

CINEMAS A FRENCH HERITAGE

SIMON EDELSTEIN



REX

JONGLEZ PUBLISHING



Aurillac – Cristal – 2021

Aurillac, Cristal. A cinema loses its character, slims down, is doomed to disappear even if at a slow pace ... Suddenly, not far away, a giant bubble rises, majestic, rather arrogant, with an astonishing brilliance, overwhelming possible rivals with its sheer size. The heart of the city is changing. However, this new beauty with bold shapes, a little chilling – without sinking into nostalgia – cannot obliterate memories of yesterday’s cinemas modelled along more traditionally recognisable lines.



Grenoble – Le Méliès – 2022



Aubenas – Le Navire – 2021



Rumilly – Les Lumières de la ville – 2021



Lyon – Crystal – 2010



Lyon – Cinéma Saint-Denis – 2011

Lyon, Cinéma Saint-Denis. A lively district away from the centre, a discreet entrance at the end of a narrow passage (you could easily end up in a neighbouring business by mistake) ... The Saint-Denis, a century-old cinema. Has it aged? Apparently not. Always dapper, keeping its original beauty – not even needing a facelift, not a wrinkle. The Saint-Denis is a wonder from a past that’s worth reliving.



Lyon – Comoedia – 2021



Firminy – Majestic – 2022



Saulieu – L'Étoile – 2022



Pont-de-Roide – Le Foyer – 2022

Saulieu, L'Étoile. The Étoile cinema is located in what used to be the Ursulines convent chapel (1624). Being a movie-lover is a religion like anything you can practise in a church, all the more easily since the worshippers have left. Perhaps tired of the clergy's message, which they find as boring as a bad movie.



Saint-Judoce – Le Petit Rex – 2022

Saint-Judoce, Le Petit Rex. Jean-Jacques Boinet, with many past ventures to his name, settled in Saint-Judoce, a Breton village of 560 residents, in 2007. He fulfilled his dream of opening a 15-seat cinema in an old forge: Le Petit Rex, in memory of the Parisian Rex he knew as a kid. The sessions often came as a surprise. Neither day nor time was fixed in advance: everything was done by word of mouth in this museum-like place. A long illness carried him off in 2019. But this little corner of paradise still exists.



Lannilis – Étoile – 2015



Montreuil-sur-Ile – Armor – 2015



Bais – Le Foyer – 2019

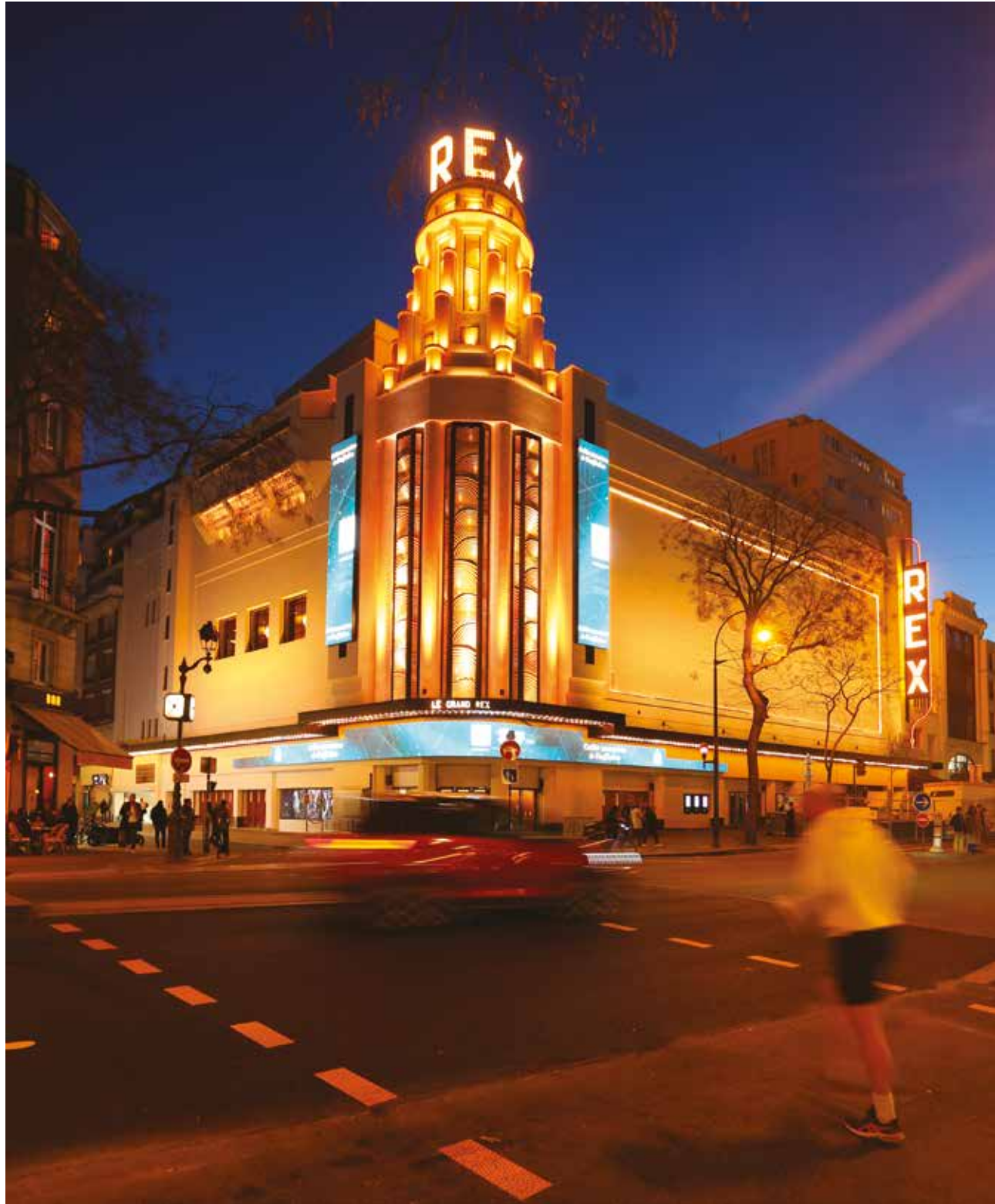


Longwy – Palace – 2020



Longwy – Palais du Cinéma – 2020

Longwy, Palais du cinéma – Cinéma des familles – Longwy-Palace. The Palais du Cinéma, Cinéma des Familles and Longwy-Palace, with their sweet-sounding names, are no more than tottering shadows almost erased from the landscape of Longwy. This place is in search of a new identity to forget that it's a dormitory town reigned over by a Kinopolis as ugly as an airport reception hall.



Paris – Le Grand Rex – 2023

Paris, Le Grand Rex. On 8 December 1932, 3,300 guests in tuxedos and sequined frocks crowded in front of the cinema's huge Art Deco façade. Le Tout-Paris celebrates the birth of the largest cinema in Europe. Welcomed by 80 ushers in livery and white gloves, the guests discovered a room filled with palm trees swaying limply in front of minarets, ancient colonnades, Venetian palaces and a sky sparkling with stars. In 2022, the starry sky is still there. The Rex hasn't changed.



Paris – Le Champo – Espace Jacques-Tati – 2022

Paris, Le Champo – Espace Jacques-Tati. The Champo shelters a universe from another age. Discreet by day and sparkling when night falls. The Reffet Médecis cinema and La Filmothèque in the Latin Quarter cling close to it. They personify a disappearing world. Love of cinema, an active passion in this corner of Paris, has already faded from many cities and countries.



Belves – Rex – 2021



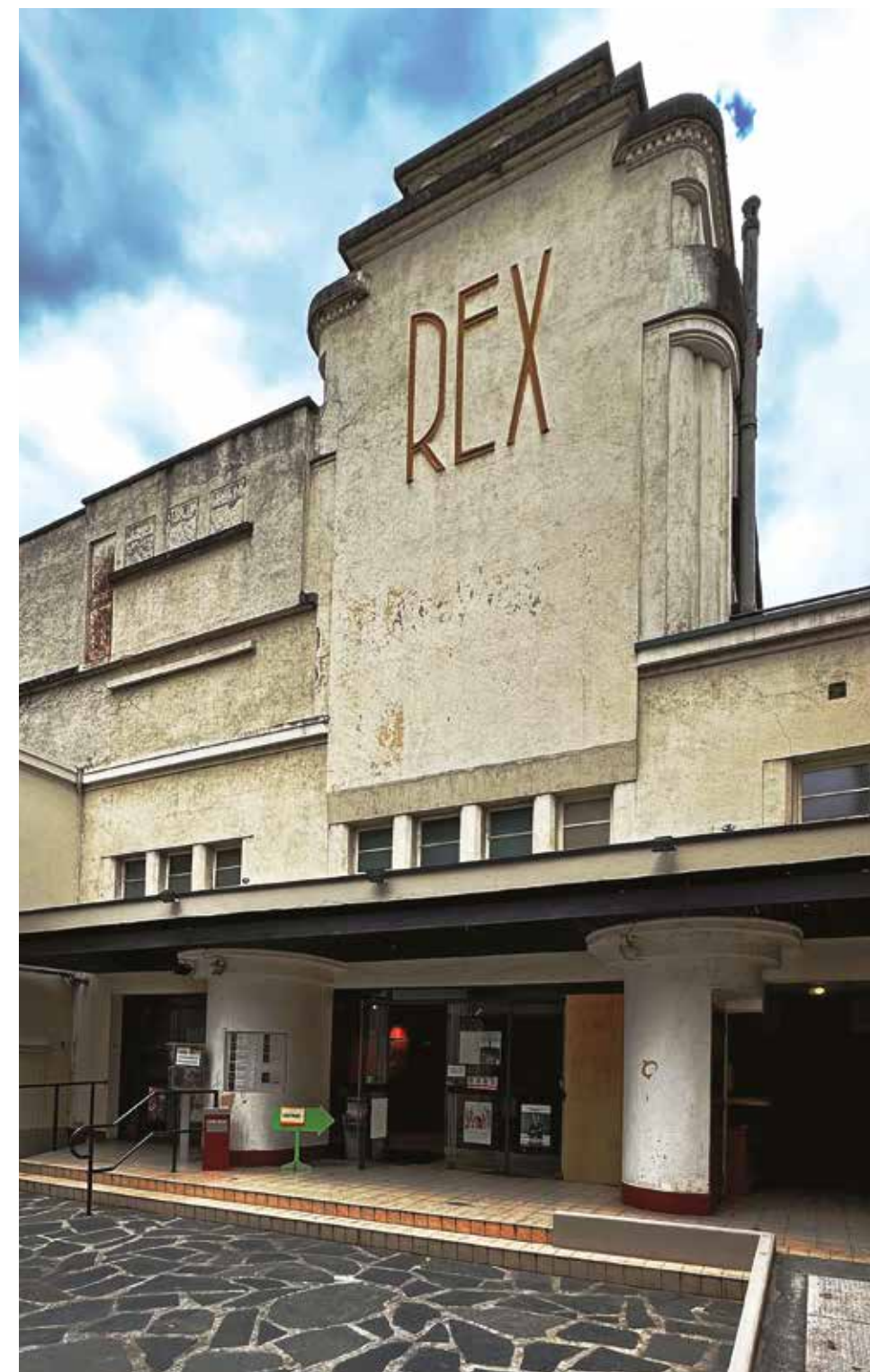
Saint-Jean-de-Luz – Le Rex – 2022



La Réole – Rex – 2012



Chauvigny – Le Rex – 2020



Brive-la-Gaillarde – Rex – 2014

Brive-la-Gaillarde, Rex. Built by architect C.-J. Villiéras, the Rex opened in 1936. The reinforced concrete infrastructure with its refined Art Deco geometric shapes is reminiscent of the ocean liner style with decks and portholes. In 2005, the cinema was listed in the inventory of historical monuments.

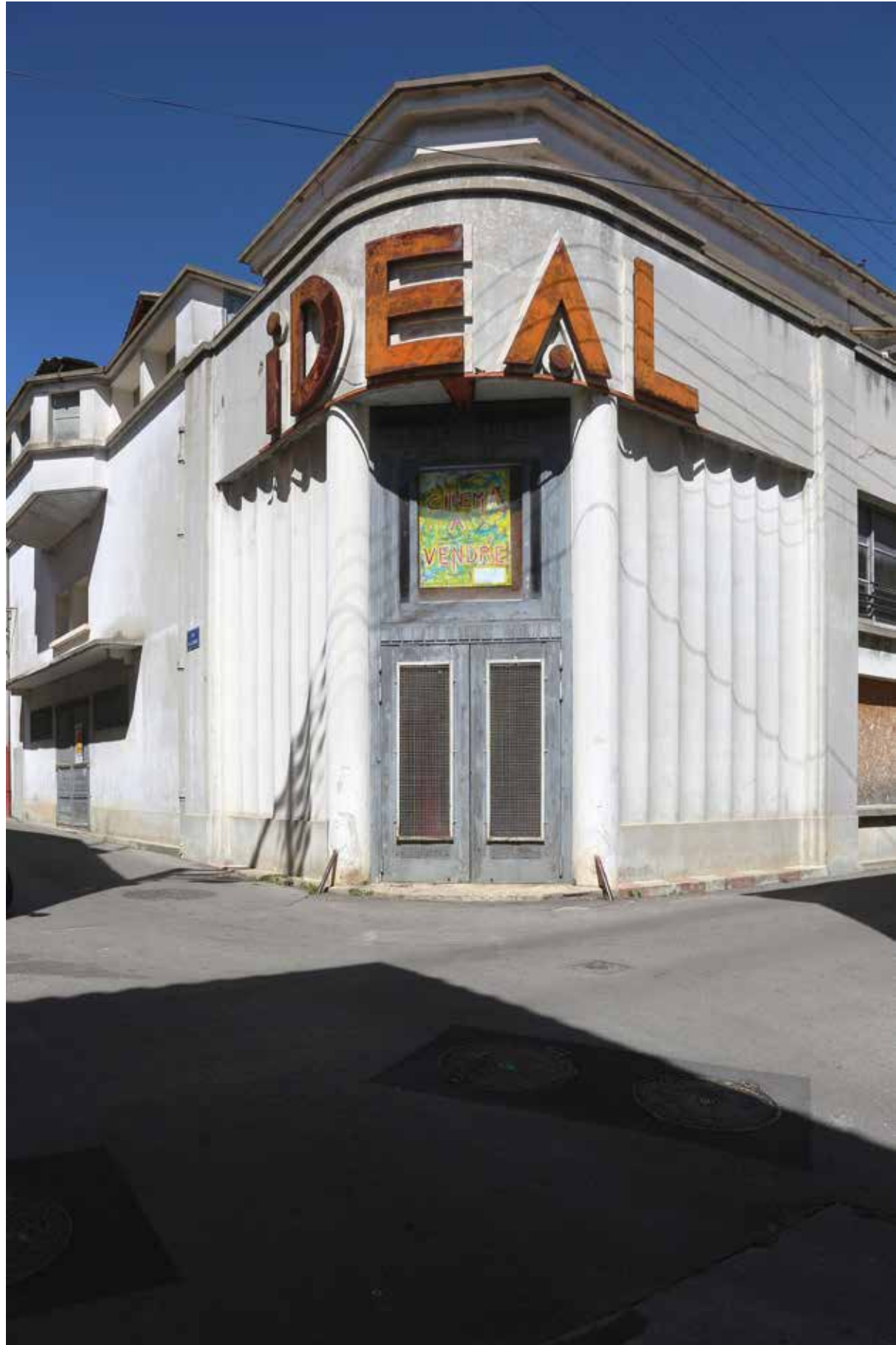
OCCITANIA



Bagnols-sur-Cèze – Casino – 2016



Vic-Fezensac – Cinéma Brana – 2021



Lézignan-Corbières – Idéal – 2017



Bram – Idéal Cinéma – 2010

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The packed audiences of darkened cinema rooms are no more. People are gradually drifting back home to lounge in front of a multitude of online platforms, far less expensive than a trip to the picture palace. Habits have changed... the cinema is no longer a world of magic.

Movie theatres have lost their splendour, often pushed into the suburbs and choked left and right by fast-food chains as if they were ashamed to exist at all.

However, some of this fabulous heritage dedicated to the stuff of dreams which cinemas once were still exists, especially in France. This is one of the few countries left where theatres are still being built, sometimes with audacious architecture. Also, France is a place where their demise is fervently denied.

Sometimes, on a street corner, a forgotten but flamboyant façade recalls past glories. It's there to remind everyone that cinema is immortal.

Simon Edelstein, whether in search of decaying or completely abandoned historic cinemas, or exploring lovingly restored or spectacular contemporary buildings, has scoured the roads of France for over 10 years, in cities and countryside, to seek out this exceptional heritage.

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