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TOPIC #6 for TEST ONLINE Forum

What does a producer look for in a writer who has participated in screenwriters' training program?

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Date: 2004-11-30 11:32:37
Posted by: Isabelle Fauvel
Subject: **réponse**

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A mon sens un producteur attend non seulement que le scénariste ait acquis les bases suffisantes et nécessaires de la dramaturgie mais surtout qu'il sache partager le moment de l'écriture, c'est à dire qu'il sache entendre la critique et l'analyse, travailler à plusieurs mains...

Il attend aussi un gage de qualité car si l'auteur en question a été sélectionné pour une formation et qu'il l'a suivi il est possible qu'il soit plus prêt aux missions qu'on voudra lui confier plus tard.

Date: 2004-11-22 12:59:52
Posted by: TEST
Subject: **knowledge about the script**

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TEST proposal 15: Writers need to know that there are differences between the selling script, the script that will be read by the producer, and the shooting script. We were not sure that writers and trainers were sufficiently aware of the difference between them.

TEST proposal 17: We need to remember that the script is not an end in itself, it is always incomplete, it is an instrument to enable other people to make a film. And this is why training should be focused on, and knowledgeable about, the industry for which it is training the writers.

Date: 2004-11-22 12:10:25
Posted by: Antonio Saura
Subject: **Writers lack understanding of the industry**

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"My experience tells me that I have writers telling stories that are not films. A lot of writers that pretend to write for the screen do not have the basic skills about the cost and demands of what they write about.

As a producer, I am exposed to a considerable amount of screenplays that come out of schools. Most of them are well constructed, but lack originality and are inspired in American models. I am not interested in copying Hollywood, since my scope is totally different. I need writers that know about the business they are about.

Conclusion: writers lack understanding of the industry."

Date: 2004-12-17 15:42:12
Posted by: Stephane Mitchell (stephane.mitchell@bluewin.ch)
Subject: **RE: Writers lack understanding of the industry**

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I write in the French speaking part Switzerland, where the words INDUSTRY or MARKET draw a puzzled silence. There is no proper industry, there's barely a market as you know it. So I, the writer, must understand not the industry, but the different needs and wants of the people who pay me (sometimes) : some directors/ producers beat the war drum, want to compete with Hollywood or France, and so I must master Dramatica, shake hands with McKee, recite "the hero's journey" etc.... Some others are guerilla filmmakers: there's no money, no budget, they're "auteurs" and so I must understand that dramaturgy means squat to them, that dialogue must be poetic, that scripts are a nuisance, that sets and props will be too expensive. Then there's the TV producers who wants to appeal to the old and young and plain and cool. So I must understand that I have to write a local story with universal appeal which must please, yet must not alienate anybody...

I appreciate your conclusion Antonio, because it raises important questions. But you must understand that writers may not lack understanding of the industry's demands, but of your personal human wishes. Another producer may be delighted when getting a "Hollywood" copycat. Another may not even read the script as long as a bankable star is attached. Will Goldman says that "nobody knows" what makes a movie succesful. I believe that a writer must only understand writing for the screen and why she wants to do it. As for the industry, well, who can understand it ?

I believe that a writer should write because she has a story to tell. If she's a good writer, and she has a great story, great characters, then she understands the industry and the market. If her three act structure is flawed, you will be able to redirect her I'm sure.

But I'm not so naive as to think that writers don't require training. Because writing requires craft. Craft to understand how to better write, to understand structure, to comprehend that screenwriting is both solitary confinement and a team sport once the producer and the director hop on board. Craft to learn how to protect yet forget her ego. And then, craft to understand how to sell her project. CONCLUSION: Training programs should train writers to better their craft, and to understand the language of the producer and the director. It should not teach them what to write about, it should not scare them about what the industry want or doesn't want. If a writer is naive enough to believe that a story with a plot centering around his left foot will not draw an audience then... Oops

Date: 2004-11-17 17:36:47
Posted by: Webmaster (benjamin@focal.ch)
Subject: **Welcome !**

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