

Arcadian Pleasures

NEW COMPLEX
DEFINES STATE-
OF-THE-ART
IN ITALY

BY ROSELLA GIOFFRE

On May 30, in the small town of Melzo about 20 km (13 miles) from Milan, the new Arcadia cinema complex opened in the presence of Italian vice-premier Walter Veltroni, who is also minister for cultural and environmental heritage, with a special brief for entertainment. The new cinema center represents the state of the exhibition art in Italy.

The Arcadia super-cinema was built on a disused industrial site and currently has four 220-seat auditoriums with big screens (18 x 9.50 meters, or 59 x 31 feet), a bar and a fifth auditorium seating 630. This last theatre has one of the largest continuous screens in the world, measuring 30 x 16.50 meters (98 x 54 feet). In the near future, an additional four 220-seat auditoriums will be opened at the Arcadia, together with a second bar, restaurant, book and video store, plus a rooftop arena for concerts, theatrical

shows and open-air cultural events.

The Arcadia is characterized by leading-edge technology and major innovations. Walls and ceiling are treated with a permanently resistant fiber, and seating rows are a roomy 1.30 meters, or 51 inches apart. The seats themselves, designed like the rest of the Arcadia center by architect Giancarlo Marzorati, are a comfortable 75 centimeters (30 inches) in width. There are no free-standing or hanging lamps in the auditoriums, which are floor-lit by a system of small lighting tubes, introduced here for the very first time. Each seat is equipped with its

own mini-conditioner, to prevent annoying acoustic disturbance during screenings. All seats are numbered and may be reserved up to 15 days in advance via the computerized

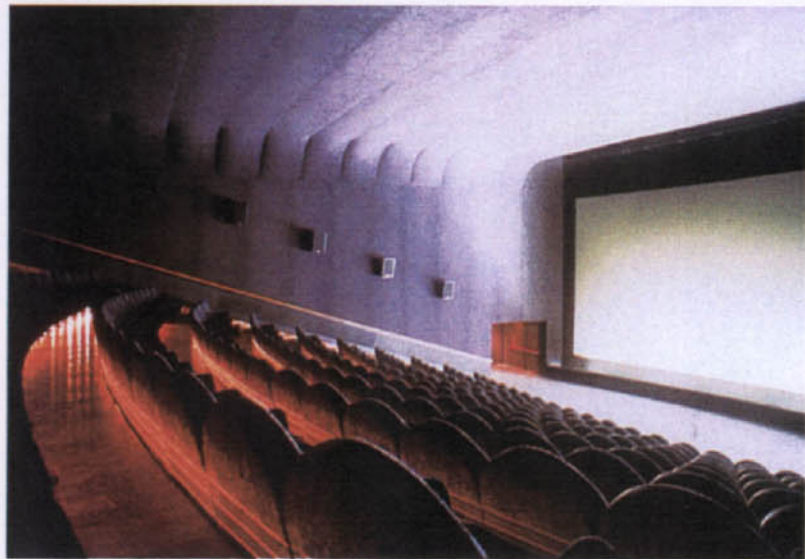
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ticketing system. The auditoriums are equipped to screen films in both 35 and 70mm, using any existing sound system, thanks to their specially designed projection facilities which allow simultaneous showing of the same film interlocked on multiple screens.

The Arcadia is the result of a major financial effort, with a total investment of over 20 billion lire (around US\$13 million) and top-level design criteria to assure audiences optimum quality in terms of both cinema entertainment and ancillary services. The Arcadia, situated in a catchment area with a potential audience base of around 400,000 people, is the dream come true of Piero Fumagalli, a family businessman who went confidently ahead, together with his partners in the venture, creating what Minister Veltroni called a true "meeting place, a multi-event center."



NIGHTTIME EXTERIOR OF THE ARCADIA.



AN INVITING AUDITORIUM AT THE ARCADIA.