lengths or genres, and other options aimed at different audiences and markets. By sheer volume and variety, Cannes, Berlin, and others have continued to claim center stage within the festival world through systematic attention to multiple audiences and professional expertise in situating these festivals within a larger calendar. The same person may not attend an outdoor screening of a crowd-pleasing film like *Ali-G Indahouse*, starring Sacha Baron Cohen (which I saw with my children in 2002 in the plaza in Locarno), and a nearly deserted presentation of a video documentary on human rights or a panorama of student shorts. The large festivals incorporate these alternatives not only to build audiences but also to continue flows of new films and positions of power: today's student may be tomorrow's

auteur . . . and perhaps decades beyond that, the subject of an honorific presentation or retrospective. Connections with cinematographers, institutions, business people, and funders in emergent national industries in Iran, Romania, and Malaysia may ensure prestige films years later. And publicity reinforces power, as Cannes has shown well in its history.

Nevertheless, since the 1980s, the primary changes in the festival world have come from the many smaller festivals that have taken shape with more limited goals in mind. Many American cities, for example, host festivals whose programs set up along ethnic lines, whether Chinese, African American, American Indian, Jewish, or other showcases of transnational or intranational connections. A Chinese cinema festival is not the same as a Chinese American film festival, although they both may program some cross-cutting international offerings in order to appeal to wider audiences. Other national or regional specializations (Brazilian, French, European, Asian, African, etc.) may go beyond heritage issues, although meanings can become ambivalent: a French film festival is more likely to invoke the global prestige of French culture and film, while a Latin American film festival in the United States or Europe seems, almost inevitably, to coordinate with local immigrant and heritage organizations. Once again, international politics impinge, at least indirectly, on the meaning of the festival.

Similarly, thematic festivals focus on particular subject matters or areas of debate: human rights, women's rights, LGBTQ issues, or ecology. Even this range suggests an array of audiences and involvements ranging from those who have political concerns with particular issues to those who identify with films and plots as well as issues and organizations. This interplay, in fact, is discussed at greater length in the examination of film festivals and the public sphere in chapter 5.

Still other thematic festivals develop less specific group interests associated with dedicated segments of audience as much as politics: festivals devoted to mountain films, to musicals, or to bad (albeit not *maudit*) films. This book will spend less time on the vast range of these different kinds of festivals than on more complex "A"-level and major regional festivals; however, it recognizes that these festivals constitute part of the fabric of a complicated film festival world. However small or broad, they are connected to other festivals in terms of the circulation of films, texts, and film knowledge. Sometimes they may share personnel if the festivals have the financial means, and they certainly overlap in potential audiences. And even the smallest festival keeps the idea of a festival world present and alive.

Many smaller festivals support the circulations of selected festival films on a smaller scale as well. Gay, lesbian, bi-, and transgendered filmmakers have established international connections through the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, the Turin International Gay and Lesbian Festival, the San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, Los Angeles's Outfest, and other outlets in Chicago, Philadelphia, Hamburg, Lisbon, Dublin, Austin, Tampa,

Melbourne, and Mumbai.⁷⁹ These, in turn, have reinforced institutions found in larger festivals and circuits, exemplified by San Francisco's creation of Frameline, the umbrella organization of the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival, which supports distribution of LGBTQ films, and, since 1990, also includes production funds.⁸⁰ They also connect to other discursive horizons of LGBTQ discourse, including scholarship and preservation.

While these thematic film festivals negotiate film in relation to particular audiences, issues, and imagined communities, others choose to present film in its many textual dimensions. Again, most festivals show feature-length fiction films even though they have sections on documentaries, animation, and short films that are often novel and newsworthy even if limited in commercial distribution. There are, however, festivals that are devoted to specific formats and genres other than the features—animation, documentary, shorts, fantasy, ethnography, or children's films. These more specialized festivals attract dedicated followings, both in terms of audience and producers, yet may not begin with the same localization or identification that we see in metropolitan gay festivals or an Asian American film festival in Los Angeles. Some of them mirror other mainstream festivals in their structures, while others do not.

The International Animation Film Festival at Annecy, France, for example, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2010. While a charming medieval and renaissance city with both lakes and mountains that act as backdrops for films—and a candidate to host the Winter Olympics in 2018—Annecy lacks strong historic association of production or distribution. Instead, the festival reinforces urban culture and branding. Other prominent animation festivals include Zagreb (1972), Hiroshima (1985), and Ottawa (1975). These festivals are international in scope and have sections for different formats, from features to shorts, films to television to digital works. Just as many festivals are accredited by FIAPF, animation festivals are sponsored by the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (or ASIFA). Annecy, indeed, is very similar to larger conventional film festivals; it has its market, conferences, sponsors, stars (Tim Burton), and everything that parallels the major festivals. Thus, Annecy is not a "small" festival at all; the primary difference is that it focuses on animation to the exclusion of other, more publicized genres.

The Pordenone Silent Film Festival (Le Giornate del Cinema Muto), however, represents a different kind of festival. Pordenone is the most established silent film festival; created in 1982 by the local film archives and film club, the festival devotes its energy to the first thirty years of cinema history. It is not competitive, but it provides a Jean Mitry Award to scholars and archivists working on the specific period. The festival has proven to be very important in the rediscovery and preservation of early cinema as well as in the nurturing of the study of early cinema. The festival is global, showing works from all different parts of the world, and helping to discover and popularize lost prints that exhibit the global

reach of early cinema, while reframing other films with restored prints and new orchestrations. For example, Josef von Sternberg's film *The Case of Lena Smith* (1929) was found in Japan and shown in Pordenone in 2003,⁸¹ while 2009 saw Erich von Stroheim's *Merry Widow* enhanced with a new orchestral score and accompaniment.⁸² Pordenone, then, is more like an academic conference than a conventional film festival. Films are never premiered at Pordenone, but they are "new" because they are orphaned films that have been newly rediscovered or restored. The films Pordenone shows rarely have much market value; therefore, there is hardly any business interest in this festival. However, the festival attracts serious scholars, preservationists, musicians, archivists, and dedicated early cinema cinephiles. The 2005 presentation of Russian silent cinema from before the creation of the Soviet Union in 1917 pushed the boundaries on the study of Russian cinema, while in 2009 a new section, "The Canon Revisited," offered the festival as a platform through which to rethink knowledge of established classics. And more than a thousand people attend every October while its organizers and fans network with other silent film festival organizers from Bologna (Il Cinema Ritrovato, founded 1986), San Francisco (1992), London (1998), and Bristol (2005). Many associated with these silent film festivals also take part in the activities of film archives and museums.

We might also read this diversity of festivals in terms of locality and audience. Every festival has some audience; films simply need to be seen. Except for Cannes, whose formal screenings are restricted to film professionals who are actually audiences, all festivals invite more general publics as ticket buyers, in seminars and events, and as gawkers beside the red carpet. The general audience is very important in the success of film festivals, not only financially but also in their role in creating an atmosphere to ensure the success of the festivals. Yet these "civilians" seldom occupy an important role in the organization of film festivals, nor do they participate in programming decisions. Nonetheless, the local audiences are oftentimes the most consistent contributors because they attend the festivals in their communities from year to year while programs and even programmers change.

At the same time, festivals are also seen as aspects of global urban branding, tourist attractions as well as local services.⁸³ Some cinephiles roam from festival to festival, while other spectators travel to specific festivals. And the idea of a festival may indicate the general culture of a city rather than merely selling tickets and hotel rooms at a specific destination. The spectacular festivals, in fact, may be off-putting to locals, while the most audience-friendly festivals are those that are smaller, less business-oriented, and local whose objectives are showing good films to an appreciative audience.

Marijke de Valck's study of the cinephiles at Rotterdam stresses the importance of audience in Rotterdam, which has recorded over 350,000 visits in a single year.⁸⁴ She credits this to the festival's lack of red carpet and to its openness; she

also highlights the festival venue, a downtown multiplex that allows the festival to program different types of films in the same cinemas to attract more viewers with diverse tastes. Here one notes the festival's effort to keep the audience in mind when putting its programs together, both in terms of diversity and in basic logistical advantages in selling tickets. This emphasis on audience, not unlike the practices I will discuss in Hong Kong, provides space for the festivals to program both more avant-garde alternative works and more accessible art house releases. On the one hand, different cinema screens may reify the separation between the more esoteric works and middle-brow fare, but on the other hand, a multiplex-like creative programming (in spaces between blockbusters) allows the possibility of crossing those boundaries with the mixing of audiences.

More audience-centered festivals often lack film markets and formal competitions even though they are vital elements of the cultural lives of San Francisco, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other cities. Another major audience-centered U.S. festival is Telluride, which began in 1973. This, however, is located in a remote mining town in Colorado that requires extra effort just to get there. The festival does not sell individual tickets, but only passes, ranging from \$390 to \$3,900, and makes a point that the filmmakers accompany their films at the festival. It only shows twenty films a year and there is no award. Since the third festival, the programmers no longer announce the line-up until the very beginning of the festival. In 1975, when Jeanne Moreau, Chuck Jones, and King Vidor were invited to the festival and Moreau cancelled because of medical reasons, the local press printed "Moreau Cancelled" rather highlighting the presence of Chuck Jones or Vidor.⁸⁵ Bill Pence, one of the founders and organizers, believes that not publicizing the program removes the "hypes" on the films. Telluride shows films that are American and more accessible, including *Brokeback Mountain*, *Juno*, and *Vincere*. It has also invited prominent noncinema professionals to be guest directors of the festival: past guest directors include Laurie Anderson, Salman Rushdie, Edith Kramer, Don DeLillo, Stephen Sondheim, and Slavoj Žižek. These people curate a series of films and introduce them to the audience, shaping a particular experience of the filmic public sphere. The inclusion of famous artists provides more legitimacy to the festival; at the same time, Telluride is introducing another level of celebrity into the festival, even though it is a high-brow crowd that reaffirms film as a cultured art.

Telluride has evolved over the years. Originally, it was a very small event, where Pence asserts that "everyone had the same experiences." In a town with only three blocks, people did bump into each other. This festival has hardly any local participation; neither the organizers nor the audience live in Telluride. Some of the cinemas are even temporary, making the location only meaningful in a limited temporal plane. Therefore, the "small towniness" of the festival is very much a constructed and ephemeral experience. As the festival became more popular, its very early intention of not directly doing business has shifted.

In 2009, both Sony Pictures Classics and IFC acquisition teams were in Telluride and held rather lavish dinners at the same restaurant. These are the major art film distributors today in the United States. Telluride is also covered by glossy magazines like *W*, where an interview with IFC president Jonathan Sehring put Telluride in the league of Toronto and New York in terms of art house acquisitions.⁸⁶ This is part of the trend of increased industrial infiltration in film festivals in this new millennium.

Telluride is also translocal in site as well as audience: it offers small satellite festivals in New England, where Pence lives. In these festivals, only six films are chosen and they are fairly accessible films that would normally receive art house distribution in the United States but might arrive more slowly in New Hampshire. Other festivals also have such tentacular events, whether summer sessions for the HKIFF, coordinated programs for New York's MIX in Brazil, or Locarno's screening of selected films across the border in Milan.

Truly audience-inclusive/responsive festivals may, in fact, have only a few films for a small audience, with limited press coverage and few aesthetic assertions or business ambitions. The Festival de Cinema Independent de Barcelona, for example, has a section called "Pantalla Hall" (Hall Screen) which does not charge any admission and creates a relatively open forum in a downtown museum-exhibition center, the Centre de Cultura Contemporània (CCCB). It offers noncommercial cinema in different formats, including shorts, animation, documentary, and fiction, while the audience can mingle freely with the filmmakers. As Stefan Berger, from the International Federation of Film Societies, sums it up: "The central meeting point, the Pantalla Hall of CCCB, was well chosen. Here you could enjoy a series of additional short films, animation, and documentaries for free. Here an Indian evening with live dance performance was held as the 'pièce de resistance' of the festival. Here you could exchange thoughts in a warm, constraintless environment."⁸⁷

What does local environment have to do with it? All of these festivals have evolved over time with film practices and cultures of their locales—whether dominating the city as in the case of Cannes (or Park City) or fitting into a larger range of cosmopolitan activities. This includes knowledge of local tastes (more Japanese and fewer Latin American films in Hong Kong), a set of venues, and other aspects of operation and organization discussed in the final section here. It also involves local support, whether from the government (at multiple levels, including the state), private donors, corporate sponsors, or a regular base of moviegoers who will buy tickets and attend events. Local authorities and businesses, in turn, look for recompense through money spent or more intangible values of place identity.

Despite the need for local support, though, nearly all film festivals are in some way tourist festivals—festivals that try to bring people into the cities and towns. Certainly, this applies to specialty festivals like Annecy, Pordenone, or

Telluride. Even for more general events, though, tourism is linked to a desire to sell the local and to a larger extent the regional. It is not surprising that venues such as Venice, Cannes, Karlovy Vary, Locarno, San Sebastián, and Mar del Plata are all resorts, heavily dependent on tourism. Archival images of these festivals are full of images of beaches, or other forms of friendly water, be it the spa in Karlovy Vary or the lake in Locarno. Indeed, aquatic attractions sold the festivals for local organizers (especially since festivals do not take place in competition with other prime tourist uses). Even the “alternative” to Cannes, the celebration of films *maudits*, would occupy the casino at Biarritz, and yet another French resort, Deauville, has become a major center for third-world film.

Film festivals occupy an interestingly contradictory position in representing the local. Images of sun and fun, scantily clad starlets, and established stars are juxtaposed with the representation of the more reified leisure of high art. Nevertheless, even though the films can be high, middle, or even low brow, film festivals demand time for an audience to see film, having a good time in its many manifestations, be it escapism or study or frontal encounter with the darkest impulses of human activities.

As they have escaped as well as continued their resort origins, film festivals often connect to other art institutions and cultural attractions, sharing spaces and collections as well as discourse. This is apparent in the link of the very first festival in Venice with the Venice Biennale. The Edinburgh festival is a component of the vast panoply of the Edinburgh Art Festivals; in 2007, the Hong Kong International Film Festival became ensconced in a two-month celebration of both arts and commercial activities in design, music, and film itself. The use of Lincoln Center for New York, the Brooklyn Art Museum’s own cinemaFEST, New York University’s First Run Film Festival for student films, all link museums, universities, and even corporate sponsorship to festivals in a wider local arts scene. Meanwhile, institutions like the British Film Institute, the Hong Kong Film Archive, and the Paris Cinemathèque connect cities and spaces to events beyond the limited festival calendar.

Julian Stringer, among others, has explored the relationships between global cities and the film festival economy.⁸⁸ In most festivals, local government officials are present in ceremonial events, giving legitimacy to the festivals and the city’s stamp of approval, oftentimes with financial assistance. Most festivals are too small to substantially benefit or hurt the city by their absence or presence, yet together with other cultural events, from other art festivals of one kind or another, concerts, theaters, and museums, film festivals contribute to the cultural mosaic global cities want to portray. Hence, a vital audience may not even stay for the films. During the gala opening of the First Asian Film Awards in Hong Kong in 2007, for example, an array of government officials were seated in the first rows of the Convention Center Hall. They included many Mr. Wongs, who served as directors of the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society,

the Hong Kong Trade and Development Council, and the secretary of commerce of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; these men gave prepared speeches (not always the most lively ones) for a good part of the pre-award ceremony to an audience eager to see the Korean pop star Rain later in the event. Even Cannes is supported by the French Ministry of Culture, the province, and the city, with a budget of 20 million euros in 2007. Therefore, while many government officials leave the festivals themselves to the festival boards and staffs, they always show up for the photo ops. However, when sensitive cultural and political issues erupt, sponsors may play different roles.

Local festivals thus are loci of competition among cities. While Cannes holds global primacy, it has competitors across France (Biarritz, Deauville, Nancy, Annecy). And the city of Paris itself, a force in Cannes's Cinéfondation, has taken an active role in preservation as well as screening. The July Paris International Film Festival, founded in 2002, is imbued with the spaces and audiences of the city, from outdoor screenings at city hall to all-night screenings with coffee and croissants. While this festival channels premieres from Cannes to a metropolitan audience, it has added other accouterments of larger and competitive festivals, including retrospectives, star attractions, and the Paris Project, which supports global filmmakers in assembling French coproductions. Tensions between cities as political capitals and their claims as cinematic capitals have occurred in other settings, national and regional. In Rome's first film festival in 2006, for example, then-Mayor Walter Veltroni was the force behind the establishment of the event, with a venue designed by star architect Renzo Piano and a budget (24 million euros) outstripping Venice. It was even held just one month after Venice, in October. One German programmer told me in 2007 that it would be impossible to have two big film festivals in the same country within two months; he believed that the old festival would eventually prevail. Veltroni's unsuccessful bid to defeat Silvio Berlusconi led to changes: by 2008, the budget had been cut to 15 million euros and its codirectors had departed, although the 2009 festival boasted Meryl Streep and scenes from *Twilight*.⁸⁹ As I will show later, tensions among Hong Kong, Shanghai, and other competitors for Chinese films also play out against a regional tapestry in which Pusan, Bangkok, Sydney, and Tokyo have also asserted claims through film festivals that go beyond audience and tourism.⁹⁰

Perhaps the most striking convergence of place, festival, audience, and urban agendas has been Tribeca, in New York. While I have already mentioned the role of the venerable New York Film Festival, Tribeca's Web site notes that "Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff founded the Tribeca Film Festival in 2001 following the attacks on the World Trade Center to spur the economic and cultural revitalization of lower Manhattan through an annual celebration of film, music and culture. The Festival's mission focuses on assisting filmmakers to reach the broadest possible audience, enabling the international film community and general public to experience the power of cinema and promoting New York

City as a major filmmaking center.”⁹¹ Tribeca is also one of the very few festivals that is run by a for-profit company, Tribeca Enterprises, which may explain why the festival goal is to reach the “broadest possible audience” and its openness to many business ventures. Over the past decade, this initial effort at regeneration has expanded into its own cinema, year-round programming, and a branch festival in Doha, Qatar, that began in 2009. However, in recent years, the trade press has been lukewarm to the festival and sometimes has complained that it lacks any distinctive directions and identity.⁹²

These demands for audiences and sponsors might lead to more conflicts if global competition did not have some loose agreements: festivals compete for auteurs and works, but cannot afford to compete on schedules. Hence, major festivals have to adhere to a calendar that allows them to craft the year into appropriate segments. Berlin, for example, did not see the cold weather as a problem and moved the festival from June/July to February in 1978 to be in a better position in this global festival calendar. This decision was very much based on a business model where Berlin saw the late winter as “a period of meager trade and few festivals.”⁹³ Thus, Berlin would capitalize on showing films produced since Venice and be ahead of Cannes, which has eyed the fall spot of Venice (with encouragement from Hollywood distributors, whose fall prestige releases usually are not ready in time for the Cannes festival in the spring). However, individual cities may simply find the right time for the festival for that specific city. Hong Kong holds its festival in April because of the Easter holiday, so that people are off from their work and have time to go see movies, paying the bills for the festival. HKIFF also uses the Chinese New Year’s holiday as another moveable landmark for completion and distribution of the catalog. Similarly, Paris in July has become a capital for tourists before residents leave for their own vacations: a perfect transitional month for a festival after Cannes.

Situated within a multilayered network, small festivals and multiple audiences remind us of the impassioned interests that established cinephilia around ciné clubs, isolated art houses, or college film series. Ironically, many of these institutions have become victims of technological change in the cinematic world, as video, DVDs, television, and the Internet have made once exotic or alternative films available to individual spectators worldwide. Here, film festivals have survived as both collective and sanctioning experiences and as gateways to distribution for films and filmmakers. Other horizons of discourse—journalism, museums, and universities—have survived as well, although continually facing new demands of audience, interpretation, and knowledge for the future, just as film festivals do.⁹⁴

Festival Worlds Today

The variety of interests and themes of these smaller festivals and the sections they intersect within festival sidebars and marketplaces in Cannes, Toronto,

Hong Kong, and other sites underscore the dialectic of film as a mass medium and the packaging that highlights specific interests and appeals across the festival world. Despite these differences, however, many contemporary festivals share some general issues of organization and function that we should review before moving onward. While national, group, or thematic intentions have been paramount for many festivals at different times, festival organizers and programmers, nevertheless, also see themselves as the guardians of quality cinema that transcends national industries and their demands. By the late 1990s, new film festivals became closely aligned with their host cities and communities, with film festivals serving as another venue to add to wider global cultural offerings. While many festivals, especially the major international festivals, bridge periods and interests through multiple sections, all these film festivals participate in global flows defined by the aesthetics of films rather than simply its industries. Except for some very specific local festivals that only showcase their national or regional cinema, like the Guadalajara Mexican Film Festival or Fuokoka Asian Film Festival, the majority of film festivals today have global palettes and global ambitions.

As these festivals bring world cinema to their local audiences, they also compete in an international arena to gain stature within the film festival world. Therefore, while major festivals like Cannes, Venice, Berlin, San Sebastián, Pusan, Mar del Plata, and Toronto have their own local and national contexts, even they seek to identify, attract, and dominate cutting-edge cinema from around the world. This very internationalist flow of film festivals makes it necessary that they maintain loose global networks, from the more formal arrangements of FIAPF, to the informal but very real festival calendar that all international festivals respect with caution, to consultancies and friendships among programmers and critics.

The crux of this globalization is continuous exchange and communication; however, these exchanges are not equal. This global aspect of film festivals also confirms the inevitable, arbitrary, and rarely mutable hierarchy of different festivals. The prestige of major festivals rests on the films they program, especially for their world premieres, and the people/guests and press they can attract to their festivals, primarily directors and stars. Cannes now undeniably stands at the top of the pack, followed by Venice and Berlin, all old European festivals. This does not mean that the films that have premiered in these festivals or have won prizes there are necessarily box office successes, but within the loose film festivals community, these films garner the most prestige and circulate through subsequent festivals as an affirmation of primacy by the other festivals that add the Golden Lion or Palm designation to their catalog copy.

Here, Western European festivals claim hierarchical distinction so that their prizes and even screenings bring global prestige, making these festivals the ultimate cinematic taste makers. This also suggests that films from other countries

can only be recognized if they manage recognition from these European festivals, reinstating colonial relations of power and taste that are uneasily read by filmmakers and diplomats. In subsequent chapters on Hong Kong and on the public sphere, this book will discuss in more details these complex relationships between the West and the non-West and its many contradictory implications.

The global aspect of film festivals again creates a peculiar relationship with the United States and Hollywood. Stars and directors from the United States are often heavily coveted by the European festivals; Hollywood images and glamour are global even if many works by these stars would seldom be screened in festivals. Since the concept of the “premiere” allows for the first screening in each festival’s home country, Hollywood films can also negotiate openings, publicity, and presence around the festival cycle. Yet the international qualities of many of these festivals must balance the inclusion of Hollywood and independent American films with traditional powerhouse industries of art cinema (France, Germany, Italy, Japan) and choice selections from other countries. Cannes today, as it has been for decades, is international not only because it presents the best of French and European cinema, but also because it extensively covers the world; except for Africa (a blatant area of neglect), all continents are well represented each year. Different negotiations of local industry and global vision play out in Hong Kong, Rotterdam, and Mar del Plata.

At the same time, the global reach of festivals brings them into more concrete international political relations, manifested in censorship and boycotts—in other words, which countries will provide their films and which countries will withhold them. Festivals must grapple with political issues as well as personal ones, as invited filmmakers are occasionally barred from attending either by their own countries or by the festivals’ host countries. This was already a public problem when festivals were caught between Western and Eastern blocs, in Europe and in Asia. However, it continued after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1997, the United States did not provide a visa for Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami to attend the New York Film Festival (leading the Finnish director Aki Kiarosmaki to boycott that event as well). Meanwhile, in 2009, the Iranian government prevented director Jafar Panahi from attending the Berlinale, then put him in prison when he was invited to sit on the jury at Cannes in 2010. The chapters on the public sphere will discuss this theme, as will my notes on the Hong Kong International Film Festival and that festival’s complex relations with the People’s Republic of China in terms of censorship and withholding of films from the colonial times to the present.

As the late twentieth century started to spread a neoliberal corporate business model into cultural institutions, film festivals became more embroiled in the implementation of cultural tourism as well as cultural investment. If film festivals are sponsored by different public, local, regional, and national organizations, the organizers who have to apply for funds must show the relevance of the festivals

to the development of their region. Some film festivals seem almost to be reflexes of the local tourist industry. The annual Wine Country Film Festival, for example, was established in 1986 in California wine country, in Napa and Sonoma. On its Web site, its founder/director Stephen Ashton compares the *terroir* (the characteristics of the land) for wine production to that of the film festival, “the *terroir* of cinema.” He also links films to wine and cuisine in their deep cultural roots. Not unlike the programmers of other festivals, Wine Country’s organizers stress that they “choose to celebrate our differences rather than fear them.”⁹⁵ The festival has an international program; in 2009, it included works from all over the world, assembling a program of films of many different genres. Most films selected have not had wide release, but they can be considered second-tier festival films that have traveled in different smaller festivals or the sidebars of major festivals. The promotional video of the festival, however, sells the space of the festival, where the audience will be in the beautiful vineyards of California wine country, savoring good wine and food in outdoor cinemas.⁹⁶

Yet most major festivals also have corporate sponsors. The Cannes Web site, for example, displays logos as diverse as Chopard, L’Oréal, Renault, and HP. L’Oréal and BMW appear as sponsors for Berlin, while the ubiquitous cosmetic company shares billing with Lancia, Person, Canon, and Kodak among others at Venice. For smaller festivals, public-private negotiations may mean a more agonizing quest for corporate funding as public resources run dry. Corporate sponsors may respect serious cinema, but they are nevertheless responsible to their shareholders, and sponsorship is about the bottom line. Film festivals bring cultural prestige to corporations, and they particularly like stars and red carpet. With extensive press coverage, the public sees the corporations as civic partners within their respective communities; the customers see the glamour associated with famous actors. With these different elements, sponsoring corporations hope to cultivate their brands and create sophisticated and responsible images.

The latest incarnation of festivals as online events mediated through the Internet challenges any ties of place and audience. Up to this point, traditional festivals are not sacrificing their concrete space and place, but only adding virtual dimensions to them. Tribeca 2010, for example, hosted a distinct virtual section, where for \$45 one could watch eight features and eighteen shorts at home as well as participate virtually in other events of the festival. Hardly any completely online festivals exist, except for the likes of Babelgum or Con-Can, both run by commercial media companies.⁹⁷ When festivals are completely removed from specific spatial and temporal elements, they challenge nearly all aspects of film festival existence and relations among filmmakers, programmers, and audiences. So far, however, online film festivals have not proven to be a threat to traditional film festivals.

Any new technology that has been nurtured and accepted by many poses challenging dimensions to how film festivals are organized and used by their

different constituents. It would be naive to simply see new virtual technologies as liberating and opening new venues for all. It would be equally naive to see that the virtual world will take away the aura of physical festivals. A similar argument might have been made for television or DVDs, but both ultimately became part of the transformation and lives of festivals.

The politics of global flows, differentiation, and politics in these events, nonetheless, are sustained by a universalist discourse of art and aesthetics that transcends the festival or the nation. There is no film festival that does not see itself as devoting its energy and effort to the preservation and development of the art of cinema. Even festivals that are overtly politically oriented, like the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, or community-based, like MIX, use the art of cinema to achieve their specific goals. The term *aesthetics* encompasses diverse aspects of seeing cinema as expressions of human creativity, including multiple schools of thought (realism, neorealism, expressionism, avant-garde), questions about the formal elements of cinema, and breaking new grounds to promote artistic practices worthy of attention by those who decide artistic standards. In this regard, too, many film festivals and programmers see themselves as offering a cinema that is different from the commercial cinema people encounter every day in their neighborhoods, even though few festivals truly avoid the glamour and allure of Hollywood, or its local equivalents. Yet aesthetic considerations also need to find their place among other concerns of the global festival. The next two chapters will discuss the different discourses on aesthetics within film festivals, from the idea of a festival film to the construction of the auteur, including voices of the critics and theorists, and the relationship between film festivals and film canons. Here, I am simply suggesting that these universal discourses are formed in different ways by festivals as they negotiate film as a global medium and an aesthetic product. This negotiation is scaled down, in fact, in interesting ways if we turn from the larger multisectional programs of Cannes, Hong Kong, or Toronto to smaller-scale, thematic festivals and audiences worldwide.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a general historical and structural overview of film festivals, which explains the many elements that have made film festivals possible and meaningful: the invention of cinema, the debate on what cinema should be, the demarcation between cinema as a mass medium versus cinema having the wherewithal to be an art form, and the development of differentiated audiences and networks. Through these, the chapter examines the discursive horizon cinema has occupied at different periods to contextualize what film festivals mean in different contexts.

As we have seen, film festivals took shape in the larger world of cinematic discourse. Ciné clubs, art houses, and museums also have provided different spaces for cinema. Media and institutions continue to converge with film festivals today,

in a world where festivals and films also maintain Web sites for a constant virtual presence, enhancing the specific and localized festival event.

At the same time, these histories and sociologies of festivals insist that film festivals are not just about art cinema or cinema as art. From their very inception, film festival organizers and sponsors courted the glamour of Hollywood and the money of those studios as well as other national producers. More importantly, a well-rounded and nuanced understanding of cinema, both as a medium and a social practice, demands that analysts understand the constant negotiations to define cinema as both art and mass consumption.

While we can separate these themes analytically, we must remember that they constantly intersect in the creation, meaning, and experience of film festivals. Global connections cannot be appreciated without the local contexts, nor national industries without recognition of international canons and aesthetics. Larger questions on the relationships between festivals and their diverse communities as well as on the construction of film knowledge—looking backward at history and forward to new filmmakers—also warrant further considerations. By outlining the diversity that exists within film festivals, I have shown that festivals come in different forms and shapes; some share similar elements, while others set themselves apart by power, specialization, or genre. Nonetheless, through all these events and among almost all their agents, films remain the center. Films as texts are still the talk of the festival professionals as well as larger communities. Hence, as we move ahead, the next two chapters will address festival films and their meanings.