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History of the Cannes Film Festival â?? Part IV the 1960â??s

Description

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The Cannes Film Festival, until 2003 called the International Film Festival, is an annual film festival held in Cannes, France, which previews new films of all genres, including documentaries, from all around the world and is widely considered the most important festival in the world in terms of impact as it draws attention to and raises profiles of films contributing to the development of cinema, globally boosts the industry and celebrates film at an international level, As such, a nine-part series on the Cannes Film Festival is underway with the publishing of the History of the Cannes Film Festival â?? Part I, Part II, and Part III.

FESTIVAL DE CANNES

As Cannes became a world-class film festival during the 1950s and through the advent of the Cold War, the Cannes Film Festival, still known as the International Film Festival, was attracting hundreds of journalists and celebrities alike. The end of WWII brought about renewed agreements, and exchanges. Numerous international cinematographic events were organized and put forth. Most filmmaking

countries attended one anotherâ??s events as a sign of respect and friendship.

But, in 1958, France entered into a constitutional crisis resulting in the demise of the 4th Republic and a needed transition to a new constitution and thereby, a new republic, the 5th Republic, on October 4th, 1958, led by Charles De Gaulle, who in turn became the first French president elected under the new republic in December of 1958.

Meanwhile, AndrÃ© Malraux became the International Film Festivalâ??s organizer. He was also the Minister of Cultural Affairs. He gave a new dimension to the competition and let the younger generations express themselves. Malrauxâ??s selections were not always uncontroversial, but he imposed a film that led to one of the biggest French scandals of the decade, Jacques Rivetteâ??s *La Religieuse (The Nun)*.

In 1959, AndrÃ© Malraux, in agreement with Robert Favre Le Bret (the Festivalâ??s Delegate General), formalized the Film Market. This market moved into the Palais, asserting its role in developing the film industry. The International Film Market has grown each year and today is the largest event in the film industry worldwide.


AndrÃ© Malraux

Criticsâ?? Week comes to Cannes

The film market did not make everyone happy, notably, those who judge films (cinema critics). In 1961, the Association FranÃ§aise de la Critique du CinÃ©ma (French Syndicate of Cinema Critics) was

founded, with Georges Sadoul as President. In 1962, the Association of Film Critics created Criticsâ?? Week, a parallel event held outside the Palais that presented filmmakersâ?? first or second films. The public was particularly impressed by Bertrand Blierâ??s first feature film shown at this event, *Hitler, connais pas* .



Hitler, connais pas

The Cannes Film Festival gradually opened up to the International film world. Films from countries such as China, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Brazil began to feature amongst the award winners, and Japan was particularly in vogue with its Samurai films winning four Special Jury Prizes between 1960 and 1965.



Harakiri

Scandals



Since its creation, the Cannes Film Festival has seen quite a few scandals due to the choice of film selected, for various reasons. For example, in 1960, Federico Felliniâ??s *La Dolce Vita*, was considered pornographic by some people. This film was controversial at the Vatican, which threatened to excommunicate anyone who saw it.



Viridiana

And, there was also Luis BuÃ±uelâ??s film *Viridiana*, which criticized religion and its deviations. Francoâ??s Spain tried to censor it, but the director sent the film anyway, which led to his being forbidden from returning to his country.

In 1964, for the first time, the president of the jury was not an academic but a director named Fritz Lang. Since the festivalâ??s very beginnings, the jury had always been led by writers such as AndrÃ© Maurois, Marcel Achard, Marcel Pagnol, Maurice Genevoix, Jean Giono.

Up until this time, the film world had been qualified as a minor art form, but it would be legitimized by respected intellectual and cultural institutions such as the AcadÃ©mie FranÃ§aise.

From then on, the 7th Art combining the six previous arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, dance, became more and more liberated and the members of the jury were increasingly chosen from the film world.



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In 1965, the actress Olivia de Havilland, pictured above, was the first woman president of the jury, followed the year after by Sofia Loren.

Deep Social Malaise

In May of 1968, France was overcome by a deep social malaise. The demonstrations started in and around Paris, and clashes with the police grew more intense. The crackdown was reinforced in the night of 10 to 11 May, leading to the countryâ??s total paralysis.

Despite the shockwaves that submerged the country, the Cannes Film Festival began on 11 May and was supposed to continue to 25 May. A much-awaited restored version of the famous *Gone with the Wind* was scheduled to be shown.

In the following days, Eddie Barclayâ??s amazing parties provided a bit of light-heartedness amidst the national crisis. The atmosphere in Cannes was electric, and feelings were running especially high amongst the younger generation of filmmakers.



FrancÌ§ois Truffaut at the turbulent 1968 Cannes Film Festival

FranÃ§ois Truffaut made the announcement, â??Everything with any sort of dignity or importance in France has come to a stop. I propose that we bring Cannes to a halt to organize a debate about the future of French cinema!â?• The jury members pulled out one after the other, first Louis Malle, then Monica Vitti, and Roman Polanski.



Peppermint FrappÃ©

The debates and the strike action that paralyzed the Palais du Festival became increasingly bitter. On the 18th of May, at the height of the troubles, Carlos Saura and Geraldine Chaplin prevented the showing of their film *Peppermint FrappÃ©* by hanging onto the stage curtains.

Directors and producers called for the Festival to be shut down to prevent things from degenerating any further. After negotiations and incidents, they got their way on 19 May 1968 at noon â?? the president of the Festival Robert Favre Le Bret decided to cancel the festival to prevent things from degenerating any further. The Palais immediately emptied out.



Interruption of the Festival - May 68 © P. Louis / AFP

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