

Movie theatres, especially the small, independent ones like Salem Cinema in Salem, Oregon are a dying breed. Even prior to COVID, they were a precious local business held in high value by their communities but always living on narrow margins. There aren't so many options now to see unique, independent and international film on a large screen and in community with others. Salem Cinema, the Darkside (Corvallis) and other smaller places allow that still to happen and compete in their communities with the larger, corporate movie purveyors. All of these locations provide local employment and much needed entertainment, but the small local theatres also engage in the community through special events, hosted festivals, and unique opportunities. It take a lot of money to pay for films and the refreshments sold don't always pay all of the bills. In this time, many in the local community have stepped up to buy concessions on "popcorn Fridays" or other special logo items (shirts, cups, etc.) to try to keep the theatre going until COVID passes. They were open briefly and then forced again to close. Now just recently opened again, they are struggling with a weary and wary public that is not fully ready to return to enclosed spaces, even though they are operating safely and with care. It is possible many businesses could close in the pandemic, but if we lose theatres like Salem Cinema, they aren't going to be replaced tomorrow by a new theatre. There are very few folks willing to sacrifice their own economic potential to operate these beloved, community institutions. We need to support those who do. And who want to continue.