



History of the Cannes Film Festival – Part VIII the 2000s

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

At the start of the 21st century, Cannes was the premier cinema event in the world. It stood out from the other international film festivals events such as the Berlinale and Venice festivals.



1946 Festival de Cannes Poster © Leblanc

And, to further strengthen the indissoluble link that united Cannes with the most important cultural

event in the world, the International Film Festival became the Cannes Film Festival in 2002, under the impetus of Cannes' Mayor and Member of Parliament, Bernard Brochand.



The arrival of the new millennium brought about changes in awareness under the filmgoer's trained eye. After the creation of the *Caméra d'Or*, awarded to the Best First Film, the Festival went a step further by recognizing the best film-school short films with the creation of Cinéfondation in 1998.

In 2000, the Festival continued to show its support for new talents by creating a new initiative called The Residence to welcome young filmmakers and help them develop their projects. 2005 saw another innovation called the Children's Session, a class for the youngest fans to encourage their curiosity about cinema.

In 2002, for the 55th anniversary of the Festival, the top award went to alternative American director, Michael Moore, for *Bowling for Columbine*. Two years later Moore received a second *Palme d'Or* for *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

American cinema d'auteur was still in favor in 2003 when Gus Van Sant won the *Palme d'Or* and the award for Best Director. His film *Elephant* recounted the day that two teenagers gunned down their fellow students in a school in Columbine in America.

The Festival thus had to encourage relations between cinema professionals and defend its interests against outside influences. Furthermore, historical events were seared into the public's mind, in this case, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States, or the bomb threats of 2002, demonstrating the importance of the tensions weighing on the event as it was happening.



Fahrenheit 9/11

Nonetheless, the Festival was not immune to such media/political phenomena, as can be seen with the release of Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* in 2004, with took a position favorable to France during the Iraq conflict and the wrong-minded American strategy.

In 2005, the Festival emphasized its International dimension. The Festival's Atelier (Workshop), organized by the Cinéfondation, invited 18 filmmakers from around the world to come to Cannes to present their projects to producers during the Festival. A new program, called 'All the cinemas of the World', offered different countries the chance to present their films.

Thierry Fremaux

Thierry Fremaux, who was appointed Delegate General in 2007, said: "The Festival is also a market for international buyers and sellers; today it is the culmination, not the starting point. It used to be that films were discovered here. Now, everything is done upstream and the selections are known to the professionals one month before they are made public. But sales are often finalized after screening at Cannes."

In 2007, the Festival celebrated its 60th anniversary. It continued to denounce a fragile world in need of unity. Both 2007 and 2009, the Palme d'or was given to movies that referenced a painful past: *4 months, 3 weeks and 2 days*

from director Cristian Mungiu told the story of two young girls, trying to abort in Ceaucescu's Romania , and *The White Ribbon* from Michael Haneke darkly depicted society and family in a northern German village just before World War I.

However, in 2008, Jury President Sean Penn stated, he wanted to reward a filmmaker who was “very aware of the times within which he lives.” Consequently, *The Class* from Laurent Cantet received the Palme d'or in 2008. The film depicted a French teacher (François Bégaudeau, both teacher and writer, is acting his own part in the movie), and his experience, during one whole school year, in teaching French class to racially mixed students in a tough Parisian neighborhood.

Although the commercial blockbusters were largely absent from the competition, their stars could often be seen on *Le Croisette*, and independent films were also competitors to be reckoned with.



Image Source: Getty /

Pascal Le Segretain

Category

1. television

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