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Collectif Jeune Cinéma at 50: A Subjective Conversation

Raphaël Bassan, Théo Deliyannis and Viviane Vagh, July 2021

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In the midst of the present devastating economic and social planetary pandemic, the Collectif Jeune Cinéma (CJC) is celebrating its 50th anniversary of existence. Founded by Marcel Mazé (1940-2012) and some friends, in June 1971, the CJC remains the oldest film co-op in Europe, and its mission remains to archive, distribute, exhibit and program French and international independent filmmakers and their alternative non-commercial films referred to largely as experimental and “different” films. Despite the closure of movie theatres for much of the year and the unprecedented situation for this nation’s cinephiles, this French filmmakers’ co-op, is very much alive.¹

To celebrate this half-century jubilee, organised by president Frederic Tachou, former president (between 2005 and 2018) Laurence Rebouillon, co-founder Raphaël Bassan and administrator Théo Deliyannis, the CJC is imagining and creating several events for the exposure and the discovery of all types of different and experimental films, whether by filmmakers of the past or by young filmmakers of today, members of the Co-op. The rich characteristic of the Collectif Jeune Cinéma is that it is an intergenerational community composed of not only filmmakers but also archivists, researchers, theorists, and programmers.² The events will be held throughout 2021 and around the 23rd edition of the Festival des cinémas différents et expérimentaux de Paris (FCDEP) in October. This yearly festival, programmed and presented by the CJC, was created by Mazé and the DCA group (D’un cinéma l’autre) in 1999.

¹ For more on the history of the CJC, please see [here](#).

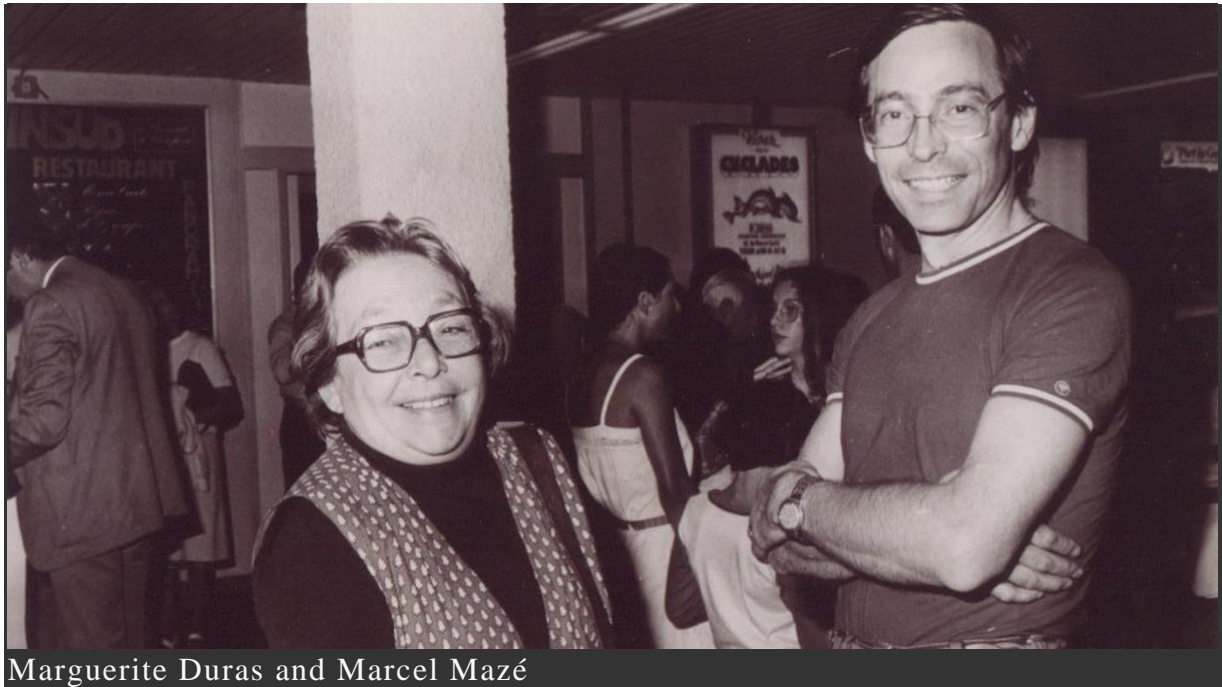
² [More information](#) on the community around the CJC can be found in the *hors série* edition of the CJC’s quarterly *Étoilements* publication in PDF form, which celebrates the 10th edition of the Festival des cinémas différents et expérimentaux de Paris.

Our intention here is not to go into an objective historical account of the five decades of the Co-op's existence but rather to reflect over the reasons for its long life and to consider its evolution despite the challenges and obstacles it encounters. To ponder over how our co-op can continue to develop and evolve in its mission to support a continuing renewal of experimental and different cinema and likewise how such cinema can enable a collective structure such as the CJC, which in our opinion continues to play an important part in our social cultural environment.

With this desire and in this particularly chaotic and nebulous period, the three of us: film critic, theorist and experimental filmmaker and co-founder of the CJC, Raphaël Bassan, experimental filmmaker, theorist and the present administrator, archivist, distributor, and programmer of the CJC Théo Deliyannis, and myself, experimental filmmaker, stage director, visual artist and member of the CJC for almost two decades, were inspired to meet up over our computer screens. By some coincidence, this meeting symbolically represented almost three generations and three components of our Co-op.

– *Viviane Vagh*

Raphaël Bassan (RB): I have always been passionate about cinema. I started going to the cinema at the age of six with my family and later on around eleven when I could go to school by myself, I would go to see a film a day and watched all kinds of film genres. I discovered experimental cinema as a cinephile and unlike other cinephiles I didn't disapprove of it. I never rejected any other cinema either, I was always looking for ways to see as many movies as I could! This is where my story as an active contributor to cinema begins. It all started with the Collectif Jeune Cinéma. Even though I had seen avant-garde films of the '20s or those by Kenneth Anger at the Cinémathèque française in Paris and had heard of Le Festival international du cinéma expérimental de Knokke-le-Zoute in Belgium, I can say that my first encounter with a theorised idea around the experimental film genre occurred when I was 19 in 1967 when a special screening program took place at the Cinémathèque entitled "Avant Garde Pop et Beatnik" organised by P. Adams Sitney. The film activist and theorist had come from the USA to present films, especially those of the '60s. Sitney wasn't able to show all the films he had intended to at the Cinémathèque due to a lack of time slots so he organised more screenings at Jean-Jacques Lebel's place and Dominique Noguez, who was present, wrote in December 1967, "Une nouvelle révolution cinématographique", the first ever "real" article on this subject by a French critic who wasn't attached to any pluri-disciplinary avant-garde such as surrealism or lettrism. To make a long story short and to get to the CJC, a few years later I was looking for a job and a friend encouraged me to meet Marcel Mazé who was a departmental manager at the Agence France Presse at the time. Even though Marcel didn't have a job for me, in a curious twist of fate it turns out that he and I were interested in the same type of films and he mentioned that he was organising a screening in a small theatre in Paris, Le Studio du Val de Grâce. I saw Marcel again when I went to that screening – it was 23rd June 1970 – and there I met other people who along with myself were to become the co-founders of the Collectif Jeune Cinéma a year later. A few months later to my great surprise Marcel called me and two other friends to be part of the pre-selection committee for a special program at Le Festival international du Jeune cinéma de Hyères (one of the main film festivals in France at the time), with which he had been entrusted by the festival's director Maurice Perisset. It was this course of events that led me from being a simple spectator to suddenly becoming an active actor in the community. At the same time, our Hyères group (as a collective) wrote articles, held screenings in Paris, led debates and social meetings around these types of films, and I got to meet all the people who, at the incentive of Marcel, would become the main actors in the creation of the CJC in June 1971, and as is quite typical with French associations, not without discord and blow-ups.



Marguerite Duras and Marcel Mazé

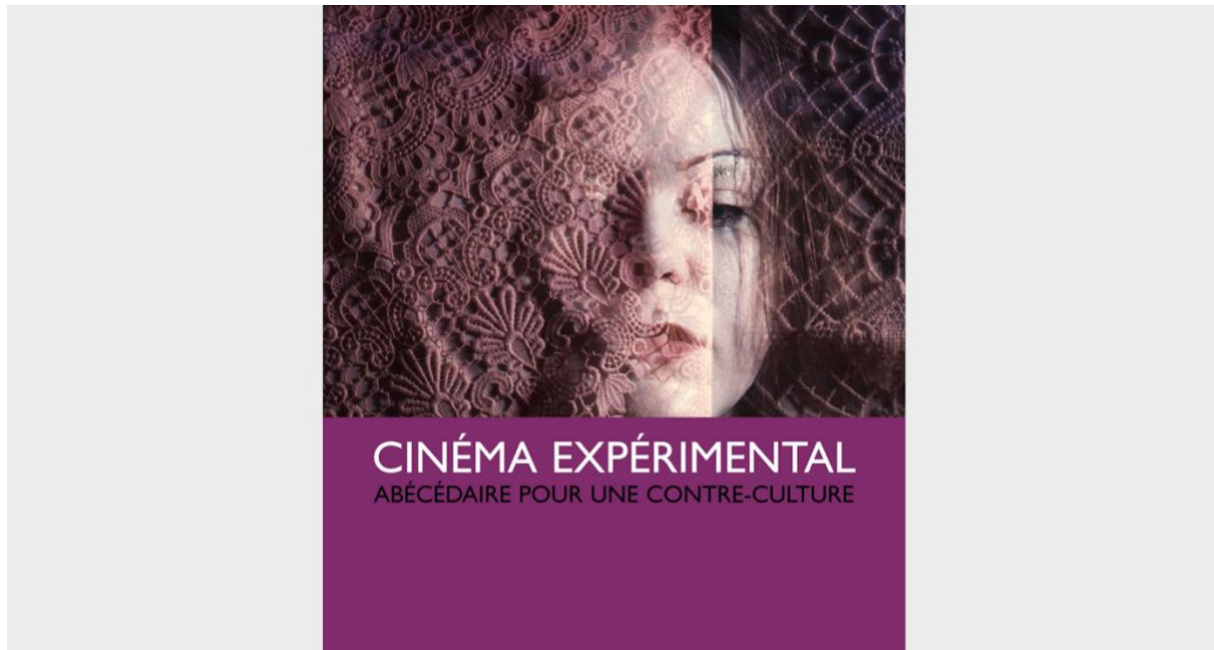
Théo Deliyannis (TD): My story with the Collectif Jeune Cinéma starts when I was doing my masters as a film student and was researching an early Parisian underground filmmaker, Étienne O’Leary. I was looking for people who had written about his work and thus I met Raphaël Bassan who has written about almost every French experimental filmmaker. Raphaël suggested I do some volunteer work with the Co-op. I began by helping out with the FCDEP. I got on very well with the staff at the time and was asked to organise a screening on Étienne O’Leary for the festival’s next edition. This was my first experience as a programmer. Meanwhile, I made two films, one was hand-processed at LabA, a Greek artist-run lab. Later I was employed by the CJC for a few months and then stayed on to volunteer, particularly as part of the festival’s selection committee. In 2018 I was hired as the administrator after the previous administrator left.

Viviane Vagh (VV): It seems that the CJC is a kind of receptacle of encounters based on the passion for independent alternative cinema. There have been a number of attempts to create structures like this one but without success. It is rare that a structure remains alive for so long and continues to evolve and renew itself.

RB: The landscape today is very different to the one at the beginning of the CJC. At that time almost nothing existed or had been formally theorised, about alternative independent or experimental film, especially in France, and the series of events that led us to creating this film Co-op were of course largely due to the historical social context and events of the ‘60s and 1970s with the profound changes in society and the desire for freedom, that led to a great culture of activism that sought to change the paradigm in every domain, which had major consequences for the arts, including the cinema.

We were young, with a burning will to create some form of identity that reflected freedom of expression. Everything seemed possible at that time and we met at a moment in history when there was a potential for this desire to be achievable. We had a collective passion to fill in the gap for what was terribly lacking in France, a free and independent alternative cinema form which was already present in the US and Europe in 1968-69 with the film co-ops. This desire led to encounters and elements that would concretely bring a group of us (Noël Burch, Jean-

Paul Cassagnac, Yves-André Delubac, Luc Moullet and others) to the decisive step of the founding of the first French cinema co-op, Le Collectif Jeune Cinéma with Marcel Mazé as president. Three years later other incentives took place. People such as Claudine Eizykman, Dominique Noguez and Guy Fihman created departments at French Universities, and theorised about and exhibited experimental films. One has to appreciate that the history of experimental film is connected to a historical period, it is an evolution based on a social necessity that led to the creation of film co-ops all over the world and the Collectif Jeune Cinema in Paris.



TD: I am of the generation who came to the CJC after the death of Marcel Mazé, I arrived a year later; it was already a collective with bylaws that had evolved over the years. I have often talked about this subject with Pierre Merejkowsky, who has been a member of the CJC for many years, and he says that it is rather extraordinary that the CJC has stayed alive and effervescent after Marcel's departure and that of other charismatic active members. I find it interesting that something that started with an informal structure and developed into a more formal one in the 2000s, through many challenges and crises, has in my opinion an even more collective spirit today. Perhaps this is due to a collaboration based on friendships, passion and energy. I had just started making films and I felt that I would find here a place to show my work and that I would get feedback and advice, more so than from my university classmates. I really appreciated the intergenerational spirit which is typical of the CJC and this plurality of people who represent our association is quite rare. I also have a framework here as a programmer, archivist and distributor. The CJC is a rare environment that gives freedom to people who have just arrived. The doors are wide open for new energy, one has only to think of a suitable project and commit to bringing it to fruition. Projects are led not only by filmmakers, but there is also an interest in programming, archiving and research by some members. We are a constellation of people who are interested in all aspects of experimental cinema.

VV: How would you compare the CJC of 50 years ago to what it is today? Its support for experimental cinema? In a way both the '60s/'70s and the period we are living through today is "unchartered territory" with a desire to end old paradigms and incite new beginnings.

TD: The definition of experimental is vast in our Co-op! We try to keep everything open and in movement: new discoveries, new friendships, new encounters, new ideas. This attitude has

inspired me to show a large variety of the experimental film genre. There is a desire to question the canonical figures of cinema, and of the avant-garde, and CJC is a kind of lab for new and different stories of experimental cinema. The definition of experimental cinema has unfortunately become totally institutionalised by some who define it as a fixed, closed form, a cinema with no surprises, whereas I adhere to the experimental form precisely *for* its surprises! I do my very best to constantly renew it by avoiding a form that is forever repeating itself. As any incentive is possible within our association, another interest of mine is to dig up or to meet filmmakers of the past, of the '60s, '70s, '80s, members of the CJC, most of whom don't make films anymore and those whose films have literally disappeared because they have deteriorated or have been forgotten. I try to compile their interesting stories and to bring that "memory" back to life. That sums up the reason why I'm here and why I stay.



Raymonde Carasco, Irène Fournier, Claude Brunel & Nicole Deschaumes

RB: We were very much in the present creating history, so to speak. Things could take form because of the epoch. I think in a way we felt in our (youthful) bones, that this was how we could contribute, individually and together, and what we could receive from this new adventure. I left for a year in 1972. I had started as a programmer and came back as a film critic. We all very much benefitted from the structure as we all became professionals one way or another, except for Marcel who sacrificed, in the spiritual sense of the word, his own profession for the life of the CJC and supporting different cinema. An important event took place in 1977 when the Centre Pompidou was inaugurated in Paris. One of the first major events there was an exhibition called "Une Histoire du cinéma" curated by Peter Kubelka, a prominent experimental filmmaker. The Centre's film collection department bought films by Maurice Lemaître, Jonas Mekas, Maya Deren, Marcel Duchamp. Things have changed since that time, we now have paid administrators (Théo today) and paid staff such as Judit Naranjo and people coming in for work experience and volunteer work. In 2005 Laurence Rebouillon was elected president of CJC and reorganised how it functioned, bringing new life to its activities. She worked hard with Bernard Cerf who was director of our annual Festival, and it subsequently gained a lot of exposure. Many new programs were added to it.

VV: Do you think that the cinema genre that the CJC supported in the beginning has evolved in time? And do you think that the filmmakers who have nourished the CJC with their films have also evolved in time? Do they nurture one another like a connecting capillary system?

RB: In 1974 a new co-op was founded, The Paris Films Coop, and in 1982, another one, Light Cone. These three French co-ops are still running today. In the mid-'90s young filmmakers got together to create labs and associations for the first time in France. The mission of these structures was to generate the creation and the exposure of independent experimental films. To name a few: Braquage, Etna, L'Abominable.³ Our yearly film festival, the Festival des cinémas différents et expérimentaux de Paris, was created by Marcel Mazé following the political closure of the Hyères festival. In this way, all these initiatives, this intermingling and collaboration at times with the CJC, brought one way or another water to our mill so to speak and in doing so renewed the energy in our Co-op and within the experimental cinema genre itself. It also happened that young people, students or filmmakers, came to see us. They were curious to find out more about this style of filmmaking. All this to say that what seemed exterior to our Co-op became a constructive renewal element to it. Meaning, all the benefits are a continuous, flowing, interconnected movement, stemming from the films themselves into our Co-op and from the Co-op into the films. The CJC is a tributary to its members, and to the rules and modes of distribution that have made it evolve.



Poster c.1974

VV: Can we talk about the way the technologies we use today have changed things?

RB: In the first years of our festival, we were mostly dealing with French films, one had to send DVDs, tapes or analogue films. With the arrival of Bernard Cerf as director of the festival, then later with Frédéric Tachou (in 2012), many things changed. The festival began to be competitive, and the jury had to deliberate publicly. Around 2016 the films could be sent via the internet, you just had to send a link. With the potential of digital, with the evolution of the

³ See Pip Chodorov, "[The Birth of a Labo et du réseau des laboratoires indépendants en France](#)", *Dérives.tv*. 2003. Originally published in Nicole Brenez and Christian Lebrat, *Jeune, dure et pure! Une histoire de cinéma expérimental et d'avant-garde en France*, Cinemathèque Française / Mazotta, Paris/Milan, 2001, pp. 519-521; Pip Chodorov, "The Artist-Run Film Labs", *Millenium Film Journal*, vol. 60, fall 2014, pp. 28-36.

internet and all the other technologies we are able to use today, all this makes the CJC what it has become today. It has become international in every way. As I say in my article in *Dérives.Tv*⁴, the CJC is traversed by different currents at the same time as it traverses them.

VV: Do we continue to exist because we've built a kind of mini society? (There is an ecosystem of the experimental cinema genre). What more do we provide than other film co-ops?

RB: That's the big paradox. Not only has the CJC survived these five decades but as has the two other historical French film co-ops such as Paris Films Coop and Light Cone. That isn't the case anywhere else in Europe today.

TD: Also, what has never existed anywhere else in Europe, for example, in England or in any other country, is for there to be so many co-ops created. It's very French to have created so many in Paris in the '70s and '80s. And it's true that the three you mentioned Raphaël are still very active today, although only the CJC is the heir to the spirit of the co-ops the way they were created in the '60s. I'm basing this on the fact that they have all undergone changes in their way of functioning, including the Film-Makers Cooperative and Canyon Cinema, the oldest filmmakers cooperative in the US.

RB: Canyon Cinema is actually the oldest surviving film co-op in the world.

TD: Yes, and as far as I know, we are one of the few film co-op which has tried to keep the original precept, that is to cultivate a space as democratic as possible, that is managed by its members and where decision-making is not centralised. Perhaps in reality, certain tasks need to be centralised but nothing has specifically been established for it to operate other than democratically. The CJC is set up to run as a collective, giving space and opportunity for volunteer workers to work with us and for filmmakers to join, whatever their CV as an artist or filmmaker. We're not an agency, we're not a gallery and we're not a distribution company. These are things that other supposed co-ops have been sucked into (one could say that they are adapting to our contemporary world, but that's another debate). Legally, under French law we are not defined as a co-op. We are what is called here a not-for-profit association. We don't work with a financial means of production, we organise screenings and exhibitions for our member filmmakers. In a way, we operate in a more abstract, perhaps a more poetic fashion. As to your question "what do we bring and offer today?" well, for example, we have produced a catalogue that is visible online. The fact is that if a film enters a catalogue, it is not only to distribute it but also for exposure. There's a proliferation of images on the net today, not only of films that have been made but also of those sent to festivals. We receive 1600 films for our festival's call for submissions, that's huge and we are not the only existing festival! I consider it a form of recognition when one gets exposure on an internet site that is not one's own. Not only is it immediate exposure but it becomes a part of something that is lasting. There are films in our catalogue today that were made 50 years ago and without the CJC these films would have no life, they would be in a cellar or an attic, lost and forgotten.⁵ We can't take every film

⁴ See Raphaël Bassan "[Méditations et souvenirs autour d'un jubilé](#)", *Dérives.tv*, novembre 2020.

⁵ The catalogue of the Collectif Jeune Cinéma includes, or has included, classics of experimental and different French cinema, such as Jean Genet, whose only film *Un Chant d'Amour* (then banned), we were one of the first structures to show, Marguerite Duras, who even went on television to defend our action and "different cinema" in general, the first films of Chantal Akerman for whom we had developed a consequent literature within our review *Cinéma Différent* that we made [available for free on our website](#), the films of the Zanzibar group, composed of Jackie Raynal, Patrick Deval, Daniel Pommereulle, Pierre Clémenti, Alain Jouffroy, Serge Bard, François de Ménil), and those of Marcel Hanoun, whom we were among the few to support at the beginning, and whose importance today is no longer demonstrated.

that is sent to us but those that enter our catalogue will have a life of more than two years which is usually the life of a film intended for festivals. It's very rare that a film is screened for more than two years unless it is the case of a well-known artist for whom a retrospective is organised. As I have mentioned, the CJC is a lab about the history of alternative cinema, made up of films and archives for anyone who is interested in experimental cinema. The reason that those specialising in independent alternative cinema worldwide know of us is precisely because our definition of experimental cinema is different than the established academic and institutionalised definition. We are discrete in the way we go about our organisation and don't try at any cost to generate a huge impact in the world of cinema. It's not our philosophy. The CJC's goal is not to create or manage a megastructure, too many problems would arise from that.

VV: In relation to your answer Théo, do you think that the CJC resembles an experimental film, regarding freedom, non-commercial distribution...

TD: Yes, there is something experimental in the CJC in that we haven't fallen into the trap of limiting the notion of experimental cinema into a rigid, fixed or set form. This is my point of view and I am not sure it is shared by everyone, although I do think that the informal quality of the CJC provides a space where all types of projects can be realised. We arrange screenings in all kinds of places, from apartments to cellars to venues such as the Centre Pompidou. We don't concentrate our energy on looking to be recognised within an institutional context. In fact, our way of working or communicating is very much alive and we want it to stay alive, we are in constant evolution. Filmmakers who are active in the Co-op are also in constant evolution, usually after 10 or 15 years of investing in our activities, they may wish to move on and make space for younger people and that is totally understandable.

VV: Théo, you spend many hours doing voluntary work for the CJC and that's "experimental"! No one can expect this situation to go on forever. That's one of the reasons we depend on

Some canonical figures of the experimental cinema in France and internationally define the catalogue: Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, Dominique Noguez, Amy Greenfield, Robert Withers, Patrick Bokanowski, Robert Cahen, Stéphane Marti, Jean-Paul Dupuis, Jean Sousa, Anita Thacher, Robert Todd, Gérard Courant, Jérôme de Missolz, Bruce R. Elder, Patrice Énard, Takahiko Iimura, Aryan Kaganof, Ken Kobland, Maurice Lemaître, Babette Mangolte, Toshio Matsumoto, Alain Mazars, Georges Rey.

But also contemporary filmmakers, all of them recognised in international festivals: Marie Losier, Laurence Rebouillon, Jean-Charles Hue, Marc Barbé, Salomé Lamas, Deco Dawson, Derek Woolfenden, Michael Woods, Mauro Santini, Peter Snowdon, Moira Tierney, Frédérique Devaux, Nazlı Dinçel, Olivier Fouchard, Stéphane Gérard, Daphné Hérétakis, Baba Hillman, Émilie Jouvét, Fabrice Lauterjung, Thibault Le Texier, Pierre Merejkowsky, Frédéric Tachou, Peter Mettler, Solomon Nagler, Jacques Perconte, Camilo Restrepo, Érik Bulloz, Pip Chodorov.

We also support young filmmakers without any discrimination: we have developed a section (unique in France) dedicated to Queer Experimental films, and we also show the first films of filmmakers who are increasingly recognised in festivals, such as Félix Fattal, Loïc Hobi, Diana Vidrascu, Jen Debauche, Alexander Isaenko, Maxime Jean-Baptiste, Nour Ouayda.

Moreover, a part of our catalogue is dedicated to very young filmmakers, whom we try to position (by encouraging them through the distribution of their films) to become the filmmakers of tomorrow: all of them are under 18 years old and produce experimental films that we consider equal to those of their elders.

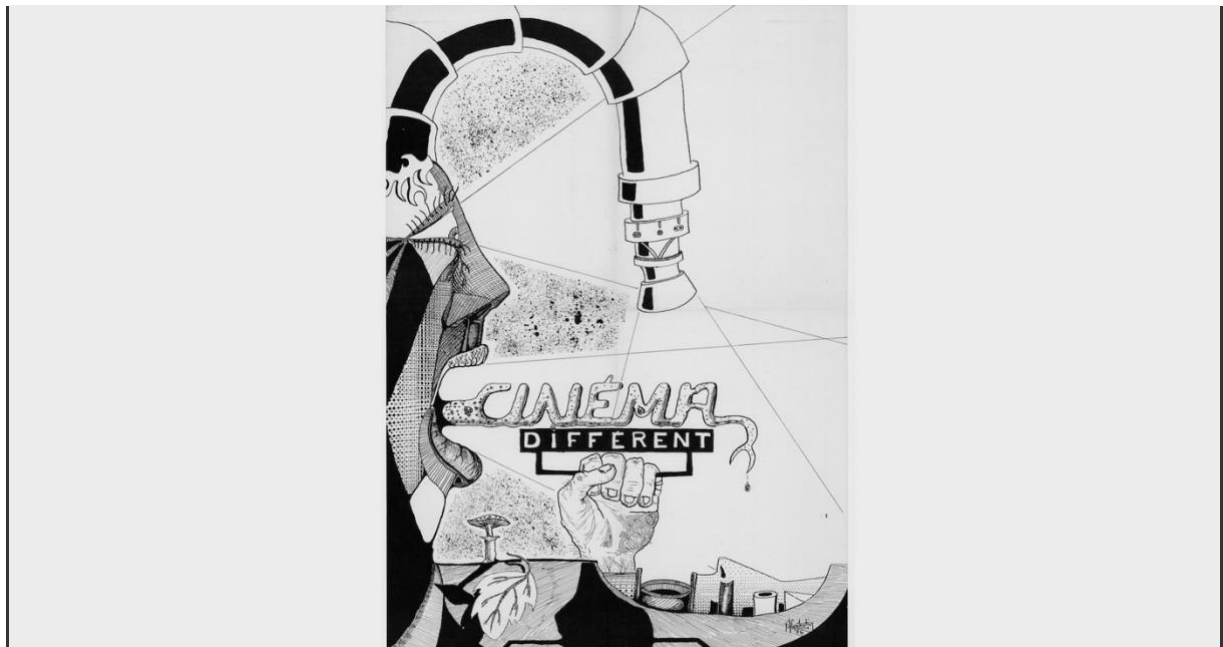
Finally, thanks to our work, several rare films have been given a second life: the unique copies found in our archive of the film *Imagens* by Luiz Rosemberg Filho (which, following our digitisation, has been screened in several festivals, including the Viennale), *Le Chant des Signes* by Yves-André Delubac, and those of Pierre Bressan and Jean-Pierre Ceton (screened at the legendary Oberhausen festival), Anielle Weinberger's first film, which won a prize in Hyères in 1972, and the work of filmmaker Ellis Donda, exhumed after 40 years and screened at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2020.

government grants to be able to hire staff. In the beginning the CJC operated on a volunteer basis but it is not the reality today. In 1997 the French Government created the *emploi jeune*.⁶ This is helpful.

TD: The CJC, like all co-ops, is based on a fundamental principle, which is a sharing of the royalties. This means that 70% of the revenue for the rental of the films goes to the filmmakers or to their heirs and 30% goes to the Co-op. But of course, this depends on the proportion of films distributed and we can't predict the number in distribution per month. Some months yield more than others. In the '70s, the epoch was what it was. Lots of jobs were available and rent wasn't so expensive. You could work part-time and that was sufficient to sustain a person's needs. Today it's not the case or even possible, also because our structure has become too big to be run only by volunteers.

VV: But there was kind of an auto-management and autonomy then, we weren't dependent on the state to survive.

TD: The question of paid staff for an association is a complex one. While, as I said, it was feasible in the 1970s to hire someone with the CJC share (30%), as time went by and with the social economical changes this option became unsustainable and further funding became necessary. Funding was granted to us in the 1980s when the government had a major cultural plan. But this was given to us at a time when the CJC was at a standstill for a variety of reasons: the end of Festival d'Hyères, the increasing use of video vis-à-vis celluloid film, also by this time the young filmmakers from the 1970s had become older and many had stopped making films. Another thing is that when public funding became available it brought about conflict among the filmmakers and between the co-ops themselves. While funding is possible, a collective consensus is difficult. This is a common issue and not exclusive to the CJC.



Poster c.1970s

⁶ A contract proposed by the French Government enabling young people up to the age of 26 to work in a legal structure short term.

When in the late 1990s the CJC became active again there was a much easier approach to public funding and especially for jobs supported by the state. This time there was no hesitation in applying for a grant in order to employ staff, the world had changed so much, it was no longer possible to run the Co-op solely with volunteers. Our first administrator, Sarah Darmon (in 2000), was hired in this way. The more paid staff there is, the more specialised a structure like ours becomes and the less space there is for volunteer work. It's the question that all the collectives ponder over. As paid staff, I try to be at the service of the CJC members. When a project is voted on at our General Assembly, I am happy to help the members out with it, however this is no reason for me to do any of the unpleasant jobs that they don't want to do themselves! This situation has generated (and still does) a lot of misunderstandings and conflict. The CJC is a structure that was created by filmmakers for filmmakers. I am a fan of keeping that spirit going. An example is that the festival selection is not handled by external curators, the selection is managed by the filmmakers of the CJC.

VV: As we said, there's a spirit within the CJC that allows it to operate in a democratic atmosphere of freedom. Is there a place for a co-op like ours in our world today? During the COVID lockdown you took the initiative to screen online our member's films for free. Could it be viable to have the same dynamics outside this kind of context? If we were not to receive any help from the state due to a general economic crisis, could the energy that is keeping our Co-op alive sustain the structure in the short term?

TD: The film album we produced for free during confinement was also possible because many of the films had already been made viewable online by their filmmakers. This production was a way for us to affirm the philosophy that we practice. We are not only interested in doing business transactions for the payment of film exposure and distribution, it is also our wish to imagine and encourage projects that are free, as an educational project. When we generate income for films this is the result of our screening them in institutions who pay for the programs we offer. One of the projects we have designed for the CJC 50th anniversary is the Cinémathèque Temporaire, which will feature 80 screenings for a whole year in St-Ouen, a Paris suburb. We have exceptionally asked the filmmakers of the CJC to show their films for free. Not one was against the idea. Understandably this doesn't mean that we will screen films for free to whoever asks us. As for our Co-op being able to survive without any financing at all, the answer is, in our world today, probably not, unless we were able to reinvent a different type of existence.

There's a point of no return when you become too large a structure with all that it involves. You can never go back to its original form or to its original intention. The CJC now has 1700 films in its catalogue, and this makes it very difficult to be managed solely by volunteer workers. I'm not a once-a-week volunteer worker, I come to the CJC office every day of the week. I'm volunteering at the moment because I've been a paid staff member and I know the ropes; I'll be hired again soon. It is a known and unfortunate fact that once you obtain public funding you have to be accountable for it and grant applications are complex; you have to be experienced at filling them out. All these realistic examples show the complexity of keeping the CJC alive.

VV: On the one hand we cultivate freedom of expression and on the other we depend on financing from the state to be able to keep that freedom. Is that a reflection on experimental film today? It's all a bit of a vicious circle. If it wasn't for the passion, the energy, the intellectual research and exceptional encounters, we'd be on a fine line between staying alive and disappearing.

RB: Since the appearance of the Internet, our catalogue as well as our festival has become international. We have Iranian films, films from the Arab countries, Indian films, films that we never had before, and this is an important factor. For our 50th year anniversary we will get all kinds of articles and texts in lots of different countries. In this way the evolution of digital and technology also corresponds to the evolution of the CJC, especially with the multiplication of means of communication today. If we hadn't got help from the state in all these areas, I think the CJC would not have survived. The evolution of a collective life is also linked to the evolution of the world.

TD: Even if the situation of the world is especially tough at the moment, there are still and will always be, lots of initiatives that are free and available to all. I would like to talk about an example of this kind of militant energy. In 2018, La Clef Cinema, which was one of the mythical alternative cinema venues in Paris, was closed in order to be sold. An association, Home Cinema, has been occupying the theatre, calling it La Clef Revival. Many filmmakers answered their call and came to show their films for free. As for the filmmakers of experimental films and financing, we are one of the few structures that exhibits self-financed films. Today many other festivals and structures repeatedly screen the same filmmakers, those who have generally received some kind of financing by various (private or public) institutions. "Amateur cinema" is one of the historical roots of experimental cinema. The CJC provides a space for these films.



VV: What seeds are we planting today? Is there fertile soil in our present environment for our ideas? Such as the Cinémathèque Temporaire, can these ideas bloom and grow? I see this jubilee as a new cycle, especially within our present social and economic conjuncture, though difficult, this could well be a very good moment for experimenting new ideas.

TD: We have always tried to bring new ideas and not only within this present context. Yes, an example is the Cinémathèque Temporaire. We wish to create a space that is missing at the

moment in Paris and in our present conjuncture. There are hardly any alternative welcoming spaces left in Paris where one can meet and exchange ideas over a cheap drink. Theatres have become impersonal and expensive and all the friendly spaces for socialising are closing, one after the other, either because they are taken over by large groups like La Clef Cinema or because they can't survive financially. For our Cinémathèque Temporaire project, we have decided to collaborate with an alternative space, Mains d'Œuvres, situated in a suburb close to Paris. As Mains d'Œuvres is not a cinema we will be able to apply a pay-what-you-want entrance fee to the sessions. I think it's necessary to produce something that is not "an event", but something along the lines of regular screenings. In Paris, the CJC has to "compete" with all kinds of events (I'm not only referring to special screenings but also to the form of advertising used to promote special screenings on Facebook, as "events"). All this takes a lot of our time. Whereas screenings on a weekly basis in the same venue, is a different matter. This is also a way to show as many films as possible of our catalogue and to consider our catalogue as a program in itself: no one will be curating. It'll be an "experimental" experience, a variety of films without a particular theme or order in a program. We will be showing films that have recently entered our catalogue and work backward to the oldest film we possess (1943). After the screenings people will be able to mingle and talk about the films over a drink. Of course, our yearly film festival will also take place in October. Retrospective screenings will be curated by CJC members. This year for our 50th anniversary the festival will be focusing on and highlighting some historical events that have occurred over the years in our Co-op and also on specific themes dear to CJC members. We will be showing rare films, and not only French films, as we have helped and exhibited many filmmakers worldwide.

VV: A renewal of an authentic collective spirit within the CJC, French or international, would create a social and valuable component.

TD: I do believe we can offer a counter-model to what is available. We can voice what is "political" today; unite and imagine all kinds of ways of distribution and exhibition. It is important for a filmmaker to know that a film isn't complete until it has been viewed by spectators, whether it is screening one's film in a private home or in large festivals, whichever the choice, as long as one has a thought behind the options. This cannot be done without being committed or involved. Many filmmakers have written on this subject. One cannot only think about financing or about the technical means necessary to make one's movie. I believe one should ask questions such as, how I wish to give exposure to my film, what impact does it have on film culture or how do I exist as an artist. These are questions we can think about collectively. Some think individually because their thought is based on the short-term and so they create their own artist website. We suggest something different.

VV: The Collectif Jeune Cinéma has the passion and all the will power to create this renewed vision.

TD: Yes. The Collectif Jeune Cinema had the desire and passion to offer something that made sense for the world in the past and it makes even more sense today in this emerging "new" world. If ever there was a time in which we needed a collective spirit to express our aesthetic and political cinema values, it is certainly at this time in history.

Transcribed from the original French by Viviane Vagh. March 2021.