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## The rise of interactive cinema and its significance for filmmakers, audiences, and the exhibition industry

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THE RISE OF INTERACTIVE CINEMA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR FILMMAKERS,  
AUDIENCES, AND THE EXHIBITION INDUSTRY

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors in the Major Program  
in Cinema Studies in the College of Arts and Humanities and in The Burnett Honors College at  
the University of Central Florida  
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## ABSTRACT

Traditionally, movie theater audience members are passive participants. The role of the traditional spectator is to sit down in a dark theater and watch as the film unfolds. As images flash across the screen, the audience member has no obligations. All they have to do is react. However a new, more actively engaged audience member is now emerging.

The new role of the active audience member can be defined as putting a conscious effort into affecting one's own movie-watching experience. The trend we are now seeing in cinema is that of an interactive experience in motion picture creation and exhibition, and it utilizes this updated spectator role to great effect. Whether the audience member has a role in actually making the film, as is the case with crowdsourced cinema, or if they are actively involved after the film is created, as is the case with shadow casts and "choose your own ending" movies, going to the movies has become a much more active experience.

The fascinating implications of this interactive cinematic movement for artists, audiences, and the exhibition industry cannot be understated. This thesis will explore some of the biggest interactive trends in filmmaking and exhibition today, and then delve into the implications of these trends.

## DEDICATION

For my mentor, Professor Lisa Cook, for encouraging me through four years of film school to achieve my goals.

And for my Sisters in Chi Omega and my parents, Miguel and Maria Vazquez, for their unconditional love and support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 1: CROWDSOURCING .....	2
CHAPTER 2: SHADOW CASTS .....	6
CHAPTER 3: CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN ENDING MOVIES .....	9
CHAPTER 4: HOW DOES INTERACTIVE CINEMA AFFECT ARTISTS?.....	12
CHAPTER 5: HOW DOES INTERACTIVE CINEMA AFFECT AUDIENCES?.....	15
CHAPTER 6: HOW DOES INTERACTIVE CINEMA AFFECT THE EXHIBITION	
INDUSTRY.....	20
CONCLUSION .....	24
REFERENCES.....	25

## INTRODUCTION:

Traditionally, movie theater audience members are passive participants. The role of the traditional spectator is to sit down in a dark theater and watch as the film unfolds. As images flash across the screen, the audience member has no obligations. All they have to do is react. However a new, more actively engaged audience member is now emerging.

The new role of the active audience member can be defined as putting a conscious effort into affecting one's own movie-watching experience. The trend now in cinema is that of an interactive experience in motion picture creation and exhibition, and it utilizes this updated spectator role to great effect. Whether the audience member has a role in actually making the film, as is the case with crowdsourced cinema, or if they are actively involved after the film is created, as is the case with shadow casts and "choose your own ending" movies, going to the movies has become a much more active experience.

The fascinating implications of this interactive cinematic movement for artists, audiences, and the exhibition industry cannot be understated. This thesis will explore some of the biggest interactive trends in filmmaking and exhibition today, and then delve into the implications of these trends.

## CHAPTER 1: CROWDSOURCING

Crowdsourcing creativity is one way in which the filmmaking process has become more interactive. “Crowdsourcing” is a term coined by *Wired* magazine contributing editor Jeff Howe and editor Mark Robinson. According to Howe,

“Crowdsourcing is the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call (Howe, “Crowdsourcing, A Definition”).”

Artists can crowdsource any element of their project to make their vision come to life. Directors and production companies issue open calls for anything from scripts, scores, shots, etc. One example can be found in director Tim Burton’s recent crowdsourced project “*Tim Burton’s Cadavre Exquis*”. “Cadavre Exquis” translates to “Exquisite Corpse”, and refers to an old Surrealist parlor game in which participants may either write a phrase or draw a picture and then pass it on, thereby contributing to the story. After everyone has contributed, the participants are left with an original piece of art, brought to life in equal amounts by each participant (Ehrlich, “Tim Burton Telling Crowd-Sourced Tale Via Twitter”). In Tim Burton’s project, Burton tweeted the first sentence to initiate the story:

“Stainboy, using his obvious expertise, was called in to investigate a mysterious glowing goo on the gallery floor #BurtonStory. (Ehrlich, “Tim Burton Telling Crowd-Sourced Tale Via Twitter”)”

Participants then tweeted back to Burton with what they thought should be the next line in the

tale, ending each tweet with the hashtag (Twitter label) #BurtonStory. The selected response was then retweeted by Burton, and the cycle began all over again (Ehrlich, “Tim Burton Telling Crowd-Sourced Tale Via Twitter”). Another website that can be accessed via the Toronto International Film Festival’s homepage was created where the entire story could be read with a list of all the authors identified by their twitter usernames (“Tim Burton’s Cadavre Exquis”). The “*Tim Burton’s Cadavre Exquis*” project is an excellent example of how easily crowdsourcing via social media can be used to help artists collaborate with others on their story, making the filmmaking process more interactive.

The film *Awesome; I Fuckin’ Shot That!* is a concert film depicting The Beastie Boys’ appearance at Madison Square Gardens on October 9, 2004; however, it is anything but the typical concert film. The Beastie Boys handed out fifty-five Hi-8 and six digital cameras to fans at the concert, asking them to document their experiences. There were no rules - just have fun and let the cameras roll. The film made history as the first concert film to be shot entirely by amateurs. Three teams of editors, including Beastie Boy Adam Yauch, worked together on creating one cohesive film that is meant to make the audience feel like they are there at the show with everyone else (Silverman, “Awesome, I Sat Through That”).

*Awesome; I Fuckin’ Shot That!* is the first of many crowdsourced concert documentaries shot by fans. *Prague DVD* is another example, this time focusing on the band Radiohead. Shot by fifty Czech Radiohead fans, the film was not originally authorized by the band. However after Radiohead saw the footage, the band offered their full support and even provided the master soundboard recordings from the night. The film was then made available online for free.



(Michaels, “Radiohead lend their music to fan-made live DVD”).

*This Movie is Broken*, a film featuring the band Broken Social Scene, is part documentary, part scripted work. Filmmakers Bruce McDonald and Don McKellar shot live footage of the band performing in Toronto and asked fans to go around the city filming anything that reminded them of a sweet summer romance. This footage was later edited into the film. McDonald and McKellar then scripted and shot a story about a young man who only has one night to convince his crush to stay in Toronto with him instead of leaving for Paris (Fischer, “Bruce McDonald and Don McKellar Creating Crowd-Sourced Broken Social Scene Movie”). As a result, *This Movie is Broken* includes documentary, crowdsourced, and traditional scripted elements all in the same film, making it unique, exciting, and interactive.

Many crowdsourced film projects utilize the Internet to gather content. The crowdsourced television show *Bar Karma* utilizes software called StoryMaker that lets the show’s viewers collaborate with each other on ideas for the next episode. Designed by Will Wright (creator of the *Sims*), StoryMaker starts off with a question or situation presented by one of the show’s producers. In the StoryMaker program, little cards come up with a brief description of the viewer’s submitted ideas. There are options to continue browsing cards until the viewer finds one they want to recommend to the producers or build on, or they can create their own responses. Together, the participating viewers and the producers pick the ideas they like the best and that story goes into production. When the episode airs, everyone who contributed an idea that made it into the episode receives a credit (“StoryMaker”).

The same process occurs on websites like Open Source Cinema

([www.opensourcecinema.org](http://www.opensourcecinema.org)) and Wreck A Movie ([www.wreckamovie.com](http://www.wreckamovie.com)) where members can pitch their projects and work together on films. Filmmakers post a description of their film online and utilize a discussion board to gather feedback on aspects ranging from costuming to potential shooting locations. They may even request script pages or shots (“This is how Wreck A Movie.com Works”). This gives audiences the opportunity to collectively create the film that they will later watch.

## CHAPTER 2: SHADOW CASTS

Another way that cinema has become interactive is through shadow cast performances. A “shadow cast” is a group of active audience participants who dress up as the characters of a film and act out and lip-sync the film in front of less active audience participants. These audience observers also dress up, utilize props, and recite key lines, however they do not perform in front of the screen like the shadow cast does. In the beginning of *Rocky Horror* there is a wedding, and as rice is thrown, the audience members in the theater throw rice at each other. This is one of the many props used. When the proper and conservative characters Brad and Janet (guests at the wedding) are introduced on screen, the shadow cast members playing them walk into the theater and the audience yells “slut!” and “shithead!” at them (Katovich and Kinkade, 1992). This is what is known as a call back (“The Rocky Horror Picture Show Cult Following”).

For audience members who are new to the *Rocky Horror* shadow cast, a certain amount of hazing usually occurs. The film itself is very bold and racy, so the audience and shadow cast enjoy singling out these *Rocky Horror* “virgins” by making fun of them while they participate in sexually suggestive games (“The Rocky Horror Picture Show Cult Following”).

All of these are examples of interaction between a shadow cast made up of fans of the film, active audience participants, and a film. *Rocky Horror* shadow casts, or shadow casts developed around any other type of cult classic, are a great way to engage audiences during screenings and get them more actively involved with the film’s experience.

Interactive British film exhibition group Secret Cinema takes the shadow cast concept one step further by creating elaborate sets and hiring lots of actors to interact with audience

members before the film even begins. The audience members sign up for a mailing list and receive cryptic emails with clues to what the next film will be. Each correspondence ends with Secret Cinema's motto, "tell no one" (Secret Cinema Homepage). When it starts getting close to the actual event, Secret Cinema notifies audience members of where they can purchase their tickets. They then receive another correspondence that lets them know where to meet (Secret Cinema Homepage).

For example, for a screening of *Blade Runner*, audience members were transported on buses to the secret location. "Air hostesses" from "Utopia Airways" attended to guests during the drive to the undisclosed site. The buses arrived at a warehouse which was transformed into the film's setting, post-apocalyptic Chinatown, Los Angeles in the year 2019 (Barnett, "Secret Cinema"). As soon as audience members stepped off the bus, the experience was like stepping into the film itself. Guests walked through several installations, or recreated sets, and interacted with the people (actors) they came across. After the guests made their way through the installations, they sat down in a large room with a giant screen to watch the film. The shadow cast continued however, especially during the climax of the film in which two shadow cast members scaled a wall and re-enacted what was happening on screen (Barnett, "Secret Cinema"). Special effects lighting and projectors were also utilized to make it look like the actors were actually climbing tall skyscraper buildings (User: secretcinema2046, "Secret Cinema Presents Blade Runner").

Shadow cast productions actively involve audiences. They test guests' knowledge of the film, encourage the use of props, and utilize actors to engage the audience, thereby bringing the

film to life. They make going to the movies an “event” that cannot be matched. Some may argue that audiences only interact with the *cast* rather than the film, however the cast grew organically from watching the film. The cast cues come from the film, and therefore cannot exist without it. Shadow cast events *enhance* the overall experience, helping audiences open up so that they may better receive the film.

### CHAPTER 3: CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN ENDING MOVIES

With the advent of new digital media technology, there are many more creative opportunities to tell stories through interactive cinema. One such way is through choose-your-own ending movies. Choose your-own ending movies work in much the same way as choose-your-own ending books do. The viewer watches the film until a situation eventually presents itself in which the main character must make a decision. The viewer is given options, and they choose which one the main character should follow. Then the film proceeds until it hits the next crossroads, and so on, until the film ends.

Many times when watching horror movies, viewers have a strong urge to yell at the main character and warn them to not open a door or to not trust a stranger. Now with the groundbreaking German horror thriller *Last Call*, the audience member can tell the main character on screen what to do, and they will actually do it! The way it works is audience members submit their mobile phone numbers to a speed dial database. (User: powerflasher, “13<sup>th</sup> Street, Last Call”) Then the film begins and the audience watches as the film’s young heroine makes her way through a sanatorium. When she goes for her phone to call for help, *Last Call*’s custom-made software from AixVox and Powerflasher randomly selects one number to call. The lucky audience member on the receiving end then has the opportunity to help guide the heroine to safety. The protagonist encounters several situations and asks the caller for direction, and through the specially designed software’s voice recognition, the film proceeds accordingly (“13<sup>th</sup> Street Last Call”). For example, the young heroine runs through the sanatorium and sees a person tied up, blindfolded, and terrified. She asks the viewer if she should leave them or help,

and the viewer must make a decision and respond. Not only does the heroine on screen “hear” the audience member’s responses, but the audience member can also hear her breathing and speaking to them on the phone, making it a more personal and frightening experience for the viewer (User: powerflasher, “13<sup>th</sup> Street, Last Call”).

Some may argue that this is only interactive for the person on the phone, however with other audience members shouting out advice to that person, they can definitely participate in the experience (User: powerflasher, “13<sup>th</sup> Street, Last Call”). This interactive technology also gives the viewers an opportunity for more control over the outcome of the film rather than if it was in the traditional style and just played out without any viewer input whatsoever.

Choose-your-own ending movies can also exist online for viewers to interact with and enjoy. *The Outbreak* is a zombie film that lets the viewer(s) decide which action to take next. First the viewer sits down to watch the film at their computer. In the beginning of the film, a group of people breaks into a house to escape the zombies with one man bleeding and possibly bitten. One of the characters says that they should shoot the injured man, because he could change into a zombie and threaten their lives. A woman defends the injured man, saying that they do not even know if he was bitten and should not react unless they are sure. There is another male character whose actions are dictated by the viewer’s choices, and when the two quarreling characters turn to him for a decision on what to do as tensions reach a boiling point, the film stops and splits into two screens. On the left it says “Save Him”, and on the right it says “Leave it Alone”. The viewer then must decide the injured man’s fate by clicking on one of the choices (“The Outbreak”).

There are some choices that do not end well for the film's protagonist, and when that is the case, the screen reads "You Die". At that point the viewer has two options. They can either click to start the film over from the very beginning, or go to the chapter selection menu to start from a specific point to see other ways of how the film could play out ("The Outbreak").

Critics may want to call *The Outbreak* more of a game than a movie because the viewer uses their computer to decide how the action proceeds; however, all of the scene options in this film were shot with real actors, lighting, cameras, special effects makeup, etc. It is produced like a regular movie, except the viewer is the editor.



## CHAPTER 4: HOW DOES INTERACTIVE CINEMA AFFECT ARTISTS?

Interactive cinema allows artists so much more freedom and so many more opportunities to realize their visions. With crowdsourced projects for example, filmmakers can create epic movies shot in a variety of exotic locations with a miniscule budget through posted open calls for crews and footage.

With shadow casts, filmmakers get to see their works transformed with every screening. It breathes new life into the film, because no two productions will ever be the same for those experiencing it. Although the film itself does not change, the live interactive aspect heightens the viewer's sensations and pulls them deeper into the film's setting and meaning. Shadow cast events like Secret Cinema go to great lengths to make the audience feel as though they are really *inside* the film. If the casts are successful, watching the movie becomes a much more intense sensory experience.

In addition, the audience will be more likely to retain the artist's message better if the screening is interactive. Research confirms that people will process and retain information more effectively if they learn it in a way that actively engages them. A study conducted in England and Wales demonstrates a direct correlation between the effects of interactive teaching, which includes asking a high frequency of questions, using open-ended questions, and asking students to explain their answers, and student achievement (Muijs and Reynolds, 17). Students perform better if they are asked to participate, rather than just listen to their teacher lecture. Therefore, it is likely that audiences could understand an artist's message more clearly and viscerally if they

are involved in the storytelling process. The effort that is put into interacting with a film before or during its screening should ultimately correlate to how receptive an audience member is to the film. Artists therefore can utilize this knowledge to better construct their films, thereby eliciting the most desired response to their work during exhibition.

With choose-your-own ending films, artists have the opportunity to give their viewers several options for an ending, instead of restricting themselves to just one outcome for their beloved characters. Choose-your-own ending movies allow for more artistic freedom and keep the story fresh and exciting, even after multiple screenings, giving the work a longer artistic lifespan.

Manipulation of traditional narrative structure is another way in which artists can be creative using interactive cinema. In interactive storytelling, the traditional rules of time, Aristotelian narrative structure, and dramatic arc do not apply directly because artists can utilize interactive technology and create a new kind of story structure. For example, dramatic beats are minimized because the user is controlling the pace of the story, and therefore they control those beats (El-Nasr, 2007). With forms of interactive cinema like choose-your-own ending movies, the story is no longer linear because at any point the participant may decide to go back to the first scene and select a different story path. Nonlinear filmmaking has been done many times before, for example in many of Quentin Tarantino's films, however this is the first time artists can leave the order up to the participating audience member.

The artist and participating audience member therefore have a unique bond in interactive cinema. The filmmaker creates scenes, but then the audience member picks up the storytelling

process by selecting the order of events in choose-your-own ending movies. Artists should be aware of this joint relationship with active audience participants in the creation and exhibition of their art because creating with this in mind will give them a better sense of how to push the medium further, which after all, is the artist's role.

## CHAPTER 5: HOW DOES INTERACTIVE CINEMA AFFECT AUDIENCES?

Whenever people collaborate together on any type of project, there is a level of satisfaction that goes along with completing it. It is the realization that the person made up their mind to create something, and when they actually see that vision realized, they feel fulfilled (Regelski, 58). When audiences participate in a storytelling process that involves interactive cinema, they feel the same satisfaction. According to Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs", after humans satisfy their basic needs for food, shelter, etc., they yearn "for the fullest development of one's talents or capacities", or self-actualization (Regelski, 58). The need for self-actualization can be realized through the creation of art because people recognize the inherent value in making art (Regelski, 58). They know how it affects them emotionally, and when they create it themselves, they are able to reach a "heightened awareness of being" (Regelski, 58).

Art is a powerful tool. Without it, it would be extremely difficult for people to express and understand their innermost desires, dreams, emotions, and life experiences in way that can be understood by others (Regelski, 59). When audiences participate in the creation of a film (a work of art), they are able to address the need for self-actualization, leaving them feeling more fulfilled. When people create art, they are left with the knowledge that they just created something that is unique to them, and no other person can recreate exactly what they have just made. They are aware of themselves as individuals, rather than as their profession, social status, outward appearance, or other the labels associated with them (Regelski, 60).

This is why people collaborate together on websites like Wreck-A-Movie and respond to open calls. This is why audiences work together on a film or script. People want to realize

a vision, and interactive cinema gives them that opportunity while achieving self-actualization.

The participatory culture surrounding interactive cinema also holds benefits for active audience members. Henry Jenkins, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and authority on the subject, defines participatory culture as one:

“(1) With relatively low barriers to creative expression and civic engagement (2) With strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations with others (3) With some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices (4) Where members believe that their contributions matter (5) Where members feel some degree of social connection with one another” (Jenkins, 2006).

Overall, “not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute when ready and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued” (Jenkins, 2006). This definition holds true for all of the crowdsourcing and shadow cast examples mentioned here previously. Therefore, the fact that interactive cinema is part of a participatory culture should not be overlooked, and neither can the benefits linked to such a culture. These benefits not only include the opportunity to express oneself, which as stated earlier, satisfies the need for self-actualization, but also include a forum for that contribution (Jenkins, 2006). It is one thing to fulfill one’s need to create unique and special art, however it is another to have a medium with which to share that art with others, gain feedback, and most of all, be appreciated and/or recognized for what you have given. It is about contributing to something bigger than oneself for the advancement of the culture, the art, the fan experience, etc.

Fandoms that surround geeky obsessions like anime, *Harry Potter*, and other cult

phenomenon also engage audiences in an interactive way. One example is in fan fiction. According to Jenkins, “fan fiction refers to original stories and novels which are set in the fictional universes of favorite television series, films, comics, games or other media properties (Jenkins, 2008). Fan fiction writers often send their work to beta readers (trusted fellow writers or participants in the fan fiction community) to look it over before they publish it in on online forums like Live Journal (Busse, Kristina and Hellekson, Karen, 172). The act of participating in fan fiction at all is an act of subverting the established hierarchies and “transforming media consumers into producers” (Busse, Kristina and Hellekson, Karen, 176). Therefore, the role of a beta reader “represents a further refutation of the idea that individuals or groups can claim sole intellectual ownership over the texts and images that combine to form a shared frame of reference for a diverse and international community” (Busse, Kristina and Hellekson, Karen, 176). The idea behind this is that minority groups like women, homosexuals, certain ethnicities, etc. are not represented sufficiently in mainstream literature today, and fan fiction is a way to correct that deficiency (Busse, Kristina and Hellekson, Karen, 67).

Forums like Wreck-A-Movie and StoryMaker allow for the same kind of interaction between filmmakers and the motion picture equivalent to beta readers. There is always an opportunity to have individual shots, scenes, the script, etc. critiqued by one or several colleagues. Some may argue that this relationship between creator and peer reviewer has always existed and beta reading or critiquing a scene in a forum is nothing new, however new media technologies like the above-mentioned websites, as well as YouTube, make it much more accessible to people all over the world, providing greater opportunities for diverse opinions and

as a result, a more universally identifiable work of art. Participating audience members have the opportunity to not only be the creators, but also the editors of a work of art without ever having to meet in person.

Engaging in a participatory culture helps develop skills like collaborative problem-solving (Jenkins, 2006). According to research stated earlier, interactive teaching helps students retain and understand material better. Forms of interactive cinema like choose-your-own ending movies strengthen this type of skill in the individual participant, and in forums like StoryMaker, Wreck-A-Movie, etc., it aids in the collaborative aspect. When citizens are able to formulate strong collaborative problem-solving skills, they are more prepared to lead teams and make progress on issues ranging from planning a prom to running a country. Research shows that communities that engage in participatory culture thrive more than those that do not as people learn “based on shared interests rather than fixed roles and responsibilities” (Jenkins, 2010).

Finally, audiences have the power to shape the flow, or circulation of new media as members of this participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006). The term “new media” refers to digital mediums that allow for a high level of user controllability and interactivity (Wei and Hindman, 2011). Blogging, podcasting, and tweeting are all examples of how new media (which by definition is interactive) provides an outlet for disseminating not only information, but interpretations and opinions based on that information (Jenkins, 2006). This is a very powerful idea and can be utilized in ways ranging from grassroots political activism to helping someone collect the most votes on American Idol (Jenkins, 2006). No matter how it is used, the fact that audience members are able to utilize interactive cinema in the same way in order to achieve

some kind of social change is an impressive accomplishment.



## CHAPTER 6: HOW DOES INTERACTIVE CINEMA AFFECT THE FILM EXHIBITION INDUSTRY?

According to a study that the Motion Picture Association commissioned and L.E.K. consulting group compiled, “the worldwide motion picture industry, including foreign and domestic producers, distributors, theaters, video stores and pay-per-view operators, lost \$18.2 billion in 2005 as a result of piracy” (“The Cost of Movie Piracy”). It is a “crime wave of epidemic proportions” that began with the commercialization of VCRs, then progressed into new media with file-sharing websites (Yar, 2005). That is a huge amount of lost revenue as the industry continues to struggle with the issue. One solution to the piracy problem however, lies in interactive cinema.

With interactive cinema, there is a very small opportunity for piracy because the interactive experience cannot be reproduced. For example, if a person wanted to pirate the German choose-your-own ending film *Last Call*, they could come into a theater and film it with their camera, but it would not be so much filming the movie as documenting an experience. There is no way to recreate the phone call from the protagonist, or the audience member receiving that call at home unless the person had that software. Even if they did have that software, the experience is more exciting when there is a bigger pool of numbers to choose from because it is more random.

The only opportunity for pirating a choose-your-own ending film would be to take a choose-your-own ending film that exists on DVD and then copying all of its alternate scenes. When the film is on DVD, it does not require special software like *Last Call's* voice-activated

system in order to work. All the viewer needs to do is select with their remote which option they wish to select. In this case, the piracy threat is still there, however if the motion picture industry invests in more movies like *Last Call*, it will not only cut down on piracy, but the gimmick will drive people to the cinemas.

The same goes for shadow cast events. It is one thing to film the event, but it is something completely different to live it. There is no market for a recording like that.

Crowdsourced cinema could potentially be pirated, but people would probably be less likely to pirate something that they all made together, especially if they were to receive a small percentage of the royalties. When a person actually puts time and effort into something, it is safe to assume that they would want to protect it. Piracy is stealing, so those who participate in crowdsourced open calls for films would probably be less likely to steal the profits from themselves or others.

On the other hand, the creation of crowdsourced cinema is done in the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) spirit, so some who participate may feel that they should not have to pay for something that they helped create. The Beastie Boys refer to *Awesome; I Fuckin' Shot That!* as an “authorized bootleg” (Silverman, “Awesome, I Sat Through That”), however the film still had a theatrical run and is available for purchase. The Czech filmmakers who shot the Radiohead concert DVD on the other hand, made their film available for free download on their website, as well as YouTube. They are explicitly against making any profit on the film, their website reading “Strictly not for sale.” and “By the fans, for the fans. Enjoy” (Michaels, “Radiohead lend their music to fan-made live DVD”). All in all, for crowdsourced films it depends on the

point of view of the filmmakers and the participating audience members, but as far as choose-your-own ending and shadow cast events are concerned, the piracy threat is very minimal.

Ticket prices are high, and many people find it more economically feasible to just remain at home and watch an instant film on their subscription service. Special shadow cast and choose-your-own ending movies will draw people back to the theaters.

Secret Cinema events often occur outside of a traditional theater, but if an exhibitor wanted to sponsor the event by providing projection equipment and the print, they could still make a lot of money. Secret Cinema tickets in the U.K. range from £16 to £23.50 (Jones, “Say A Long Goodbye to the Multiplex”), or \$22.52 to \$33.08 (“Universal Currency Converter Results”). It is true that some of that money has to go towards paying for the actors and any rented items, but there is still an opportunity to make a large profit. During eight Secret Cinema screenings of *The Warriors* in London, there were an estimated 6,500 total attendees (Jones, “Say A Long Goodbye to the Multiplex”). It is important to note that currently, an average adult movie ticket costs around \$10.50 (“Fandango Ticket Center - Sucker Punch Tickets”), while Secret Cinema events cost more than double that, and are widely popular. One Secret Cinema event in November of 2010 sold out within 10 minutes, and that’s with the audience not even knowing what film they were going to see, because the film’s identity is always kept a secret until the credits begin (“Offer now expired: Secret Cinema: What Will You See?”).

*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* holds the record for the longest running theatrical release in history for a reason (“An Absolute Pleasure for 35 Years”). Not only is the film a cult classic, but the audience also loves to actively participate. Audiences want to interact with the

film and each other, and if more theaters started holding shadow cast events, they would likely see a sharp increase in attendees. Ticket prices could even be raised for a special event like that, because as Secret Cinema continues to prove, people will pay more for an interactive experience.

## CONCLUSION:

The rise of interactive cinema is a fascinating prospect for audiences, artists, and the exhibition industry alike. The opportunities for collaboration and new cinematic experiences are exciting and cannot be understated. Just as the future of digital communication lies in new media, the future of cinema lies in interactive movies. As communities foster participatory cultures, interactive storytelling (in all mediums) will continue to flourish. All the resulting benefits for the film industry, artists, and audience members alike will only improve society as a whole. In summary, these technological advances and new creative forms of exhibition and distribution will only make the future of film brighter.

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