



ECOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Brazil's Cine A Invests in Sustainable Cinema

BY REBECCA PAHLE



"At Cine A, every ticket, every screening, every smile is part of something bigger."

– Silvio Brittis, CEO

➔ Building the sustainable cinema: easier said than done. At January's ICTA L.A. Seminar Series, attendees will have the opportunity to learn, in the session "Sustainability in Cinemas," the whys and hows—as well as the benefits and challenges—of adopting eco-friendly practices. To see what's possible, those interested in pursuing sustainable solutions would do well to turn their attention south—specifically to Brazil, where cinema chain Cine A is making a mark... by their efforts to *avoid* making a mark on Mother Earth.

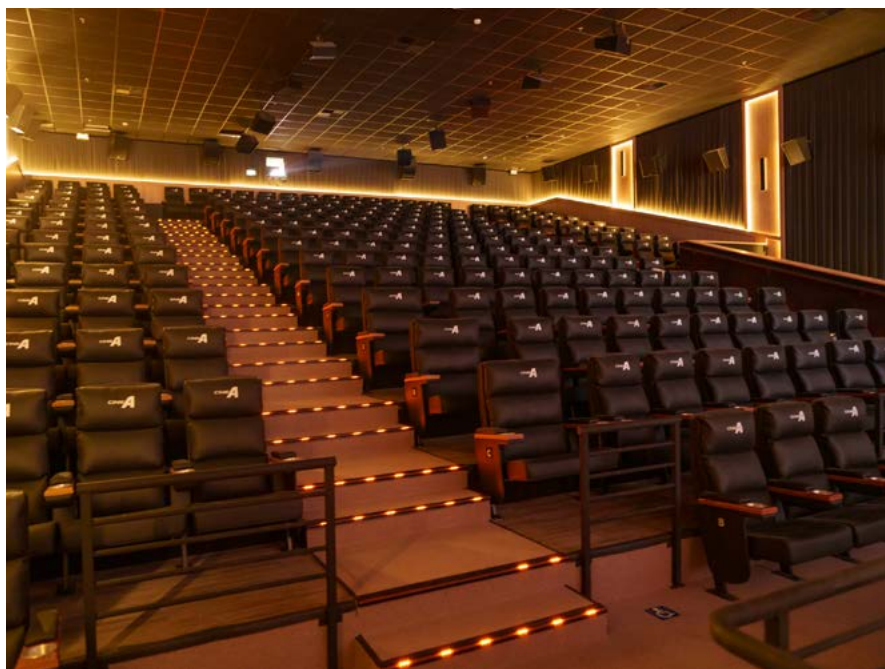
Cine A's story begins on November 12, 2004, when founder and CEO Silvio Brittis opened the first location of the chain-to-be, then called the Cine Art Café, in the city of Machado. In 2008, a second location followed, and leading up to 2024 the chain expanded rapidly, operating 62 screens in 22 sites spread across seven states in Brazil. One of those states, Minas Gerais, is home not only to Cine A's first theater, but to the theater that years after its founding would bring the chain a new level of global attention. Opened in 2019, Cine A's Itajubá location made headlines as Latin America's first self-sustaining cinema complex.

"For Cine A, it was important to bring that innovation of having the first fully sustainable cinema in Latin America," says Benedito Procópio, Cine A's director of marketing. Simple green initiatives like the use of paper straws and biodegradable

popcorn tubs are paired with high-tech solutions like solar panels, rain water collection and recycling, electric car charging stations, and laser projection—the latter by Cinionic, which had been providing (non-laser) projection technology to Cine A since 2012. Building the sustainable cinema required detailed planning and coordination "from the ground up," says Procópio. As a result of its efforts in building the four-screen theater, Cine A received the world-renowned LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) seal—and, later that year, the Sustainability Award from LATAM trade show Expocine.

In 2023, Cine A took their commitment to environmental sustainability even further with the opening of a new cinema in the state of São Paulo. In addition to eco-friendly solar power and water management systems, plus electric vehicle chargers, this new location's ecological bona fides include acoustic lining in the auditoriums made from recycled bottles recovered from the ocean; 100 percent biodegradable packaging for concessions items; separate waste and recycling systems; and design that takes advantage of natural light to form welcome common areas. It also recycles space, in a way, by inviting the local community for yoga, cycling, mediation, and other activities—free of charge. Inverter air conditioners and laser projectors, the latter again provided by Cinionic, cut down on the





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cinema's energy consumption—decisions friendly to the environment as well as to Cine A's bottom line.

"Anything that can be sustainable, Cine A strives to make it sustainable," says Procópio. Needless to say, this poses its fair share of challenges. First: Cost. Though environmentally friendly solutions—like solar panels and laser projectors, to name two—cut down on energy costs and can lead to substantial long-term savings, in the short term, Procópio admits that eco-friendly solutions can be more expensive than their more traditional counterparts. Once the balance sheet is figured out and planning moves ahead, you run into a different problem: coordinating an army of third-party contractors, some of whom may be unfamiliar with the requirements of building a cinema, all of whom are likely unfamiliar with the requirements of building *this* cinema. You have to "[make] sure everyone's on the same page about why things are a little bit different for a cinema of this nature," says Procópio. Despite the logistical challenges, he says, Cine A's philosophy is to "always [look] to improve the way you do things" by searching out new technologies, companies, and people to work with for each new build, rather than sticking with the familiar for its own sake.

It should be clear by now that Cine A doesn't shy away from difficult tasks. São Paulo is an extremely competitive market in which to open a new theater—and that's when you're *not* coming out of a global

pandemic. "But the public has really responded... [to] the concept of a sustainable cinema," says Procópio. It's a concept they plan to double down on, implementing "as many sustainable solutions as possible" in new builds and utilizing the knowledge gained in building the Itajubá and São Paulo locations to retrofit Cine A's 20 other theaters.

Eventually, says Procópio, Cine A's entire chain will boast a sustainable identity—even if that takes a while. In the shorter term, there are smaller, more easily accomplished ways to further their sustainable message, like screening content aimed at educating children about the importance of protecting the environment. Another goal is to add electric vehicle charging stations to the parking lot of every Cine A location, "something that's going to take a bit of time," says Procópio, but that can definitely "be implemented in the near future."

In embarking on their goal of becoming the world's first sustainable cinema chain, Cine A hopes to inspire others in the exhibition community to build sustainable theaters. There are real benefits, argues Procópio—"social, economic, and environmental"—to doing so. Put simply, "It's an important thing to do. And it's a thing that most companies are going to have to do sooner rather than later. I think there's a real hope that, [as more cinemas prioritize sustainability], this becomes the norm moving forward." ■