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Entre l'offre et la demande : l'entreprise patrimoniale

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DE NOUVEAUX MODÈLES POUR DE NOUVEAUX USAGES

Vers une politique de l'offre pour les cinémathèques en Europe

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I am Head of the German Film Institute in Frankfurt and President of the Association of the European Cinémathèques (ACE). This Association has 38 members at the moment covering all Europe from Moscow to Lisbon and from Oslo to Athens. We have a lot of film archives in common, including the big national film archives, to the smaller ones. Our institutions in Europe are acting and re-acting in a highly complex field, as cultural intermediaries, agents or service agencies, and this complexity in our opinion is defined by the special tradition of each *institution* in Europe, the self-definition of its cultural mission, the definition from others for example political entities, the pressure on success, often related to funding questions, the expectations of the audience, the presumption of demands of unknown users etc. We are facing the digital challenge in almost every sector of our daily work life, the change in consumer preferences, the demand for transparency, use and re-use of collections, the question regarding the future of traditional cinema, the intensified debate with copyright owners and holders and the confrontation with formally unknown exploitation measures. This is not an exhaustive list but merely a selection of essential factors which require permanent interrogation and definition of our institutional identity.

To make it clear, no changes have occurred to the classical tasks of collecting, cataloguing, conserving, withdrawing and presenting, but entirely transformed are nowadays the aspects of how to perform these tasks in a digital world, which means collecting preserving and providing access to digital materials. This has become an essential problem for the film archives. These digital media create a new media environment and thus the question arises: how and towards what will the film archives work in the future.

Dan Nissan, Head of the Danish film institute has asked in this context: are film archives to become institutions which, in the future, will be dealing with a long gone media, connected to the certain way of experiencing this media, and certain *carriers* of narratives? Should archives therefore only focus on classic cinema and its presentation in traditional, theatrical environment? Many of the eminent personalities of the European Film Archives just after World War Two deeply focussed on presentation while they gathered together the great collections: Henri LANGLOIS in France, Jacques LEDOUX in Belgium and Freddy BUACHE in Switzerland, Fernand Jung in Luxembourg, Peter KONLECHNER and Peter KUBELKA in Vienna, Gerhard LAMPRECHT and Wilhelm LAVIES in Germany. All of them were mainly collectors with a passion for cinema, they collecting film and related materials mainly in order to exhibit, to publish and to show. Restoration was a privilege reserved for the master pieces, and was undertaken without the development of a philological basis. In which Enno PATALAS from the head of the Munich Film Museum described this carefree attitude, he turned his back on it in the 1990's when the young generation of film restorers and historians began to develop the philological

basis from their own practice. Also within the archives, there was reorientation towards film beyond the master pieces. The 1978 FIAF congress in Brighton marked the turn in attention towards early film formally classified as marginal.

The archives do have a tradition of re-defining their task, mostly seen in complex internal processes of collections' analysis for example, but proceeding towards a set of instruments and techniques which proved of long-term duration. But for the last 10 years the challenges brought with persistence to the European archives, are mainly of an external nature. For example in the first half of the 1990's the project *Projet Lumière* of the then newly founded *Association des Cinémathèques Européennes* was still able to receive funding from the Media program of the European Commission for a joint large scale analogue restoration project, which resided in the publication of a wonderful catalogue and a tour of the restored films through festivals and cinemas throughout Europe. But after that, funding of the European Commission was available exclusively for the digital environment; for databases, for excess to digitised works, for research into e-cinema or for the development of new internet platforms for so-called digital content. This funding policy of the European Commission could be neglected, as driven by political and economic interest if it didn't mirror the general expectation and attitude of the society. The promise of the internet to provide all information on the click of a mouse, the widespread expectation of the users, this information would implicitly produce the truth. The still growing demand for images from the private sector or industry, for example YouTube, the loss of the status of traditional cinema as a natural focal point in the leisure activities linked to an increasing privatisation of film consumers' habits. All these are challenges which the publicly funded film archives are unable to ignore, unless they define themselves as a traditional museum for traditional analogue film.

For most archives in Europe this is impossible since they are charged with public commission, but still, the question is how to do it, where are the catalogues and data all encompassing, searchable, connecting the materials in our collection, while these connections are needed by users, researchers, students, programmers, film festival directors. How is this information about our collections and our knowledge made public? Those materials and the data, how are they accessible or exchangeable and in what kind of picture of the European Moving Image Heritage do they culminate?

In order to create at least a basis for answering some of these questions, the ACE members are working on procedures for standardisation in film cataloguing, indexing and description, with again, the financial support of the European Commission. They are currently creating a digital union catalogue of the holdings of film archives, which is called MIDAS. Again, this is financed by the European Commission.

At the moment we have 16 participating European archives and of course we are presenting their data, (not the films themselves) documentaries, mainly films before 1945. This focus on information, on standards in cataloguing on the interoperability of our databases, on identification and on so-called multilingualism, may seem far removed from the daily operations in a film archive, yet this is the condition for us to gain presence in the world, dominated by visibility.

For the sake of the European Film Heritage we simply cannot afford to be invisible outside the base of our premises, cinemas and exhibitions. In the perspective of millions of users, this kind of visibility is linked to the presence on the World Wide Web, culminating in a perhaps unconscious assumption that invisibility on the Web means less importance or no existence. The European National Libraries were the first to acknowledge this relationship, publishing catalogues and some digital books jointly in the European Library. Regardless of the political implications connected with the slogan of Google's challenge, ACE has followed the debate about a European digital library very carefully. The European digital library means a joint gateway to digital content held in the European museums, archives and libraries. At first, it had been designed without the implementation of the film or so-called audiovisual sector; it was only designed for the traditional and highly classified libraries, museums and archives. Now, thanks to two years spent on lobbying, on behalf of ACE I have the honour of being a founding member of the new European Digital Library Foundation, which means film archives are accepted as one of the players beside the museums, archives and libraries.

Digital collections of moving images and cinema related material are dispersed in Europe, lacking the possibility of domain-specific search and access across the various institutions and countries. The problem of lacking coherence in data across film archives of *cinémathèques*, as well as the solving of intellectual property rights issues are crucial for providing access to both digital moving images and film-related material.

Both challenges can only be met in a collaborative way by building a network of film institutions around the actual task of providing integrated access. Therefore, ACE recently initiated a project called the European Film Gateway (EFG), the proposal was submitted by the Chairman of the Film Institute to the E-content Plus Program of the European Commission at the beginning of October.

EFG aims to find and implement solutions for providing integrating access to the wealth of Europe's cinematographic heritage. The network now consists of 23 partners from 14 member states of the European Union plus Norway and Switzerland, most of them being ACE members. In case of success, the project will start in spring 2008 and end in 2011, and hopefully the network members will then provide approximately 840,000 digital items, including 70,000 films with a total duration of about 25,000 hours for testing the projects.

The EFG will be linked to the European Digital Libraries; the film archive material will be accessible to their common user interface. For the first time it will be possible to contextualise search and use works of different media, that once were separated by the media barriers of the analogue age. Let us not fool ourselves, these are big figures but in regard to technology we cannot be among this privilege and function of the industry. Regarding visibility of our holdings beyond our cinemas, our hands are all too often bound, this is privilege of right owners whose archives generally are better developed than public sector archives, since the collections embody monetary value for them and for us, our collections have cultural value alone. Yet the archives are forced to behave like right owners, harvesting their collections for films in the public domain for example, or for "orphan works", this means the right owners are unknown or not locatable. Meanwhile the archives publish more DVD's than books, do not accept collections if they are not connected with the rights, for example a license for screening in the wrong premises, or the right for non-commercial distribution.

Be this justified in the desire to present their collections, or be it justified in the powerful need to generate a larger income, what do these considerations imply for the collecting policies, the care of the holdings, for cataloguing and publishing ? When the archives turn to non-fiction film, pre-1945 because they are considered as "orphan works" and therefore can be used for amateur film or industrial or advertising film. What does this mean for the work inside the archives and film historiography outside ? The debate as to whether the archives are subordinating themselves blindly to the digital challenge and thus being traitors to their cultural identity was carried out in public by Alexander Horwath, director of Film Museum in Vienna and an internationally acknowledged expert Nicola MAZZANTI. This question arises daily as we are operating with terminology such as asset management, content, use, re-use, but it should not be overlooked that we often assign that new vocabulary to our traditional tasks, in order to reach our audiences in the digital world and to be heard by our funding agencies. Again, are we traitors ? Do we carelessly neglect our cultural identity born in and forever connected by cinema ? I don't think so.

Cinema only lives in the presence of spectators and the history of cinema together with the history of the film archives has all too often been a history of hidden treasures, of invisibility, of expert rumours and fabulous secrets of frustrating searches and locked walls. The demand to open our files, inventories and collections should be an internal demand and it mostly is. We can offer something, not only in the so-called content but knowledge and expertise, valorisation and orientation, the ability to write history and to create context. Skills are still terribly missed in the digital environment.

Our demands are addressing rights holders and the copyright legislation in order to facilitate the opening of the archives as the basis for access and most of all, our demands are addressing people. We do need managers, curators, restorers, well-educated and trained, familiar with the history of film

and of film technology, with ethics and philology of archive work, with profound knowledge of copyright issues and digital developments, people able to define the focal points for the collecting policy, for acquisitions, trade, the expansion of collections, for analogue or digital restoration activities, for DVD production, film distribution and exhibition practices.

Do the archives find trained staff? This question was tackled by the archives 10 years ago and they found an Archimedia training Program for students and young professionals out of the archives. It was a forum for acquiring or deepening knowledge on specialised subjects such as programming, restoration, management and also an important networking opportunity. As a training program at various places in Europe it was lacking a permanent structure and a comprehensive approach, and it was finished after the funding of the European Commission had ended. It has left an awareness of painful need amongst ACE members.

Temporary training and on the location training are proving increasingly insufficient vis-à-vis the complexity of the tasks, but do the tasks influence what is currently taught and learnt at the European universities for example? Are our needs and demands - which are identical to those of commercial sector archives - being met? With few exceptions I personally tend to deny the question, therefore I am extremely glad about our *image* which in my opinion is a high quality program. I am happy about the interest in it and the opportunities it gives for you and for us. Thank you for your attention.