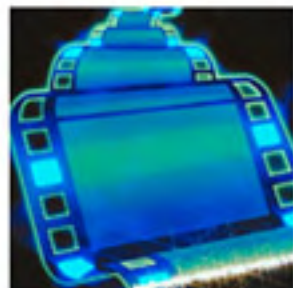


Cinema in Belgium : Liege Médiacité to become a reality



In our new regular cinema news, Anne Feuillère trawls the Belgian screens and festivals - this week, the long-anticipated Liege Médiacité is to become a reality.



Industry - Belgium

Liege Médiacité to become a reality

In the pipeline for over a decade, **Mediacité** - an ambitious project involving the renovation of a former industrial area in Liege - is finally to become a reality, with construction on the project by property developer Wilhelm & Co having just begun. Full details of Mediacité can be consulted on the Liege Region website.

Built around an area of shops and leisure facilities, the project includes the construction on a

five-hectare site of a 16-theatre complex, which will be run by French group UGC, who secured the deal after a tough battle with Belgian outfit Kinopolis; film sets; administrative buildings; and recording studios reserved for French-speaking broadcaster RTBF. Everything is planned to be up and running by 2009.



Nearby, a "digital cluster" is also planned to open on an area of 24,000 square metres that will include the Pôle Image de Liège, which was set up last year by animation studio CoToon.

The Pôle is an umbrella group of nine companies, including XDC, a leader for digital cinema equipment on the European market, and Hoverlord, a specialist in digital post-production. The Pôle is expected to move to its new headquarters at the end of 2007.

Another plan under discussion is the construction of an industrial studio for foreign productions, which could also take advantage of the services offered by companies specialising in post-production.

Despite fierce competition from Eastern Europe - where an increasing number of productions are being delocalised - the Wallonian Minister for the Economy and Employment, **Jean-Claude Marcourt**, is rumoured to be considering the project, estimated to be worth between €8 and €24m, which the Liège Médiacité could thus host.

Liege and its region are currently experiencing a boom in the cinema industry with local prestigious and energetic studios – such as the Dardennes' Les Films du Fleuve, Versus Production, Tarantula and Les Films de la Passerelle – all producing prize-winning films (which include, besides those by the Dardenne brothers, *The Axe*, *Ultranova*, *The Weakest Is Always Right* and *Congorama*).



mediacité proposed site

Audiovisual service providers are also experiencing growth.

Anne Feuillère

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the Pôle website's description of the **Mediacité**:

6.5 hectares located a few steps from the hypercentre of Liège will be devoted to a shopping centre, a cinema complex, the new RTBF national television centre, an Olympic skating ring, an audiovisual and multimedia complex, Tv and cinema studios and a multitude of other services devoted to the entertainment media.

The image pole of Liège is part of this development with a structure of over 24,000 m² of offices and studios. Not forgetting the traditional techniques of the cinema, the complex will shelter the entire fiction or animation HD production chain and digital distribution scenario. All these skills, which are already available in the Liège region via the images pole network, will be concentrated in these common installations from the end of 2007.