WORLD AT WAR
MATT REEVES BRINGS THE LATEST APES CHAPTER TO THE SCREEN

CINEMA EATS AND DRINKS
NAC’S DANIEL BORSCHKE ON HIGH-END CONCESSIONS

GLOBAL CINEMA FEDERATION
NATO ANNOUNCES WORLDWIDE EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

DINNER AT THE MOVIES
MOVIE TAVERN STAYS AHEAD OF THE CINEMA DINING CURVE

SPIDEY GETS HIS SPIN BACK
HOW THE WRITERS BROUGHT THE WEB SLINGER TO THE MCU
TOP TITLES: 2016
La La Land
Hunt for the Wilderpeople
Lion
Manchester by the Sea
Moonlight
Captain Fantastic
Don’t Think Twice
A Man Called Ove
The Eagle Huntress

TOP TITLES: HISTORICAL
We curate our lineup to ensure that all people in our community can see their lives and stories represented through our art form. Broadly successful titles for revenue have been The Lobster, The Imitation Game, The Grand Budapest Hotel, Birdman, Moonrise Kingdom, 127 Hours, Austenland, and a little/big gem that rocked our world called Brokeback Mountain. We have had films that hold for over 20 weeks, such as Slumdog Millionaire and New York Doll (with a local twist). In 2016 we exhibited 34 docs, 93 international titles, 169 exclusive engagements, and 279 total films.

SALT LAKE FILM SOCIETY
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
Contributor: Tori Baker, Executive Director

>> Salt Lake Film Society (SLFS), at seven screens/two venues, is robust for a community-based nonprofit cinema. At our Broadway Centre Cinemas (1989), we seat 1,086 patrons in six auditoriums. Our largest auditorium is 248 seats including the maximum ADA accommodated seating areas. At our one-screen historic Tower Theatre venue (1928), we seat 340 including the balcony.

HISTORY
The SLFS was founded as a 501c-3 nonprofit cinema by a small group of volunteers determined to save the Tower Theatre and keep diverse, independent film content accessible to residents. A brother-sister team purchased the company assets (a dense video library and the lease for the Tower Theatre) and managed the space as sole proprietors before turning Salt Lake Film Society into a nonprofit cinema in 2001. Our founders defined the mission to educate, advocate, and inform about and through cinema. We deliver socially rele-
By 2004, the still-young 501c-3 had grown from a one-screen audience of approximately 20,000 people to a seven-screen audience of over 90,000 people annually. Bringing unique content and running lean on resources, the founders were still operating a cash-based, sole-proprietor model. I was brought on board in 2004 having honed skills at Muscular Dystrophy Association, Salt Lake Olympic and Paralympic Games, and Sundance Institute/Sundance Film Festival. Realizing immediately that the well-intentioned founders were not maximizing the organization’s potential, I dug quickly into why SLFS mattered. Diversified programs, grew revenues, and hired staff. It has always been my goal to actively shape and define what an art house cinema means to a community and to lead the organization to become indispensable to the cultural core of our capital city. We started programs, tested community need, fundraised, grew the governing board, and worked toward defining SLFS as a local arts leader. In recent years, we have grown annual budgets, diversified revenues, grown our political capital, increased membership and donor support, remodeled and upgraded both facilities, increased audiences, launched community initiatives, and raised public and private contributions in support of our programs. We are now one of the largest nonprofit arts presenters in the city with an economic impact of over $9 million annually.

COMMUNITY

Today, SLFS continues to operate the Tower Theatre and Broadway Center Cinemas with seven screens active 365 days a year. SLFS actively works to increase and diversify the numbers and demographics of citizens engaged in the film arts. SLFS presents over 270 film titles representing more than 20 countries, owns one of the rarest archive DVD/video collections in the country, and operates 22 community projects under three initiatives: film access, film education/culture, and film fostering. Every year, individuals are exposed to the best films from contemporary artists, historic archive collections, and films in the zeitgeist of the community. Proving our mission matters, 93 percent of our audiences said SLFS programs open up new worlds to them, 88 percent said we give them new perspectives, and 84 percent said that SLFS venues serve as a community anchor; a full 23 percent said they had a life-changing experience with our
programming includes annual highlights such as Summer Late Nights, a series of cult attractions that give film lovers a new way to see film; The Greatest, a month-long repertory series (2016 highlighted black directors; 2017 is musicals), Tower of Terror, which includes shadow-cast films and classic horror titles; Big Pictures, Little People, bringing over 1,000 children from low-income daycares, foster group homes, and shelters to experience artistic family content on the big screen; Wassail & Waffles Holiday Film Series, complete with kids making waffles and a visit from Santa; and many more. SLFS has the highest-attended national Czech That Film Tour; we do an annual collaborative project Film México Film Tour and will launch a dance-film tour in 2018.

ENGAGEMENT

One strategy we used to improve engagement was rebranding. SLFS operates both the Broadway and the Tower, and we united our complicated name in logos and uniform colors. Secondly, our lobby remodel was essential in phasing out the Loews look and creating a branded space that matched our mission. We also produce our own creative collateral. We use local artists for our cult programs and build collateral featuring movie imagery to keep the visuals compelling. One of our most recent strategies includes a mandate to incorporate fund development language into any and all materials and marketing channels. We follow more strict style guidelines so that whether patrons find us in social media, on the website, or their iPhone home screens, the look and feel of our information is consistent.

We focus on collaborating in our community. SLFS has built strong relationships with local consulates, issue-based nonprofits, social services, city/county government, our Utah Film Commission, and fellow arts nonprofits. We work for quality of experience and mission impact, not volume. While audiences have grown over the years, it remains our goal to ensure that the impact is high. Since the traditional model of marketing in cinema relies on heavy lifting from the distributors, nonprofit cinemas can struggle with marketing smaller titles. Some films will take on their own momentum in social media, but others need a boost, and finding the resources to apply to that goal isn’t always realistic for a minimum of seven films each week. For this reason, at SLFS we put marketing efforts
SLFS SERVES INDIVIDUALS OF ALL AGES, RACES, AND SOCIOECONOMIC LEVELS AND HAS A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS AS BOTH A LOCAL BUSINESS AND A NONPROFIT LEADER.

toward fund development, telling our story (our “why”) and engaging loyalty more heavily than we invest in marketing specific titles.

CINEMA ADVERTISING

I have found Spotlight Cinema Networks to be the greatest of art house champions, along with Sundance Institute, Boston Light and Sound, and those key art houses that founded the Art House Convergence movement. Spotlight Cinema Networks has actively believed in small community-based mission-driven theaters. We consider them family.

I love to tell the story of how SLFS became clients. I met Jerry Rakfeldt (CEO, Spotlight Cinema Networks) in the first founding years we worked to make Art House Convergence a reality (with the collective art house support of many peers all across the nation). Each year at our annual conference, Jerry would ask me if I was open to looking at the Spotlight on-screen advertising model. Each year, I was resistant. I was not sure it was right for SLFS audiences. I had hoped that one day I could curate pre-show content and create a unique experience that meant folks would rather see it in the theater than on their personal devices, but I had to be convinced that cinema advertising was part of that picture. After increasing human capital at SLFS, it was finally time to test out pre-show models. What would work, what would not, what are audience behaviors and expectations, and what are their limits? Of course, I called Spotlight. I prepared for a flood of donor and supporter e-mails in resistance to watching ads. Not one came. The unique thing Spotlight Cinema Networks does for the pre-show is that it seamlessly integrates into art house programming. Donors and supporters understand that in order to be strong and sustainable as a bricks-and-mortar home for cinema, it takes outside support; they just don’t want the feeling of their art house to be interrupted by the wrong ad appeals. Spotlight gets this.

We didn’t stop there. Spotlight Cinema Networks, in collaboration with SLFS, has launched a new, revolutionary, Art House Public Service Announcement Project that stemmed from a long-time vision I’ve had. Often, as creative arts leaders, nonprofit cinemas create short films for the pre-show. I felt it was time to have professional pre-show content that harnessed a different kind of message and carried a different weight. I was ready to launch a vision to make this happen locally. But why stop locally? I called Jerry at Spotlight Cinema Networks and pitched him my vision: let’s create an Art House PSA Project that produces two to four professional PSAs annually that feature legendary film artists talking about the value of independent cinema and local screens. Underwrite that with sponsors that want access to art house audiences and their powerful loyalty. Release it nationwide for free to every art house in our network because it’s sponsored. Being the champions they are, Jerry and the team at Spotlight Cinema Networks loved the idea. The first 2017 Art House PSA Project spots feature film legends Penelope Spheeris and Peter Bogdanovich. We are live in 26 states, 150 theaters and growing. It is a unique opportunity for sponsors to associate their brands with community-based, mission-driven theaters and their loyal audiences. The project is not limited to Spotlight clients, although I continually give positive testimonials to our network about the Spotlight team. Sponsors would be insane not to seize the opportunity to access the demographics that art houses nurture. When it comes to advertising, our networks provide quality and a higher repeat viewership. Future spots are in production and we intend the project to be successful long-term. We plan to continue to message the importance of seeing movies the way they were intended to be seen, on a big screen, in a dark auditorium, with community.