



WE DID IT !

GOOD NEWS FROM CINÉMA LA CLEF
JUNE 2024

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PRESS RELEASE

WE DID IT !

We did it. La Clef is saved.

From stories of workers' struggles to decolonial films, La Clef has always been a movie theater that confronts pressing political issues, making space and giving a platform to other justice-oriented movements. We carried on this history from the first months of the occupation through to our recent screening series at DOC -- and it's because we believe that film creates connections and sparks debates that we fought so hard to save La Clef.

We are especially happy to announce today, amidst a seriously worrisome political context that makes it more necessary than ever to have a space to gather, to think through, and to build alternatives. We hope that this good news, as small a glimmer as it may be, brings hope and strength to all who are organizing, everywhere.

We almost can't believe we made it, given how long the road to get here was.

It took us almost five years of struggle. Five years of reflection, meetings, negotiations, messages in bottles tossed at sea, wild ideas, disappointments, and beautiful surprises. It took thousands of hours of meetings, sleepless nights, and emails to the entire world. Occupying then buying La Clef required an immense coordinated effort and so much perseverance -- and it was only possible because dozens of people worked together, taught each other, took turns relaying one another. Without all this, we would not have accomplished something that required us to learn how to do everything : operate a projector, repair a beer tap, host a debate, build out a budget, avoid eviction, find patrons, produce movies, buy time.

It was exhilarating but hard. Thanks to the constant support from the public, volunteers who came to lend a hand, donors, friends, colleagues, and the activists who inspired us and advised us, we never gave up. It's thanks to all of you : again, thank you a million times over!

The Cinéma Revival foundation will be the owner of the building. Its mission is to guarantee that La Clef always remains a collectively-run independent movie theater, forever protected from real estate speculation and freely run by its members. The Cinéma Revival foundation entrusts the La Clef Revival nonprofit organization with the day-to-day management of the space, open to all who wish to join. This project grows out of the occupation: screening rare films on a pay-what-you-can basis, participatory curation, programming by other organizations and movements, frequent meetings with film professionals, a dedicated community space, workshops to support emerging voices...

This way, we're not just saving a neighborhood movie theater. We're defending the idea that the value of a place isn't measured just in its square footage, but also in its ability to create possibilities to organize and create together. We maintain that these kinds of spaces need to exist in the heart of our cities, and not just on the peripheries where market forces are constantly pushing them further afield. We're opening a crack in the neoliberal city, a welcoming space for invention and contestation that will be a resource for collectives that don't have a space of their own - the recent news is urging us to foster political autonomy, weave new solidarities, and encourage mutual aid.

We hold firm that culture is for all to share, and that collective management is a path for emancipation. La Clef will be a place to share ideas, films, and struggles; where we can constantly connect the dots between the artworks and the present day, between cinema and politics.

We can't wait to reopen our doors to let collective imaginations rush in!



Financial plan

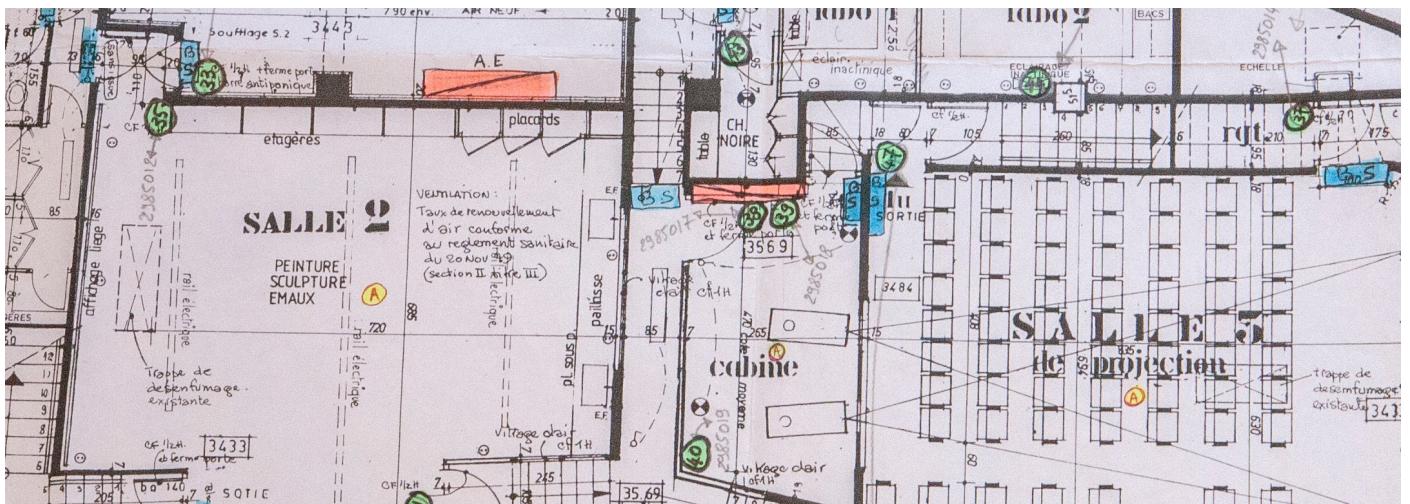
We have had the ongoing support of the real estate cooperative Bellevilles to complete our financial plan. Thanks to this work, **we have been able to borrow 800 000 €** from Crédit coopératif and NEF. These loans will be paid back over sixteen years thanks to the rent paid by the nonprofit La Clef to the foundation.

With their help, we also were able to renegotiate the sale price for the building from 2,9 M€ to 2,35 M€ ! Adding in notary fees, the architectural firm Bientôt's fees and the fees for the law firm Legicoop who worked on the project, **the total purchase cost is 2,7 M€**.

Alongside the purchase, **our crowdfunding campaign reached its goal of 400 000 €, thanks to 5 000 donors** ! Amongst them are film industry folks like Agnès Jaoui, Mathieu Amalric, David Lynch, Wang Bing, Leos Carax, Céline Sciamma, Alain Cavalier, Sophie Fillières, Irène Jacob and Valérie Massadian, among many others.

Adding to the mix are several major donors (who, as a reminder, have no power over or say in how the movie theater will be managed, since the foundation is a structure with no shares or shareholders): Quentin Tarantino, two patrons who wish to remain anonymous, la Caisse d'Épargne, Sandrine Dumas, Pascal Breton, Vianney Vaute, Cédric Klapisch and Cinego.

In all, we raised 2 million euros in donations : thank you again to each and every one of you who offered your support !



Next step : renovation work

To reopen La Clef legally, we need to bring the building up to code. There is a lot to do: removing asbestos, renovating the electrical circuits, the plumbing, and the HVAC system, and improving accessibility. Even by sticking to the bare legal minimums, **these renovations will last one year and cost 600 000 €**.

We are still not out of the woods : we have a bit of cash on hand and we hope that the City of Paris, the Ile-de-France regional government and the CNC (National Film Office) will take on half the costs, which means **we still need to raise 300 000 € for the construction work**.

So the call for donations remains active at retour.laclefrevival.org ! For supporters abroad, we are also proud to be fiscally sponsored by Film Independent, a 501(c)3 nonprofit in Los Angeles that allows donations to be **100% tax deductible in the United States**: <https://my.filmindependent.org/CinemaLaClef>

Lightning opening, June 27th to 30th

Even though La Clef will need to be closed for a few months, we still plan to celebrate this great big news by reopening the movie theater for **four days of pay-what-you-want screenings and celebrations from June 27th to 30th!**

LA CLEF
est sauvée!

du 27 au 30 juin 2024

OUVERTURE
éclair

*avant
les travaux
de rénovation*

laclefrevival.org

Création Graphique Anton Mogila

Legal structure

When we first had the wild idea to buy La Clef ourselves at the start of the occupation, we turned towards collectives that had already been thinking about community land trusts and other ways to create real estate commons. Following the advice of Foncière Antidote, we chose the “right of use” model : **La Clef’s management will be shared between all those that care for the space and make it come alive. The movie theater will become a common good that no one person can seize.**

To create this commons, we are using a legal structure to **separate the property’s walls from their interior’s usage**. Our foundation Cinéma Revival acquires the property deed of La Clef and then entrusts the use of the space to the nonprofit through a long term lease at an affordable rate which gives the tenant substantive rights of use on the property. This way, the nonprofit has all the rights of a property owner, save for the right of resale that stays with the foundation.

We have written the foundation’s bylaws in a way that makes any resale nearly impossible in order to **permanently remove the La Clef movie theater from the real estate market**. The resale of the building is only possible if each of our two governing boards (the working board and the advisory board) approve it at a majority : a near impossible situation. And in no way could this hypothetical resale ever generate a profit: the bylaws forbid speculation.

These bylaws and the lease go on to detail that the working board needs to run a curatorial collective, highlight rarely screened works, charge sliding-scale affordable pricing for all, and promote the transmission of knowledge and know-how through a horizontally-run organization. As long as these outlined principles are respected, the organization has full programmatic freedom. Thanks to this structure, **La Clef will remain an autonomously run independent movie theater for the foreseeable future.**

What’s a foundation, again ?

It’s a structure that allows for mission-driven work in the public interest. It allows for collective acquisition of built structures without a stock or shareholder system. It gives **no dividends back to donors**, and allows for a varying degree of tax deductibility for individuals and corporations. This means that the project cannot be endangered by people wanting to cash out on their shares, and that power is not distributed based on donated amounts. Patrons and donors, as rich as they might be, cannot force the building’s sale -- only the foundation administrators can make that decision.

Cinéma Revival’s board

Cinéma Revival has two administrative boards. The first is the working board - today it is made up of six people who were part of the occupation. The advisory board is made up of film professionals chosen for their willingness to defend our model of operation: a filmmaker (Céline Sciamma), an independent movie theater operator (Jean-Marc Zekri), a representative of the autonomously run cinema Nova (Laurent Tenzer) and a specialist of right of use property (Eric Arrivé)..

The Investment and Strategic Orientation Committee (CIOS)

Each year, the Investment and Strategic Orientation Committee issues a critical opinion on the activities of the endowment fund, ensures that the principle of disinterestedness is respected, and advises the trustees on their ethical and economic choices. We have composed our CIOS in such a way as to best reflect the different aspects of our project: an associative cinema venue, combining distribution and creation; a cultural collective asset; a militant, self-managed and inclusive space. Our members are: **Emmanuel Falguières** (L’Abominable - Navire Argo), **Valentine Roulet** (president of Ténk), **Sarah Vanuxem** (researcher specializing in the law of the commons) and **Françoise Vergès** (feminist and decolonial activist).

Reopening plans

We're imagining a project that continues what La Clef was during the occupation, with our eyes set on a smooth, sustainable and legal day-to-day operation. A place to show rarely seen films, at affordable prices for all.

Pay-what-you-want screenings of rare films

For starters, **the film programming will always be done collectively, openly, and by volunteers and member organizations** : everyone who wants can join the collective and learn to organize a screening and suggest a movie. Our wish is to welcome all cinematic visions so that this place can be as lively as possible, all day long! This way, La Clef will keep its eclectic curation that will be as diverse as its audience. The only guideline to follow is to show films that aren't or are no longer shown elsewhere, to dive deep into back catalogs and to rediscover works that have been out of circulation.

The ticket pricing will still be pay-what-you-can! The only different is that it will be officially accredited by the CNC : for every ticket sold, a portion will be shared with the film's distributor (we thank them again for supporting us throughout the occupation by generously granting us screening rights), and another portion will be collected by the CNC to go towards financing independent film.



A neighborhood bar-café

The nonprofit-run bar-café will open as soon as possible to encourage conversations between screenings and meetings, and to provide a welcoming space for the neighborhood! The multi-purpose room will be adaptable and will be able to host local organizations and initiatives: town halls, public meetings, workshops, general assemblies...

Supporting emerging voices

In the parts of the building that can't welcome the public, we will be setting up three rooms with post-production facilities for video editing and sound mixing. Two will be available for rent for emerging filmmakers and production companies : this will ensure a stable and independent revenue stream for the nonprofit to continue programming freely without worrying about box office bankability! The third room will be used for the nonprofit's activities: creating ciné-tracts, teaching free editing workshops, mentoring amateur practices, relaunching artist residencies, etc.

Two salaried employees to carry out the nonprofit's activities

We are also setting up office space for two permanent staff members : someone in charge of building maintenance and technical equipment, and another person in charge of managing finances and administration. These are intense workloads that require steady availability : we cannot solely rely on volunteers. The staff members will manage the organization's budget : the income (membership fees, ticket sales, bar/café revenue, space rental, and grants) should cover the costs (space upkeep, taxes, rent to the foundation to reimburse the load, staff salaries and supplies.) The goal isn't to turn a profit, but to balance the income and expenses so that the organization can be sustainable.

The two staff members will be in support of the nonprofit organization and it will be the La Clef members who will decide freely on which films will be shown, which collectives to welcome, as well as on the opening hours, which beer is served and what new initiatives will be put in place. This is the goal of the organization, founded on right of us and the notion of commons : let the audience members decide and build the movie theater that they want, together! To do this, we'll keep a collegial governance structure, where decisions are made collectively with a deep commitment to sharing information by organizing regular workshops for volunteers on programming, projectionist skills, communication tools and so on...

A movie theater invented by its users

We must confess that we don't know exactly what La Clef will look like tomorrow, since it will be built in the image of those who come and get involved, infusing the space with their new ideas and visions !