

DIY Cinema

Its easy to.....Make your own Underground Cinema

STEP 1 : GET A GANG

You can't do this alone so first you'll need to get together with your friends or a group of other film/video makers, you can do this by circulating a leaflet advertising a meeting. Make sure you get the leaflet into every venue, business, club, college, launderette where potential gang members might hang out. Remember at this stage it doesn't matter if you've got experience or not, enthusiasm and commitment is more important.

STEP 2 : HOLD A MEETING

At the meeting explain that you're forming a group to hold screenings of film/video and that the group will now be having regular meetings where decisions will be made democratically. Next find out :

- A. Who is prepared to put in the work to make things happen.
- B. If anyone in the group has skills, equipment or film/video work they are prepared to let the group use.
- C. If anyone knows of a venue that would be suitable for the groups first screening.

STEP 3 : FINANCE

At first you may have to put up your own money to get things going but once you start having screenings the group will be self financing and you can get your money back. The most effective way to operate is to make the group totally non-profit making, pay no wages and use all your takings to buy equipment and improve the screenings.

STEP 4 : FIND A VENUE

Start small, you need a place to hold an audience of about 50 max. Try to get a venue that is easy to get to, preferably near to the main public transport routes. Try for a weekend date but Wednesdays and Thursdays are OK. As you're going to charge admission on the door make sure you get to keep it all to plough back into the group's activities.

CAFES - Some cafes are ideal because they have their own chairs, are usually licensed for drink, stay open late and are usually looking for a way to increase their takings.

PUBS - Many pubs have function rooms which are top notch some even have their own T.V.s and video projectors but chairs can be a problem and of course they usually close at eleven o'clock.

CLUBS - Chairs are a problem, drinks can be overpriced and you may have to pay to use the venue but you can find a good deal if you're prepared to haggle.

SQUATS - Squats can provide total freedom for your operations and you get to sell your own drink and food but on the downside security is a problem and you risk the cops closing you down at any time so make sure you check out all the angles.

STEP 5 : EQUIPMENT

For a basic screening you will need :

TRANSPORT - A car with a big boot and a driver.

VIDEO - A T.V. set and a video player. You should be able to borrow these from a group member or a friend.

SUPER 8 - A sound Super 8 projector . If no one in your group has one, then you're going to have to buy one so start checking out Car Boot sales, junk shops, the local paper, camera shops etc. You should be able to get a basic sound projector for under £50. Makes to look for are EUMIG, CHINON, ELMO and BAUER.

16mm - 16mm projectors can be difficult to get hold of, try to borrow one from a local college. You'll need one which plays OPTICAL SOUND. Because a lot of colleges and training institutes are now using video and computer technology it's worth contacting them and trying to get them to give you their old 16mm projectors and other cine equipment.

A SCREEN - You can buy a screen from a Car Boot sale or use a white sheet, even a clean white wall will be fine.

SOUND - Many Super 8 filmmakers use audio cassettes with their work so you'll need a cassette deck or ghetto blaster. Most 16mm projectors come with their own speakers. If you're going to have an MC introducing the films or have makers doing live dialogue over their work you'll need a basic sound system and a microphone.

STEP 6 : FINDING THE WORK AND PUBLICITY

You can publicise the show and look for work at the same time, make a leaflet which advertises the show and calls for work then put it up everywhere, send it everywhere, give it out at clubs, pubs, gigs, colleges...everywhere. Call the local radio, talk to everyone... film/video makers wont mind showing their work for free so long as they know that all the money you make is going to a cinema which will promote their work and create a scene where they can interact with other makers and meet an enthusiastic audience.

At first you can just get makers to turn up on the night and get free entry with a film/video but it's safer to organise a programme before the show and this means you can draw up a simple photocopied programme. Because of low/no budgets the vast majority of the work you'll get will be between 5 and 20 minutes long this means that for a three hour show with two intervals you'll need about 10 to 15 films for a show. Try to get a good mix of film and video and a variety of genres eg. animation, documentary, drama, home movies..... You might want to select the films you show or even censor them but our advice is **SHOW ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING** and let the audience decide, if they have food and drink and aren't made to sit in total silence they wont mind sitting through a couple of boring films and if a film is totally offensive let the audience shout it down or walk out, it's not up to you to prejudge their reaction.

The only problem is with films over 30 minutes as they tend to monopolise the evening but you can always show them in instalments or help the maker to put on their own screening. If possible try to get at least one live performance amongst the film/video this will really liven the night up.

STEP 7 : THE SHOW

Hold a meeting before the show, make sure you've got everything organised, work out who's doing what on the night...projection, sound etc. Make sure everyone knows to get to the venue early to set up the show. Set up a table on the door where you can take money, you can either sell raffle tickets or ink stamp the audience's hands. Put a book on the door for film/video makers to put contact numbers in for the next show. Don't try to reproduce the trance like auditorium of commercial cinema the audience can get this at the local multiplex, instead try to create an interactive space, put candles around, get the film/video makers to

talk about their work, encourage debate, if something goes wrong don't get embarrassed tell the audience what's happening , you can even get the them to help with the problem

STEP 8 : TOUGH IT OUT

Because of years of neglect and indifference the media scene has become pretty hardcore people will tell you that it wont work, the established 'INDEPENDENT' media will ignore you and because you're open and democratic, careerists and users will try to exploit you, even some bitter film/video makers may slag you off...well we're here to tell you it can work...

KICK OUT THE JAMS !

STEP 9 : LATER

If you hold regular shows you can and develop and expand the groups activities, with the money you make you can buy more Super 8 projectors and some 35mm slide projectors then project images on the walls of the venue, you can get musicians to play along to film, set up installations in cupboards and in the toilets, expand your photocopied programme into a film/video magazine, take over disused buildings to hold bigger one-off shows.....! The only limit to what you can do is your own energy and imagination.....

THE EXPLODING CINEMA COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

1. The EXPLODING CINEMA COLLECTIVE is committed to D.I.Y.Cinema and film/video. The core activity of the collective is organising regular open access non-curated shows. The ideas, projects and methods developed by the Exploding Cinema are copyright free, anyone can use them just as anyone can make a film/video, but any collective show that uses the Exploding Cinema name must first be approved by the majority of the collective. We oppose the elitism, academicism, industrialism and obscurity of the traditional 'Independent' film/video sector and welcome contributions from all film/video/performance practises from the popular to the experimental. We aim to find a diverse popular audience for our screenings and to break down the limiting divisions between maker and audience, theory and practise, amateur and professional. The Collective opposes State funding for film production (B.F.I., the Film Council, the Arts Council, Film London etc..) since it is undemocratic, elitist and harmful to open access/D.I.Y.cinema. Instead, we advocate the transfer of state funding from production to exhibition/distribution. The only exception to this would be state production funding which is demonstrably democratic, equitable and just. The Collective will at all times strive for financial and institutional autonomy and will under no circumstances seek or accept state funding for its activities.

2. The Collective is committed to non profit-making collective practise, equality of opportunity, voluntary contribution and open access. This means that...

(a) Anyone can contribute to the EXPLODING CINEMA or become involved in its activities but to become a member of the collective with voting rights at general and sub-group meetings, it is necessary to read accept and sign this agreement. The rights and privileges laid down in this agreement will then be given to members of the Collective. Access to the resources, information and equipment of the Collective for non- members is at the discretion of the Collective. If at a general meeting the Collective decides that a member/s have

deliberately broken this agreement, they will lose their voting rights and the rights and privileges this agreement provides. They will no longer be a member of the Collective.

(b) The Collective will hold regular meetings at which a chairperson will be elected and decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of Collective members. Changes to this agreement can only be made by a two thirds majority vote at a general meeting. To call a GENERAL MEETING the organiser/s must actively take steps to contact every member of the Collective and give at least a weeks notice of the meeting. Every member of the Collective has the right to organise meetings and to express their opinions at meetings.

(c) Every member of the Collective has the right to participate in the decision-making processes that effect their chosen activities in the Collective.

(d) The Collective is not a monolithic block with a single ideology, it is rather a coalition of diverse interests able to include many shades of opinion, working methods, collective and individual projects.

(e) Every member of the Collective has access to the network of information, resources and equipment owned by the Collective.

(f) Whenever possible, all opportunities and positions within the Collective will be allocated by informed collective agreement and that this process should be rotational. Every possible attempt will be made to rotate duties and positions and to avoid heirarchical work practices.

(g) No wages are paid by the Collective except for specific and collectively agreed contracts.

(h) All finance, equipment and information acquired by the Collective is held in collective ownership by the Collective.

(i) The time/labour and resources put into the Collective by its members is returned to those members as the success of the Collective. The Collective is constituted for the general benefit of filmmakers and the particular mutual benefit of it's membership. Work conducted in the name of the Collective must be for the benefit of the Collective. No single member or faction of the membership should seek personal success or profit through the activities of the Collective. All finance, equipment and information acquired by the Collective is held in collective ownership by the Collective.

(j) Every member and every perspective of the Collective will be given their own copy of this agreement.

3. The Collective recognises that an essential way to provide low/no- budget makers with effective distribution/exhibition is to promote and organise a nationwide circuit of Exploding Cinema style venues.

4. The Collective will diversify into video distribution and finance and resources will be made available for this purpose.

5. The Collective will diversify into skill sharing and training and resources will be made available for this purpose.
6. The Collective will set up a register of resources/equipment available to members/makers.
7. The Collective will/should find a way to recompense makers for their contribution to the show.
8. The Collective has a NO - CENSORSHIP POLICY and will only preview work for programming purposes.
9. The Collective will take active and effectively financed steps to recruit and renew the broadest mix of membership / makers./audience in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and age possible. As a member of the Collective I undertake to uphold the principles and conditions of this agreement and I understand that if I leave the Collective I will no longer be granted the rights and privileges of the Collective .

Revised November 2005

No Stars. No Funding. No Taste.

The EXPLODING CINEMA is a coalition of film/video makers committed to developing new modes of exhibition for underground media; from DIY screenings in all kinds of venues to low/no budget film tours, cable T.V. and the internet.

It's almost SIXTEEN years since the Exploding Cinema was founded in a stone cold bunker at the back of a squatted sun tan oil factory in Brixton. At that time it was a gathering of media misfits rejected by the `Independent' film/video establishment who decided that rather than griping about the fucked up state of the industry they would stage their own screenings in cafes, pubs and disused buildings and would set about fusing together the isolated and disenchanting fragments of the underground media. The Low/No Budget film is the source of so much talent and creativity, but they need a place to be shown. Not a sterile, unfriendly "arthouse" but a relaxed, open environment where the audience can watch, chat, discuss the film and meet film/video makers.

We hold regular OPEN SCREENINGS of film/video for makers who want a popular audience for their work, we have no preference as to the kind of work ...drama, experimental, documentary, splatter, animation, true confessions, protest, pop promos, home videos, found footage....and we're looking for performance work and musicians. We have facilities for Super 8, 16mm, Standard 8, VHS, tape/slide, and performance. If you want to bring your own equipment or set up an installation that's no problem neither.

The group is voluntary and totally democratic, anyone can contribute, anyone can join the group.

Because the cinema is unfunded and non-profit making, we are unable to pay contributors but we do offer an exciting interactive public forum for work and ALL the money we make goes back into the events and buying better equipment.

Exploding Cinema

<http://www.explodingcinema.org/>