

# **Screen savers**

## **Cinema's preservation in the international scene**

edited  
by Susanna Caccia

Edizioni **ETS**

# CONTENS

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Cinema halls in Buenos Aires a XXth century heritage</b> Marta García Falcó, Patricia Méndez	<b>9</b>
<b>From the Volta to the Light House: re-evaluating Dublin's Architectural Cinema Heritage</b> Marc Zimmermann	<b>35</b>
<b>A Future of Heritage Cinema Buildings</b> Richard Gray	<b>49</b>
<b>The Remaining Cinema Gems of Sweden</b> Kjell Furberg	<b>77</b>
<b>Canada (Québec)</b> Pierre Pageau	<b>99</b>
<b>Cinema Architecture at risk. Experiences and conservation projects</b> Susanna Caccia	<b>121</b>
<b>Rediscovering Cinema Architecture and its value in Malta's social landscape</b> Marc Zimmermann	<b>139</b>
<b>Cinema Architecture in Italy</b> Maria Adriana Giusti	<b>157</b>
<b>From arcades to shopping malls: preservation of Beyoglu cinemas</b> Evinc Dogan	<b>169</b>
<b>The architecture of northern Africa cinema theaters from their origins to the second world war</b> Ezio Godoli	<b>189</b>

## FOREWORD

For too long a time our movie theatres have represented a heritage that seems doomed to disappear. For over thirty years now they have shown signs of irreversible decline, with buildings torn down or altered for other uses. Despite the repeated warnings of scholars and movie-lovers all over the world, despite the publications and conferences they have produced, an important part of our cultural heritage is being lost.

This is why we have felt the need for the present volume, in which a series of contributions are brought together, starting out from Quebec, as told by Pierre Pageau, to lap the shores of movie theatres on African coasts, as described by Ezio Godoli. These writings have been deliberately chosen for their reference to a variety of spatial and socio-cultural contexts, not only to offer as broad as possible a panorama of the current situation, but also to trace the paths that can lead to saving our cinemas. They are essays that reveal both the importance of this problem on an international scale and also ways to find new directions and strategies for conservation. Though, as Maria Adriana Giusti shows in her contribution, Italy unfortunately lags behind in this search, not only as regards the literature on the topic but also in the paucity of concrete measures of conservation, some interesting situations do exist. In this context, we need only think of the associations created almost all over the world, of which an outstanding example is London's Cinema Theatre Association, associations that for many years have been carrying on a vast project of cataloging and conservation. It is especially the English cinemas described by Richard Gray that show us how such associations can play a decisive role in the survival of theatre architecture. Examples of these masterpieces include the Swedish movie theatres described by the historian Kjell Furberg, who recreates for the reader the golden years of cinema with an evocative series of illustrations to accompany the text.

Another text offering important insights is the contribution of the Cinema Heritage Group, under the guidance of Marc Zimmermann, the author of two dense essays here included, one on particular aspects of the situation in Malta and the other about the city of Dublin. Other essays that contribute to our understanding of the importance of historical research aimed at a meticulous analysis of the situation of a specific geographical area include the

detailed study of Buenos Aires done by Marta Garcia Falco and Patricia Méndez, or that of Istanbul by Evinc Dogan. Though unfortunately in many instances we witness a series of uncoordinated initiatives and a lack of consistent policy-making, we can also find a stimulating counter-example in France. There, various initiatives promoted by Mission Cinéma, created in 2002, are part of a project aimed on the one hand to safeguard and give new life to historical movie theatres and on the other at an intelligent envisioning of new containers designed to create more geographical balance in the presence of cinemas. A primary role in the battle against the loss of cinemas has been played by citizens who in response to local situations have rallied against closings and demolitions. Sit-ins, petitions and other forms of local protest were, for example, the means used to prevent the loss of Adalberto Libera's historical Cinema Airone in Rome.

This book hopes to join the actions of local communities. Its objective is to recognize the centrality of the architectural heritage of movie theatres and the desire to link knowledge to social action and conservation. It is for this reason that a comparison and interchange with what is happening on the international scene has seemed indispensable. This comparison has its foundations in a common goal: safeguarding movie theatres and with them a piece of the history of the twentieth century, for they are at once icons of modernity in its various junctures and the expression of forms of citizenship that differ according to time and place. With an important final comment: a work like this once again proposes to the historian and the restorer the occasion for reflection on and memory of the various *temporalités urbaines*.