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**Cuba and France Cooperate on Cinema, Culture**

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The Cuban Institute Cinematographic of Arts and Industry (ICAIC) signed Thursday a grant agreement aimed at funding digital cinema at Cine La Rampa, located in Havana.

ICAIC President Roberto Smith highlighted that the agreement will extend the already-existing collaboration between both countries in the areas of “co production, preservation of heritage, and the digitalization of the theater (La Rampa).”

The Cine Yara and Cine Charlie Chaplin were the first Cuban cinemas to have digital projection earlier this year.

About the past bilateral cooperation, Smith recalled that one of the major treasures of Cuban cinema - the ICAIC newsreel collection, has been digitalized in Paris with the support of the French National Audiovisual Institute (INA). For over ten years, Cuba has commemorated the French Film Festival.

During the ceremony, French ambassador Jean-Marie Bruno honored Smith with the medal of “Knight of Arts and Letters,” a distinction conferred by the French Ministry of Culture since 1957 to “persons who have distinguished themselves by their creativity in the field of art, culture and literature or for their contribution to the influence of arts in France and throughout the world.”



“We would not have deserved this distinction without the Cuban Revolution, without the ICAIC and without their founders Alfredo Guevara and Julio Garcia Espinosa,” Smith said, adding that “cultural diversity in cinema would not have been promoted as an essential condition for the education of creators and audiences.”

The ICAIC was founded less than three months after the Revolution's victory in 1959, and since then has had a major role in supporting and promoting Cuban cinema, which has been internationally recognized.

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