Tools for
European
Screenwriters'
Training

TEST

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TOPIC #1 for TEST ONLINE Forum

How useful is the training of screenwriters, taking in account the context of the current European audiovisual industry?

Here you can exchange points of view about this question. Click 'post message' or 'reply to...' to send your contribution to the Forum.

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Welcome !

Date: 2005-02-14 10:15:22
Posted by: Michel Gaztambide
Subject: **accompanied by training for directors and producers**

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I would say that the training of screenwriters is useful, necessary, essential, etc. It should be accompanied by training of directors and producers that accept and understand the need and importance of working together with screenwriters. They should know how to guide and recognise the keys to a fruitful collaboration.

Date: 2004-12-01 12:12:56
Posted by: Rosa Verges
Subject: **Reflect on what we are doing**

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Training offers the possibilities to thoroughly discuss and reflect on what we are doing. In the everyday working practice there is hardly time to do so.

Date: 2004-11-30 10:09:13
Posted by: Isabelle Fauvel
Subject: **Former des scénaristes de Europe répond à plusieurs nécessités**

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DE MON POINT DE VUE FORMER DES SCÉNARISTES EN EUROPE répond à plusieurs nécessités :

- professionaliser cette activité

- travailler les univers "européens" communs

- permettre à des générations de réalisateurs de trouver leur alter ego scénariste, ce qui dans un pays comme la France par ex est une nécessité car même quand les réalisateurs n'ont pas le désir d'écrire, ils y sont pratiquement contraints dans le système actuel

- Créer un réseau d'autant plus utile que l'écriture est un travail en solitaire, souvent isolé.

Date: 2004-11-22 12:04:00
Posted by: Antonio Saura
Subject: **On training and Europe**

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"There is not such a thing as "European audiovisual industry". We have the national industries of each territory. But in order to survive the always changing world of offer and demand in the audiovisual, this should change. The EU has a duty to offer ways so circulation of works and collaboration among the nations in Europe take place. It is the EU duty to transform the national into pan-European.

In this sense, training in writing and development, should insist in the need for pan-European analysis of the projects: bearing in mind the national peculiarities, and helping the circulation of different ideas."

notes for TEST, June 23 2004

Date: 2004-11-25 09:54:32
Posted by: Patrick Cattrysse (Flanders Script Academy) (**patrick.cattrysse@skynet.be**)
Subject: **RE: On training and Europe**

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I very much agree. Interesting concepts here are "national peculiarities" and "different ideas". My feeling is that up till now, discourse has been too "global". I compare with our discourse on "culture": "our" culture vs. "their" culture. Hence "European" cinema vs. "American" or "Hollywood" cinema. What is specific exactly? What common? Is a simple sentence "Are you hungry" specific to the English language? It is probably to the extent that only people speaking English can understand it. It is not for example in the way it distinguishes between the question and affirmative form (inverting subject and verb). And I have not commented here on the content of that sentence. Are stories specific for what they tell? Or for the way they tell the story? Or both?

Date: 2004-11-23 15:02:39
Posted by: Eva Evangelakou (**eva.evangelakou@virgin.net**)
Subject: **RE: On training and Europe**

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There is a hugely developed northern European audiovisual industry, a developing one for the rest of the EU countries and an emerging one for countries like Greece. Collaboration amongst unequal partners can only be stipulated and hence not beneficial. The, by all means necessary, EU training for screenwriters should firstly bring most trainees to an even level and then work towards the amalgamation of common experiences and goals.

Date: 2004-11-30 13:09:59
Posted by: Antonio Saura (**asaura@zebraprod.es**)
Subject: **RE: RE: On training and Europe**

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The point made by Ms Evangelakou is really important and should be discussed. Shall we really level first? In what language?. Who trains what?... Those are questions we can adress here. Also, and I then refer to my previous point and to the very good point made by Mr Cattrysse, what model shall we follo?. In my personal opinion - which I apply to my choice of movies and tv programs when I produce- the narrative choice depend in a way of the cost of a film and therefore in the comercial potential of the film: so if I would be looking for an action film, my range of choice would definitively be the American model of structure and plot, since I am trying to aim to a market that consumes variations on that. But if I am to focus in a more character driven prsonal film, the American structure helps very little, since the audience for that type of film will be asking for something that is specific and different. If we only train our writers in one model, we will b seeing cheap clones of movies than other industries do better than we do. It is rather surprising to see year after year that the most succesful movies in Spain are not the best constructed ones according to the rules trained in a majority of courses. That makes me think.

Date: 2004-11-22 11:57:04
Posted by: Antonio Saura
Subject: **On training writers and the industry**

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"Sometimes I have the feeling we train for the sake of training. Being true that we need a considerable critical mass of writers in order to find the jewel we can produce, the training is aimed only towards the structure and plot, and not to the viability of the screenplay itself."

notes for TEST, June 23 2004

Date: 2004-11-25 09:47:49
Posted by: Patrick Cattrysse (Flanders Script Academy) (**patrick.cattrysse@skynet.be**)
Subject: **RE: On training writers and the industry**

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Then it would be interesting to develop further the concept of "viability". … "plot, structure,…": my experience is that in many EU regions there exist two opinions, one black, the other white. Either one can not learn/teach how to write or one can teach/learn how to write in a couple of weeks and the learning process is mechanical (as if learning morse code). It might be interesting to start studying better that teaching/learning process. For that matter, acquired knowledge and experiences in teaching/learning prcesses in other fields might be helpful.

Date: 2004-11-30 12:56:50
Posted by: Antonio Saura (**asaura@zebraprod.es**)
Subject: **RE: RE: On training writers and the industry**

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I would like to use the opportunity of this forum that has started to try to further up our capacity to be helpful in the difficult task of helping creators find the tools they really need to write both for the screen and for television. In this sense, I do not think there is only one particular way of achieving those results. But I also believe that the efforts in this behalf should be more coordinated than the chaos and excesses we are suffering now. It is true that we have evolved from nothing (the situation in the 80's 90's,) to an avalanche of offers. But how many, what type, and what knowledge is the industry demanding? We don't know. Talking from experience, I apreciate a trained writer when I see it: it saves time, it saves money. But what I receive more and more are "falsely" trained writers. I have to deal with writers that have been told certain set of rules, but are not able to create, construct, and, what is worse, to understand the economics of the industry they want to work in. It takes a lot of training INSIDE the companies to have a decent writer for a long running Tv serie, for instance. And it takes a lot of work to have a writer who understand the collaborative work with a director, for instance. We could try to use this forum to suggest concrete ideas that could be implement by aleady existing prorams. We need to enhance, not to distroy. So my question would be: how can the industry do to collaborate with the training programs? Are internship programs a possibility? (difficult with writers)…

Date: 2004-12-13 10:27:05
Posted by: Giovanni Robbiano
Subject: **RE: RE: RE: On training writers and the industry**

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I agree with your evaluations specially in regard to trainers and their insight of the "real" world, often we deal with an academic attitude, while we should be able to teach both rules that work and original ways to overcome them. It is vital for our survival in this extremely aggressive market/world.

Here some points:

- Our job is often improvised, the same happens for the training of our professionals.

- I don't want to impose a stamp on good and bad, but it should be easier (for anyone willing to learn) to pick the right people and determine a number of solid, certified institutions. - Our access should be easier as well, Media serves a limited number of candidates, therefore its influence is important but not decisive.

- On this behalf promoting, sharing and circulate both brand and ideas should be DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED, it is not (only) that I want to tour Europe, the problem is that I don't know my fellow partners, what they do, who they work with.

- One result of this would be in a limited number of years the development of projects that are not just the usual co-production fairy tale, but are promoted by real partners and may develop ultimately a sense of European cinema (or tv).

- I think experience in both areas (teaching/professional writing, and, possibly directing) makes a significant difference, especially here.

The experience of writing for a living is far different that what most classes give, and I have to say that in my experience even some of the best trainers have a sort of distopia when the level of real writing is reached, what you do to make a living and when this is assured how do you write the best possible movie under the requirements of an economic system?

The problem at least here in Italy but I guess around Europe is the idea that there is a gap between quality and market, I mean the strict belief that there is no possible common area between the two, I sense this all the time and I experience it both ways, talking with producers when I raise some specific stories to which they reply "difficult" meaning not commercial, and the other way around when a writer lowers his expectations by accomplishing some undefined commercial "standards", the result is a vast number of products that are routine, worthless and doomed to oblivion.

The authority of the writer in Europe is very low, and I suggest some form of association could help, even if I hate the concept of becoming a Union. if Test could help us focus on some project in this behalf it could (possibly) help.

I apologize for miswriting.

Date: 2004-12-13 10:19:35
Posted by: Tom Abrams   [**reply to this message**]
Subject: **RE: RE: RE: On training writers and the industry** [**back to the index**]

The answer to your particular question is complicated but I will say that one way to help solve the problem of improving a writer's ability, education and understanding of the needs of his profession is also to better educate the PRODUCERS. There are lots of training programs for writers -- and okay, maybe their success or methods are suspect -- but there are few training programs for producers and very little of that training is "creative" (dealing with how to understand story and more importantly, work with writers.) I think that by putting producers INTO workshops WITH writers would go a long way toward educating both partners creatively and maybe more importantly, make both partners understand the needs of the other occupation. At worse, writers see producers as an enemy whose bottom line is the dollar or euro or the peseta, and producers see writers as arrogant idiots with their heads in the clouds. Putting these two professionals together in training programs could help to some extent. (Then, of course, it's an issue as to what is the right training program and what do they "teach".)

Date: 2004-12-12 16:22:51   [**reply to this**
Posted by: Christian Routh (**christianrouth@teleline.es**)   **message**]
Subject: **RE: RE: RE: On training writers and the industry**   [**back to the index**]

There is indeed much more training available than 20 or even 10 years ago, but it certainly lacks a coherent European co-ordination, & is increasingly confusing for applicants, faced with a bewlidering array of courses that are hard to distinguish from one another. One effect of this is that courses are forced, somewhat artificially, to be in competition with each other for applicants. Given the harsh reality that very few of the courses are free, as one might wish them to be in an ideal world, courses are obliged to accept applicants who can afford to go on them, rather than necessarily finding the best ones. I don't think anyone in training can put their hand on their heart and say that the quality of applicant has steadily improved over this time. the reality is that the entrance level barrier has gone down, not up, even though the knowledge of the craft of screenwriting is undoubtedly more widespread.

Date: 2004-11-17 14:46:37
Posted by: Webmaster (**benjamin@focal.ch**)   [**reply to this message**]
Subject: **Welcome !**   [**back to the index**]

This is the Forum dedicated to the topic #1.
Here you can exchange points of view about **the question above**.
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