Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

CinemaCon in Las Vegas

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, April 20th, 2016

CinemaCon is the annual convention of Theater Owners (NATO) that takes place in Las Vegas at Caesar's Palace (until 2010 it was called ShoWest, at Bally and Paris hotels). All the major Hollywood studios make presentations of their upcoming movies, with exclusive footage and movie stars in attendance.
This year (April 11-14, 2016) Paramount had Amy Adams and Jeremy Renner on stage for *Story of Your Life*, Warner Bros had Russell Crowe for *Nice Guys*, Colin Farrell and Eddie Redmayne for *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, Ben Affleck, with Amy Adams again, as Bruce Wayne and Lois Lane from *Batman v Superman*, for *Wonder Woman* (Click here for more details). Sony had Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt for *Passengers*. Universal asked Charlize Theron to present an award to their chairman Donna Langley. Warren Beatty honored Arnon Milchan, producer of his upcoming movie about Howard Hughes. 20th Century Fox had director James Cameron announcing four *Avatar* sequels. Newcomer STX had Matthew McConaughey for *Free State of Jones*. Amazon Studios had Elle Fanning for *Neon Demon* (Click here for more). Lionsgate held a party at Gordon Ramsay's restaurant. Disney showed an entire movie: *Captain America: Civil War*. At the closing night ceremony awards were handed out to Susan Sarandon, Keanu Reeves, Jesse Eisenberg, Anna Kendrick and many others.

Caesars Palace (c) Elisa Leonelli

So exhibitors traveling to Las Vegas from all over the country are treated to some glitz and glamour. Journalists like myself cover the event. But this is not the only reason why I have been attending CinemaCon for the past 20 years. I also like to explore what is new in this rapidly changing city that offers much more than gambling casinos. I have seen all the amazing shows from Cirque du Soleil: *O* at Bellagio, *Zumanity* at New York New York, *Kà* at MGM Grand, *Mystère* at Treasure Island, *Beatles LOVE* at Mirage. I saw *Viva Elvis* at Aria in 2011 before it was replaced by *Zarkana*, that I had loved when it was playing at Radio City Music Hall in New York. This great show is closing forever on April 30, just like *Iris* did in 2013 after 2 years at the Kodak theater in Hollywood; so hurry if you want to see it. I saw both Bette Midler and Cher perform their one-woman shows at Caesars Palace, and Blue Man at Luxor.

Caesars pool (c) Elisa Leonelli

I adore QUA, the tranquil Spa at Caesars and the outdoor pools of clear warm water. I like the art exhibits at the Bellagio. This year I loved the classic B&W portraits by Yousuf Karsh, who

photographed everybody from Winston Churchill in 1941 to Nelson Mandela in 1990, movie stars like Humphrey Bogart in 1946 and Lauren Bacall in 1966. I had lunch at Giada DeLaurentiis restaurant in the new Cromwell hotel. I enjoyed a stroll in the new pedestrian mall between the Flamingo and the Linq; there was live music and a fountain with colored jets. I did not go on the giant Ferris Wheel; it moved so slowly that I thought it was still. For a good ride I suggest the roller coaster at New York New York. I did not visit the Pinball Museum, saving it for next time I'm in Vegas.

New York New York (c) Elisa Leonelli

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