

CILECT NEWS

July 2001

Issue No 34

GEECT GENERAL CONFERENCE 2001 AT LA FÉMIS, PARIS



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Who was at the GEECT Conference?



GEECT

General Conference at La Fémis, Paris

The 2001 General Conference of GEECT, the European grouping of CILECT, was held in Paris and hosted by La Fémis on 31st March and 1st April.

La Fémis and GEECT shared the choice for the content of the meeting. The Paris school chose to devote the first day of the meeting to **“An Update on Digital Imaging”**, focusing on how digital technologies affect the artistic and economic aspects of film-making.

Presentations on “Film in the Digital Era”; “Colourist: a new craft?”; “Digital Colour Grading” were fol-

lowed by roundtables with professionals and GEECT delegates.

For the second day the GEECT Executive had asked four film schools – the NFTS, Beaconsfield, UK; PWSFTViT, Łódź, Poland; SSJFTVS, Jerusalem, Israel and SNC, Rome, Italy – to explain how they go about **“Selecting Students”**.

The presentations – by Roger Crittenden for the NFTS, Andrzej Bednarek for PWSFTViT, Renen Schorr for SSJFTVS and Caterina D’Amico for SNC – were followed by discussions in small groups and reporting back to the plenary.

The participants expressed a strong interest in these practical issues and encouraged GEECT and CILECT to focus future meetings to other concrete topics in film and TV training.

Over eighty delegates attended the Paris conference, quite an impressive figure!

The presentations of the selection procedures of the Jerusalem, Łódź and Rome schools are reprinted (in a slightly edited form) in this Newsletter.



Grand old masters are not forgotten at La Fémis



Lauri Törhönen discussing the next GEECT conference in the Nordic countries

SELECTION PROCEDURES

The Sam Spiegel Film & TV School, Jerusalem

In contrast to the majority of European film schools, the Sam Spiegel Film School works in the *total filmmaking* method and does not make a division into areas of specialization. The school incorporates in its curriculum studies of production, direction, scriptwriting, cinematography, editing, sound etc. for all students.

The duration of studies is four years. In the first year the infrastructure for all professions is laid. At every stage in the course of the four-year studies, the school allows each student to submit projects in the fiction, documentary or experimental genres.

Each year thirty students are admitted to the school, selected from 180-200 applicants. This demands that the sorting procedure be able to locate candidates with high capabilities in the aforementioned fields. Previous knowledge or experience in the fields of cinema and/or television is not required.

The school's policy is that in an ever changing, ever fluctuating ideological, esthetical, technological, financial world, the students should be able to respond and adapt quickly to the changes taking place around them, and to understand the primacy of classic narrative as a means to communicate and move audiences.

The school believes that the classic narrative will not age or become anachronistic, and that an emotionally stimulating story is the key to "directing the audience" (to paraphrase Hitchcock).

The school's method holds that the drama's core is not only for the director and scriptwriter to hold and understand, but that storytelling and a grasp for drama is also required from the producer, cinematographer, editor and sound designer. Therefore, the development of a fundamental ability to tell a story and understand a protagonist's

essence is the bread and butter of the student's daily school life.

The majority of applicants arrive at the school aged 21-23 years old, most with no previous experience in the filmmaking industry. After a 3-year military service for men and a 2-year service for women most of them come with a diminished sense of creative self and with identity conflicts and crises; a so-called "second adolescence". Therefore the school's sorting procedure focuses mainly in identifying the latent potential in each candidate.

In conclusion: since the studies encourage versatility and are a total and multi-disciplinary experience, stressing the storytelling personality and the unique individual voice of each and every student, the sorting procedures try to find and decipher the character and potential in each applicant.

The tests depict narrative skills, visual skills, background, and inner world.

THE SELECTION TESTS

In principle, the tests are user-friendly and account for the different needs and biases of every applicant, recognizing that some need the relaxed home surroundings and some are in need of more stressful conditions to function optimally. They are therefore divided into home tests (given 3 weeks before the exams taken at school) and in-school tests. Each home test has its school counterpart.

testing visual and aesthetic capabilities

Home test: the applicant is to photograph three different stills, in a subject defining intimacy and emotion; such as "My Grandmother/Grandfather".

The school counterpart (poster test): the applicant is to create from one sheet of white paper (no additional sheets will be given) a poster which

reflects his inner world and is encapsulating and communicating a certain message. At the applicant's disposal are colour papers, old magazines, paintbrushes, colour gouache paint, colour pencils, glue and more. Duration: 2 hours.

Writing Tests

Home test – examination of general writing abilities: C.V. test. Applicants with a rich, varied, interesting or artistic life experience grade highly. The C.V. is treated not merely as a formality, but as an indicator no less important than any other test.

Out of C.V. Story – The applicant is to choose one meaningful incident that influenced his/her life and write a two-page story about it.

The School counterpart: alternate autobiography. The applicant is to write a two-page alternate, imaginary autobiography, in light of the following quote: "A person's biography is constituted not only of the things he had done, but also of the things he wish he had done and hasn't." (Milan Kundera).

These series of tests provide a glimpse of the applicant's multifacets. The idea at the core of these tests is to try and evaluate from the start which of the applicants is of a vital, entreprenuring, and exciting personality and therefore worthy of proceeding to the second stage – the interview.

Writing – continued – Narrative capability examination

Home test: "the siren". The applicant is to write a story linked to the Memorial Day siren. The siren may be the subject, time frame, motive, or any other facet relating to the story. Memorial Day in Israel is in memory of fallen Israeli soldiers. During the siren the "world stands still" for two minutes: cars halt, people of all ages stand

still and bend down their heads. The siren is loudly heard throughout the country. Two pages.

The School counterpart: a moment of conflict. The applicant is to recall a moment in his/her life when he found himself in a conflict situation and write a story using the same moment or situation of conflict.

Writing – continued – originality/innovation/humour

School test: like/dislike/indifferent – The applicant is required to classify his likes, dislikes and indifference regarding facets pertaining to his inner world (politics, arts, scenery, scents, colours, persons, concepts etc.). Duration: 30 minutes.

optional test: previous works

Submission of previous works is non-mandatory. Inasmuch as the applicant possesses previous works that can testify to his ability, he is requested to choose a single piece of work and present it at the day of tests at the school. The work submitted may be taken from the following fields: film, video, music, writing, drawing, graphics, journalism or a series of stills. It should be emphasized that work of the highest quality only will raise the applicant's chances of admission.

In conclusion: professional and experienced teachers, who work in the film and television industry, inspect the qualification tests. The tests are submitted and inspected anonymously (with the applicant's number only). Each and every test is checked and rechecked by two different examiners. In the end, the examiners are in possession of no less than eight works made under similar circumstances. Therefore, they receive identical conditions of inspection.

THE CONCLUDING COMMITTEE STAGE

The school's director and 4 teachers, who functioned as examiners in the selection procedures, constitute the Concluding Committee that reviews all the applicant results.

Naturally, only a precious few score highly in all the tests. These few automatically graduate to the second stage – the interview. Roughly 20% of the

applicants score in the low-to-average range and automatically disqualify.

The bulk of the Committee's discussions concern the non-definitive results, involving gaps in different applicant abilities as shown in the various tests. The committee reviews and discusses the merits of each case specifically and decides whether or not an interview is to be granted.

35%-40% of the candidates pass on to the interview stage.

THE B STAGE

An applicant who has qualified through the school's test stage will be summoned for a personal interview. The school's Director, chair of the interview committee and the four examiners of the Concluding Committee are present in the interview. Interview duration: 20 minutes.

With his/her arrival at the interview stage and the members of the board having read his works, the applicant enters a room where his visual works are in display.

He/she is questioned about the pattern and framework that guided him/her in his/her visual and his Likes & Dislikes work. These questions are aimed to ease the candidate's stress. The Board reaches a decision based on the overall personal and artistic impression left by the candidate.

Following the interviews and the weighting of test results, the committee decides which 30 applicants will be admitted to the school.

*Renen Schorr,
Founder Director*

The school believes (...) that the classic narrative will not age or become anachronistic, and that an emotionally stimulating story is the key to "directing the audience"

SELECTION PROCEDURES

The National Film, TV and Theatre School, Łódź

There are **two film departments** in the National Film, Television and Theatre School, Lodz, Poland: **directing and cinematography**. The studies last four years, the degree granted being MA level.

Each year about 120-150 Polish candidates apply for each department. The entrance exam for Polish candidates starts at the beginning of June and generally at the end of September for foreign candidates. Five to eight students are admitted in each department every year.

The selection tests for each department consists of three stages, with a selection after each stage.

Film/Television Directing

First Stage

- ◇ An interview with the candidate. Conversation about film history, literature, theatre, art history, films and plays, film and theatre directors the candidate knows, likes, dislikes.
- ◇ Evaluation of the candidates' personal works: videos, still photography, screenplays, paintings

Second Stage

About 35 candidates are admitted after the first selection and go through the following tests:

- ◇ Directing a short theatre scene (2-3 minutes).
- ◇ Directing a short video scene, no sound, 6 – 7 shots, 1.5 – 2 minutes with the help of a camera student.
- ◇ Taking photos in a town / of an event, a place or a person; maximum 15 photographs.
- ◇ Documentary interview of a person the candidate does not know.

- ◇ Writing a short script. Ideas to be taken from a newspaper.

Third stage

About 15 candidates are admitted to the third stage.

- ◇ Each candidate is asked to present orally a project of a documentary and a feature film.
- ◇ This is followed by a long discussion with the candidate.

After this last stage five to seven candidates are admitted each year.

Film/Television Cinematography

First Stage

- ◇ The candidate is asked to take two series of photographs – black and white and colour – based on an idea suggested by a the teacher.

- ◇ Conversation with the candidate about the two series of photographs.

- ◇ Evaluation of the candidates' artistic works, photographs, videos, paintings, drawings.

50% of the candidates are admitted to the second stage.

Second Stage

- ◇ Presentation and evaluation of a photo assignment made outside the school.
- ◇ Written piece about an event, a place, a memory
- ◇ Discussion of the two series of photographs made in the first stage and of the artistic curriculum of the candidate

About 25 candidates are admitted to the third stage

Third Stage

- ◇ Candidates are asked to invent and shoot a short video scene involving movement and lighting: 5 shots, 1-2 minutes, VHS, SVHS, digital
- ◇ Composition made from different objects
- ◇ Conversation with the jury about film, theatre, literature, photography, art and film history

After this last selection, eight to ten candidates are admitted.

*Andrzej Bednarek,
PWSFTViT, Łódź*



SELECTION PROCEDURES

The National Film School, Rome



Caterina D'Amico, Director

Each year by the end of February the Scuola Nazionale di Cinema (Italy's National Film School) advertises all the requirements for application. The application form is sent to a large number of institutions in Italy and abroad, and is also put on the web. By the end of April the SNC receives around 1,000 applications from potential students who ask to be accepted in one of the **nine courses** offered. Applicants apply directly for their chosen course, and may send two applications for two different courses (but not for more than two). Of course some courses are much more requested than others.

Here are the nine courses, the average number of applications received in the last two years and the number of places available for each of them: Acting 320 applications for 12 available places: (6 boys and 6 girls); Animation 18 places available; all other departments take 6 students each year. Art Direction 60 applicants; Cinematography 80 applicants; Directing 280 applicants; Editing 80 applicants; Producing 20 applicants; Screenwriting 120 applicants; Sound 20 applicants.

The Animation course was closed for two years and is re-opening now. We have launched it this year with five Workshops held in five Italian cities, each of them open to 100 students.

REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must have a high school diploma and a good knowledge of the Italian language. The age required varies for each course: actors are accepted between 18 and 22; animators between 18 and 27; the

others between 20 and 27. Applicants send an application form, together with their c.v. and a 2-page text in which they explain why they are applying to the school, and tell about their interests, attitudes, experiences. This piece can be really relevant: if the applicant manages to give an insight of himself, he/she is half way through. Applicants are also required to send in a portfolio, composed of items that differ from course to course, as detailed here below.

Animation: a story for an animated film, complete with storyboard and drawings for characters and setting.

Art direction: ten sketches for sets and ten for costumes, with a text in which the applicant explains his/her intentions and the reasons for his/her choices. **Cinematography:** still photographs, ten of which realized with natural light and ten with artificial light, with a text in which the applicant explains his/her intentions and the techniques employed. **Directing:** a ten minute video and a proposal for another film (documentary or fiction). For **Editing:** material edited on a VHS with a text in which the applicant explains his/her intentions and the reasons of his/her choices. **Producing:** a

project for a feature that is based on a book, with the outline of the story, ideas for casting, financial plan and budget, and an explanatory text. **Screenwriting:** two stories to be developed into films for TV movies or TV series. **Sound:** a piece recorded on tape or CD with a text in which the applicant explains his/her intentions and the techniques employed. As for the **Acting** course, all the applicants who are resident in Italy are invited for an interview that will be filmed; all those who are resident abroad must send a VHS tape in which they speak about themselves.

SELECTION PROCESS**PHASE 1**

For each course there is a commission of experts composed of a minimum of four members: one must be a representative of the SNC Board, one must be a film director, the others are professionals in the specific field, who may or may not teach (permanently or occasionally) at the School. For the Acting course two commissions are appointed: one for the boys and one for the girls. Each commission examines all the dossiers (for the Acting course, interviews all the applicants) and selects up to 24 candidates for Phase 2; for the courses that have more than 100 applicants, up to 36 candidates can be selected. For the Animation course, up to 72 candidates can be selected. This is because the candidates to the Animation course will ultimately be 18, divided in three different specialities which are Traditional animation, Computer animation and Auteur animation. Although the candidates may state their preference, it is the commission's responsibility to indicate the speciality they can follow.

PHASE 2

The candidates are examined by a commission that may or may not be the same as the one for Phase 1. Phase 2 takes place in the school and lasts 3-4 days. Candidates view a film (or a

choice of clips) and write a text which is an analysis and a personal appreciation piece; they have to fulfil other tasks, specific to their profession, that are decided on the spot by the commission (for instance: they are given a theme and asked to develop it); they are interviewed on their works, their knowledge of cinema, their knowledge of other arts. Up to 12 candidates for each course are chosen for Phase 3 (12 boys and 12 girls for the Acting course; 36 for the Animation course).

Phase 3

This is a **six-week long** "Introductory course to filmmaking and film culture", 30 Italian films, introduced and analysed by critics and professionals; there will also be a number of lectures on theoretical issues and a number of lectures on the various professions. In the afternoon they follow at least two specific workshops. Here follows one example: in the first three weeks the 12 directors will form couples with the writers, and write a story for a short film on a given theme. They will also provide visual material for their stories (photographs of locations or of characters, screen tests of possible actors, etc.). The 12 stories are published in a small book. In the other three weeks the directors form couples with the editors, and make a 8-10 minutes documentary on video on a given theme. The 12 documentaries are screened on the last day of the Introductory course. At the end of Phase 3 the final selection is made on the basis of the evaluation formulated by the teachers that coached the students. The Animation candidates follow a similar "Introductory course", where also the theoretical part of the programme is focused on animated films.



Zuzana Gindl-Tatárová autographing her book.

Next GEECT Conference "The Training of Producers" November 2001 in Sweden and Finland!

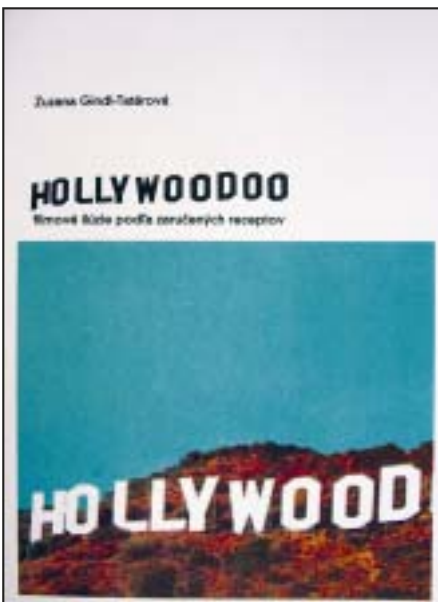
During the GEECT meeting at La Fémis, Lauri Törhonen, director of the Helsinki school, suggested organising a travelling conference at his school and at Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm, with a stop-over at the Turku Polytechnic.

All three schools have agreed to collaborate and co-host the second GEECT Conference for 2001.

A working session on the boat crossing from Sweden to Finland has even been included in the schedule...

The conference is well into its planning stage now; theme is the **Training of Producers** in GEECT Schools; date is "Week 45" on Lauri's calendar: the week starting 5th November 2001.

News from Schools



VŠMU, Bratislava

Prof. Zuzana Gindl-Tatárová has written "Hollywoodoo", a 120 page book in which she examines the differences between Hollywood and European storytelling in narrative films, suggesting building bridges between the two "schools" rather than exacerbating differences. Filmmakers under special scrutiny are Miloš Forman, Quentin Tarantino and Luc Besson.

The book was presented to the press at the Art Film Festival of Trenčianske Teplice (Slovakia) last June.

CILECT films were also shown at the festival. Zuzana had invited a number of CILECT film schools to send their most representative films to the festival.

The CILECT films were shown in three 90 minute sessions to an interested audience, a mix of (Bratislava film school) students and tourists of the small Slovak spa town.

See also page 25 for more news from schools.

THE CHAMBORD PROJECT

PREAMBLE

This proposed GEECT programme takes its name from the Chateau de Chambord, near Blois in France, famous for its double helix staircase, a structure that best describes the intermeshing elements of the project outlined in this document. There is also an historical significance in the choice of name. Blois was the venue of the Congress of CILECT in 1990. This Congress was significant in the world of film and television training because it marked the emergence of regional groupings of schools and academies in the field of audio-visual media. In particular, it approved the establishment of GEECT, the Euro-

European grouping of CILECT. As the expression of its central philosophy, GEECT has had an intensive programme of meetings, conferences and workshops for teachers and emerging film makers, all aimed at providing improved teaching methodology for professionals who provide the bulk of the practical training offered in Europe's schools and academies. Amongst the specific topics already covered have been animation, documentary, screenwriting, directing (including an examination of the relationship between directory and actors), and, most recently, a review of the processes by which the most talented young film makers can be selected for training. Perhaps the most impressive programme undertaken by GEECT was the four year cycle of conferences/workshops examining the creative relationship between screenwriters, producers and directors. These Triangle Conferences have provided the impetus for the most

the process by which these professionals impart their knowledge and experience to the future general of film makers is largely ad hoc, without a systematic approach to planning and preparation (.....) we are mindful of the need to provide some forms of concentrated training to maximise the unique opportunities offered by these professionals.

Dick Ross sets out here a project proposed by the GEECT Executive

The project is still in its initial draft phase.

profound change in teaching practice in decades, moving many schools and academies to create a learning model reflecting in microcosm the practice of the professional world. This new approach has also reinforced the vital relationship between the academies and film and television industries.

Through its Executive Committee, GEECT plans to sustain this ongoing review of training practice, always mindful of changing priorities in the European industry.

THE PROJECT

The second element of this project is an awareness of the need to provide post-graduate training for the most talented young filmmakers in Europe.

Since the Blois Conference, GEECT has represented the only significant thinking on a topic that now has aroused wider recognition: that of **training the trainers.**

The structure of almost every European academy and school is built on the premise that the majority of specialist teaching is carried out by professional film makers working either in blocks of masterclasses, seminars or tutorials, or for longer periods in the breaks between projects in their professional life. Without

these symbiotic relationships, few, if any, academies could survive. However, the process by which these professionals are prepared to impart their knowledge and experience to the future general of film makers is largely ad hoc, without a systematic approach to planning and preparation, without clear objectives and methodology.

GEECT is mindful of the need to provide some forms of concentrated training to maximise the unique opportunities offered by these professionals. Secondly, attention needs to be paid to the demographics of the teaching corps. A number of teachers in most academies are two generations removed from those they teach. Implicit in this observation is the inherent conservatism and inflexibility of an aging teaching staff. Younger professionals need to be encouraged

to participate in the process.

The second element

of this project — another strand within the helix — is an awareness of the need to provide post-graduate (beyond film school) training for the most talented young filmmakers in Europe. This “bridge” experience would prepare participants to make fuller use of the numerous development initiatives available in Europe — EAVE, ACE, Arista, SOURCES, etc. GEECT recognises particular areas of training where this advanced training would be most effective: 1. Production, particularly in marketing, exhibition, distribution. These ele-

ments are not taught as major components of Producer training in most academics, where the concentration is on development and production, 2. New Technologies. By now, hardly new. However this field is constantly developing and no school is able to operate at the cutting edge. The application of new technological advances in the audio-visual media, their potential power, and experimentation with new forms of presentation, production and postproduction

need to be addressed. For example, there has been an increasing concern about the role of the story teller/screenwriter in

relation to new technologies. This needs to be formalised beyond the present workshop or conference approach to a full scale research project on an international level. There are other subjects for advanced training, but creating an effective model using those outlined above would provide the basis for a new concept in professional training. Other specialisations could merely be added as they are identified. Many of those involved in film and television education recognise the need for further training “beyond the academy.” Few, if any schools, have the resources to service that need.

The Process Advanced training needs advanced trainers operating in an advanced environment. These trainers need to be trained. This could be most effectively carried by using an intensive, short course model bringing together experts and young filmmakers who have recently entered the profession into a single learning/training experience. In the interests of diversity, and accepting the realities of cost, organisation, and local expertise, this notional training centre should be mobile, with specialist “packaged” courses prepared to a central directive and monitored to ensure the highest possible standard. This could be achieved by forming an

alliance of key schools willing to participate by providing centres of experience. In effect, each contributor would provide, say, one, two or three workshops each year and provide organisational and administrative support. Each workshop would thereby become a building block in a solid structure, whilst at the same time offering, the potential of transferring each course to other centres as a package. Ideally, each package could be

Each workshop would thereby become a building block in a solid structure, whilst at the same time offering, the potential of transferring each course to other centres as a package.

adapted to be relevant across disciplines. For example, a workshop in new forms of story telling in a digital environment could be designed for

screenwriters, but then offered to producers. Image manipulation in post-production could be relevant to writers, who could respond imaginatively to its potential.

This programme would also be the “case study” experience for the new generation of trainers. Their participation would be both a learning experience and a sharing of contemporary professional practice. If coordinated as a single programme, centrally defined and designed, the training the trainers component would encircle the central core –thus creating the Chambord effect, the double helix.

Dick Ross, April 2001



PANNING THE HORIZON: THE EVOLUTION OF GEECT'S VISIONS PROJECT

Chap Freeman,
Columbia College Chicago

In April of this year, the Visions 3 workshop for European documentary students met in Bratislava to critique its current crop of works-in-progress, and I was struck again by how much the project has evolved from its beginnings in 1994. Teaching Visions has always been a thrill for me, because the pool of participants is so international, and because the primary goals of the project are idealistic. At its beginning, the workshop was conceived not only as a greenhouse for the next generation of non-fiction filmmakers in Europe, but also as a way to encourage production across national borders, on the eve of the European Union. It has succeeded at both those tasks. When I hear that a former participant from Austria is using a German/Japanese colleague he met in Visions to help produce his new film, or that a student from Holland is still making movies, despite the births of her two children, it seems to me that the hopes of the GEECT leaders who put the first workshop together are actually being addressed.

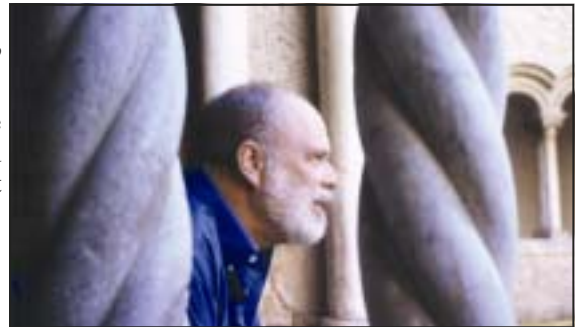
The Visions Project has an unusual structure. A program without physical facilities or production equipment of its own, it moves gypsy-like from one country to another. It has always been financed in stages, and is dependent on students' home schools to produce the projects it develops. Its form may defy conservative notions of how film education should be organized, but in seven years, its participants have completed twenty-six documentaries in seventeen countries, with thirteen more now in production. All of the completed films have been exhibited beyond the classroom. Several have won prizes. A few have been screened internationally, and one walked off with the Tuschenski Prize, Holland's award for best student documentary of the year.

What has made this possible, I think, is that the project has always been

responsive to the creative needs of its students, and willing to evolve to meet those needs.

VISIONS 1: 1994-1995

The project's first leader was Michael Rabiger, whose book *Directing the Documentary* is still the most influential teaching text in the field. Michael organized the first workshop as a set of three meetings, over a span of a year and a half, with students developing proposals, shooting footage and editing their projects between the three gatherings. The first meeting was the longest that Visions has ever held: twenty-six days at the *Literarisches Colloquium Berlin-Wansee*, hosted by HFF "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam-Babelsberg. It included a set of three shooting exercises on videotape, designed not only to teach documentary techniques but also to give participants a chance to bond with one another. These alternated with exercises on paper, designed to stimulate cinematic thinking, and with discussions of the workshop's central theme: "Confronting the Stranger." Screenings of documentaries from several countries were held at night, and a separate seminar for teachers from participating schools was convened in the middle of the month. (It produced a book in German and English, *Teaching the Documentary in Europe*, which captured ideas from the teacher's meeting and collected the favorite exercises of that group.) In the last two weeks of the workshop, students were asked to screen the film they had used as an application to the program, for discussion and evaluation by everyone. Finally, each participant was assigned to develop a documentary concept that would conform to the overarching theme. These were discussed in private appointments between the students and Michael, or between the students and one of the two educators he had hired as co-teachers – myself



and Madeleine Bergh of the Dramatic Institute in Stockholm. After some rewriting, each student presented his or her proposal to the whole group, with the intention of heading home to produce it.

The second meeting was held in Prague, from January twenty-first to February fifth of 1995, where students were expected to report on the progress they had made. Most were still in preproduction. Only a few had footage to show, and only one (the Dutch film that later won the Tuschenski prize) was in rough-cut. A few projects were stalled, either because of conflicts with the filmmaker's other schoolwork, or because of problems with subject matter. As teachers, we were faced with the difficult choice of sticking to our schedule (and perhaps eliminating some projects that were falling behind) or allowing the timing of productions to diverge, at the risk that some of them would become untenably extended. Then we had a piece of luck. Rolf Ortel, one of the early organizers of the project, struck an agreement with the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam to review those films that were complete by late fall. If the completed movies met the reviewer's standards, they would be given a sidebar screening at the festival itself in early December, out of competition but open to all ticketholders.

This proved to be exactly the kind of incentive our students needed – a new goal with the alluring prospect of public exposure, but only for those projects that were completed on schedule. Eleven productions were finished in time for the festival, all of

which were accepted for screening. Visions 1 concluded with a third meeting in Amsterdam, to attend IDFA and critique the finished films. (As a footnote, I should add that one of the films that did not begin production – a Finnish study of a young woman who had killed her child's father – was completed almost six years after our meeting in Prague – proof once again that patience can be a documentarian's best friend.)

VISIONS 2: 1997-1998

Two years later, when money became available for a second round of Visions, Michael Rabiger was already booked with other work. But Madeleine Bergh and I had an advantage that would help us compensate for this loss. Visions 2 would meet in Amsterdam, hosted by NFTVA, and the first session would coincide with IDFA 1997. This allowed us to use the festival's bookings as fodder for our own discussions, and gave our students some access to the press kits and pitching which are part of its professional market. Madeleine also arranged for a classroom visit from a young Swedish filmmaker who was screening her first documentary at IDFA. She attended with her cinematographer and her producer. All three of these women were eye opening for our students, some of whom had not fully comprehended what it takes to produce and market a movie outside the classroom.

Thanks to feedback from students in Visions I, Madeleine and I had already made some changes in the workshop's schedule. One of these was to eliminate the common theme, which had proved more ephemeral than anyone expected. Another was to increase the emphasis on projects that students had completed before they came to the workshop. Our Visions 1 students had told us that those films, fragmentary and unsophisticated though they often were, had provided them with their best understanding of each other's personalities and aspirations. They said that the development of personal points of view, and the discovery of the themes which come from point-of-view, had been the most valuable lessons of their workshop. They had told us that, in future rounds, whatever we could do to en-

courage self-awareness would be worthwhile.

Our Visions 1 students had also said that the three shooting exercises, although valuable as a source of *camaraderie*, were emphasizing technical information which most of them already knew. So Madeleine and I decided to eliminate one of those exercises, making room to screen more early work.

The other change we made was to ask students to submit a proposal for their Visions film as part of the application process, rather than at the end of the first session. This, we hoped, would speed the process of getting acquainted and extend the time for critiques.

And so it did. By the end of our meeting in Amsterdam, projects looked somewhat better on paper. And by spring, the changes we had made seemed to be speeding up production. When we met for our second session, hosted by the Bulgarian National Film Academy in Sofia, more projects had at least some footage to screen, and those that didn't seemed more fully articulated on paper. Teacher-student conferences were intense, in Sofia, and student-student conferences had begun to yield something more than emotional support.

At the third meeting in October, sponsored by the *Scuola Nazionale di Cinema* in Rome and held in a monastery two hours south of the city, so many of the projects were near completion that I was inspired to add a study unit on the promotion and distribution of these films. This met with mixed results. Some students felt enthusiastic about printing posters and managing screenings to publicize their projects, while others felt that such self-promotion might backfire, in their countries, calling the value of their work into question. This reminded me that the workshop, for all the common ground we had managed to create, was still a meeting of different, and sometimes disparate, cultures.

Once again, thanks to the efforts of Rolf Orthel, the Visions 2 films that were complete by fall were accepted into IDFA, bringing the workshop full circle. Since GEECT funding had been allocated to the first three meet-

ings, not all the students were able to attend this additional event, but those who did get to see their work in public.

VISIONS 3: 2000 - 2001

Funding for Visions 3 came suddenly and late at the end of 2000, thanks to the creative efforts of Caterina D'Amico at Rome's SNC. The first meeting was held in Chieri, near Turin, in a space that was earmarked for the Italian school's animation program, but which had not yet been occupied. Already convinced that the training of point-of-view was one of our most valuable lessons, Madeleine and I took one more step, asking each student to begin the workshop with a single presentation that included both a screening and critique of past work, and a presentation of the new proposal. Although time consuming, it was remarkable how much this technique did to uncover latent themes and interests. We maintained the two shooting exercises from Visions 2, whose bonding properties seemed especially strong this time. At the end of the meeting, we also asked our students for a more complete and critical self-assessment. These reports showed us that Visions students are becoming better at defining their own interests and subject matter. As a direct result, they are also becoming more efficient at planning their films.

Our support was strong in Chieri. Rolf Orthel contributed a lecture on constructing effective openings, and Michael Rabiger returned to talk about how documentaries can create dramatic structure, build characters, and manipulate time. He and Rolf met individually with many of the students, multiplying the number of creative reactions to their proposals. As a supplement, the group also had a visit from two Italian documentarians, who screened the director's cut of their film on the war in Afghanistan. Long, violent, and moving, it reminded us that one great goal of non-fiction film is simply to bear witness. A second screening, from a videomaker whose work culls World War II footage from the film archive in Turin, showed us both how potent those images really are, and how difficult it is to turn them to contemporary purposes.

And so, in April, we arrived in Brati-

slava, for a second meeting hosted by FTF VŠMU. Once again, the films-in-progress looked tighter, more defined, and more self-expressive than they had in previous rounds. Even those proposals which had collapsed since December were replaced by their authors with others just as provocative – a good sign that students are learning to work from inside their own beliefs. Our host, Zuzana Gindl-Tatárová, remarked on the number of strong projects from women, and observed that our students seemed very supportive of each other's efforts.

The value of Visions 3 will lie in its results, of course. If these productions proceed as scheduled, a number of them will again be finished in time for application to IDFA, which has become our greatest source of external support. By providing a tight but reasonable deadline for completion, the Dutch festival has given our students something immediate to aim for. Nothing, it seems, improves a filmmaker's energy like the knowledge that an audience is waiting. And nothing improves an educational program's performance like the opportunity to revise and try again.

Chap Freeman,
Columbia College Chicago



CILECT CONFERENCE

THEORY FOR FILM SCHOOLS

Ljubljana

15 – 18 November 2001

Igor Koršič, Project Head

"Shall theory leave it here, and move on, self satisfied with absolute conclusions and rules? Then it is of no practical use. Theory must also take into account the human element; it must accord place to courage, to boldness, even to rashness.

The art (of war) has to deal with living and with moral forces, the consequence of which it is that it can never attain the absolute and positive."

Von Clausewitz, *On War*

The aim of the CILECT project with the working title Kalos - k'agathos, selected at the last CILECT congress at Ebeltoft, was to investigate the problems that we have with the theoretical part of film school education.

Our first consideration was the "theory of film" itself. But it is obvious that such a scope is inappropriate. We decided to consider more general aspects of theoretical teaching at film school, including the theory that is necessarily also part of craft subjects like editing and directing.

We tend to use the notion of theory, for everything from an explanatory model and self-reflection to subtler philosophical thought, and it could benefit from more careful consideration.

The obvious central issue concerning work at film schools is that of quality. Of course we want good, creative filmmakers who will make good films. But what are the values that we are looking for and promoting? How do we identify potential values in the process of student selection? This

issue was the subject of discussion at the recent GEECT Paris conference at La Fémis.

We see certain potential values, largely at a theoretical level, in the submissions of potential students. How do we endorse and nurture these values and enlist them to serve the needs of film practice, in our teaching?

What kinds of theory do we need in the teaching of film and television practice, how much, and how should it be taught in order to foster and promote the quality of creative work?

So that we may share different points of view on the same subject, this four-day conference will be divided into 20 minute time slots. 20 minutes is also the length of the papers that should be submitted.

One of the four days is going to be devoted to the evaluation and assessment of curricula. Theoretical curricula at certain numbers of schools are going to be presented and evaluated as case studies.

I am proposing the following topics (but feel free to propose new ones, or to modify, for example, by combining my suggestions):

- * The central values at play in a film school
- * 100 basic notions and concepts that a film-maker should master
- * 20 non-fiction books that students should read
- * 50 works of fiction that should be read by students
- * 20 theatre plays that a student should have seen
- * 50 obligatory classic films that a

(Continued on page 20)

The Triangle Project: A Look Back

The third and last stage of the Triangle Project took place in Turin, 18-25 February 2001.

The TRIANGLE Project deals with enhancing the understanding of the importance of the effective relationship between Writer, Director and Producer.

These three key figures – always the initiators of any film – must learn how to collaborate more effectively in order to create and present a viable product. We believe that this learning process should be central to the practice of European film and TV schools.

We need to train the trainers, to create awareness in the teachers that will raise the issue of marketing the audiovisual product internationally.

We want to establish models of new integrated curricula for the courses of Writing, Directing and Producing in European film and TV training institutions, with special attention to the development of the Producing courses.

To do so, in 1996 we designed the TRIANGLE Project and presented it to the MEDIA II Training Programme. The Project was selected.

TRIANGLE 1 – a Teachers' Conference – was held in Rome in December 1996. The Conference produced suggestions for new integrated curricula for the courses of Writing, Directing and Producing, giving particular attention to the relation Writer-Director. The papers of the Conference were published and circulated to the CILECT schools.

TRIANGLE 2 – a Teachers' Workshop – took place in Terni in October 1998, again with the support of the MEDIA II Training Programme. The Workshop produced suggestions for teaching procedures, especially on script development and on the relation Producer-Writer. A Report on the Teachers' Workshop was published and circulated to the CILECT schools.

TRIANGLE 3 – the last stage of the Project – took the shape of a double

Workshop, with the aim of designing new teaching modules to improve the creative relationship and the mutual interaction between Producer and Director.

TRIANGLE Stage 3 consisted of a Students' Workshop and a Teachers' Workshop. The professionals running the workshops were Gianni Amelio, Gyula Gazdag, Robert Nickson, Mark Shivas, and Neville Smith.

The Students' Workshop

The Students' Workshop was an Intensive Course aimed at recent Graduates or Students in the final year of a full-length degree course, and took the form of training through projects. Each team of Students presented a project of fiction to propose to the industry when they leave school. Amongst the projects that had been proposed, eight were selected: five scripts to be developed into features; one outline to be developed into a serial interactive video game; two features that had already been shot and were presented in their first cut. Six professionals – four from Europe and two from USA - formed two teams of tutors composed of writer, director, and producer. During the first half of the day each team of Tutors analysed, discussed and developed the selected scripts or films and related production plans, demonstrating the attitude and methods operating in the industry. The second half of the day was devoted to re-thinking and re-writing.

The Teachers' Workshop

The Teachers' Workshop was divided in two parts: during the first half of the day the Teachers attended the Students' Workshop as observers, in order to experience the complementary approaches to professional script development and editing as a practical example of the creative and collaborative nature of the 3-way relationship. In the second half of the day details of curricula already in use in academies were explained and demonstrated for

The Triangle project was initiated in 1996 by Caterina D'Amico and has been one of the most successful GEECT CILECT projects, together with VISIONS. The project has been made possible thanks to the support of the EU MEDIA programme.

delegates, to focus on specific curricula aimed at integrating the training of writers, directors and producers as a creative partnership. Then the teachers were in dialogue with the tutors who coached the students' workshop: to move from the particular to the general, the tutors responded to questions put by the teachers who attended the students' session, using the morning experience as case studies.

In the evenings, student films from the various schools were screened and discussed, in order to illustrate the results of existing curricula. Also two first feature films were presented as case studies, introduced and commented upon by their authors and producers.

Caterina D'Amico

(Continued from page 18)

- student should have seen
- * Film theories that should be part of film school curricula
- * The quantity of film theory that is necessary for a student
- * How theory of film should be taught at film schools
- * "Non-theoretic" theory that might be useful
- * Necessary theory from other disciplines (musicology, dramaturgy)
- * The possible need for any interpretative training
- * The importance of other arts, drama, literature, music at film school
- * Aesthetic values to be taught at film school
- * The need for film history at film schools
- * How film history should be taught
- * The need for philosophy
- * The need for sociology, sociology of culture and media
- * The need for psychology and socio-psychology
- * The theoretical lessons of the Triangle project
- * Useful theories on editing
- * Useful theories on directing
- * Useful theories on cinematography
- * Useful theories on sound

- * Useful theories on documentary
- * Useful theories on art design and set



Some participants at the closing session of Triangle 3 in Chieri, Turin



Gyula Gazdag, UCLA, Tutor of Triangle Project



Neville Smith, Tutor of Triangle Project

design

- * Useful theories on script writing
- * Useful theories on make up
- * Useful theories on costume design
- * Useful theories on film production
- * Theories of artistic collaboration
- * The knowledge that film-makers should have when leaving film school