



Dinard Festival of British Films

Hussam It started in 1990. The city of Dinard wanted to have a big event, annual big event and they thought about British cinema because the city of Dinard has a British character, you know, a lot of the streets have British names and architecture is rather British and I think that the first man who founded the city was British at the end of the 19th, 19th century. So connections are here, are there with the country and at that time the British cinema started to, to be known by directors as Ken Loach, Stephan Frears and Mike Leigh. They started to win prizes in festivals, big, big festivals and French professionals started also to buy their films so the festivals managed to screen these films for the first time and it managed to take place in this Hall of Cinema, Cinematography and slowly, slowly we became only rendez-vous of British cinema in France and in Europe and because of the good health of the British cinema the Festival became to be also very, very known.

Elaine. Where is the actual venue where the films are shown.

Hussam We have five screening rooms but the heart of the festival is on the Palais of Arts where we have a big screening room of 400 people and we equip two other places and projectors and, and seats and we have the local cinema here nearby where we can use two screens so we have something like 1000 seats for every screening. A lot of people attend. Last year we had 29,000 people who came to see.

Elaine. From which areas?

Hussam From all over Brittany; from Paris also and from Great Britain.

Elaine. So how is it actually funded, the Festival?

Hussam The city of Dinard is the owner of the Festival so they pay the most important funds. We have also the Region, the Conseil Général, and the Departement Conseil Général and we have also the Ministry of Culture and private sponsors.

Elaine. And the staff. Are they paid, or volunteers?

Hssam We are all almost paid, not a lot but paid. We have one person who works all the year on the festival. We have me, the Director, the Artistic Director, and during July and during all the summer we

increase the numbers we become 4 or 5 and during the Festival we become 80, almost 80.

Elaine. How are the films selected to be chosen each year for the Festival?

Hussam We receive something like 100 film proposals. We go to Cannes Film Festival also and we go to London to screen movies. We have contacts with the Stage Agents and the producers that propose films and our work, our job is to watch them all and to select movies and we also have homages, tributes to Charles Dickens and John Schlesinger also.

Elaine. Is that the 100 years Dickens....

Hussam Two hundred years....

Elaine Sorry, two hundred years

Hussam Yes, of his birthday and we have a lot of also an exhibitions and master classes and thing like, things like that. French people admires two things in British cinema. The first one is the humour, kind of absurdity. The second thing is the social aspect. The, the British movies try to look at the society and look at the world and try to observe it and to, to speak about ordinary people and small people.

Elaine. You mentioned at the beginning I think Mike Leigh, who improvises largely and takes a very ordinary situation and people and largely improvise.

Hussam Yes, British directors and scriptwriters think that ordinary people have exceptional stories to tell.

Elaine Yes, have a story to tell.

Hussam On the contrary, French cinema is opposite. They think that exceptional people can tell ordinary stories. That is why French cinema is, is bourgeois and very auto centred on the individual, the individual, on the man or the woman or the couple. On the contrary, British cinema is for the society, for the whole, for the group.

Elaine. Would you say that the films that achieve success at the film festival here go on to achieve further success on perhaps a larger scale?

Hussam Yes. We try to screen movies that, that the other Festivals, the big festivals, don't take, you know? Now, today, Ken Loach's movies or Stephan Frears or Michael Benton or Mike Leigh don't need us. They go straight to Cannes and to Festival de Venice or Toronto or Berlin. So, they don't need us. What we try to make is to invite small budget films and unknown directors and that's why we were

the first to show a film like, a film called 'Shallow Grave'. That was big hit after Dinard and we were the first showing 'The Full Monty' also, 'The Girl with a Pearl Earring' and last year called 'Tyrannosaur' we showed it for the first time here in France and someone, a distributor, see it, and he bought it, so it was released in all the French cinemas. So for our level we work for small films and that, that means, artistic, yes films.

