

## Film Festivals In Algeria : What Role And What Objective ?

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### Abstract

This article aims to highlight the importance of film festivals and the role they play in various aspects, especially the economic aspect, with the aim of achieving both classic and event-specific objectives. Festivals are also considered as a market for the promotion of film offers, because they are akin to a stock exchange in which supply and demand interact. We thus seek to study the mosaic of Algerian film festivals, their reality and their finances in the light of the current cinematographic situation.

**Keywords :** Film Festival, Cinema, Algeria, Economy.

### Introduction :

We cannot talk about film festivals without mentioning their basic component, which is the industry that created this space. Here we mean the film industry and film materials with their various commercial, technical, artistic and aesthetic dimensions. Without cinema, there would be no film festivals. To situate oneself in the context in which Algeria is inscribed, it is necessary to be interested in the reality of the structures and legal frameworks that frame these events. From there, we can dissect this reality in order to research the fundamental role played by the festival and what objective is it trying to achieve?

#### 1- Legal structures and frameworks

In Algeria, several institutions supervise the cinematographic sector, and they have been dissolved and restructured each time. The last law on cinema in Algeria dates from 2011. (Law, 2011, p. 13)

As for the institutions that oversee the management of the film sector, we find the Algerian Film Center, which was created in 1968 and whose organic law was promulgated by executive decree n ° 10-74 of 21 Safar 1431 corresponding to February 6, 2010. The center has several missions<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, we find the creation of the Algerian Center for the

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<sup>1</sup> Article 5: The main tasks of the Center are research, collection, preservation, valorization and publication of all films and cinematographic documents.

As such, he is in charge of the following missions in particular :

- To carry out and encourage all studies, research and publications related to the cinematographic art.
- Management of the center's movie theaters and preparation of new theaters.

development of cinema, which was created by executive decree n ° 10-227 of 21 chaoual 1431 corresponding to September 30, 2010. (<http://www.cadcinema.dz/>) It is a public establishment of an industrial and commercial nature, because the center is subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, and Article 5<sup>2</sup> specifies the missions assigned to it. The Algerian Center for the Development of Cinema differs from the Algerian Center for Cinema, because the first is a commercial and industrial institution and is therefore managed by a board of directors composed of government representatives, while the second is of an administrative nature and is managed by a steering council, and its council is composed of several representatives of the executive body in addition to representatives of the cinematographic art.

### 1-1 Exhibition halls :

In terms of numbers, it was difficult to limit them, given that a large number of them were closed, permanently abandoned or converted. Historical sources indicate that the number of movie theaters in Algeria was about 458 theaters on the eve of independence, distributed throughout the territory, of which only 91 theaters were in operation, while 25 belonged to the Ministry of Culture and the others to the municipalities that refused to cede them, while 222 theaters remained closed. Algiers is at the top of the wilayas with the largest number of rooms with 52 rooms, followed by the wilayas of Oran and Tizi Ouzou with 16 rooms, then the wilayas of Bejaia, Batna, Tlemcen, Skikda, Annaba, Mostaganem, Boumerdes, Tipaza and Ain Temouchent with a number of rooms equal to or slightly greater than 10. As for the rest of the other wilayas, they have a reduced number of theaters, not exceeding ten, while we note the total absence of movie theaters in the wilayas of Bouira and Tissemsilt.

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- Keep the documents and equipment relating to the cinema and all the films deposited with him, borrowed, donated, or that he can acquire, reproduce, and record on various media.
  - Encourage the implementation of a policy aimed at preserving and documenting the cinematographic heritage, in coordination with other national institutions active in this field.
  - Elaboration of a permanent inventory of cinematographic works.
  - Enrich the collections by collecting new versions of films.
  - Creation of a library specialized in cinema.
  - The publishing of films and documents for artistic, educational or cultural purposes by any appropriate means, in particular through exhibitions, publications, courses and conferences.
  - Establishment of a database on Algerian and foreign cinema.
  - The edition of books, periodicals and all publications aimed at publicizing and disseminating national cinema.
  - Organization of shows and events related to cinema
  - Encourage the development of film clubs throughout the country.
  - Take all measures aimed at promoting cinematographic works and public access to the center's theaters.
- <sup>2</sup> Article 5: The Center is responsible for commercial, industrial and artistic development and the promotion of Algerian cinema. As such, I am specifically responsible for the following tasks :
- Production or co-production of cinematographic works.
  - Management of moral and financial rights of films produced or co-produced by the Turks.
  - Issuance, purchase and exploitation of film promotion materials such as catalogues, posters and advertising tapes for the benefit of Algerian films produced or co-produced.
  - Distribute and exploit Algerian films on national and international markets.
  - Management, rental and exploitation, in the context of production or co-production, of installations and technical production equipment, in particular photography and sound studios, laboratories, as well as digitization, conservation and storage equipment.
  - Encourage foreign film investments in Algeria
  - Carry out projects related to cinema as an approved client on the basis of an agreement.

Accordingly, the total number of halls according to the last statistics is as follows :

<b>Total</b>	<b>employees</b>	<b>closed</b>
313	91	222
The percentage is	29%	71%

**Source :** Statistics of the Algerian Ministry of Culture (<https://www.m-culture.gov.dz/>, 2025)

The same source explains the affiliation of movie theaters to the organization that oversees their management. What is remarkable is the small number of theaters supervised by the Ministry of Culture, that is, 25 theaters in only 15 states. The same applies to private cinemas, which supervise 32 theaters spread over only 15 states, while municipalities monopolize the rest of the theaters.

<b>Total</b>	<b>Municipal</b>	<b>Ministry of Culture</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Other</b>
313	251	25	32	05
Percentage	80%	08%	10%	02%

**Source :** Statistics of the Algerian Ministry of Culture (<https://www.m-culture.gov.dz/>, 2025)

As for their management and classification, they are subject to the provisions of the decision issued on 21 Muharram 1435 corresponding to November 25, 2013 by the Minister of Culture. In accordance with Article 8<sup>3</sup> of this decision, movie theaters are classified into art

<sup>3</sup> Articles 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the same decision specify the nature of the classification, which is as follows : The art and experimental halls are cinemas whose programming includes works highlighting at least one of the following characteristics :

- Cinematographic works having a research or modernity character in the field of cinematographic creation.
- Cinematographic works of a certain quality, but which did not receive the audience they deserved.
- Cinematographic works that reflect the life of countries whose cinematographic productions are not sufficiently disseminated in Algeria.
- Reissue of cinematographic works of artistic or historical interest, in particular cinematographic works considered classics of cinema.
- Short-term cinematographic works that aim to renew the cinematic experience through their quality and selection.

Cinema programs for art and experiences can exceptionally include the following elements :

- Modern cinematographic works that combine critical demand with audience satisfaction and can be considered as works making a tangible contribution to the art of cinema.
- Amateur cinematographic works of an exceptional nature.

Article 10: Out-of-category cinemas are cinemas broadcasting exclusively and mainly cinematographic films and equipped with the following equipment :

- Minimum screen size of 15 meters.
- High-quality equipment, appliances and audio means for first-class comfort and reception.
- Ancillary shops dedicated to the reception of the public, in particular a reception hall, exhibition spaces, a cafeteria and a sales office.
- It is particularly required to wear respectable costumes to enter the movie theaters classified out of category.

Article 11: The first category includes cinemas broadcasting three (3) exclusive and first-run film screenings daily, excluding interruptions and public holidays. These rooms will be equipped with the following elements :

and experimental theaters, non-category theaters, first-class theater, second-class theater and theater complex. This decision also clarifies the technical requirements that must be met in the theaters and other requirements related to circulation, in addition to the provisions relating to tickets.

## 2- Film Festivals in Algeria

Cultural festivals in Algeria are generally subject to a set of laws that govern these activities. Consequently, Executive Decree n° 03-297 of 13 Rajab 1424 (September 10, 2003) defines the conditions and modalities of their organization. This decree includes chapters on the definition of a cultural festival and its contributions, in addition to its categories, organizational conditions and financial provisions relating to the financial aspect and the budget of the cultural event. This decree remained in force until the publication of executive decree n° 07-348 of 4 Dhu al-Qi'dah 1428 (November 14, 2007), (Journal, 2003, p. 15) modifying and supplementing executive decree n° 03-279. It was followed by executive decree n° 09-14 of 14 Muharram 1430 (January 11, 2009), which supplemented and modified the first executive decree n° 03-279.

There are many cultural events in Algeria. There are many festivals related to theater, painting, dance and popular arts, including film festivals. Some of them have an official character, others have a local character, and there are events organized by amateurs. According to the law that regulates cultural festivals in Algeria, they are divided into three categories :

**International cultural festivals:** These are festivals that stand out for their foreign character.

**National cultural festivals:** festivals in which different regions of the country participate.

**Local cultural Festivals:** These are festivals in which participants from one state or several neighboring states participate (Journal, Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, 2003, p. 16). Around to our research, we have decided to display the cinema events according to each state, as follows :

1. State of the Adrar: Touat Cinema Days.
2. Province of Chlef: Short film Days of Idols.
3. State of Laghouat: Unknown.
4. State of Oum El Bouaghi: Unknown.
5. Batna Province: National University Short Film Festival.
6. Bejaia: International Film Days.

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- Minimum screen size of 15 meters
  - High-quality audio equipment and first-class reception and entertainment equipment.
  - Adjoining shops used as cafeterias

Article 12: The second category includes cinemas that broadcast at least one screening per day, excluding breaks and public holidays, regardless of the level of luxury and comfort of the room.

Article 13: A cinema complex is understood to mean any cinema complex composed of at least three cinemas with a capacity of at least 600 seats. The complex of rooms is characterized by spacious reception areas and comfortable, spacious and air-conditioned rooms, equipped with large screens allowing the viewer to benefit from a good viewing quality. In addition, it has easily accessible entrances and a set of cinemas that offer the spectator, when present in the same place, a wide choice of films and distinguished comfort.

7. Province of Biskra: Unknown.
8. Béchar Province: National Short Film Days.
9. Wilaya of Blida: International Short Film Days.
10. Province of Bouira: Unknown.
11. Province of Tamanrasset: Cinema Days presented by the Lumiar Association.
12. Province of Tébessa: National Days of Sinifast
13. Province of Tlemcen: Tlemcen Cinema Days.
14. Province of Tiaret : Unknown
15. Province of Tizi Ouzou : Amazigh film festival
16. Wilaya of Algiers : Algiers Film Festival  
Maghreb cultural film festival  
International film days
17. Province of Djelfa: National Youth Cinema Days.
18. State of Jijel: Jijel Cinema Days.
19. State of Setif: International Short Film Festival.  
Gargour Short Film Days - Gargour Hammam - Sétif
20. Saida State: Cultural festival of women's literature and cinema.
21. Province of Skikda: International Film Days.
22. Sidi Bel Abbes: Amateur short film days.
23. Province of Annaba: Annaba Mediterranean Film Festival.
24. Guelma's condition: Unknown.
25. Province of Constantine: Cinema and Memory Days.
26. Province of M'DAËA: Regional Short Film Days.
27. Province of Mostaganem: Short and Documentary Film Days.
28. Province of M'sila: Days of cinema and youth tourism  
Days of Kurdada for the short film Bob Saada
29. Province of Mascara: National Cinema Days.
30. Province of Ouargla: Ouargla short film and documentary days.
31. Oran Province: Oran International Arab Film Festival.
32. State of El Bayadh: Short Film Days.
33. Province of Illizi: Unknown
34. Province of Burj and Arriraj: Unknown
35. Province of Boumerdes Unknown
36. Province of El Tarf : Unknown
37. Province of Tindouf: Days of the headquarters of the short film.
38. Condition of Tissemsilt unknown.
39. State of El Oued: National short film and documentary Days.
40. Khenchela Province: Unknown.
41. Province of Souk Ahras : Unknown
42. Tipaza Province: Unknown
43. Province of Mila: Cinema Days of the Lumière Association
44. Province of Ain Defla : Unknown

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45. State of Naama: Cinema Days, Light Association
  46. Province of Ain Temouchent: Short Film Days.
  47. Province of Ghardaïa: Continental short film Festival of Ghardaïa.
  48. Glizan Province: Local youth cinema days.

These events vary according to the characteristics of each region and the nature and content of the competition offered by these events. (EZZINE, 2017, p. 187) However, among them we find six festivals that have the legal basis that established them, and these are :

### **2-1 Oran Arab Film Festival :**

The Oran International Arab Film Festival was established by a decision dated 19 Rabi' al-Awwal 1428 corresponding to April 7, 2007 (EZZINE & CHEDED, 2023, p. 4). This festival, called the Arab Cultural Film Festival, is subject to the provisions of Article 2 of Executive decree n ° 03-297 of 13 Rajab 1424 corresponding to September 10, 2003, which sets the conditions for organizing cultural festivals. However, this decision does not specify the location of the festival, as other similar decisions do.

According to its organizers, the festival aims to encourage new filmmakers to present their productions, as well as to coordinate Arab cinemas and unify efforts to advance the film sector in Arab countries.

### **2-2 Algiers Film Festival :**

This festival was created in 2005 by a decision of 7 Joumada al-Thani 1426 corresponding to July 13, 2005, which included the creation of the Algerian Cultural Film Festival. Its organization is subject to the conditions of organization of festivals provided for by Executive Decree n ° 03-297. (Journal, 2005, p. 24) The festival's competition is limited to feature films and documentaries only and awards four prizes: the Grand Prix, the Special Jury Prize, the Audience Prize and a Special Mention for each category. (ficinema, 2024)

### **2-3 Maghreb Film Festival :**

This festival was created in 2010 by a decision of 28 Joumada Al-Awwal 1431 corresponding to May 13, 2010, which notably led to the creation of the Maghreb Cultural Film Festival. Its organization is subject to the conditions of organization of festivals provided for by Executive Decree n ° 03-297. (Journal, 2010, p. 20) However, it was canceled by the Minister of Culture by a decision of 7 Muharram 1437 corresponding to October 21, 2015 in his second article, because his competition included feature films, short films and documentaries, and the Golden Amias prize was awarded for the feature films and short films category and the Grand Prize for the documentary films category.

### **2-4 Cultural festival of women's literature and cinema :**

This festival was created in 2014 by a decision of 05 Safar 1435 corresponding to December 08, 2013, which notably led to the creation of the National Cultural Festival of Women's Literature and Cinema. Article 1 stipulates that its seat is determined in the State of Saïda, so that its organization is subject to the conditions for organizing festivals provided for in

Executive Decree n ° 03-297. (Journal, 2015, p. 28) This festival aims to honor the female figures of the world of literature and cinema. (mculturesaida.com, 2024)

### **2-5 Amazigh Film Festival :**

This festival was created in 2005 by a decision of 23 Dhu al-Qi'dah 1426 corresponding to December 25, 2005, which included the creation of a national cultural festival of Amazigh film. Its organization is subject to the conditions of organization of festivals provided for by Executive Decree n ° 03-297. (Journal, 2014, p. 31) The competition includes feature films, short films and documentaries, and the prizes include the Golden Olive Award, which is considered the grand prize, the best male role award, the best female role award and the jury prize, in the different film categories. (www.dircultureto.dz)

### **2-6 Annaba Mediterranean Film Festival :**

This festival was created in 2015 by a decision of 07 Muharram 1437 corresponding to October 21, 2015, which included the creation of the Mediterranean Film Cultural Festival under the name of Annaba Mediterranean Film Festival. Its organization is subject to the conditions of organization of the festival stipulated in Executive Decree n ° 03-297, (Journal, 2006, p. 20) and it awards several prizes, including the Golden Jujube, the Prize for the Best Screenplay, the Prize for the Best Male and Female Role, and the Special Jury Prize. (www.annabamedfilms.org)

As for the rest of the other cinematic events, they have a set of characteristics, in particular :

- \* The absence of a legal basis defining the conditions for its creation.
- It is managed by cultural associations or amateurs, and sometimes the director of culture of the state is considered the governor of the festival.
- \* Lack of media promotion.
- \* Irregular periods and the disappearance of some of them.
- It is considered as the only way for young creatives to present and exhibit their productions in the cinematographic field in the absence of significant abilities.

Accordingly, the objectives of the festival are defined as follows :

- \* Identify unknown cinemas.
- \* To offer the best film production to the local public.
- \* Discover promising cinematographic talents.
- \* Disseminate film culture.
- \* Attract the audience to the movie theaters.
- \* Defend local or national cinema.

## **3- Festivals in the balance of the economy**

There are generally two types of festivals: non-profit festivals that focus on the relationship between cinema and the viewer, and modern and lucrative festivals that focus on the relationship between the director and the producer. Their objective is usually to promote the name of the country and the extent of its contribution to the advancement of



cinematographic work, whether local or international. These festivals are based on the business equation. Costs less income.

The costs include ,Staff: Part-time or full-time,Places: Includes various reservations and vacant places,Office overhead costs ,Marketing and advertising ,Public relations, Examination fees ,The revenues include ,SubmissionsWindow of remembranceCare and supportCultural, partnershipsConcert tickets and merchandise sales. (EZZINE, 2016, p. 134)

A study shows that the festival budget is linked to the number of days of the festival. If the festival lasts more than 15 days, its operating budget exceeds one million dollars. If the duration is less than 8 days, the operating budget is less than one hundred thousand dollars.

That is why most of the most profitable festivals in the world share the box office profits thanks to the revenues shared with the filmmakers, especially the premieres.

### Conclusion :

In conclusion, we conclude by saying that film festivals, especially those with a long history, are primarily due to the existence of a cinematographic dynamism, with an abundance of production and the establishment of traditions among the public of this art. They differ according to their nature and their objectives, especially those of a lucrative and commercial nature, since they aim to promote the cinematographic product in parallel with the political promotion of the image of the regime or the state that hosts the festival.

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