



JAPAN 2021

100 YEARS OF
JAPANESE CINEMA



FAN Major Programmes Monitoring & Evaluation

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FAN Major Programmes

Since 2018 Film Hub Midlands has led on BFI Major Programmes, a cross-FAN, UK-wide programming initiative open to all Film Audience Network (FAN) members. The initiative includes an annual BFI 'Blockbuster' and a moment of National coordinated programming generated from within the Network. The UK-wide initiative is project managed by Annabel Grundy for Film Hub Midlands who worked collaboratively with all stakeholders and partners to achieve the final results. Annabel manages all stakeholder management, opportunity promotion via the Hubs, engagement with members and coordinates the steering group who make the funding decisions.

The aims of the BFI Major Programmes initiative are to:

- increase audience engagement with film and deepen the quality of cultural experience
- increase the confidence of FAN members to screen a wider range of films
- boost the engagement of audiences aged 16- 30
- increase the diversity of FAN audiences
- raise the profile of film as an art form and create a dialogue about its place in our cultural life

Report overview

This report summarises the initial findings of BFI Japan 2021 BFI Blockbuster that appeared in cinemas across the country from October to December 2021.

The report presents the main output data for FAN member projects funded via Major Programmes, demonstrating the scope and scale of delivery, alongside some headline evidence of key outcomes. A more comprehensive assessment of the initiative will feature in the final report on Major Programmes due for delivery in 2022.

The evidence presented here is drawn from the following sources:

- Existing documentary records (including project logs, booking lists and funding/ budget information)
- Audience surveys and delivery partner feedback
- Observations are drawn from qualitative interviews with delivery partners (FAN member) and strategic partners (including FAN Hub executives and BFI)

Summary

Audiences

- Audience engagement was impacted by the on-going Covid-19 pandemic
- Members were still operating with reduced capacity, social distancing and mask wearing but cited more complex challenges around understanding what drives audience engagement and expressed a need for more research in this area
- BFI Japan 2021 saw an increase in activity aimed at younger audiences and a boost in attendance of audiences under 30 years old, compared with previous BFI Blockbuster seasons
- Audience data suggests diversity of UK-wide audiences increased within certain audience ethnicities compared with previous BFI Blockbuster seasons
- Appetite for returning to enhanced cultural experiences was evident and responses demonstrate satisfaction was high from audiences. Yet, there is still a desire for hybrid and online activity from both the members and the audience
- Capturing increased profile of film and dialogue about film is challenging, yet members felt the very nature of the audiences they engage, and the enhanced activity delivered, achieves this
- Central BFI Japan 2021 Marketing campaign had a positive response, but the impact was less evident for venues outside of London, who struggled to see the benefit and impact on local audiences. There was an overall sense of a missed opportunity as the momentum and consistency of the campaign deployment waned towards the end of the season

Members

- Members and stakeholders identified a strong audience response to the theme and many members will continue to develop and build a stronger profile of Japanese and South Asian films within their programmes
- There is a consistent appeal to new members to participate in BFI Blockbuster seasons, mostly driven by the theme and their own focus and interest. BFI Japan 2021 saw a 30% increase in Film Festivals and some key specialist curators taking part
- Satisfaction levels from members regarding participation remains high, yet more care needs to be taken with new members who may need more support and guidance through the process and have higher expectations of the impact of national profile
- Members demonstrated confidence by being more adventurous and creative with their programming choices, even if they commented on scaled back ambition or risk taking with their event design

Measurements & Evaluation

- It is essential that spend per head and financial terms are taken in context along side measurements that look more deeply into who came, and whether they changed a behaviour and have since come back
- Members are growing tired of familiar evaluation methodologies and desire a more reciprocal relationship where learning can be shared, discussed and embedded

Background

Since 2014, BFI Southbank and BFI Film Audience Network have collaborated to deliver annual Nationwide thematic film seasons to engage and delight audiences UK-wide. Celebrating genre, representation and craft in film, BFI 'Blockbuster' combines a high profile National campaign with a sustained (3-4 month) period of film programming at both BFI Southbank and in venues nationwide. Japan is the BFI's sixth 'Blockbuster' season delivered in partnership with the Film Audience Network (FAN) and the Independent Cinema Office (ICO) delivering a National Tour. This is the third 'Blockbuster' managed by Film Hub Midlands.

BFI Japan 2021

The BFI's blockbuster season for 2021 was originally developed to coincide with the year of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics yet due to the pandemic the BFI presented a major celebration of Japanese film, from its origins to the present day, between October to December 2021.

Japan has one of the world's greatest cinematic traditions, and has long inspired admiration and fascination among audiences and creatives in the UK, acclaimed for fusing the finest craftsmanship with an audacious and experimental spirit, and distinctive social and cultural histories with popular forms and genres.

This was a time for FAN members to come together and inspire new and younger audiences with this country's rich and diverse moving image heritage and culture. The programme centred Japanese stories and creatives in front of and behind the camera, through Japanese productions and co-productions.

FAN Physical Admissions **14,089**

Live Online Admissions **914**

395 screenings / events **54** UK projects **13,141** engagements

Engagement; **544** watched later admissions **12,597** soft admissions

Hub	No of Projects	Investment	Physical & Live Online Audience	% of total audience	Screenings / Events	% of total screenings/events
London	12	£ 20,240	2,782	19%	57	15%
North	9	£ 15,706	3,198	21%	58	15%
Scotland	7	£ 23,770	1,406	9%	47	12%
South East	7	£ 15,707	2,166	15%	63	16%
Midlands	6	£ 24,500	1,867	12%	69	17%
South West	6	£ 12,800	1,564	10%	21	5%
Wales	4	£ 7,537	1,568	11%	65	16%
Northern Ireland	3	£ 6,190	452	3%	15	4%
Total	54	£ 126,450	15,003	100%	395	100%

	Investment***	Projects	Admissions	New Visitors	Very Good & Good rating	Identify as non-white	Identify as female	Identify as living with a disability
Japan 2021*	£126,450	54	15,003	41%	95%	22%	51%	10%
Musicals 2019*	£239,602	73	28,776	46%	98%	10%	61%	8%
Comedy Genius 2018*	£179,655	66	17,932	46%	98%	17%	55%	10%
Black Star 2016*	£293,335	37	16,394	26%	98%	21%	62%	9%
LOVE 2015	£421,231	62	31,473	44%	91%	16%	66%	8%
Sci-fi 2014**	£567,688	59	65,210	29%	88%	10%	47%	6%

* Japan omits BFI Player, touring programme and BFI Southbank activity. Musicals, Comedy Genius and Black Star figures omit Film Menu activity delivered by ICO

** Sci-Fi consisted of individual PDF applications from 9 Film Hubs - all other Blockbusters had combined centralised project management

*** From Comedy Genius onwards investment does not include any project management costs - only direct investment in audience development activity

Audience Profile

Summary

51% Identify as female

34% 16-30 years old

24% Identify as LGBTQ+

10% Identify as disabled

22% Identify as non-white

41% New audience

Observations

- 10 percentage point decrease in female audiences, compared to Musicals and a 5 percentage point decrease compared to Comedy Genius.
- 16-30 year old audiences overall increased by a 7 percentage points compared to Musicals. Younger audiences increased a further 8 percentage points at activity aimed specifically at diverse audiences.
- There is a significant increase in Asian or Asian British audiences (6% for Musicals and 2% for Comedy Genius). Yet, a decrease of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British audiences across all activity (10% for Comedy Genius and 4% Musicals).

This table outlines the audience profile of those attending FAN activity during BFI Japan. The total survey sample was 1,183, representing 8% of audience from FAN activity. Members expressed challenges with encouraging audiences to complete audience feedback forms using QR codes. The three columns of focused activity highlights projects identified by MP Project Manager to be aimed at specific audience target groups.

It is worth noting that the audience figures and profile only refer to activity supported via Film Hub Midlands and does not include BFI South Bank, BFI touring programmes, which would contribute to an overall audience number for BFI Japan.

		AIMED AT FOCUSED AUDIENCE GROUPS		
	ALL	YOUNG AUDIENCES	DIVERSE	ACCESSIBLE*
<i>Survey sample</i>	1183	267	290	592
Identify as female	51%	46%	45%	41%
Identify as male	47%	45%	43%	40%
Identify as non-binary	3%	1%	5%	3%
Prefer to self-describe	2%	1%	2%	2%
Prefer not to say	3%	2%	3%	2%
Age 16-30	34%	23%	42%	32%
Age 30+	59%	55%	53%	51%
Prefer not to say	2%	1%	1%	1%
Identify as Heterosexual or Straight	62%	52%	47%	46%
Identify as Bisexual	10%	7%	11%	8%
Identify as Gay or Lesbian	9%	2%	22%	8%
Prefer to self-describe	5%	3%	7%	4%
Prefer not to say	15%	20%	8%	15%
Identify as living with a disability	10%	12%	8%	9%
Prefer not to say	8%	18%	4%	10%
White: British/Irish/Travelling Community/Other	73%	59%	66%	59%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean/African/Asian/other	5%	3%	7%	4%
Asian or Asian British: Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Chinese/other	12%	7%	19%	12%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African/Caribbean/Other Black background	2%	0%	1%	3%
Arab/Any other Ethnic group	2%	1%	2%	2%
Prefer not to say	5%	4%	2%	4%

* Data identified by projects that claimed to provide access measures. It is important to note that this may not have been on every screening delivered within that project.

Audience Profile cont.

The following table is used to identify the socio-economic background (SEB) of audience members based on what occupation was held by their highest earning parent when they were 14 years old and what type of school they attended. This is based on the National statistics socio-economic classification (NS-SEC), which is divided into four categories: NS-SEC 1 (higher managerial and professional occupations), NS-SEC 2 (lower managerial and professional occupations), NS-SEC 3-5 (intermediate, small employers and technical occupations), NS-SEC 6-7 (semi-routine and routine occupations) and NS-SEC 8 (Never working and long-term unemployed). In this report we make no assumptions from this information to infer if audiences are disadvantaged.

	ALL	ACTIVITY AIMED AT FOCUSED AUDIENCE GROUPS		
		YOUNG AUDIENCES	DIVERSE	ACCESSIBLE
State-run or state-funded / comprehensive school – non-selective	49%	39%	41%	32%
Attended school outside the UK	15%	8%	21%	12%
State-run or state-funded / comprehensive school – selective on academic, faith or other grounds	13%	6%	12%	8%
Prefer not to say	7%	4%	7%	5%
Independent or fee-paying school – no bursary	7%	6%	6%	5%
Independent or fee-paying school – bursary	5%	2%	3%	4%
Don't know	2%	3%	3%	2%
Other	2%	2%	3%	2%
Modern professional occupations e.g., teacher, nurse, social worker, artist, musician, software designer	21%	12%	17%	14%
Traditional professional occupations e.g., accountant, solicitor, scientist, medical practitioner	13%	9%	10%	8%
Senior managers and administrators e.g., finance manager, chief executive, managing director	10%	6%	9%	6%
Technical and craft occupations e.g., fitter, plumber, printer, electrician	10%	7%	8%	6%
Middle or junior managers e.g., office manager, warehouse manager, restaurant manager, shop manager	9%	5%	10%	5%
Clerical and intermediate occupations e.g., Secretary, nursery nurse, office clerk, call centre agent	9%	4%	9%	3%
Semi-routine manual and service occupations e.g., postal worker, security guard, receptionist, sales assistant	5%	2%	2%	4%
Unemployed/never worked/long term sickness	5%	5%	4%	3%

Developing Audiences

“What a fabulous event, such a fantastic, horizon-broadening opportunity for local young people in an area that can feel very far away from everything. I was particularly impressed how young people were encouraged to broaden out into making their own films and told about opportunities with BFI.”

Audience Member

“It was really moving to see someone like myself represented on screen. As an Asian trans woman it almost never happens.”

Audience Member

Online Audiences

One in five projects included some online activity reaching **1,458** audience members

The data gathered is evidence of how the activity supported by BFI Major Programmes for BFI Japan 2021 meets the following aims despite the impacts of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic;

- A boost to engagement of audiences aged 16- 30
- Increased the diversity of FAN audiences
- Increased audience engagement with film and deepen the quality of cultural experience
- A raised profile of film as an art form and a dialogue generated about its place in our cultural life
- Increased the confidence of FAN members to screen a wider range of films

Given the context of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic within which BFI Japan 2021 was delivered it is not possible to compare seasons like for like, therefore previous season figures are used merely to identify changes in audience engagement. Level of covid caution remained high, especially midst the Omicron variant increase during December 2021, which had an impact on audience confidence and attendance. Audience engagement was impacted with restrictions still in place in many venues including social distancing, reduced capacities and mask wearing.

Members consistently commented on the current challenges of audience engagement, specifically a lack of knowledge and understanding of what audiences want, how to engage them and methods to reach them. BFI Japan 2021 remains consistent with previous seasons in achieving over 40% new audience members. However, from observations they are concerned that audiences who were engaged prior to the pandemic have not returned, they may be more risk averse, taste and habits may have changed and the way people access cultural and creative activity has shifted. Reaching audiences digitally has become harder and members expressed a need to go back to the beginning to understand who their audiences are now, to rebuild relationships and form new ones.

Research into audience behaviour is needed post pandemic to identify how audiences want to engage and give members the confidence they need when delivering activity.

Online activity remained a part of the UK-wide programme, attracting 10% of the total audience number;

Delivering online activity remains a priority to some members, with 11 projects including an online element, in most cases as a hybrid offer. There is still a sense from members that certain audiences are less confident at returning to physical screenings and that online activity can complement these, and while the focus is primarily on the theatrical cinema space, it is important to explore and engage in other possibilities to connect and share films with wider audiences. Much of the online activity was wrap around and added value elements – Q&As, workshops, panel discussions (especially when it isn't possible for talent to travel). 42% of members claim they will continue to offer activity online.

Only 6% of the audience survey responses came from those who had engaged online. Of that 6%, 20% would have attended a physical event, 45% would not have attended if a physical event and 35% didn't know.

Young Audience Focus

11 focused projects

113 specific screenings/events aimed at younger audiences (*including families*)

443 audience members reached
(*3% of the total audience number*)

34% New attendees

Audience survey sample **267** (*23% of total audience*)

Diverse Audience Focus

9 focused projects

60 specific screenings/events aimed at increasing diverse audiences

1521 audience members reached
(*10% of the total audience*)

48% New attendees

48% of members delivered **130** accessible screenings/events
(*33% of the total programme*)

BFI Japan saw an increase in activity aimed at younger audiences and a boost in attendance of audiences under 30 years old;

Activity targeting younger audiences increased with 11 focused projects and 113 specific screenings (which included activity aimed at under 16s. Members commented that the theme lent itself to targeting family audiences with Studio Ghibli titles and the cult/independent titles appealed to 20-30 year olds.

The audience survey data suggests that the BFI Japan season appealed to a younger demographic than previous Blockbuster seasons. Overall activity saw a rise in young audiences of 7 percentage points, compared to previous seasons, and activity that was specifically aimed at diverse audiences saw a further 8 percentage point increase.

The survey data also identifies that new audiences from this segment have reduced post pandemic (34% Japan, 60% Musicals, 50% Comedy Genius), which was backed up by members challenges with understanding how to reach new audiences (see P11).

Members and stakeholders both observed that at the time of delivery older audiences were slower to return to normal 'pre-pandemic' activity.

Audience survey data suggests a growth in the diversity of UK-wide audiences, within certain demographic groups;

Audience survey data confirms that activity targeting specific audiences (underrepresented ethnicities, people who identify as from the LGBTQ+ community) succeeds in increasing audiences from these groups. The only exception would be activity that is delivered with access requirements which did not appear to increase audiences who identify as living with a disability. 37% of supported organisations were female led, 19% are Black and under-represented ethnic led, 12% are LGBTQ+ led and 8% disability-led.

Overall there is a 6 percentage point increase in Asian or Asian British audiences (12% for Japan, 6% for Musicals and 2% for Comedy Genius), and this increases a further 7 percentage points for activity aimed specifically at diverse audiences. Yet there was an 8 percentage point decrease of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British audiences across all activity (2% for Japan, 4% for Musicals and 10% for Comedy Genius). This could be explained by the impact of covid on the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British community and increased lack of audience confidence. There was also an observed increase in organisations with a specialist interest in South and East Asian films and audiences, which as previously evidenced, with other under-represented groups, has a positive increase on audience numbers from the targeted communities.

Audience survey data suggests a 10 percentage point reduction of audiences members who identify as female compared with Musicals, which could be due to the appeal of the theme. Participating members observed an increase in men, and family units - fathers, sons and brothers.

Cultural Experience

46 projects delivered were enhanced
(85% of total projects)

209 screenings were enhanced
(53% of total screenings)

95% of audience rated experience
good or very good

96% would attend again

“This was a wonderful experience. Great to be out in the community, sharing an experience with other families. My daughter (age 10) struggles with anxiety and this helped her in getting experience of being out and about again (post lockdown) and feeling safe around others. The film was really family friendly and suitable for all.”

Audience Member

Audience appetite for returning to enhanced cultural experiences was evident and responses demonstrate satisfaction was high;

Engagement and added value activity was impacted by the delays in delivery and changes in the season funding support. Many members commented on the need to scale back and reduce risk and creative ambition of activity due to the reduction of grants available and continued impacts of the pandemic. However, despite restrictions imposed and risk aversion of some members regarding live elements of enhancements, travel for talent etc. members were able to develop innovative ways to enhance activity and make audiences feel safe and comfortable.

Across the project **53% of screenings was enhanced**. Type of enhanced activity included; introductions, Q&As, pre-recorded talks, live-music, craft workshops, culinary displays and themed food offerings, exhibitions, illustrative poster giveaways, interactivity and cosplay, DJ parties, site specific activity.

Audience survey questions were refocused from asking audiences the value of cultural experience to focus on feelings. The following table outlines how that audiences felt high levels of satisfaction with cultural aspects, and valued raised awareness and deepened understanding and how they differ across different target audience groups.

Cultural Achievements, rants by audience survey responses	ALL*	Young Audience	Diverse Audiences
Rate the event/screening overall as very good or good	95%	90%	90%
Would attend again	96%	93%	92%
Made you feel welcome at the venue/event	82%	76%	83%
Inspired you to watch more films like the one you have just seen	65%	52%	68%
Deepened your understanding of the art and power of film	63%	56%	65%
Provided an opportunity to socialise with friends or family	57%	57%	60%
Increased your awareness of people’s lives and experiences that are different from your own	56%	53%	69%
Made you feel connected with a community of people watching the same film	53%	45%	56%
Introduced you to new types of film	51%	58%	53%
Made you think about yourself, where you live or where you are from	43%	33%	52%

- Data collected from audience survey sample of 1007 overall but note that not all responders answered this section
- Sample for Young Audience activity was 218. Sample for Activity targeting underrepresented audiences was 324

Reach

Volume:

251 Items of press of coverage*
£548,352 Advertising value equivalent

Web Engagement**:

26,467 website sessions
4,571 ticket click through
 (20% converted)

Top Cities – ticket clicks

3,400 London
126 Leeds

Top Chains

2,300 bfi.org.uk
1,200 picturehouses.com
146 closeupfilmcentre.com

Total Social Impact:

	Network Impressions	Engagements	Engagement Rate
Facebook	415,986	10,058	2.40%
Instagram	388,827	17,504	4.50%
Twitter	1,259,109	18,493	1.50%
Total	2,063,922	46,055	2.20%

There was some evidence of public dialogue about film’s place in UK cultural life as a result of the season, however, feedback suggests that there was a loss of momentum due to campaign fatigue, changes in the season and other impact caused by the pandemic.

Japan 2020 was due to launch in March 2020, just before the country went into the first lock down. The programme was redesigned as a BFI online season via BFI Player and the re-launched in 2021 with an in-venue season once cinemas reopened. As with previous Blockbusters, BFI Press Office coordinated the national press and marketing campaign, which was supported by FAN Major Programmes. Film Hub Midlands recruited a Marketing Campaigns Coordinator to update website listings, create highlights and support members with campaign assets and advice. The campaign included;

Centralised website (hosted by BFI)

Bfijapan.co.uk launched in September 2021 and provided a centralised listing for UK-wide in-venue activity, trailers, ticket links. Members reported limited value or impact from centralised listings website. It is clear from analytics the limited reach and impact on activity outside of London and bfi.org.uk

National Press campaign led by BFI Press Office

BFI Press commented on the complete shift in the news agenda, as everything was focused on the pandemic and cutting through that was only occasionally possible. Impacted further by a loss of momentum and keeping press interested across the two editions of the season (2020 online and 2021 in venues). There was a continued drop in coverage volume and AVE compared to previous Blockbusters, although making comparisons is impossible given the context of the global situation. The pandemic also affected attendance of talent which also impacted on volume of coverage. FAN UK wide activity is vital for the success of the national coverage of any BFI National season. See page 13 for 2021 press highlights – provided by BFI.

Social Media campaign was led by BFI across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels with members leading on their own activity. Analysis of impact across UK-Wide activity is not possible due to the detail of analytics. Members commented on a lack of social media engagement via central channels although a strong presence via own channels.

Recommendations for future impact analysis on participating member social media channels may reveal much wider social reach and deeper engagements.

*This figure includes coverage of the BFI online programme in 2020 and the in-venue programme relaunch in 2021. Examples of FAN press highlights on following page, provided by BFI Comms.

** The website and social media analysis covers only the period of time between 1st September – 31st December 2021, tracking the hashtag #bfijapan. Social Impact across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter



2021 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS – BFI FAN EVENTS

JAPAN 2021

SheffieldWire

Queer East Film Festival allows Showroom to 'open up conversations about queer Asian heritage'



Queer East Film Festival allows Showroom to 'open up conversations about queer Asian heritage'... SheffieldWire

B24/7

CRAPPY MONSTERS, A BLOOD-SOAKED TRAIL OF SAMURAI SLAUGHTER AND A NEW CONTENDER FOR WORST FILM EVER MADE

After taking shelter in a spooky old mansion, a bunch of partying teens discover a ouija board and decide to spend the night. As you do, a werlock promptly pops up bent on sacrificing them to revive his bride. This sets out to achieve by unearthing a whole lot of creepy monsters...

Recently released in 4K, the 1988 horror Spooker achieved cult status largely as a result of its availability. One reviewer described it as 'a go-for-broke 1980s horror thriller that offers some surprisingly good monster effects and some unconvincingly stylized acting and writing'.

AMP ASIAN MOVIE PULSE

BFI Japan Comes To Big Screens UK-wide This Autumn



The BFI Japan Comes To Big Screens UK-wide This Autumn... AMP

creativetourist.com



Akira Kurosawa Mini-Season at Showroom Cinema... creativetourist.com

BFI announces UK-wide 'BFI Japan' events



BFI announces UK-wide 'BFI Japan' events... BFI

creativetourist.com



Yasujiro Ozu Mini Season at Showroom Cinema... creativetourist.com

Ryusuke Hamaguchi: "This Is How We Live Our Lives"



Over the past several months, Ryusuke Hamaguchi has been extraordinarily generous to interviewers curious about the background, influences, and working methods that have led to his emergence as one of Japan's most internationally acclaimed directors...

campbeltown courier

Cinema prepares for Hallowe'en horrors... campbeltown courier

The Star

Film Review: A mini-season of three of Kurosawa's most beloved films... The Star

The script is a vehicle: Japanese director Ryusuke Hamaguchi on Drive My Car



Drive My Car is released in cinemas on 19 November, when the Close-Up Cinema's Ryusuke Hamaguchi retrospective also begins as part of its Japan 2021 season... The Guardian

TOP 5: Pick of the best arts

- 1 Festival activities... 2 Japanese cinema... 3 Theatre go live... 4 Story competition... 5 Champion baking...

Matchbox Cine presents The New Morning of Billy the Kid by Naoto Yamakawa



SHOGUN ASSASSIN

Sword & Sorcery... with a vengeance.

Art Form Profile

"It's really validating when you feel that you've kind of got it right and the audience engages in the films as passionately as you do."

Member

Members expressed a desire to showcase South Asian film to the next generation, broaden audience perception of the art form, encourage people to engage with it on a deeper level and to connect people to Japanese culture.

Members and stakeholders identified a strong audience response to the theme and many members will continue to develop and build a stronger profile of Japanese and South Asian films within their programmes.

The ability to enhance events enabled audience engagement and dialogue, some enhanced activity such as Q&A's, workshops etc, allow direct communication with the audience, and provides an opportunity to understand why they came and what they thought of the film, but ways of measuring and tracking this in relation to raising the profile of film with new audiences is challenging.

The development of academic partnerships to deliver introductions and post film discussions led to a more engaged conversational approach to the context in which films are presented (Grimmfest) and will support legacy activity for future focus on Japanese Horror.

There was a general sense that the profile from the national marketing and PR campaign did not translate to UK-wide audiences. Whilst some members felt like part of a big machine, it does support members to feel like they are part of something. There was a desire for a more reciprocal relationship as members follow PR guidelines and utilise branding but see limited impact in return.

Participation from members was impacted by changes and delays, causing loss of momentum and frustration for some, but there was still an overall welcome sense of opportunity, especially for specialist programmers;

The initial opportunity for members was open early 2020 with funding support up to £12,000. In addition were four larger strategic awards for national impact activity that was all cancelled. 47 members were initially supported. When the country went into lockdown in April 2020 and venues closed the season was delayed until 2021. When relaunched the allocation of grants reduced to £5,000 and members were given the opportunity to postpone activity and/or reapply for scaled back projects. 20 projects did not postpone activity or reapply again in 2021.

Members who revised their activity reflected on the clear communication and process around the delays and changes to the season, even with changes to Project Management team at Film Hub Midlands. There was naturally some element of frustration and loss of enthusiasm for activity that had to be scaled back due to grant and budget limitations and continued restrictions. Members commented that this impacted on creative ambition and led to a lack of momentum. However, members and stakeholders agreed that these changes were right in the context of the on-going pandemic, audience appetite and programmers' approach to risk taking and creative ambition at that time.

Participation

54 projects

(one project was not delivered)

68 venues

53 unique members

Participation cont.

92% member satisfaction

47% new members

40% have read the Bigger Picture event guides

“In a time when venues are re-opening and finding their way again with programming and re-connecting with their audience a UK wide venture like BFI Japan is an excellent resource and focus for both venue and audience alike”

Member

There was a broad participation across different types of exhibitor, and a consistent engagement across Hubs;

There was an increase in Film Festival participation (see table below), this could be due to the theme lending itself to cult specialists and specialist organisation with 6 South East Asian/East Asian focused/led organisations/festivals and 2 specialist curators within other organisations.

Participation is driven by the need to feel part of the network, collaborate in UK-wide activity/part of the cultural conversation, and an opportunity to take programming risks, to build audiences and to gain UK wide visibility. Some consistent lead organisations feel an obligation due to being BFI funded and plan for UK wide season activity regardless of the theme.

47% of members have not participated in BFI Blockbuster or Major Programmes Seasons before. New members are driven to participate to be part of the cultural exhibition ecology, develop skills and knowledge and provide access to South Asian cinema to broader audiences. Some expressed limited knowledge of FAN and its activities prior to participation. Of the new members 30% were Film Festivals, 30% Film Clubs or Community Screens, 26% Cinemas, 9% mixed arts venue and 13% other.

In order to understand the impact diversity of leadership has on audience development we have begun to ask members to self-identify. 37% of all supported organisations were led by people who identify as female, 19% are led by the Global Majority, 12% are led by people identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ community and 8% led by people identify as living with a disability.

Feedback from members regarding the opportunity and support received during the management process is consistently high. 92% members were either very satisfied or satisfied with project management approach. However, this drops to 83% either satisfied or very satisfied for new participating members, with 17% neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and increases to 100% either satisfied or very satisfied for those members who have participated previously – suggesting that new members might need more support or guidance through the process. It is not possible to tell if this has been impacted on the many changes in the planning of the season due to Covid-19.

Organisation Type	Japan	Musicals	Comedy Genius
Film Festival	31%	14%	18%
Cinema (independent or local/national circuit)	21%	24%	21%
Film Club or Community Screen, Regular Pop Up Film Event	17%	23%	33%
Other	15%	8%	5%
Mixed Art Venue	13%	14%	16%
Touring Cinema or Community Screen Network	4%	3%	7%
New Members	47%	49%	51%

Confidence

219 titles

100% specialised film*

69% feature length

26% short films

95% Japanese films

4% non-US International film

1% US / British films

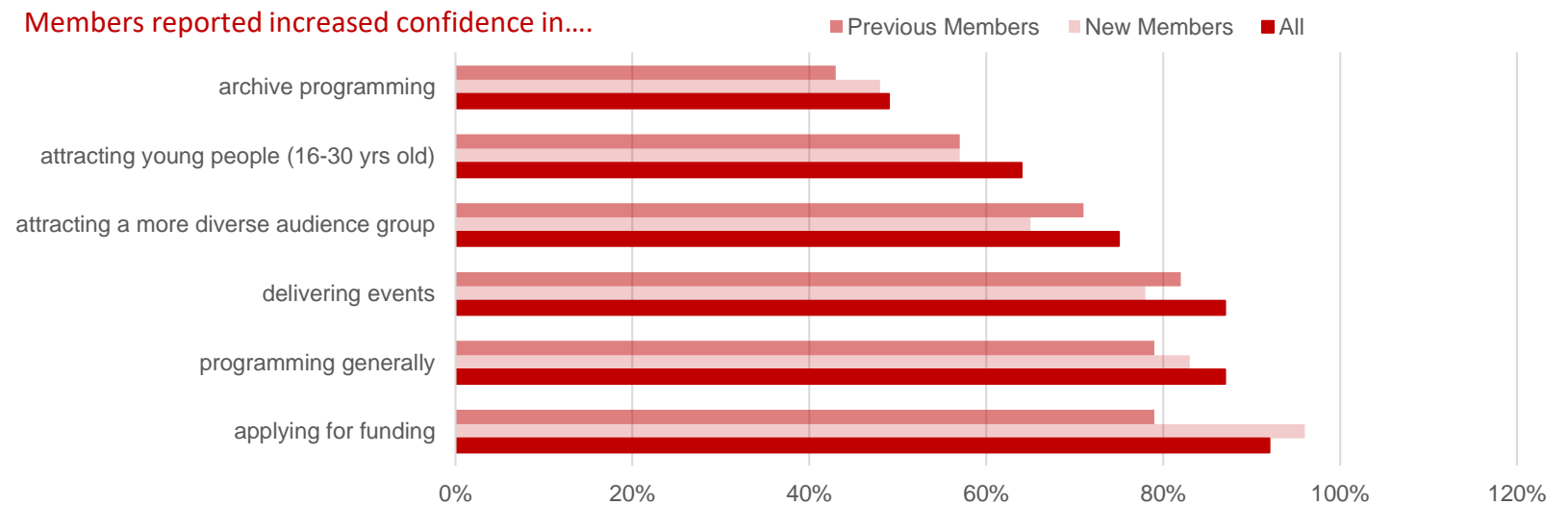
Members demonstrated confidence by being more adventurous and creative with their programming choices, even if they commented on scaled back ambition or risk taking with their event design.

94% members claim support has enabled them to programme a wider range of cultural film at their venue.

There was an overall increase in the number of different titles selected for programming, due to the vast possibilities offered by the theme. The BFI tour included nine titles, with a further 55 titles from other distributors. Only 11% of titles programmed came from the suggested titles list, demonstrating a high level of confidence from members in selecting and sourcing unique titles, despite some challenges around identifying distributors, acquiring rights and sourcing good-quality screeners.

Members new to Major Programmes claimed increased confidence in applying for funding, archive and general programming, whilst members who have participated previously claimed increased confidence in attracting diverse audiences and delivering events. But only 17% of members claim to have worked with the BFI National Archive or another major archive.

Members also reported on increased confidence for developing new film activity to community audiences, programming genre films, delivering and commissioning live score activity, opportunity to increase confidence in scale and awareness of planned and prep work required, increased confidence in trusting programming choices and ability to deliver activity received positively by audiences.



based on 52 members (24 new members & 28 previous members) narrative report responses

* Based on BFI Definition of Specialised Film

Value for Members

FAN Major Programmes support and BFI Blockbusters provide considerable value to FAN members from across the UK;

“In a time when venues are re-opening and finding their way again with programming and re-connecting with their audience a UK wide venture like BFI Japan is an excellent resource and focus for both venue and audience alike.”

Member

“Reminded me how to have fun with programming and to move away from the rigidity of the general UK film slate.”

Member

National Profile

- Make connections with BFI
- Be recognised nationally for contributing to the cultural conversations
- To showcase and profile work outside of the community and local audience
- Supports the reputation of the venue with distributors – builds reputation as a key cultural venue

Programming and Creative Risk Taking

- Increases appetite for more risky and creative programming
- Increase expenditure on more costly film licensing fees to screen less accessible and traditional content

Professional Sector Development

- Professional development for curators
- Enables working with interns that can be paid
- Funding enables more investment in marketing to try broader approaches to reach new audiences – especially needed in the wake of the pandemic
- To provide a wider reach with targeted social media advertising to neighbouring cities, helping to create awareness and provide a great snapshot audience for similar event targeting in the future
- Monitoring provides invaluable information about the audience and potential audiences, allowing a clearer understanding of how to shape programming and marketing in future
- Explore how to effectively translate non-English language films and how to produce audio description for more complex films
- Build new partnerships, re-connect with partners, expand networks
- Opportunity to build legacy and provide support, share knowledge and experience with other community groups
- Access to experts, advice and guidance

Audience Development

- To bring cultural cinema activity to areas where there are no independent cinemas
- Builds connections with local communities
- Ability to development enhanced programming to attract new and broader audiences
- Opportunity to try new things and test audience impact

Aid COVID Recovery

- Returning to live events post Covid – for some members this is the first in venue activity since 2019

Value for Money

FAN National activity spend

£280,104

(includes BO, other funding, inkind, other income)

Additional funding leveraged

£41,883 generated from Box Office

15% of overall spend

£61,910 other cash funding

22% of overall spend

Total: £103,793

37% of overall spend

Average (mean) value of additional funding

leveraged by projects: £1,958

£49,861 inkind support

18% of overall spend

Average (mean) value of inkind support leveraged

by projects: £940

Film Hub Midlands invested a total of £126,450, resulting in £8.68 spent per head*. Funded projects leveraged an additional £103,793;

Due to the pandemic the investment in BFI Japan was scaled back for the 2021 in venue programme. Due the smaller size of awards, investment demonstrates value for money with overall spend per head remaining consistent with other BFI Blockbuster seasons.

However, it is worth noting that spend per head per project ranged from £1.79 to £228.33* per person – challenges occur where predicted audience figures are ambitious and not realised in delivery. This was particularly evident in this season as members continue to recover from the pandemic and as previously noted are challenged by changed audience behaviours and continued capacity restrictions. This is relevant for festivals and one-off/pop-up activity where the opportunities to maintain a core audience base over the pandemic have been more difficult and this activity could be the first activity delivered in over 12 months.

57% of members achieved spend per head under the desired £10 per head.

Members and stakeholders both commented on whether spend per head measurements are difficult to truly quantify and too crude to be taken as a general measure. It lacks the specificity of measuring impact on audiences quality of experience or ability to reach new audiences.

It is essential that spend per head and financial terms are taken in context along side measurements that look more deeply into who came, have they changed a behaviour and come back. A more holistic approach to measuring investments in the context of the quality of the experience for individuals is needed which is unlikely to be uniform across all activity.

Funding leveraged from box office reduced by 13 percentage points (15% Japan, 28% Musicals) which is to be expected given the continued restrictions to capacity and audience impact of the pandemic.

Other cash funding increased by 8 percentage points (22% Japan, 14% Musicals), which could be due to the reduced grant amounts leading the additional support to be generated and that the theme enabled more funding opportunities. Funding came from a variety of sources including regional Film Hubs, the Japan Foundation, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, wider organisational support, local combined authorities.

*For this particular project activity was impacted severely by rising omicron cases and postponement of activity to outside of the season and evaluation window and therefore not included.

Challenges

“Covid has had its impact on audience figures for all of our live events this year, and we have had to work extra hard in terms of publicising them and emphasising our efforts to keep people safe while attending them. But this is a struggle every exhibitor is confronting right now.”

Member

Members expressed some challenges that impacted their projects in reporting documentation and qualitative interviews;

COVID-19

- Continued restrictions on social distancing, capacity, and mask wearing impacted opportunities to fulfil audience targets and maximise ticket sales
- Audience confidence and staff availability was impacted by increased Omicron cases
- The changing parameters of the season led to frustration, lack of momentum on trajectory and more challenges with the process

Funding Restrictions

- Funding level had an impact on the creative ambition and risk taking for many members. However, this was ok for most due to the scaled back activity and intentions of members
- Reduced funding meant that for some members contributors weren't compensated and more volunteer hours were required

Audience Engagement

- Audiences were difficult to predict – tastes have changed, the way audiences consume cultural content has changed, new habits have been formed
- There is a lack of awareness of who current audiences are and what they want
- Members expressed a need to go back to the beginning with marketing to understand how to reach audiences and build new ones

Evaluation and Reporting

- Using a QR code on screen and posters for evaluation was useful, but response levels remain disappointing for some members and they find paper surveys are still required
- Members don't have an oversight of centralised audience feedback, therefore don't encourage audiences to respond
- Members find reporting processes time consuming and not reflective of the level of funding distributed

Marketing & PR

- Centrally led PR and social often excluded UK-wide activity causing frustration to some members
- Audiences are only interested in what their local venue is doing and not looking to national activity, meaning centralised marketing and PR campaigns had limited impact on local audiences

Staff Changes

- Changes with Film Hub staff meant it was challenging for new members to build relationships and caused a lack of continuity in conversations.

Recommendations

These recommendations have been identified by evaluators and sourced from members feedback throughout the evaluation;

Audience Research

- Research into audience behaviour is needed post pandemic to identify how audiences want to engage
- Any audience research completed by larger venues could be of use to smaller members, Film Hubs could facilitate sharing of knowledge and insights, not just within geographical areas but also types of organisations/size of venue etc UK-wide

Evaluation Methodologies

- Major Programme teams share audience surveys with individual members for analysis, members to disseminate this to teams, this would be especially useful for them to understand if their methods of collection is working (paper, QR codes etc)
- Insight into the success of the survey QR code would be useful
- Disseminate final reports to participating members to understand where and how their reporting contributes to evaluation
- For future seasons it would be useful to include data (audience, number of screenings and venues) from touring programmes that are part of the Blockbuster seasons to give a full UK-wide picture of engagement. Especially when participation from lead cultural cinemas is often isolated to touring programmes and not investment from Film Hub Midlands via Major Programmes, and therefore excluded from the evaluation
- It is essential that spend per head and financial terms are taken in context along side measurements that look more deeply into who came, have they changed a behaviour and come back. A more holistic approach to measuring investments in the context of the quality of the experience for individuals is needed which is unlikely to be uniform across all activity.

Contributors

Full List of qualitative interviews conducted;

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FAN Hub Manager:

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Vicki Brown

Milk Tea

Susan Christie

Cromarty Cinema

Claire Horrocks

Exeter Phoenix

Michael Stately

Queens Film Theatre

Emma Woolf

Friends of Cotteridge Park

Strategic Partners:

Liz Parkinson BFI - Press

Nyree Jillings BFI - Marketing

Rhidian Davis BFI - Cultural Programming



Drive My Car, 2021



Josee the Tiger and the Fish, 2003



The Witches of the Orient, 2021