

## TERRASSA - CITY OF FILM



**CULTURAL INDUSTRIES ECONOMIC ARTS**  
**IDENTITY HERITAGE MEMORY INNOVATION**  
**EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY CREATIVITY**

### 1. Background

The growth of Terrassa is intricately linked to the Industrial Revolution. It is one of the most populous Catalan cities, and home to 216,000 people. At the start of the twentieth century, Terrassa factories were pioneers in textile production and in the adaptation of artisanal processes for modern industrial steam engines. The latter was associated with technological progress and training of workers to meet the needs of fervent industrial activity.

Terrassa is a city with an intense and diverse cultural life across all areas of creation and arts. It also has a wide range of cultural facilities, as well as a strong networking culture that generates constant activity, an extensive schedule of popular and traditional festivals, and a rich cultural and architectural heritage, all of which have become key parts of the city's identity.

## 2. Terrassa and Culture

Terrassa's most recent growth and development came from industrial modernism and technical training primarily in the textile industry during the early twentieth century. Subsequently, technological arts, including the emergence of cinema, arrived in the city and were led by several generations of amateur creators. At that time, a successful model was established that, years later, would be replicated and geared towards to the film industry. This model centred on three points: production, the need for specialised studies (the School of Engineers, the seed of the current Polytechnic University of Catalonia), and the preservation of both cultural and historical heritage, which will lead to the Catalonia Museum of Science and Technology.

This updated model came together at the beginning of the 21st century during a paradigm shift. The film industry became firmly established as a creation and production entity after building the Catalonia Audiovisual Centre, the Terrassa Film Office, a large industrial complex closely linked to the Terrassa Science and Technology Centre "Orbital 40". The centre is based on unique cross-cutting training support in Spain, offering audio, visual, and photo lab training; University Degree studies in Cinematic and Audiovisual Arts, Multimedia Engineering, Music, and Interpretation. Support for historical heritage comes from "Cinema Catalunya": <http://www.terrassadigital.cat/cinema/>, one of the few municipal cinemas in Spain, and the Film Archive Centre for Preservation and Restoration of Catalonia which houses historical material from over 100 years of Catalan and Spanish cinema. The city is also home to ESCAC, a university centre that is a leader in audiovisual training in Catalonia, and one of the best in Europe.

**TERRASSA IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HUBS FOR AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION AND CREATION IN CATALONIA, SPAIN, AND SOUTHERN EUROPE. THE CITY IS FOCUSED ON INNOVATION, TALENT, AND CREATIVITY AS KEY STRATEGIC ELEMENTS FOR ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.**

The promotion of cinema and the audiovisual sector in Terrassa, consequently designated a Creative City by UNESCO for its film industry, is part of an initiative to design policy through a socio-economic citizen agreement. The impetus involves identifying this sector as the best response to the recent economic crisis, and as a means of refocusing its economy on areas full of opportunities for generating wealth, employment, social progress, and well-being. In the midst of a crisis around standard production models, Terrassa has chosen meaning in the creative field of cinema, and uses it as the agent of change in local productions to position it globally at the forefront of the audiovisual sector. With an investment of 35 million Euros in the Catalonia Audiovisual Centre (promoted by the City Council and the Government of Catalonia), Terrassa has received the support and trust of the national and international film world.

Terrassa is a Pilot City for Agenda 21 for Culture through the 2015 - 2017 European Pilot Cities programme. Its strengths with respect to Agenda 21 for culture are "Cultural Rights", "Heritage, Diversity, and Creativity", and "Governance of Culture".



In line with the 2030 Agenda UN Sustain Development Goals, the creative industries and cultural infrastructure promoted by the city favour local production and the creation of decent jobs, the third and fifth goals of SDG 8 respectively, as well as the formation of cultural policies that prioritise locally produced goods to help reduce inequality (SDG 10). Terrassa also participates in setting up and implementing the New Urban Agenda.

## **3. Objectives and Project Implementation**

### **3.1 Primary and Specific Objectives**

The overall goal is to promote cinema as a part of the city's development, social structuring, and economic sustainability, in responding to citizens' concerns over the economy, using cinema as an agent of change in the local productive framework.

Specific objectives include: positioning Terrassa as a sector leader in film production services; the training and retention of talent, with a range of programmes from secondary school through university and even in business; urban cohesion and social cooperation through the "Audiovisual Board" platform.

### **3.2 Project Development**

#### **Main Actions Carried Out**

The Catalonia Audiovisual Centre (PAC) is a production hub, a hotbed for creative industries, and a business centre with over 40 companies. It is unique in Spain and Southern Europe, which allows it to host high-quality professional productions: TV programmes for large national broadcasters, international co-productions, and more. The currently established model is to provide final services to any global production that shoots in the territory, such as the recent example of Netflix.



The city invested almost 35 million Euros in transforming an obsolete hospital complex which set a benchmark across European. This was bolstered by the Terrassa Film Office and the non-profit services offered to all productions, which have turned the city into an open-stage cinema. Since 2008, the Catalonia Audiovisual Centre/Film Office has promoted 115 academic projects in the city, aside from the hundreds of internships that each centre provides within their teaching programmes, and which also receive indirect support.

**THE "AUDIOVISUAL BOARD" IS A SOCIAL MONITORING AGENCY FORMED BY AMATEUR FILMMAKERS, TRAINING CENTRES, LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, AND SECTOR PROFESSIONALS THAT PROMOTES ALL AREAS OF THE CITY'S AUDIOVISUAL INDUSTRY, INCLUDING CREATION, PRODUCTION, AND HERITAGE CONSERVATION.**

Specific collaboration agreements have been signed with ESCAC, the Santa Eulalia Institute, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the Faculty of Philology and Communication of the University of Barcelona, Pompeu Fabra University, Abat Oliba University, and Ramon Llull University - La Salle Engineering. All of these have made their facilities available to the Audiovisual Centre for creation, investigation, and audiovisual development. Additionally, the Baumann Lab offers scholarships for young authors. Cinema Catalunya also produces advertising and short films, both privately and in the university.

The Audiovisual Centre has developed scheduled visits to its studios, including persons with disabilities, to make industrial production more accessible to the public. This has made it possible to welcome thousands of visitors of all ages to discover the world of cinema production.

Cinema Catalunya hosts programmes aimed at very specific audiences, with a cross-generational focus such as: Cinema and Death, Active Over 60, Cineforum for Equality, Spiritual Cinema Cycle, Teaching of the Show, Solidarity, The Cause, Cycle of Cinema for Republic III, Environment Week, and much more. It also freely lends its facilities to local film directors for public screenings of their films. Since 2016 Cinema Catalunya has expanded to cater to children and family audience, with a focus on nursing parents.

Open Media Projects/Torax Club, has been a programme geared towards the development of projects in the audiovisual field. It is the result of a collaboration between the Audiovisual Centre and the Terrassa Audiovisual Living Lab which analysed almost 30 projects from creative industries and prioritised their industrial sustainability, and guided many of them through their preliminary phases. In line with the support of new entrepreneurs, the Audiovisual Centre hosts an incubation programme for start-ups in partnership with Telefónica Open Futures.

**"TERRASSA, CITY OF FILM" HAS PROMOTED A CITY BRAND ROOTED IN GENUINE IDENTITY VALUES, THEREBY STRENGTHENING THE CITY'S IMAGE, REPUTATION, AND REGIONAL STRUCTURE.**

## **4. Impact**

### **4.1 Direct Impacts**

#### **Impact on the Local Government**

The government has developed its own strategy to implement cultural and audiovisual policies that respond to the needs of the sector. The audiovisual sector has made significant contributions to the industrial fabric of the city. Given the administration's awareness of this, the "Audiovisual Board" was established to make the most of this potential. The board is a forum for public-private participation and cooperation that has its finger on the pulse of local cinema.

#### **Impact on Culture and on Local Cultural Actors**

Some highlights include the empowerment of the community through participation in community initiatives. With respect to local image and identity, a sense of belonging and an improved external city image have been established, thereby having a positive impact on the overall city brand.

#### **Impacts on the Territory and Population**

It is worth noting the changes to citizens' acquisition of professional skills through training and the promotion of social skills as well as coexistence. Over the long term, these initiatives contribute to the health and well-being of citizens.

### **4.2 Assessment**

An evaluation process is being developed based on the impact that can be made.

### **4.3 Key Factors**

- Strong involvement of citizens in the project from a bottom-up perspective;
- Actors involved from an historical perspective who see Terrassa as a burgeoning city of cinema;
- Structures and programmes based on culture that are well-developed and anchored in the city's idiosyncrasies;
- Support and crucial commitment of the municipal government and other supra-municipal organisations;



- Transversality with all public policies developed in the city

#### 4.4 Ongoing Work

The government is committed to sharing experiences and good practices while creating alliances with the private sector and civil society. As a result this contributes to professional and artistic exchange through European and international programmes and networks. On top of this, there is close collaboration with the Audiovisual Centre's technical staff and other departments of the City Council, including the Department of Culture and of European and International Relations.

**SOME OF THE KEY FACTORS INCLUDE THE CRUCIAL SUPPORT OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS, AS WELL AS THE STRONG INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS IN THE PROJECT.**

Some current and planned future initiatives are:

- "TRS Let's Make Cinema": the objective is to culturally integrate younger citizens, using the potential of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, addressing issues like film literacy, and eventually organising a film festival for high school students
- "Virtual Reality Cinema Hub": it aims to facilitate knowledge transfer from the professional film industry through the implementation and use of virtual reality technology.
- "City of Cinema on Tour": a set of tourist routes open to the general public that visit city spaces that have been used as film locations.

## 5. Further Information

Terrassa was a candidate for the third "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (November 2017 - May of 2018). The jury for the award prepared its final report in June 2018 and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices of implementing Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Joan Chicón Vallejo, Head of European and International Relations and City Growth, Terrassa, Spain.

Contact: [joan.chicon@terrassa.cat](mailto:joan.chicon@terrassa.cat)

Website: [www.terrassa.cat/internacional](http://www.terrassa.cat/internacional)