

# DEVELOPMENT

> MEDICI, Santpoort, 01.10.15

# AGENDA

- > introduction
- > why development?
- > development at the Danish Film Institute
- > overview: development methods
- > presentation: development projects
- > discussion

# DANISH FILM INSTITUTE

- > government agency
- > main funding body for films
- > funding based on cultural criteria
- > quality, variety and volume
- > artistic quality and/or cultural value
- > from cutting edge arthouse to broadly appealing mainstream

# DANISH FILM INSTITUTE

- > funding budget: 45 million Euro
- > production: 20 features, 30-35 documentaries, 2-3 drama series and 10-12 talent films
- > development: digital games and transmedia projects
- > market share for features: 25-30%

## WHY DEVELOPMENT?

- > increase originality: being creative in storytelling and production before the "engine rolls"
- > increase quality: make sure the film is ready for production
- > convince funders and strengthen decision making: make sure we are funding the right films
- > to save money!

## DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING

- > all funding schemes have funding for development
- > from early development to advanced development
- > as many times funding as needed
- > development is underlined in the funding system: we want to challenge the "usual way"
- > the basic rule: *point to every problem, but never to a solution!*
- > quantity and quality

## QUANTITY: FUNDS

Feature films	19,4
> arthouse films	11,1
> mainstream films	8,3
Shorts & documentaries	6,1
> documentaries	5,3
> shorts	0,8

# FEATURES

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>
All features		
> development	5%	12%
> production	95%	88%



# FEATURES

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>
Arthouse		
> development	7%	17%
> production	93%	83%
Mainstream		
> development	1%	7%
> production	99%	93%

# SHORTS & DOCUMENTARIES

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>
Shorts & documentaries		
> development	12%	26%
> production	88%	74%

# SHORTS & DOCUMENTARIES

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2015</i>
Documentaries		
> development	11%	26%
> production	89%	74%
Shorts		
> development	18%	23%
> production	82%	77%

## QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT

- > the quality of fiction development varies a lot!
- > higher quality in documentaries and animation
- > traditional writing-based development: pitch, synopsis, treatment, 1st draft, 2nd draft, 3rd draft (...) final draft, shooting draft
- > only *then* is the film developed as an audiovisual work
- > this is not development – it is preproduction!

## LOOKING AT METHODS

- > development methods gathered from specific development projects
- > the methods have been generalised into a number of development categories
- > the division is artificial, since the methods address several areas at once
- > the division describes a *point of departure* for the specific development methods

## PREMISE

- > talk and more talk about the film to get to the core!
- > workshop where the director, writer, DP, editor, production designer and others work with the premise and vision
- > producing a pilot of the first two minutes to set the film's premise
- > workshops, meetings and conversations with professional experts and people affected

# CHARACTERS

- > character development in collaboration with the actors
- > improvisation sessions with the actors based on the main idea before the scriptwriting begins
- > readings and workshops with the actors as part of the script development
- > readings and workshops don't have to be with the final cast
- > shooting with the cast to discover elements for future storylines

# CHARACTERS

- > research shooting to cast real characters in and from a specific environment
- > workshops with non-professionals from the environment to gain authenticity
- > casting non-professional actors and developing the story based on their own lives and experiences
- > shooting on location with actors co-defining the story and conflict
- > shooting on location in costume to develop characters



## SUBJECT MATTER

- > archival research to unfold the concept based on filmic and historical references
- > editing elements of the story using existing footage as a preform for the script (rip reel)
- > test shooting in a difficult location or "hostile" environment to create confidence and get access
- > ongoing input from the cast, DP, editor and production designer during the scriptwriting: gathering ideas, testing ideas and establishing the story

# STORY

- > making a character and concept bible establishing rules for the story
- > producing a film sequence that explores the theme and characters and serves as a sketch or preform for the script and the final film
- > making a visual storyboard instead of, or as a preform for, the script
- > creating an animatic of the whole live-action film based on drawings, soundtracks and documentary footage

# STORY

- > testing narrative devices where actors and real people reconstruct or reenact events together
- > doing a complete script for a documentary to resolve the film's desired narrative

# VISUALS

- > gathering images, paintings and photographs as an aid in developing the film's visuals
- > making a booklet of photos and drawings to communicate a director's visual references
- > creating a mood board or mood video indicating atmospheres, colours, light, aesthetics, graphics, costumes, visual references, etc.
- > workshop with the DP, production designer and costume designer to develop a visual guide supporting the theme, plot and characters

# VISUALS

- > working with people from other art forms, like theatre, photography and visual art
- > developing a visually co-narrative layer with the production designer

# LOCATION

- > early location research to explore possibilities and limitations of specific sites in developing the script
- > using the choice of location to develop and establish the production concept, budget and financing

# SOUND

- > finding music and sounds that can help define the film and develop the story
- > including a composer early on to find the film's tone and mood
- > recording sound and testing narrative elements on the soundtrack as part of the script development

# TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

- > testing and resolving technical solutions
- > shooting film sequences to test lighting, sound, cameras, cutting and pace
- > technical testing of key visual effects as part of the script development



# PRODUCTION

- > developing the production concept alongside the scriptwriting
- > using the production concept as a framework for the scriptwriting by defining specific conditions: shooting days, number of locations, interior/exterior, etc.
- > as part of the development, the director and the producer should assemble a crew that can support the film creatively and production-wise
- > testing the collaboration between the director and DP in connection with a shoot

# PRODUCTION

- > resolving co-production opportunities with a given country
- > finding sub-suppliers, e.g. of CGI, who can contribute creatively and production-wise
- > doing a breakdown to ensure that the film's script and budget are in sync

# FINANCING

- > exploring financing and creating a financing strategy to sharpen the script and the development
- > producing a pitch trailer or sequences presenting the project
- > producing sales materials
- > pitching the project at an international financing forum

# AUDIENCE

- > resolving what the director and the film want to tell the audience
- > create a website or blog to gather interested people around a film project
- > interacting with the audience who contribute ideas and suggestions
- > interactive scriptwriting via social media in dialogue with the writer and director

# PROMOTION

- > test if the story and genre deliver in terms of audience expectations
- > testing a possible positioning and target group for the film
- > examining audience expectations in terms of the adapted book, the theme, director, historical figure or event
- > investigating the audience's experience of relevance, currency, interest and identification

# DEVELOPMENT

- > do it early!
- > draw in other people!
- > share with others! And share again!
- > film is a team sport!
- > study: those who develop with others get more films done!

## SIDE EFFECTS

- > too much emphasis on development: "everything can be developed!"
- > too many and too long development processes
- > some projects should go straight to production
- > rather a quick rejection than a long development
- > risktaking

## OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- > development costs in the media every year
- > the tabloid discourse: it's a waste of money!
- > change in lawmakers attitude: from critical approach to support of high development costs
- > recruiting the right people: experience with development



## EXAMPLES

> development projects:

> *A War*

> *Forever 13*

> *The Sketch*

## DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: A WAR

- > development budget: 122,000 Euro, 70% funded
- > veterans from Afghanistan and wives as part of script writing
- > casting of veterans and Afghan refugees in supporting roles
- > test shoot with MMA fighters
- > early choice of location in Turkey and of crew
- > production concept, budget and financing

## **DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: *FOREVER 13***

- > development budget: 53,000 Euro, 92% funded
- > collective scriptwriting with girls age 13-15 on a website using video, sound, blogs, pictures, text, etc.
- > casting among the contributing girls
- > in development!

## LOW-BUDGET FILMS

- > new funding initiative for low-budget films
- > low-budget films aren't cheap films, but films developed for a low budget
- > clear conceptual decisions are required: e.g., two actors, one location, story in real time
- > original – not written! - development is required

## **DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: *THE SKETCH***

- > development treating the material cinematically
- > exploring theme, characters, arena, expression or story
- > development funding of 65,000 Euro and films to be produced for 400,000 Euro
- > producing a visual sequence of 6-12 minutes, a creative concept and a production concept , 1st draft or the like
- > a study and jumping-off point for further work

**SLUT**

# INTRODUCTION

- > CL, Head of Film Funding
- > 8 years
- > background: large Danish Prod. Co: fiktion, docs., tv
- > turn around: 10 mill Euros
- > everything was about development
- > took with med
- > looking bach

# INTRODUCTION

- > text, text, figures and text
- > no clips, no pictures, no drawings
- > boring
- > stating the obvious or:
- > maybe offer some inspiration
- > feel free to interrupt
- > language