

Newsletter September 2021

Dear Friends of UNICA, dear Film Enthusiasts

Only about half a year has passed since the last newsletter in February / March 2021, but a lot has happened at UNICA.

The decision for a new form of UNICA Congress has now been made. This means that both organisers and guests can expect lower costs and still enjoy the UNICA experience with films in the familiar family environment. The essential cornerstones of the new UNICA are:

- Film programme only 4 days
- Country blocks now 40 minutes
- Only 3 jurors
- Discussions only in the evening / at night
- Excursions and special programmes can be booked optionally

We think this new form is worth a try.

To start filling the diary, here are the venues and dates of the next congresses:

2022 SWITZERLAND, Locarno, Tessin. 21.08.2022 -25.08.2022

2023 ITALY, Comacchio (FE) 10.09.2023 – 14.09.2023

2024 UKRAINE, Kherson by the Black Sea

Both the new form of the UNICA Congress and the new venues, among other points, are now the subject of resolutions to be decided by the delegates.

We would be very happy to see you again at the next UNICA.

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In Memoriam

On the death of Halvor Larsen



No sooner had he taken up his position as Secretary General of the UNICA Committee at the end of 2019 than Halvor Larsen

had a lot of work to do in 2020.

The UNICA Committee had decided to organise a UNICA Film Show in 2020. A total of 34 films from 19 countries were shown. Our compliments to the team in Norway around Halvor Larsen and, of course, to all the countries and authors who had sent in films.

Unfortunately, Halvor had to leave us in spring 2021, and his family and friends mourn his death with us. We will miss him and his dedication very much.

Obituary of Rolf Mandolesi



The camera is still, the editing scissors are at rest, the sound has fallen silent: we mourn the loss of a great filmmaker, Rolf Mandolesi passed away on 3 September 2021, shortly before completing his 88th year.

His last appearance on the cinema stage was at UNICA 2016 in Suceava, where he had to be hospitalised, but recovered relatively quickly, only being unable to travel. Nevertheless, he was productive and creative until the end. Last year, he won a prize at the Shumen Festival in Bulgaria with one of his last films.

His more than 60 films are characterised by precise camera work, sharp editing and appropriate sound - deliberately without dialogue or commentary.

The image alone must speak and narrate - that was his credo. Born in Milan in 1933, he later moved to Merano and grew up bilingual. A dental technician by trade, he discovered film in the early 1960s and took his first steps with family films at the birth of his son Benno. In 1961 he became a member of the then Merano film club Virgilio Passaro. A stellar career in non-professional filmmaking began. His teachers were cameraman Mario Deghengi (1925-2020) and documentary filmmaker Bruno Jori. At the same time, he discovered Franco Piavoli, the Italian master of silent, cinematic narration, an expert at capturing moments that carry a film.

The film with which Rolf Mandolesi won his first awards was "*Risveglio di Merano*" (*Merano Wakes Up*). The film "*Devoti*" (*Believers*) was the breakthrough on the national scene in 1966. It won the first prize in the documentary category in Montecatini Terme – a festival he directed for years in the 1990s. He remained true to this genre and his style, developing and refining the gift of observing special situations and people. An open eye for the other, the complex, which sometimes had critical overtones, especially when it came to more prejudicial human qualities.



He skilfully depicted greed in his masterpieces “**Cake**” (1985) and “**Apples**” (1991). “**Cake**” is characterised by striking close-ups, and “**Apples**” by a deconstructed soundscape.

Rolf was a waterfall of ideas, in the 1980s he took up themes that have lost none of their topicality to this day, on the contrary: traffic, hustle and bustle, crowded cities, stress and overtourism, such as “**Oasis 79**” (1979), “**Circuito chiuso**” – **Short Circuit** (1982), “**Intrusi**” – **Intruders** (1986).

On his travels, camera and sound equipment were an integral part of his luggage. For him, a holiday was relaxation in discovering, observing, looking for themes. He never came back empty. A masterpiece of these holiday observations is the film “**Uomini**” – **The Men** (1988). He was never voyeuristic, his reflections and observations stimulated further thought. In later years, his films became increasingly political. Especially when it came to depicting coexistence in South Tyrol and in Europe. There was enough material that Rolf gratefully absorbed and showed in concise short films.

Rolf was not only personally interested and moved by interpersonal issues, he wanted to be a mediator between languages and cultures. He tirelessly campaigned for equal rights between the language groups in South Tyrol, was a mediator and link between the Italian Film Association FEDIC and UNICA. He moved skilfully and flexibly between German-speaking and Italian culture and won countless prizes worldwide.



Anyone who visited Rolf Mandolesi at his home in Merano was impressed by the multitude of cups, diplomas, medals and other awards. He was visibly proud of them, and rightly so. Rolf was also a welcome juror at many international festivals, where he judged sharply but correctly and fairly.

As president of the Super8 & Video Club Merano, which he founded in 1983 and which he presided over until recently, he steered the fortunes and raised “pupils”, first and foremost Günther Haller, who embarked on a professional film career, while Rolf remained true to independent work. He had the gift of constructive criticism and was always a role model for the members.

With Rolf Mandolesi we have lost a person who left his mark on international non-professional film and was always a sincere, loyal, correct, generous gentleman and friend. A friend always asked how our Merano “Roger Moore” was doing. She was probably right: he was handsome, charming, gallant and on top of that intelligent and had a sense of humour - a person who will be missed.

We will still have his films. And the traces he left in the hearts of those who knew him and were close to him will remain.

Jacqueline Pante
Photos: Mandolesi Archive

**Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to all friends of the UNICA family
who have left us.
We will miss them all very much;
they have given us much along the way in UNICA.**

The work of the committee in 2021

From April to September 2021, the existing questions and problems could have been discussed and solved in 7 online meetings.

Special activities and decisions of the UNICA Committee:

- **The UNICA of the future will be shorter and cheaper.**
Out of the 3 existing proposals for a reorganisation of the UNICA Congress, the UNICA Committee has decided to implement the proposal of Rolf Leuenberger. The suggestion is presented in detail in the resolution proposal.
The decision will be submitted to the written UNICA General Assembly 2021 for resolution.
- **The membership fee will be reduced by 50% for the years 2020 and 2021.**
Because UNICA events (Committee meetings, Congress) could not be held in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, the Committee decided to reduce the membership fee by 50% for the years 2020 and 2021.
The decision will be submitted to the written UNICA General Assembly 2021 for resolution.
- **Andorra is removed from the list of member countries** because no activities are apparent and there is no reply to letters. The amount has been outstanding for a long time.
- **Tunisia** member (without voting rights at the AGM) for the years 2019 / 2020 / 2021 will be listed as an associate due to outstanding membership fees.
If the fees are not paid, they will be removed from the membership list.
- **The supervisor of the "Friends of UNICA" will be designated as an external advisor in the future.**
- **There are proposals to reduce the size of the committee** in the future in order to increase the efficiency of the work and reduce costs. The results of the election from the written AGM are awaited. There are also considerations not to fill the position of the second Vice-President with the retirement of Bernhard Lindner.
The new President will then discuss the contents of the work with the newly elected members
- **Wolfgang Allin (Patronage)** was very active in 2021. Through his mediation, a festival in India (Puna) was recruited. The cooperation with this festival is very positive, so that further activities can be expected. The committee would like to thank Wolfgang Allin for his very committed work.
- **Franka Stas und Eugy Van Gool** were very busy during the time without President and General Secretary 2021. Franka wrote the minutes at all meetings and translated all documents for the meetings and the General Assembly into English and French together with Eugy.
The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the especially for their work.

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The next UNICA Congress

After a very strong reluctance to apply for a UNICA Congress in the last 2 years due to the pandemic, we have received several concrete applications in 2021 that let us look very positively into the future.

2022 SWITZERLAND, Locarno, Tessin. 21.08.2022 –25.08.2022

Rolf Leuenberger has succeeded in convincing the city of Locarno to hold a UNICA Congress through discussions and many visits.

An organising committee has already been formed CINEMAKERS TICINO (CMTI) as the organising committee (OC). The city of Locarno has agreed. So, we will hold our UNICA Congress shortly after the famous Locarno Film Festival in the premises of the "Great Film Festival".

The OC has asked for a one-off grant of €10,000.

Justification:

- Due to the pandemic, the circumstances are very difficult.
- Due to the first-time realisation of a short UNICA, no previously known procedures can be carried out.
- Due to the short deadline, no financial reserves could be saved and sponsors could not be found in such a short time.

An amount of 5000.- € was approved by the committee. **The application and grant proposal will be submitted to the written UNICA General Assembly 2021 for decision.**

2023 ITALY, Comacchio (FE) 10.09.2023 – 14.09.2023

During discussions with Jaqueline Pante (FEDIC, Italy) in 2020/2021, the wishes of the UNICA Committee to host a UNICA Congress in Italy were a recurring topic....

Through the efforts of Jaqueline Pante on the Board of FEDIC in August 2021, the way was finally opened.

The General Assembly of FEDIC unanimously decided to apply for a UNICA Congress in Comacchio (Ferrara) in 2023.

The application will be submitted to the written UNICA General Assembly 2021 for decision.

2024 UKRAINE, Kherson on the Black Sea

As early as at UNICA 2019 in Zeist, the head of the Ukrainian delegation Yevgen Maksymov had offered to organise a UNICA in the coming years.

Due to the developments of the last years and because of the pandemic, the planning continued again in 2021. The approval of the city of Kherson has now been obtained. We will inform all interested parties about further developments. The talks were conducted by Vice President Andrzej Przewdziecki. Thank you very much.

The following message reached us via Facebook:

Yes, in 2024 the UNICA International Festival of Non-Professional and Independent Cinema is planned in the Kherson region.

During a roundtable meeting they discussed with Vice President of UNICA Committee Andrzej Przewdziecki the main problems regarding the possibility to organise and hold the specified event.

The organising committee is sure that holding the UNICA Congress 2024 will be the brightest art event not only for the region but also for the international community in general.

The organisers are deeply convinced that the Kherson region has all the possibilities and sufficient potential to host a festival at the European level.

Sergey Kozyr Igor Mazur

On my own account

I will be leaving the UNICA Committee as Vice-President at the conclusion of the 2021 Written General Assembly.

The work in the Committee has been nice, as we have been able to solve many of the bigger and smaller problems and prepare the way for a good future of UNICA.

However, the work was also very hard in places, as we had to reinvent a lot of things in the daily work and new procedures had to be thought up with a much smaller team, without a President and Secretary General and at a time that did not exactly make the work easier.

My thanks go to the members of the Committee, especially to Jaqueline Pante, for her willingness to share her knowledge from her time as General Secretary, and to Thomas Kräuchi, who has always been a good advisor to me.

Thanks to Franka Stas who was often and very busy writing the minutes and to Eugy Van Gool who, together with Franka, took care of the translations and sending out the documents.

Thanks also to Wolfgang Allin, who enriched the work in the committee with many good suggestions.

We will see each other at the next UNICA and I look forward to meeting the UNICA family in person again.

Bernhard Lindner

Vice-president

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