

GEECT SYMPOSIUM April 16-17, 2015:

*Research in Film Schools*

La Fémis, Paris, FRANCE

Four years after the international workshop entitled “What is research in a film school?”, organized by La Fémis as part of the European Film School Network (April 2011) La Fémis hosted a follow-up conference in the context of the recent changes regarding EU supports to education and cinema. (In 2011 more than 40 representatives of nearly 30 film schools across Europe gathered to share their experience on the development of research activities: Masters and PhD programs, research funding and partnerships, and the place of theoretical courses in the curricula).

This time the major question was: how have these questions evolved? Have there been changes in the way research is being conceived, experienced, implemented, oriented? Are we entering a new, more mature, stage? Have new or previously unseen obstacles emerged? What new directions are being taken?

This 2-day symposium explored ways in which film schools create meaningful research activities, suited to their educative, cultural and professional objectives. It interrogated the stakes of research for students, teaching staff and for the overall film, media and visual arts environment.

The focus was on hands-on and actual experiences in film schools, rather than on theoretical discussions of research in art or institutional and political agendas – though these dimensions were inevitably addressed as well. Special emphasis was given to new initiatives, as well as on the recent developments of existing programs. Keynote speakers presented case studies, and specific panels were organized. Issues that were addressed included: structure of the curricula (composition, objectives...), program definitions (film practice/theory, film studies in an expanding media environment, etc.), PhD and artistic doctorate programs, funding opportunities, teaching staff and scholars, partnerships and applied research, links with other research institutions and the private sector, etc. The workshop aimed at providing a more comprehensive view of actual experiments and activities regarding research in film schools throughout Europe today.

Case studies “Combining Research with professional and Artistic Training”: Dana Whitco: The Tisch Initiative for Creative Research at New York University; Kirsi Rinne: Research as a Pedagogical Tool at Aalto University.

Screening of a Selection of Research Projects: “Treefellers Revisited”, a project by Screen Academy Scotland was introduced by Robin MacPherson ; “Transatlantic Hauntings, African

Modernities” by WITS School of Arts South Africa was presented by Jyoti Mistry ; “Boxer” from the Zurich University of the Arts Switzerland was explained by Christian Isely; and finally Barbara Turquier talked about “Filmographies Pierre Lhomme, an oral-history project by La Fémis France.

There was a session entitiled “Artistic Research in MA and PhD Degrees – A European Model?” with a case study by Mieke Bernink: The Master of Film Program at the Netherlands Film Academy; a case study by Fredrik Graver: PhD Level Degrees at the Norwegian Film School; a case study by Nadeije Laneyrie-Dagen: “SACRe” Doctoral Program, PSL University.

Then followed a session in which “ The Uses of Research” was questioned. Again case studies were prestented: from Manuel José Damásio: Disseminating Research in Film and Media Arts; from Michael Wedel: Immersive media and film heritage research at the Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf; from Lewis Paul: Overview of research at the Northern Film School and CINAGE case study.

A questionnaire “European Film School Network—Research in Film Schools” was distributed among participants in order to collect a wide variety of information. The results were presented by Barbara Turquier, La Fémis.

The symposium welcomed more than 40 participants from 25 different countries, with from outside Europe representatives from Brazil, Bulgaria, Columbia, Ecuador, Singapore, Australia South Africa and USA. GEECT schools 28 participated.

A very useful 31 page document (in English) with summaries of all presentations and discussions was later mailed to all participants.