

The emperor strikes back

Daniel Broch tells **Matt Eley** of his ambitions to expand the Everyman cinema project right across the country, eight years after being met with suspicion for rescuing the Hampstead picture house



Daniel Broch has hopes of setting up 50 cinemas in the next five years

WHEN Daniel Broch stepped in to save The Everyman Cinema Club eight years ago, you would have thought he'd have been met with people jumping for joy.

After all, the 75-year-old institution on Holly Bush Vale had gone bankrupt for a second time and without his cash, may well have closed for good.

But jumping for joy is not the traditional Hampstead way. Instead Mr Broch was met with suspicion. Who was this rich young upstart, and was he going to turn a decrepit yet renowned independent cinema into some sort of nightclub?

Eight years on, and having just turned 40, Mr Broch has surprised more than a few with his commitment to both the cinema and the area. He lives in Highgate with his wife and two young daughters, and admissions at The Everyman are up from 25,000 a year when he took over, to 85,000. All without so much as the introduction of a disco ball.

Plans have been unveiled for a second Everyman in Hammersmith, and Mr Broch has ambitious designs to open up another 50 across the country.

This, he says, was always the idea behind getting involved in the first place. We took an old cinema and the idea was always to invent a new concept and then scale it up. So everything we did has always had that in mind," he says.

The Everyman has evolved and Mr Broch and his team are now regarded as innovators in the

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industry. The cinema shows a diverse range of films, including the first UK screening of *Deep Throat* in 2005. There are community clubs, live transmissions broadcast via satellite and touches you won't get at your local multiplex, such as luxury seating and waiter service.

"I think we did a very brave or stupid thing in picking up that asset of Hampstead and making it something people could be part of and be proud of, and I was the only mug prepared to do it," he explains.

"We have created a great resource for people. This is why we are an interesting group and we are not afraid to believe in what we do."

Mr Broch and his shareholders now want to replicate what he calls "The Everyman Effect" across the UK.

There is no doubt that he is bursting with enthusiasm for the job but initially when we meet I fear this is going to be a very business-like interview.

We are talking on the mezzanine level of the Everyman offices in Downshire Hill, from where the emperor can survey his coolly dressed, bright young workers.

It looks like the sort of place where plenty of blue-sky and out-of-the-box thinking takes place.

And at first Mr Broch does nothing to alter that perception. He thrusts a corporate brochure



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into my hand and launches into a speech about the new projects. I'm half expecting a PowerPoint presentation.

But as I put a question to him he becomes distracted and struggles to get something out of the pocket of his jeans.

"Sorry," he says. "It's not that I'm excited to see you - well I am - but I can't get my mobile out of my pocket."

One slightly risqué joke and the ice is broken. Mr Broch turns from being a businessman pitching his project to the passionate character who is full of ideas that can't be contained.

It transpires that his main driving forces are not money or cinema but seeing those around him create and - arguably above

everything else - proving people wrong.

He says: "I wouldn't say I'm in the cinema business and I definitely wouldn't say I'm in the film business. I would say, and this is going to sound like a cliché, I am in the people business really.

"When I was 20 and working for different companies and looking at the way people did things, it didn't make sense to me.

"Maybe a part of me is determined to prove that I am right about how companies treat people - the default position of 'they are going to steal from you first before you steal from them'."

Mr Broch adds: "I am a great believer that people want to contribute. I am obsessed and passionate about harnessing that creative spirit and doing things off the back of it.

"A lot of the stuff we talk about is a lot of crap but we come up with some interesting stuff."

Mr Broch may have been frustrated as an employee but that didn't stop him succeeding. His work in estate agency and property made him a millionaire by the time he was 30.

Towards the end of 1999 he invested a chunk of his wealth into saving his local cinema and was told by many people that he was backing a losing horse - something that made him more determined to succeed.

"What you realise in life is that

very few people have an he says. "Which is fine different skill-sets need together. But when people that things are not going just because they don't balls to do it themselves, get irritating."

He sounds a bit like Gekko and admits he switches off from thought work.

"This is all-consuming can't do this part of the ti have my family, which is tre. You have got to be able engage when you are something. A lot of it is a sion of me and vice versa developed me, and I have oped it."

Mr Broch is determined and his team will work t the Everyman message afield.

"You need to have some aim for. You need to ha thing to believe in," he sa

"I wouldn't say peo work for money, but mo aren't going to make amount of money in their

"So, the satisfaction part of something and b and contributing is important. I think the thing that was missing was an employee.

"Maybe we'll get 50 ci five years, maybe in eigh we will get 49, maybe w get there."

Somehow you get th he will.

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