Get Bigger, Broader Audiences for Cultural Cinema: Top Tips

1. **Most of the audience for cultural film are <u>not</u> film enthusiasts**

   Audiences for cultural cinema are not like audiences for mainstream cinema. They are much less likely to be aged 15-24 and much more likely to be over 45 and female. They're more like arts audiences – and that's because most <u>are</u> arts audiences. In mixed programme arts centres, on average just half of the tickets they buy are for film.

2. **You're already getting the film buffs through the door**

   42% of the Film Hub Wales survey respondents said they went to the cinema at least once a month. 12% said they went at least once a week.

3. **You are most likely to get bigger, broader audiences by getting people to dip into the film programme**

   Only one in five ticket buyers for film in mixed programme venues sees three or more films a year. The rest dip into the film programme. Of course you must nurture your film enthusiasts but there is huge potential to grow your audience by persuading arts enthusiasts and multiplex attenders to include the occasional cultural film on their menu.

4. **Don't assume knowledge**

   Just 10% of your audience said they knew a lot about film. 45% said they had a general knowledge of film and another 45% said they had a casual knowledge.

   There are even different kinds of film enthusiast. Specialist enthusiasts have strong preferences and know a lot about the genres, directors and actors they like. But Scattergun enthusiasts enjoy film as part of a very varied cultural diet and love to discover new films. That means they have a limited knowledge. And the arts enthusiasts and multiplex attenders dipping into film have no specialist knowledge at all.

5. **Talk about the things that motivate them**

   Write copy that reflects the things that people love about film: escapism, inspiration and enjoyment. Audiences say films help them define their identity and get through difficult times in their lives. They provide knowledge and promote understanding in an accessible way. Above all, film is enjoyable.

6. **Put your arthouse film programme in context**

   People start getting interested in film because they want to be entertained. So, programming some appropriate mainstream and crossover films alongside the cultural film programme helps to build audiences.

7. Know what's great about seeing film in your venue

Cinema is not just about the film – it's an experience. Film Hub Wales survey respondents said the perfect cinema had a wide choice of films, friendly staff, food and drink and a buzzy atmosphere. It's a place where they can see film with like-minded people and feel they belong.

So, what are you offering as an alternative to the popcorn experience of mainstream cinema? Homemade cake? Nice wine? Good company? Peace and quiet in which to enjoy the film? Make sure you tell people why they should choose to see film in your venue.

8. Talk to different people about different things

Some potential ticket buyers will be motivated by the director, actors or good reviews. Many, though, will be interested in what the film is about: cricket, F1, saving the planet, or have a strong connection with where the film is set. Others engage with the story line. So, talk to different audiences about different things.

Community connectors can help you communicate with special interest groups so search them out.

9. Don't confuse them - programme regularly

Putting on the odd film doesn't work. Venues that consistently programme film on a particular day of the week get bigger audiences. That's every Monday (or Tuesday – whatever) during the film season. If you need to programme full week runs of live performances, then create gaps for them between film seasons.

10. Persuade them!

Don't just tell them it's on.

The way we write about cultural film actively puts people off. They feel intimidated. So describe clearly what each film is about and what it will be like to watch. Don't name drop – always explain why a director, performer or film is worth seeing. And use images that grab attention and convey character, emotion and story.

11. We can't be inclusive just by removing practical barriers

Building broader audiences is not just about providing specialist services. Understand particular groups' attitudes and beliefs about culture and cultural film. Work to make cultural film relevant to them. Then tell them how you have removed the practical barriers they encounter.

Audience Development Plan

Organisation:

What do we want to achieve?

What is my organisation really offering?

What do we actually do?:

Why do we do it?:

What would happen if we didn't exist? Why would that matter?:

What will people experience when they see film at our venue? (how will they feel? what will they think?)

What makes our experience different?:

Why should people get involved? Turn your answers into five clear and persuasive reasons (not facts) why people should come
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Use these reasons in everything you say or write about what you do

Who do we want to reach? Identify five different groups you want to target. What are they like? What do they enjoy? What are their negative preconceptions about what you do?

How will we persuade them? write the six word story that will best persuade each target group

How will we persuade them? what kind of image will tell each six word story?

How will we get that message across? choose the three communication methods that will best reach each group. For each group, put a star against the communication method that will be most effective.

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When will we tell them? how many weeks in advance will they decide to come along? when should you remind them?

Was it worth it? how will you tell if you achieved your aims? what information will you need to collect?

What questions do you want to ask your audiences? How will you ask them?