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Notes on Curating, freely distributed, non-commercial

The Future of Short Film



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Cover: Michel Klöfkorn, *Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad in einer halben Stunde an den Rand der Atmosphäre* (2011, Germany)

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Introduction

John Canciani

This edition of OnCurating is based on the panel “The Future of Short Film”, which was held at the Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur. The former artistic director Reto Bühler invited Lars Henrik Gass (Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen), Maïke Mia Höhne (Berlinale Shorts), Peter van Hoof (International Film Festival Rotterdam), Jukka-Pekka Laakso (Tampere Film Festival) and Laurence Reymond (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs Cannes) to present a short film not longer than 10 minutes and to talk about the future of short films from an artistic point of view and not from a technical one, knowing that this often cannot be separated.

The guests were asked to describe a utopian vision of what they think the future could look like, and not to deliver a prognosis which had to be based on facts and would be 100% accurate. Catherine Colas, who is responsible for fiction and shorts at ARTE Germany, hosted the panel.

Giving a utopian vision seems easy at first sight. However, delving deeper into this question, it turns out that it is not at all an easy task. It is also a strange momentum for a curator to take a standpoint on this (even if we all do, or rather should) when we talk about film and art. When it comes to the future, adopting a clear position creates an uncomfortable expectation in people (especially in filmmakers), who seem to be daring to hear what the relevant festivals like or dislike. Often however, these discussions do not say anything about taste, but want to highlight new voices and trends. As often as not, curators show what is produced at the moment, in the hope that this could be a hint in which direction cinema could eventually go, or they just try to catch a current wave of filmmaking. The urge of some festivals seems to be to catch those tendencies in an early stage, to satisfy their inherent enthusiasm for new discoveries. Outside of competitions, it is mainly about contextualizing films and artists into topics, ideas or historical timelines. In the end our common goal is to celebrate cinema.

It is clear that programmers and curators do not create the future, but give it visibility; the future is designed by the artists themselves.

The panel was an attempt to talk about the visions of each curator. The discussion was guided by personal views on films that they saw in 2012. As they were only allowed to choose one film (with a time limit), it was impossible to express what they see as the future of the short film, but it gave them a base for a discussion. The main essence of this discussion was that so called “hybrid films” seem to be very appealing at the moment. This is a trend which is getting stronger, and as well can be found within formal practices and contents: For example not only by mixing techniques but also by mixing genres. Laurence Reymond came up with the expression “hybrid films” when she described why she chose her film, since the expression is very rarely used in film terminology. At first she didn’t directly mention the word hybrid but rather the word “métis”, which comes from “métissage”. “Métissage” means interbreeding. In the discussion she mentioned that film will be going further in the direction of hybridizing, and she thus captured in a nutshell what best suited everyone’s descriptions.

Different aspects of curatorial practices were discussed within the panel, even if this was not originally the panel's main target. Therefore I decided to dedicate the interviews (and also the essays) mainly to the discussion of "hybrid films" and curatorial practices.

Concentrating on the format of short films (we define short films not as a genre, but as a format) in an issue of *OnCurating* makes sense, since a major part of art and experimental films are thus produced. It gives off a wrong impression to see short films as part of the entertainment industry and as a platform for only presenting student projects. Short films have always played a major part within the avant-garde of the audiovisual arts, and have not lost their importance. The definitions of short film and art film are only very vaguely discussed in literature; one may find interpretations based on historical facts or general descriptions. However, these are not based on quantitative or qualitative facts, but rather on the opinions of experts. The only binding rule for the definition of short film is its length. It follows that it is the festivals themselves that define what is a short film by: a) making rules for competition and b) choosing films curated for non-competitive sections. The regulations of the most renowned festivals determine the length of a short at an average of 40 minutes, and in one case with a maximum of 59 minutes.

This issue starts where the panel, "The Future of Short Film" at the Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur started, by presenting the films each curator on the panel has chosen (Each film will be accessible online, following the links provided in the text, from the 3rd of May 2014 to 6th of July 2014.) together with the statement the curators made.

Laurence Reymond (Programmer Quinzaine des Réalisateurs Cannes) worked for 8 years for French film distributors such as Ad Vitam and Le Pacte. At the same time, she was a regular film critic for various magazines and websites such as *Score*, *Cinéastes* or *Flucutat.net*. In 2011, she selected the films for the European Middle Length Film Meetings of Brive, and joined the selection team of the Director's Fortnight in September 2011; where she is now programming the short films section. Since June 2012, she is also the programming coordinator and programmer for the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma in Montréal. She presented the film:



Leonardo Sette, Isabel Penoni, **Porcos Raivosos** (2012/Brazil)
<https://vimeo.com/90024413> (password: pigs)

After finding out that their husbands have mysteriously transformed into raging pigs, the women of a village decide to take action.

Laurence's Statement:

"How to make a form evolve and still surprise us? Maybe one way is to go further into hybridization, playing with genres and audience expectations, and create a film that defines its own nature."

Maike Mia Höhne (Head of Programming Berlinale Shorts) is a director, photographer, author and, alongside many other things, the curator of Berlinale Shorts at the Berlin International Film Festival since 2007. She studied visual communication from 1994 to 1999 at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg, at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Havana, as well as at the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión, in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba. After a work stay in Buenos Aires, she completed the foundation study program focusing on film, at the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg. Since 2001, she has worked in various contexts as a freelance author, curator, producer, publisher, photographer and director. Additionally, she has been active for years as a lecturer, and as a host for film events. She presented the film:



PARKing CHANce (PARK Chan-wook, PARK Chan-kyong),
Paranmanjang (2011/ South Korea)
<http://muvi.es/w4329/133989> (Link to trailer)

A man casually sets up for a fishing trip at the water's edge. Evening comes and a tug on his line presents him with the body of a woman. While he tries to disentangle himself from the fishing lines she comes alive. The scene changes and the woman is now a shaman priestess in a funeral ritual for a man who drowned in a river. He speaks through her to his relatives, asking for forgiveness.

Maike's statement:

"The Future of Short Film is a Journey Into emotion, a time travel, a journey of the soul. Production is freed of all constraints. The soul seeks its own path. Musician's sing of their view of things, and the camera moves above all heads, and through all waters. Mythology and ethnology are connected, material and story - only few manage to face the total freedom of form and contents, and to use this freedom to allow themselves a look at life and death."

Lars Henrik Gass (Director Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen) studied literature, theatre and philosophy, at the Freie Universität Berlin. He received his doctorate with a thesis on the French writer and filmmaker Marguerite Duras, which was published as a book in 2011. In 1996-97 he headed the European Documentary Film Institute in Mülheim an der Ruhr, and was also the editor of the book series *Texts on Documentaries*, and the Magazine "DOX – Documentary Film Quarterly". Since 1997, he has headed the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen. He has held various teaching posts on film and cultural management, and is co-editor of the book *Provoking Reality. The Oberhausen Manifesto and its Consequences* (2012) and editor of the book *Film und Kunst nach dem Kino* (2012). He presented the film:



Michel Klöfkorn, **Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad in einer halben Stunde an den Rand der Atmosphäre** (2011, Germany),
<https://vimeo.com/19987591>

I try to understand society, I try to understand economy, I try to understand the nation, militarism, history; I ride to the edge of the atmosphere in half an hour on my bicycle, it is only 14km.

Lars's statement:

"The short film of the future is something I can't predict either, but I hope that it will be similarly unfathomable as "Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad in einer halben Stunde an den Rand der Atmosphäre" by Michel Klöfkorn. What the animation techniques give him is an understanding of society. They make it visible that things carry with them a surplus of meaning; in short: energy turns into animation, updating of language."

Peter van Hoof (Head Short Film section International Film Festival Rotterdam) has a background as an independent cinema programmer, first at the Squat Cinema Filmhuis Cavia in Amsterdam, then as a founder and programmer of Cinema De Balie: the independent cinema department of the political cultural centre De Balie, in the heart of Amsterdam. He is also one of the founders of, and current contributor to, Stichting De Filmbank, a small organization for the promotion of Dutch Experimental Cinema. As a programmer for IFFR, Van Hoof heads the Short Film selection committee. Besides the Short Film section, Van Hoof selects the features and documentaries from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. He presented the film:



Jonas Staal, *De Bunker – Het Wennen – Het Wachten – Het Licht* (2011, Netherlands)

<http://vimeo.com/91297362>

The password to access the video is: OnCurating-JonasStaal
(Available until July, 3rd, 2014)

A film about *Closed Architecture*, a concept for a new type of prison by right-wing PVV politician Fleur Agema, clearly illustrates her take on humanity. A sober portrayal of the 'control society' in which people are conditioned to serve order, efficiency and productivity, but are also watched to shape everyone into a model citizen. 'A society that doesn't need prisons any more, but has itself become a prison,' according to Staal.

Peter's statement:

"The Future is short, the future is political. While old-fashioned capitalism conquered western civilizations, ignorance took over social life and politics has been dominated by populists. Where were the artists? Under a rock studying their belly buttons, while taking shelter from the shit stream of imagery that flooded our senses. It was a depressing time during these last few years."

Jukka-Pekka Laakso (Director Tampere Film Festival) has acted since 1998 as the executive director for the Pirkanmaa Film Centre, a non-profit organization that runs an art-house cinema in Tampere. Jukka-Pekka is chairman of the National Council for Cinema, a member of the National Council for the Arts and of the European Film Academy. He worked for several years as a programmer at the Tampere Film Festival and is the director since 2002. He presented the film:



Kote Camacho, *La gran carrera* (2010/Spain)

vimeo.com/kotecamacho/lagrancarrera

1914: a horrible crime is suddenly committed in the Lasarte racetrack. How it happened is a mystery. Only one thing is for sure: the best horses in the world have been registered, and heavy betters have gathered for a race with a never-before-seen prize for the winning horse, the Grand Prize worth half a million.

Jukka-Pekka's statement:

"The Future of Short Film is Bright. More people watch short films more than ever before. And there is nothing in sight that could change this. The big challenge of the future will be to defend an independent production of "good", "serious" or "valuable" short films against the financial interests of the film industry on the one hand and the limiting mechanisms of the high art market on the other hand."

Captions

- 1 *Porcos Raivosos*, 2012, © Leonardo Sette, Isabel Penoni
- 2 *Paranmanjang!*, 2011, © PARK Chan-wook, PARK Chan-kyong
- 3 *Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad in einer halben Stunden an den Rand der Atmosphäre*, 2011, © Michel Klöfkorn
- 4 *De Bunker - Het Wennen - Het Wachten - Het Licht*, 2001, © Jonas Staal
- 5 *La Gran Carrera*, 2010, © Kote Camacho

John Canciani is the artistic director of the Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur and is programmer at the Filmfoyer Winterthur. He curated several programs with Short and Feature Length Films like "Moving Art II – O Cinema where are thou?", "Heavy Metal", "VROOOM!", "Ivan Ladislav Galeta" Retrospective, "George Méliès and Turntables", "Who's afraid of the Public?", "9/11", "Women in early Japanese Film", "Tattoo im Film". He was co-curator for the Kunstkammer Schlieren "SAME(difference)_sculpture in relation 3 – social processing" and curated "Asedio" with Humberto Díaz. He has worked as a programmer for the Swiss Youth Film Festival and Kurz und Knapp. He was a film critic for Radio Stadtfilter and his film "Tokyo Rock ,n' Roll" was shown at 18 Festivals including IFF Leeds, EMAF Osnabrück, Art le Havre. At the moment he is finalizing his Master of Advanced Studies in Curating at the ZHdK.

The Future of Short Films

with Lars Henrik Gass, Maike Mia Höhne, Jukka-Pekka Laakso, Laurence Reymond, Peter van Hoof conducted by John Canciani

A Debriefing of a Panel Discussion: Interview Part 1

John Canciani: What did you think when you were asked to introduce “The Future of Shorts”?

Peter: I am not so much into the big questions in life. Predicting the future is one of them. I don't see much need for it, and above all, I like to be surprised. With regards to this specific statement, it implies that there is supposed to be a present, and a past, of shorts; if you feel the need to say something on the future of shorts. All of the latter is a matter of perspective. The importance of short film lies mainly within the gated community of the art-and film world. With its main playing field, the (short) film festival, there is hardly any economic relevance to short film. Not even a main stage where a general audience is able to see the works. With a few exceptions, even feature film festivals reserve limited space for short films. And if they do, it is mainly as the necessary stepping-stone for filmmakers to bridge the gap between film schools, and becoming a director of a feature film. The concept of someone making short films the rest of his/her life seems to be a ridiculous idea. Apart from the exploiters (the people that run the festivals) no one within short film, including the filmmakers, can make a living out of it. This has been in the past, is so in the present, and I am afraid that I have to predict that it probably won't change much in the future.

Does this mean it's meaningless or unimportant? Not at all! All of us have created a beautiful environment where filmmakers of short films and curators, programmers, and a selected audience can meet and discuss film. A dense international network, of countless smaller and some bigger festivals,

that is there for the films and the filmmakers only; with hardly any hostility or competition towards one another. Why is this possible: because of the lack of economic importance of this world, and for the cinema world in general. It is being tolerated, as long as it's fulfilling its role as a breeding ground for talents that can be lured to the other side. Idealism versus industry: it's a delicate balance. A deadlock with, for now, little room for any improvement.

Jukka-Pekka: I thought that it is a challenge, also as a good reason to try to express myself as clearly as possible on things that are on my mind. Also, I was looking forward to a discussion to learn from others.

Maike: Interesting, the future is avant-garde, so, “avant-garde forever!” I think it's hard to predict the future, but I can express what I would like to see as future.

Laurence: I participated because I was asked, but didn't actually know what we would be discussing. I don't think one can predict an answer for such a question. But maybe we should also invite directors, producers, and every person involved in the making of films to discuss this topic. As a programmer we receive so many films per year, which is overwhelming and keeps us stuck in “the present” trying to find new voices. The filmmakers are creating the future, not us.

Lars: I totally agree with Laurence. The question about the future is simply an occasion to reflect on the present. It is evident that we all don't have the

slightest idea about the future. I took it as an opportunity to learn more about myself while listening to others.

John: Peter, you decided to select *De Bunker – Het Wennen – Het Wachten – Het Licht* (2011). Why did you choose it and did you have other films in mind?

Peter: It had to be no longer than 10 minutes. Which excluded many of the works I wanted to show. This is a work not by a filmmaker but by a visual artist, something you can see in both the cinematic qualities, as well as in the approach towards the subjects. It's a film you have to work for to enjoy. You can enjoy it (or hate it) in many different ways: as piece on architecture, or an essay on the prison system (more specific: a prison system of the future). You can look at it as a rare chance to see how the brain of an influential populist politician worked when she was still a scientist. It opens up an exciting dualism, without commenting on it as a scientific thesis.

Knowing that it's hard to grasp, or understand the work even as a Dutch native speaker, I was curious to see if and how the work is able to reveal itself towards an international audience. The last time I showed it was at the Rotterdam Film Festival. But it was in the presence of the artist, who was able to recreate the specific context for the audience, and was there for them as a target for their questions and irritations.

The film for me was a good example for illustrating my statement, which was "The Future of Shorts is political".

John: If you had other films in mind, what was the decisive factor to choose that film?

Peter: My second choice was the latest film by Phil Collins, *THE MEANING OF STYLE* (2011); I chose to select a Dutch work, also to make a statement about the deplorable state Dutch society has sunk to within a very short time period, while around us people still have very idyllic ideas about our cultural and political achievements.

Maïke: *PARANMANJANG!* (2011) was the first film that popped up in my mind when the festival asked me for one film only. I had no other films in mind. Only the limitation of the ten minute screening time made me start to think about other films; but I soon gave up and asked if it is possible anyway to present *PARANMANJANG!*

Since I saw it in early January 2011, it was clear to me that this film was and still is, a very special one. Advanced in everything: storytelling, images, ideas, creative and free. Two free spirits, guided and directed this film. If you want to, I am very attracted to free minded people. The way they understood the freedom in the question, "hey, do you mind shooting a film on the new iphone 4?" is very rare.

And all the freedom they had in making comes through in storytelling and editing, imagination and closed rituals. Watching this film is like you have no idea which trip you will ride in seeing this film. This makes it very special!

If everyone or at least many speak about the freedom that lies in the form, in the digital form, then these two brothers really used it.

Jukka-Pekka: I had other films in mind, many of them too long for the purpose. I cannot really remember how many possible films I thought of before *LA GRAN CARRERA* (2010). *LA GRAN CARRERA* includes many things that I see as interesting when it comes to the future of cinema: hybrid, combining techniques; it has its roots in the tradition of cinema, looks like a newsreel or documentary: Content that is open to many interpretations; emotional impact, it has a capability to surprise/shock, a feeling that is strengthened by the presence of others watching it, so it belongs to cinema, watching it alone on a small screen is not as powerful. So it combines in my mind what cinema, especially screening films for audiences that live them together, is all about. When I first thought about it, the most important thing was that I remembered its impact on me when I first saw it. What I want to say is that I did not have a „grid“ of ideas I wanted to present and then looked for the film, but I first had the film and then I thought that it actually does represent many of the things I think are important.

Laurence: I decided to show *PORCOS RAIVOSOS* (2012) because I love this film. It was part of the first selection of shorts I worked for at the Quinzaine, and one of the most original films I saw recently. It navigates between the styles of documentary films, ethnographic cinema and fiction in a very graceful way. It is also a way to pay an homage to the wonderful new Brazilian cinema, which has been giving us for a few years now some of the most diverse, innovating and daring films. In the last three years we programmed 4 Brazilian short films at the Quinzaine: that says it all.

Lars: I always have considered a programmer as someone who draws attention to work that is potentially, possibly overlooked. So, once in a while I am sort of obsessed with the idea that an artist or filmmaker is not appreciated to the extent he or she should be. That's the case with Michel Klöfkorn. I also could also have selected Jesse McLean, Rebecca Meyers or others. But that sort of selection is always ridiculous in some way. It presents and unravels the programmer as a clown in the public sphere. It deals with subjectivity, but also with a private inclination. As a programmer, you are thus becoming much more vulnerable than usual. Because usually, you can hide behind a set of films and names. This is not possible here. It's a statement. To be honest, I rather like to provide statements as a set of different positions. People sometimes think that a programmer's or curator's priorities matter. I can understand that, since there is very little orientation in that field. So, people look for devices. They are searching for intimacy. But I'm thinking more and more that it is questionable to push individual work in the way star curators sometimes do. I know a star curator who pushes a name in his monthly column in a fancy art magazine, while at the same time being himself the consultant of a collector who has that name in the collection. For an audience, it is rather the conjunction of works that matters, something that makes you think, I believe.

Jukka-Pekka: Like Peter mentioned, films should be much more political. I sometimes hope young filmmakers would start a movement like in 1968. Things are really going wrong nowadays and films and shorts specially can reflect fast and make statements. *LA GRAN CARRERA* maybe doesn't seem very political on the first sight, but it criticizes the morals and values of humans and also the entertainment industry, including cinema. The time and place of the races is 30s Spain, the people shown could be imagined as those who were on the winning side of the Civil War.

Peter: I agree with Jukka-Pekka, but political filmmaking can only dream away. Until now, there is hardly anything moving. We need filmmakers who are able to provoke a different state of mind.

Laurence: I believe there is such a movement nowadays. People are on the street in many countries and it is filmed and it's shown in films. In the submissions I received, there were a few films documenting those events. And more generally speaking, I don't think that a film is political only by showing "politi-

cal events", but it is more an ethical approach, and a film can be political by many ways. According to the way you consider it, every little thing can become very meaningful.

Maïke: Absolutely and there is such a movement - there are many movements. People go out on the streets again. Your question even became history already, if you compare it to the situation in Istanbul last year. The need for a Global change is obvious. The need for being political is very urgent to the people as individuals - there are people that like to receive first hand information via film, there are others that want to politicize in another way. Again, many films, many ways to speak about what happens. *THE HOTEL DIARIES* (2001–2007) by John Smith and *WHY COLONEL BUNNY WAS KILLED* (2010) by Miranda Penell are two ways of reflecting politics and giving the viewer the chance to jump on. Very different aesthetic approaches but still - both leading into what is happening today and why!

Lars: That's true, there may be many more so called "political" films now. However, I sometimes wonder how political they really are. I am rather suspicious about a romantic reading of 1968 and activist filmmaking in general. I have seen very little interesting artwork on 9/11 for instance. So, what can be more political in this world than sitting patiently immobilized in a cinema and being forced to follow an unseen world that is unfolding its secrets? Being forced to think differently is something that only cinema still can impose on us.

Laurence: I agree with Lars. The power of cinema also lies in the fact that people go out of their homes, gather in a theatre and share a human experience on top of watching a film. This is already "political". And this is where people can start to share things and maybe believe that things could be different. This is one great thing about festivals, people are there to share things. Not only films.

John: I would like to come back to Maïke's statement that one can say what they would like as the future of shorts and I must say it's the part I'm more interested in. How you would like to have the future of short film in terms of your vision at your festivals, as a private person, as a film aficionado?

Maïke: To make a wish concerning the future of films... I wish that we, including myself, think beyond budgets. A budget is not what restricts a film- it is the thinking that creates borders in what-

ever is important in making art. So going beyond borders, developing situations, images, stories, ideas that deal with complexity and simplicity on the same hand - this is what really interests me. Our world is structured through images of how to do something, how to deal with something, how to live etc. A man has to be... a woman has to be... as a couple you have to... you see, where I want to go... So making films is stepping beyond constructed images - decoupage. "Ich will die Welt durch deine Augen sehen - emanzipiert und korrigiert. Ich will die Welt einmal durch deine Augen sehen", sings DJ Koze, and I think he is right. I want to see, but really see, feel the world through other eyes and be touched- in what ever way. As I mentioned- the future of shorts is a journey into emotion - it is emotion which is change - in whatever way. The future is change. I really love it when I get films that go far beyond the idea of a budget. The future is difficult in filmmaking, because as the making of films takes so long a film will always be a little late for the future. So the future of filmmaking might be its present and in the present it is pretty much about a thought through film. I love it if I feel a free spirit behind the images and ideas, stories or excerpts. Most important for me is that I feel very close to films that enter a particular moment in time and examine it very carefully.

Jukka-Pekka: What I want is to be surprised. In cinema in general what I want to see is ambition, seriousness and experiment. In shorts you can find this, but way too many shorts made are not of the kind I want to see. And also what I do want to see are films that use the tools well. Intention is not enough if one cannot express it in cinematic ways.

Lars: As long as there is cinema, there is hope.

Laurence : The Same as Jukka-Pekka and Lars, both.

Do you think that feature movies will also go in that direction, meaning that filmmakers use shorts for experimenting?

Jukka-Pekka: I wish, but what I see happening is that cinema is seen more and more as part of the industry and the only measure to assess them is money. And experimenting, seriousness and issues rarely fit in this. But because making films is always possible also "outside the system", there will always be serious cinema too.

John: So you think the advantage of producing shorts is that there is no box office pressure and therefore filmmakers should have the possibility to risk and experiment?

Jukka-Pekka: Yes indeed. Without pressure from the box office or indeed any possibility of making money, one is more "free". But of course one is also often incapable of producing the work one wants. Cinema is dependent in most cases on money created by more or less "commercial" channels (sales to TV, whether they are state owned or not). That also means that one must please a multitude of gatekeepers. That means most of the time a conservative approach is chosen. But as exceptional works, short films have a possibility to be seen at festivals and thereafter maybe elsewhere, and because there are so many festivals, exceptional works that are "new" and "interesting" or "good" can find a life. Of course the art world has different rules.

Biographies: See introduction



Leonardo Sette, Isabel Penoni
Porcos Raivosos (2012/Brazil)

The Narrative – Approaches

by Maike Mia Höhne

cinematographic clusterlady

I.

A water lily opens to classical music. Time lapse images. Everything entices one to wholly surrender to the homage of beauty. In a bare exhibition space, in which the image occupies the entire wall and viewers linger on a bench at a fitting distance, in order to reflect upon the short, almost ten-minute film, or simply let their thoughts roam. In the synopsis for her film *VICTORIA*¹ Salla Tykkä writes: “A nightly blossoming of the giant water lily is depicted. The plant tells the story of European colonialism in the 19th century, and hides within its beauty the human need for power and domination.”

“The inexplicable”, incomparable to anything, things never before seen. A naked baby is encircled with cotton balls by a boy, is spat upon with chewing gum and then computer-controlled from a desk chair, a man with a speech disorder gives a lecture on phobias, a girl with a wig is exposed to the sexual tension between her mother and a man, a woman at an airport, played by Miranda July, gets talking to a girl with a hair band in her mouth. Everything appears as if in a dream, although it is probably more aptly described as a nightmare. While all the people act normally, their actions are full of abnormalities. There are no boundaries in this short film. It is absolutely free. ...Everything is possible².” *NEST OF TENS* by Miranda July, from the year 2000. 27 minutes.

The Japanese animation artist Mirai Mizue, says that at the beginning of his career he always wanted to tell stories, just as everyone wants to tell stories, and so he too began to tell stories. He imposed the structure of storytelling upon his images and came to terms with this logic. He then realised that this approach to the story was not his. He does not want to tell a story, he wants to paint. Now he paints pictures, animates them, works with musicians, in order to find a rhythm and tempo appropriate for the pictures and leaves the audience to discover the stories in his images for themselves. Nevertheless, his rhythm and the tempo of his cells still pursue a certain logic, a certain plot.

It is different plots that tell the story. Within itself, each plot contains the famous three acts, whereby it is clear that the boundaries are fluent and that the omitting, augmenting or telling of a story in its entirety in one act, that is, the artistic approach of one individual act does not ignore the other acts, to the contrary. Thus it is the individual strands of the narratives that differ from one another. One strand. Many strands. No strand.

II.

Film and art. Art and film. Cinema and gallery. Cinema and museum. It is always about the juxtaposition. In view of the other. As if perceived from the corner of one’s eye. From further away. An eyeing of the self. Conjectures are pronounced. Why one is well received in the cinema, the other in the cube. Why one is not there

and vice versa. Theories are put forward. Usually, in reference to the works themselves. Which short film is shown where.

Over the years, my observation has been that it also involves the profoundly human, that it is about the people themselves who have produced the works. “Types” you could call them, but that doesn’t have to be the case. But what is true, is that there are certain entities who, with their work have always felt comfortable in the visual arts; comfortable, because understood.

The same is true the other way round: There are those who have always understood the cinema and the film as film, who wanted to make film. In my opinion, it is this stance that constitutes the fine line of difference. Of course, there will always be “Grenzgänger”, those who blur the boundaries. There are always those with a lust and an urge for the other – that is, those who have been successful in one space and wish to be in the other and vice versa. The exception provides room for speculation.

The other is the secret.

III.

Telling a story in film, predominantly means telling a secret. The desire to watch a film and become involved, stay involved, go along, directly depends upon the force of the film to convey this secret, this dark power. The thrill lies within, wishing to know how it continues. Similar to how there are one million variations for the structure of the narrative, the same is true for the secret. The method, in which the secret is exposed from the outset, is one possibility in the narrative. That boredom may eventuate in one or another case – is obvious.

An audience’s encroaching feeling of boredom, often accompanied by a certain physical agitation, is better intercepted in the cube. As an active viewer I can move about, without my actions disturbing anyone else. (Kant’s imperative). In the cinema, I am, ideally, not alone – the cinema experience is at best a collective one and the power of cinema reveals itself in the communal. In a cinema space therefore, one deals differently with boredom that is triggered by a film’s narrative, in order to comply with Kant’s imperative. That doesn’t always succeed. Falling asleep, talking, standing up, bottling up, frowning, groaning, are ways in which to affect others and involve them in one’s own emotional experience. There are various ways to handle such involvement, without having wished for it. From sympathy to a furious, “Be quiet!” everything is possible. I have never experienced emotional outbursts such as that in the cube. And even when a viewer acts annoyed, it never takes more than a sideways glance – the first one leaves, and the second is left to discuss the departure with their potential accessories, or not. But the extent of the disturbance is not comparable to the magnitude it would develop if the outburst had taken place in a cinema.

What does the possibility of continual departure mean to the narrative. The average viewer’s length of stay in an open exhibition space amounts to less than half the duration of the projected piece. Behaviour that is known to the artists and gallery owners, the business. Does the viewer and potential buyer’s behaviour have an influence on the narrative? Influence on the artist’s work? And when will work shown in cubes ever be seen in its entirety, from beginning to end? Is that even the aim of work in cubes or merely one form of reception?

It is predominantly short films that are shown in galleries. Does the length of the work hold any significance at all, when the viewer can determine at any time, when and how long they will watch the piece? In regular cinema programming, short films can be seen as the short screened before a feature and sometimes in an entire program of shorts. Aside from that, there is an incredible amount of short film and festivals in general. The pursuit of many filmmakers, to find a premier festival for their short work, an “A” film festival for features, is related to the attention given to shorts and others within the framework of such big festivals, but also that which comes after. The Bear, the Palms on a poster generate incomparably more for a film’s exploitation than a small festival in the middle of nowhere that simply serves as an “end game”. Immensely important and great, but not really helpful in terms of the future and financing of the next project. By the same token, ranking for galleries and museums also applies, to position one’s own work. Beyond the matter of the experience, it is also about an afterwards.

The wish of filmmakers, artists to be recognized should be understood absolutely. The longing of filmmakers and artists to solely rule the cinema space with their work, within the short form, is difficult to fulfil. Owing to democratic and economic circumstances it is about a “together”. For the short film that means that in a festival context, a film will often be shown alongside those from other filmmakers, whereas in the context of visual arts, sole screenings do occur. For me personally, I see the collective showing as a chance. The length of a work is incomparable to its narrative, or: It is collective thinking that leads the way inside the story.

All stories require time.

EPILOGUE.

Marina Abramovic said: “Art is about energy”.³ In her work, *THE ONION* (2012), a tear-streaked Marina Abramovic bites into an onion and recites a text in the voice over, where she says: “I am tired of changing planes so often. Waiting in the bus stations, train stations, airports. I am so tired of waiting for endless passport controls. ... I want to go away - somewhere so far away that I am unreachable by fax or telephone. I want to get old, really, really old so that nothing matters anymore. I want to understand and see clearly what is behind all of this. I want to not want anymore.”

To not want anything anymore. Simply show. In the cinema. In the cube. To enter into discussion, with the others. In an imagined or concrete dialogue. That is film. That is art.

Translated by Monica Koshka-Stein
Biographies: See introduction

Notes

1 sallatykka.com

2 Sarah Drath schreibt diese Gedanken in dem Seminar, “Der Avantgarde die Leinwand”, daß ich im letzten Jahr an der Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg gegeben habe.

3 Abramovic on Performance 2012: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qR-RrVfFmY>

Animated Hybrids

Anna Veilande-Kustikova

The first time I was introduced to hybrid films was the time when I was offered to write this essay. A “hybrid film” for me, a professional in visual arts, seems like an unnecessary designation for something that will not be divided into techniques or genres in the future. However, after dealing with this particular term, its use in film arts and viewing it from the point of view of the film industry, I have to admit I am not as sure anymore.

If we were to discuss animation or an animated film with regard to terminology, I would like to note that the world of animation research is still working on defining newer phenomena, and the main problems arise from the emerging technologies. “Hybridism” also appears as a means of blurring the borders between genres, which, in case of the animated film, refers to the documentary material.

One of the factors which causes controversy among the animators is the adopted rule that unless the animated film has been computer generated, each shot which creates motion is a handiwork of the animator. Therefore, as technologies make the motion making process considerably easier, designations related to motion graphics are being used more often. The term “hybrid film” has not been introduced yet, however it could be useful in those cases in which the animation is created by using photo fixation methods or filmed materials. At this point I would like to discuss Tampere Film Festival 2012, and two of the films which were awarded there. One of them is a film by Mihai Grecu titled *WE’LL BECOME OIL* (2011), which is created by using filmed material and photographs, that completely imitates live action after post-production, and animation process. As a matter of fact, the short film, which consisted solely of special motion graphic effects, won the prize for the best animation, while the animation film *LAST BUS* (2011) won the Grand Prix of the Tampere Film Festival. Visually, *WE’LL BECOME OIL* could be referred to as live action, however *LAST BUS* falls under the animation genre. Nonetheless, in both cases the image and the movement are created to achieve certain aesthetics and content.

LAST BUS, the film that combined both live action and animation and received several prizes in the category of best animated film (which were later taken back) had become the bone of contention. In this case, the term “hybrid film” would be the most accurate to describe it. *LAST BUS* was created by using actors, whose movements were restricted, as every actor was wearing a non see-through animal mask. As a result, each movement was scripted and led by the directors. The necessary movements were recorded with a camera and the complete animated visual image was created in the post-production process. Without going into details, it is obvious that the development of technologies nowadays intends to blend animation and the live action genre. Still, to not confuse the viewer, the well-known and well-sold word “animated film” is used. In the non-commercial field of research and criticism, the film in which the acting is based on motion tracking, should be regarded as a hybrid film, as the image itself is computer generated. The only aspects, which are created with the help of the human’s hand, are the environment and the characters.

The aspects of terminology should be flexible as long as the development of technologies continues. However, it means that it will be impossible to create a precise definition that could characterize in depth one or another phenomenon of filmmaking and arts.

In my opinion, the most compelling aspect is the hybridism found in a work's content and the ideas it proposes. Animated documentary films are a great example. This hybrid is not new to the film world, as it was born in 1918 with the drawn animation of Vinsor MacKey titled *THE SINKING OF LUSITANIA* (1918). Nowadays this kind of work is food for thought, but back then it was a chance to imagine and see events that were hidden from the human eye. Nonetheless, the word "documentary" implies the use of stated facts. Documentary materials are the carriers of subjective information, yet their most important quality always remains their being as close to reality as it is possible.

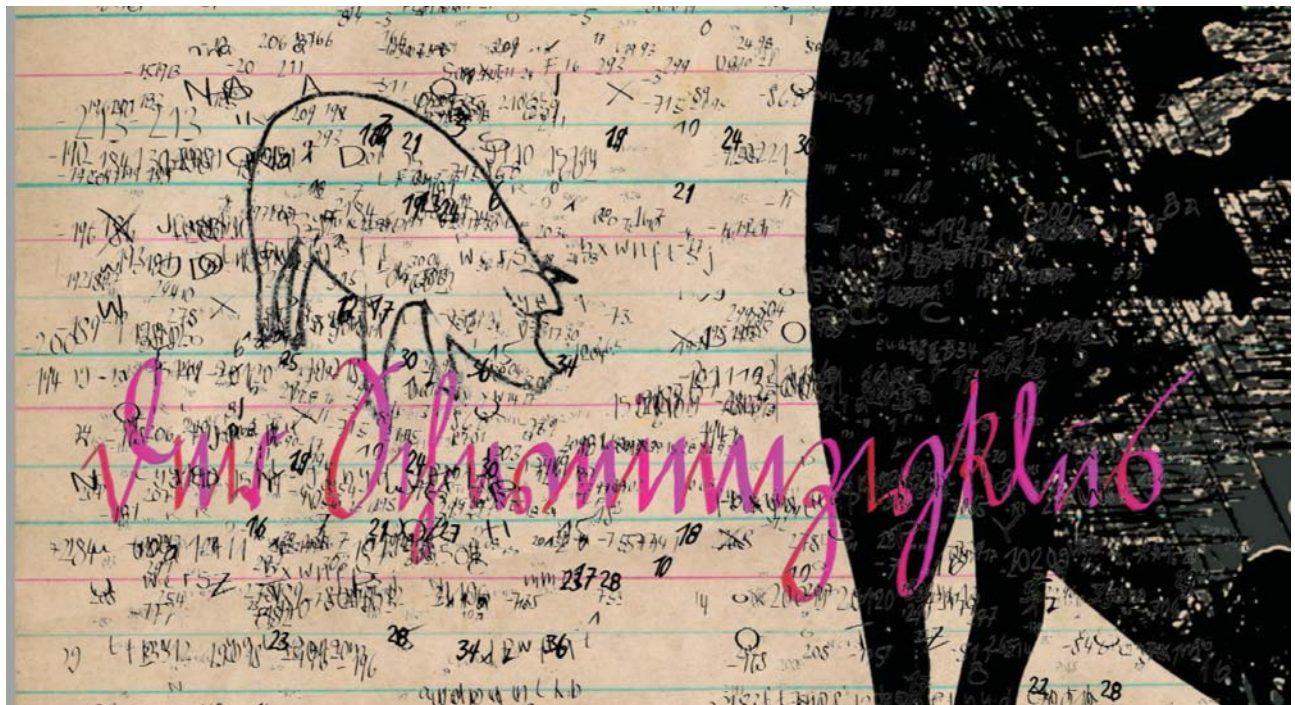
The label "documental" can be added by using subjective evidence of history, for example diaries or the objective reality, which is the main goal in photo fixations. Hybridism is introduced in those cases when the animated film is being classified as a documentary, as it has been based on true story, which unfolds in the film or in an interview, documented conversations or the testimonies, that were left by the objects of the film. Latest examples of both cases can be Chriss Landreth's *RYAN* (2004), Theodore Usev's *LIPSETT DIARIES* (2010), Ari Folman's *WALTZ WITH BASHIR* (2008) or Adam Butcher's *BRADLEY MANNING HAD SECRETS* (2011). By using animation methods, each of these films tries to achieve something more than just a reconstruction of facts. With the help of animation the author tries to create a visualization of the emotional tone. Often, metamorphoses are used for this particular purpose. And so we observe Ryan Larkin slowly collapsing in the 3D animation and the bipolar disorder of Arthur Lipsett in the disturbing, and dark imagery of *LIPSETT DIARIES*. In my opinion, one of the best examples is the animation of Adam Butcher, *BRADLEY MANNING HAD SECRETS*, with its black-green gamut and 8-bit images, which are created by rotoscoping¹. In this case, the most pleasantly surprising thing is the author's interpretation of the publicly available chat between Bradley Manning and the FBI agent. The author creates an aesthetically appealing place, rather than using a clichéd repetition of the chat. He imagines the appearance of the virtual space. However, during the whole animation he never fails to remind the viewer that the action takes place in the virtual environment. Similarly, the Latvian animation director Edmunds Jansons, uses diary pages with drawings that were made by some elderly lady in his documentary animation movie *LITTLE BIRDS DIARY* (2007). Edmunds turns the drawings into live animated characters, and at the same time he uses an animated depiction of the place where the conversation with the lady took place, placing her stories as images in the background. In any case, the use of the image and the movement created by the artist leads to the disturbance of the research of the documentary material and it is subjected to interpretation. That is why I believe that the documentary animation does not exist as a genre, it is always an interpretation based on real facts and materials.

When regarding the defining practice of genres and techniques in art, it is important to note that the designations and genres usually are weapons in the hands of the conceptual thinkers - the same we can see in film today - and hopefully will see more of in future.

Notes

¹ *Rotoscoping* is an animation technique in which animators trace over footage, frame by frame, for use in live-action and animated films.

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Michel Klöfkorn
Ich fahre mit dem Fahrrad in einer halben Stunde an den Rand der Atmosphäre (2011, Germany)

Hybrid Films

with Lars Henrik Gass, Maike Mia Höhne, Jukka-Pekka Laakso, Laurence Reymond, Peter van Hoof conducted by John Canciani

A Debriefing of a Panel Discussion: Interview Part 2

John Canciani: Most of you chose a film mixing medias or genres, a “hybrid film”, as Laurence designated it. *PARANMANJANG* uses this practice to guide the narration of the film. Starting out as a music video, then turning into a fiction movie with elements of suspense and Asian horror to transit into the second part of the film. The ritual then feels like an ethnological documentary (also like the film *PORCOS RAIIVOSOS* chosen by Laurence) and at the end it goes back to fictional film. This practice has been done before but it’s getting more and more common (also the study of German shorts from the AG Kurzfilm mentions this point¹). Do you think we have now reached the peak, or/and in what direction could it go?

Maike: I didn’t see too many movies done the way *PARANMANJANG* was done. To do a musical in a film and combine the music with “normal” storytelling is very common- I agree. I think *PARANMANJANG* is special, especially because Korean traditions - and ways of understanding the complexity of life and death - lies within, and not at the end, it is very different to our understanding here. That marks the documentary part- in which, I am sure, a Korean audience knows much faster than us, what is going on. Still, I don’t think there is such a thing as a one single way of film coming up, but films are made. There are always trends, movements, technical achievements that allow certain new ways of understanding the material itself- but very few people really ride this wave

Since then, I haven’t seen another film like *PARANMANJANG*, so perhaps this peak is taken...

Laurence: When I had to make a statement for this panel the word “Hybrid film” was the most convenient, and the most precise one. I was much more driven by the content of *PORCOS RAIIVOSOS*. Formally it is something between documentary, storytelling and performance but I don’t believe there is a peak. There has always been avant garde films, or very independent voices in cinema to try to find new ways in storytelling, I believe. But now, we have easier access to the films, with internet, vimeo, etc. So those voices get to be heard. Before, those voices would remain in confined circles, and were maybe rediscovered later with the work of film archives or festivals.

Lars: There are more hybrid films, because there are less fewer specific outlets for short films, that possibly might be able to impose certain patterns. That’s something I find very encouraging and exiting in general to see how film is liberated from the boundaries of TV, commercial cinema, etc. The same happened to music videos a while ago, when music television disappeared. That was amazing, because the genre that was generated once by music television survived it, and even became more interesting than it used to be, artistically speaking.

John: This guidance of the different techniques and genres seems to be contemporary but analysing them as single pieces of work, the filmmakers use classical elements of cinema. One could say that looking into the future also means looking back. Is there a trend that young filmmakers reflect cinema itself, maybe now even more when there is a voice in the public and also in the art world, claiming that cinema is dead?

Maïke: Referring to the cinema is dead- I think Lars Henrik Gass' book *FILM UND KUNST NACH DEM KINO* (2012) is very revealing and interesting. The use of different effects to make video look old- is very common and boring.

Lars: That's also why I am rather critical towards certain tendencies in contemporary found footage film. There is a threat of an iconographic loop. Simon Reynolds also described that in his latest book on pop culture.

Jukka-Pekka: I think that mixing genres or rather showing that they can be irrelevant is one trend that is happening. One can say that cinema is becoming more animated as film makers can and often do make things as they please, not as they appear in the real world and the difference between documentary and fiction has always been unclear or even dishonest. (*NANOOK* (1922) by Robert Flaherty is praised as a great early documentary, need I to say more?) New technical possibilities give more freedom and I do not think that all narratives have been told in all possible ways yet. And never will. The world of shorts is much more diverse than the world of feature films. In feature films one is stuck pretty much with narrative structure and affected with the star system, for example. Also, the dividing line between documentary and fiction is quite strict. Of course exceptions exist, but quite rarely. At the same time the world between art and cinema is maybe increasing, because I think there is more interaction between art and cinema. But of course this is apparent only to those who have an opportunity to follow what is happening in this area

John: You're right, especially in the field of documentaries the boundaries have been unclear for a long time. Today, it is a very common practice to play with the expectations of the audience. The mainstream mostly has the idea that a documentary film has to show the truth, to have a journalistic approach, but already at the moment in which the director decides to edit the film, he manipulates the truth. I don't know if you had the time to watch the Black Wave program in Winterthur 2012, including Zelig Zilnik, Karpo Godina and the documentaries in the program *WORKING CLASS HEROES*, or the Hitchcockians program from Croatia in Oberhausen this year, but those film makers often showed how to play with these expectations and using documentary in a manipulative political way. Young film makers and artists don't seem to pay much attention to this kind of

programs and the art world regularly dismisses film history in curating. How can we as festivals change this and should we?

Jukka-Pekka: Definitely. Film festivals should show films from the history for many reasons. If and when history of cinema is forgotten, festivals should do even more.

Lars: You sort of have to force people at gunpoint, that's all you can do.

John: Do you think the direction of hybrid films is the future? Or is it interesting because film seems to struggle to let go of the genre theories, not like music, where the critics seem to invent new genres constantly like folk, neofolk, freak folk, etc?

Jukka-Pekka: I think that film theories are interesting (sometimes), but filmmakers should not think about what genre they belong to. This categorizing is a tool to communicate something in advance, to find funding etc. And then a tool to those who deal with the finished film, but I believe or rather would like to promote filmmaking that could be free of pre-existing categorising. And hybrid is just one possibility, on top of any other style and method and all the traditional ways; classic animation, fiction or any documentary style are still valid, if and when there is a new way to have an impact to the viewer.

Peter: No, I believe that apart from small changes in genres and playing around with technical possibilities, the single screen works for a dark room will stay important. The more exciting direction to further develop is the film festival as live event, where filmmakers show their works in different ways: as installations, performances or present it together with other artists.

Notes

1 2006 . Studie zur Situation des kurzen Filmes". AG Kurzfilm Bundesverband Deutscher Kurzfilm. http://www.ag-kurzfilm.de/shared/doc/upload/page/212/page_en_212_a2.pdf

Biographies: See introduction



PARKing CHANce (PARK Chan-wook, PARK Chan-kyong)
Paranmanjang (2011/ South Korea)

Compiling a Selection of Films is not an Artistic Strategy, it Brings Such a Strategy to Light

Lars Henrik Gass

The fact that I never, or almost never, compile film programs by myself hardly qualifies me to write about curating. I am a compiler of films in the common sense of the word, but I am not a curator. A compiler of films steps behind the films; a curator positions himself in front of them. A compiler of films becomes invisible behind the films, the program itself becomes anonymous; a curator attracts visibility above the program, which becomes personified, so to speak, precisely because it is his creation. This does not imply that I do not take a stance towards the programs I help to assemble. But I do not vouch for them alone, and I do not vouch for them unconditionally. More often than not, I even endorse the program only reluctantly, because much that is accomplished in cooperation with my colleagues does not completely – or not at all – appeal to me. Every now and then I am even embarrassed by one or two decisions that are made. I therefore have to vouch for something I do not fully agree with. This fact distinguishes me from many of my colleagues and from the curators in the art world. This is due to the idiosyncrasy, which at least holds true for the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, that we arrange the programs for competition as a group of several people. Watching six thousand or more films in just a few weeks is rarely amusing, and usually exhausting, often very much so. Many tears have been shed in the past and many doors slammed. That has nothing to do with art, but rather more with asceticism. What results from this is not harmony, nor is it a compromise among equals. A weighing of interests, yes – but not a compromise. It is an involuntary summing-up. It is the invariably questionable result of a configuration of people who have watched something. The program resulting from this process inherently mirrors what we have just seen. To select means to compare – I am almost inclined to speak of a self-comparison. The process that leads toward this outcome is more phlegmatic than creative.

The group protects me from articulating my own preferences regarding the situation we find ourselves in. The group is my corrective. The others protect me from becoming private in public. They protect me from having a particular taste – and even if this taste were incredibly refined, it would still only intimidate people. The group challenges me and forces me to justify my individual choices, in this way the group represents those that our selected program addresses. In other words, the group demands an initial dialogue. This is the reason why I have always defended Oberhausen's practice of choosing among equals the films in competition, instead of following the model of artistic directorship or curating as it is common in the arts. Under no circumstances did I want to do this work on my own; not because of laziness or fear of responsibility, but to learn: about myself and the

things we watched together. Aspiring to learn from others, and to reflect the results of this process in our selection – that is what it is all about! The selection becomes an expression of confrontation, addressed to an imaginary audience. This approach prevents premature canonization or self-imposed restriction resulting from one's own individual viewing pattern.

Roger M. Buerger says: "My own ideas only interest me to a certain degree; I find it more interesting to reach as part of a group a level I could never attain by myself."¹ This is also the criticism I level at many programs: again and again, the same names, the same standards of aesthetic codes are reproduced. Many programs are guided by the cultural conventions of the West: non-European, non-US-American cultures hardly ever receive attention. A few seminal avant-garde festivals comprise films from three or four countries at the utmost, and the emphasis always lies on North America. The greatest danger lies in an eerily uncritical canonization – in film criticism as well as in film studies and on the part of film festivals – of so-called masterpieces, in the worst case.

Many a critic turns up their nose when looking at the competitions we present to our audience, because they are too heterogeneous, because they do not represent a clearly identifiable position, because they are not part of a pre-established discourse. However, they fail to recognize that there are two different guiding principles when it comes to putting together film programs. Watching films for competition, or at least watching those submitted following a call for entry, is based on a self-imposed overload, a confrontation with a myriad of perspectives, which do not at all correspond with mine. By exposing myself to this process – in which hundreds, even thousands of works voicing a concern want to be seen and appreciated – I force myself to transcend my own habits, the range of my perception and taste. This procedure confronts me with something new each time; it is a regulated loss of control. Much of what I see is not yet part of a system of values. In this sense, I cannot always claim they are "good" pieces of work, because to designate something to be "good" presupposes a form of communication that is initiated only once I select it. Viewed in this light, any selection comes with extreme risk, because, out of the great volume of submissions, I try to uncover unfamiliar or at least unguarded positions, which remain irreconcilable even though I place them alongside each other. No one tells me what I am supposed to think of them, nobody guarantees that others will like them.

The curator primarily offers a promise of intimacy, to provide a work with a suitable space, and secondarily they offer a value proposition, in which the work will receive the space it duly deserves. Basically, this is a symbolic piece of business entered into by the curator, the films and the artists, which must avoid uncalculated risk. The art world tends more to be part of a system than a market, because the communication it generates continuously creates limits and inclusions: which film is (good) art and which is not? However, this is an issue that does not interest me in connection with compiling films.

Compiling films – within the art world, where it is seen as a career called curating – is not an artistic strategy; it brings such a strategy to light. It does not transmit knowledge, it vanquishes knowledge with knowledge. A program must be difficult, as difficult as the world around us. It is therefore joyful when a program succeeds: fictional but not narrative; ideal yet not idealistic; a thought not put into words even though it seems fervently ready to be spoken at any moment, to become language and be transmitted; with one work calling another into question; a desire to collect differences in that moment in which the program itself ceases to

be thought about because it is the works themselves that think. A program is a speculative exercise, not an art historical treatise. The program saves me from forced consumerism for a certain amount of time, albeit deceptively. This process necessitates a special, cognitive space: the movie theatre.

At the movies, we are transported into time. There, we are able to judge ethically, not just aesthetically. At the very least, this is where one thing cannot be so clearly distinguished from another as it can in art. This is what art has never understood about film. That which has always been so vigorous about film, making it suspicious to the critical eye, is the compulsion to a certain perception – that someone forces me to commit myself to their perception, Juliane Rebentisch's "imposition of duration"². The thing about film that has never really fallen under esthetics is the obscene, unstructured remainder left over from the world within the film; that which does not quite completely take shape. This experience has always been more painful in the movie theatre than in the museum – having to share these kinds of perception with others and attempting to transmit them.

In the past film programs were compiled, today they are curated. In the past, programs were dedicated to filmmakers, today the curator's name takes top billing over the filmmakers' programs. This is an expression of the strong increase in the "creative imperative"³, as described by Andreas Reckwitz's. Reckwitz shows how many social spheres are collected into a "creative dispositive" and thereby esthetized. This feeds an increasing level of "attentiveness-terror", in which new stimuli must continuously be created. In addition, Reckwitz shows how especially the experience of art becomes part of an "event structure". This term refers to Harald Szeemann, who was arguably one of the first curators to turn art compilation into a form of intervention that presented the curator as an artistic figure. "The entire scope of social elements of symbols, narration and emotion, including all available media formats, is transformed into potential material for art. At the same time, the arrangement of this material is linked to the skilful mobilization of the audience's attention."⁴. This coincides with – at least in the arts – a trend towards rapidly increased deregulation in working conditions and significant pressure in social distinction within a field that no longer has clear job descriptions, let alone options for employment. Everyone is more or less creative and somewhat artistic, but they are especially well informed and linked into the network.

The division between artist and curator is disappearing. There is no presentation without performance, no program without "criticality". The oddest performance I have experienced in the last few years, was during a talk where an artist needed no less than three assistants to go around the room with video cameras, while the results were projected onto several screens. This performance enveloped the discourse in an artistic process. Within this system, curators tend to become stars themselves – aesthetic apparitions, new ideal egos, role models of an advanced industrial society: "The creative effort is perceived as an aesthetic event, as a sensual-emotional end in itself."⁵. I believe this claim can easily be transferred to postmodern museums, which have become events in themselves, staging the art itself as an event. Especially since the art world has taken over the sovereignty of definition for art films, it has become necessary to present film programs according to its rules. Reckwitz responds only fleetingly to the homology between the social form of the market and aestheticization with regard to the creative dispositive, but in my view he nevertheless defines the relationship precisely: "The widespread strategy of capital accumulation consists of producing ever-new, different products to avoid reaching the point where the needs of consumers have been completely satisfied."⁶. "The fact that, in this sense, creativity becomes a performance require-

ment applies to a creative lifestyle for aesthetic work in one's profession just as much as it does to personal relationships, in which (...) in a broader sense creative performance (stimulus potential, event production, etc.) is essential."⁷

However, the event is the work, not its presentation. To again quote Reckwitz: "profane creativity"⁸.

Presentation at 21er Haus, Vienna, on April 10, 2013

Translated by Laura Walde, Katrin Gygax

Biographies: See introduction

Notes

1 As quoted in the German original: "Supermarktsystem Biennale", in conversation with Susanne Boecker, *Kunstforum International*, No. 219, January – February 2013

2 Juliane Rebentisch, *Ästhetik der Installation*, Frankfurt am Main 2003, p. 202

3 Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität* (transl.: "the invention of creativity", Berlin 2012

4 Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität* (transl.: "the invention of creativity", Berlin 2012, p. 118

5 Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität* (transl.: "the invention of creativity", Berlin 2012, p. 240

6 Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität* (transl.: "the invention of creativity", Berlin 2012, p. 336

7 Ibid p. 346

8 Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität* (transl.: "the invention of creativity", Berlin 2012

In the cinema

Robert Cambrinus

Impatiently we hop from channel to channel when the programmes on TV do not spark our immediate interest. We have long become zappers and surfers, with attention spans so short that we increasingly content ourselves with browsing summaries and consulting Wikipedia on the internet, or we just jump indiscriminately from link to link. We behave like post-industrial monkeys swinging in digital trees. In the cinema, however, it is the projectionist who holds the reins. No remote control, no mouse click, no touch screen gives us our habitual power over the images we view. We sit in the dark. Maybe we even relish this temporary abandonment of our control. At any rate, in the cinema we voluntarily expose ourselves to the ideas of another person, the filmmaker's vision. We stay seated and let ourselves be surprised.

The cinema is a place of exhibition, which I visit like a gallery or a museum. Viewing art in books or on the internet cannot replace the encounter with the original works, and neither can watching films on DVD, the internet, mobile devices or the television. So I go to the cinema to see a film in its original version, i.e. in the original aspect ratio and sound format, the chosen resolution and colour representation, in the original language, its full length, the correct frame rate and, of course, on the intended projection screen: the big screen.

Like a painter who consciously selects her image carrier (paper, canvas, wood etc.), the filmmaker chooses his carrier medium deliberately, be it film stock, analogue magnetic tape, digital tape or a digital file. And like a graphic artist who considers a printing technique for its possibilities of artistic expression, the filmmaker chooses a specific shooting format. It is an essentially artistic decision (even though in practice often influenced by budgetary, commercial and technical considerations). The shooting format establishes the texture of the image and thus becomes an integral part of the film. The latest technology with the highest resolution does not necessarily produce the best image, only the sharpest. A cameraman once suggested to me not to shoot on VHS, but in HD for better control: "I could always downgrade the image in post-production to get the desired look". But I generally make a distinction between creating an illusion and pretending. So I shot on VHS, embraced the characteristics of the format and let chance intervene. You can always shoot another take. (Of course this is not to say that image manipulation in post-production should be rejected; only the "we fix it in post" mentality). The deliberate choice of a shooting format lends authenticity not only to the film but also to the filmmaking process itself.

When Walter Benjamin wrote about the repercussions of mechanical reproduction in 1936 he referred to the loss of aura of works of art¹. While digital technology has further improved the quality of copies, the production of the first copy in the course of digital conversion still comes (not only with the loss of the work's uniqueness but also) with a loss in quality. A finished film is played out to an analogue, or digital master. The format of the master does not necessarily correspond to the shooting format but it would represent the artist's original version. In the near future this version may no longer be acceptable as a screening format since film festivals, cinemas and curators started to stipulate their own video file specifi-

cations for screenings from their hard drives. Little or no thought is apparently given to how this process compromises the integrity of films. Common conversions are not lossless. Thus filmmakers may have to accept a deterioration or alteration of the image and sound quality. If the cinema ceases to be a sanctuary where films can be watched in their distinctive original screening formats, these “originals” will eventually be confined to film museums. Film may, ironically, gain its unique presence in space and time after all.

While a film made for cinema may be distributed across all channels (TV, internet etc.) it cannot be made for all channels. The different screen sizes, for one, necessitate distinct production methods and shooting styles. Television, for example, requires more close-ups and has more dialogue, which is why TV productions look and sound different than feature films. The viewing contexts across the distribution channels vary widely with regard to displays, locations, times and modes. This has profound implications for the reception. The diverse settings may reward repeat viewings, but they cannot substitute the dark auditorium. The undivided, uninterrupted attention we give a film in the cinema leads to an unparalleled immersive experience.

Whatever we may think about the enigmatic works of an artist like Marcel Duchamp, we try to “get the picture” and make connections. In the cinema we see images projected on a screen, and at the same time our own images are created in our heads. The filmmaker’s intention meets the viewer’s view. The artist, however, never manages to realise his vision fully. Marcel Duchamp talks about a difference between what the artist intended to realise and what he did realise². But this gap does not represent a failing on the part of the artist. It is exactly this immeasurable quality of the artwork, which contains a lack of intention, that constitutes its true potential. Duchamp calls the relation between the unexpressed but intended, and the unintentionally expressed, the art coefficient. It falls upon the recipient to decode/interpret the artist’s work. Thus the viewer contributes to the creative act. The latter is not explained in more detail by Duchamp. The receptive process is, however, similarly complex and idiosyncratic as the creative act of the artist.

There is a difference between what a viewer thinks he understands (his subjective objectivity) and what he subconsciously understands (his objective subjectivity). This gap makes the reception ambivalent and, thus, endows the film with a personal resonance. The resulting reception coefficient is dependent on individual factors like the socio-cultural environment, specific life experiences, and physical or genetic characteristics. Hence the spectator insofar sees his/her own film. It is always our individual perceptions in conjunction with our personal histories, in other words, our own images which merge with the images and sounds on the screen, and thereby lead to an emotional and intellectual experience. It is a wondrous, osmotic process. For this we need undivided time – like for the pictures at an exhibition. The dark room of the cinema affords us this time.

This revised text was first published in its original version as a text for DIAGONALE 2013.

Notes

1 Walter Benjamin: "L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée", in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Jahrgang V, Félix Alcan, Paris, 1936, pp. 40–66.

2 Marcel Duchamp: "The Creative Act", lecture at the Convention of the American Federation of Arts in Houston, Texas, April 1957, published in *ArtNews* 56/4, New York, 1957, pp. 28 –29.

Robert Cambrinus graduated 2002 from East 15 Acting & Filmmaking School, Essex University, where he attended the Media Course. His first job was an acting role in a BBC production. Soon afterwards he started to develop his own film projects. His first short film was *ILLEGAL* (2006), which received several awards. *COMMENTARY* (2009) premiered at the Warsaw Film Festival, was screened at the Viennale and competed at the Flanders Film Festival in Ghent for a nomination as Best European Short Film (European Film Awards). *I CAN'T CRY MUCH LOUDER THAN THIS* is his latest film, a free play of associations. In his work he explores aspects of subjective cinema, the destruction of illusion, and the receptive process.



Jonas Staal
De Bunker – Het Wennen – Het Wachten – Het Licht (2011, Netherlands)

Curatorial Practices

with Lars Henrik Gass, Maike Mia Höhne, Jukka-Pekka Laakso, Laurence Reymond, Peter van Hoof conducted by John Canciani

A Debriefing of a Panel Discussion: Interview Part 3

John Canciani: You stated the future of shorts is a journey into emotion. I think there are a few very interesting aspects in this thesis. First, do you think that this is a reaction on our rational world ruled by hard factors of economy and society emphasizing the values of solidarity, maybe in the so called crisis even more?

Maike: I think my personal artistic approach lies very much in the emotion itself. It is an emotion that carries me out to where I finally go. Often anger has a very strong power to guide you through a whole process of making. Anger, sometimes lust and devotion. A single image that caught my attention and let me think about the surrounding images and emotions, stories.

If you really dare something then stand close to your emotions. To dare your emotions, even and especially if they are strange, illicit, besides everything you have once learned, heard about etc. Emotion is what rules the world, no?

John: Secondly you and Laurence both chose a film less rational, very atmospheric and linked to mythologies and rituals. There seems to be a need of reflection on structures and belief. What do you think about this?

Maike: Just coming back from Poland, it struck me that in KRAKOW FILMFESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM COMPETITION, almost every film dealt somehow with belief and faith. Maybe it is about age; getting older means, at least for me, rescheduling our own perceptions of belief, they way we were raised when we were a child

- confronting it with a certain present and relocating oneself within. It is only in roughly the middle of our lifetime that real life starts, real life in terms of - when decisions really matter, when it is about deciding which way to go. So, not every film is about belief- but often, very often films are reflections on structures in life, relations, moments and this has a lot to do with where one is coming from- rituals of everyday life- from yesterday to a changing today.

Laurence : *PORCOS RAIIVOSOS* is a film starting with a kind of ethnological approach, which is supposed to be a very rational approach, and then it turns out to be a play directed by the dancers themselves. So it's much more about being your own master than any kind of ritual or mythological vision. It's a very down to earth film.

John: Both of you chose to go in the same direction while the guys went more into the rational, formalized direction. Is this a coincidence or do you see gender differences in programmers?

Maike: We all experience the world in different ways- so of course, we see and understand, receive films in different ways. There are differences between men and women- and they are reflected in, for example, discussions about films. It is important to have the chance to show different perceptions of the world in cinema and museums. So if only one sex is represented in a selection - it becomes very monolithic- and the world is, as I understand the world, multiple.

Laurence: Except for the fact that Maïke and I like to wear dresses, which is not the case for Jukka-Pekka, Peter or even Lars - or so it seems - I wouldn't believe in gender differences in programmers. But I would strongly believe in educational, historical, and personal differences, which is why all of us don't select exactly the same films.

John: Jukka-Pekka, you said that Tampere tries to break out of the Eurocentric views in films, which means that you also have an aspiration to show several productions of outer European countries. This sometimes gives off the impression that a program strives to be a panopticon of the world, or even has an educative approach. Can you please explain in more detail how you understand this point?

Jukka-Pekka: The world of art and communication, and I think that short film is about art and communication, is very Eurocentric in the European cultural sphere. I do think that knowing about other people and their culture is both interesting and fruitful. The world is evermore more dependent on other people, often far away, so one should build possibilities of more understanding. And there is very much criticism towards the media, what we see and hear and read about the rest of the world. So yes, a heavy educative approach, but it is hard to find relevant, well made films, and yes, cultural colonialism is still at work. But maybe in an old fashioned, well meaning way in which “we” try to make “them” rise to our level. (I do not believe that colonialism was altruistic, but there were also hints of this kind of motives present).

Maïke: Our Eurocentric view on film is like this, because, living in Europe creates a Eurocentric vision- I am aware of that, even more with having lived abroad. On the other hand, especially the film-making itself and the beginning of it, the so-called short film, have their roots in Europe and we can't deny it and we don't have to, neither. Form changes, film changes. To change society on the one hand and being open is the tool, and to become open we have to enter and understand different universes. Film is a fantastic tool to do trips all over!

If you refer to the films of the West Coast avant-garde people, they were originally from Europe, or influenced from the artists that emigrated or even if they were originally from the US - I would still consider them to be part of the Western world- so for me, breaking through the Eurocentric view of cinema- starts e.g. with a wild island in the Carib-

bean sea where, even after many, many years, there are still some people - resisting (freely adapted from Asterix & Obelix) - no, but really. Even the New Latin American cinema was, because their main protagonists had all studied in Rome, mainly influenced by European filmmakers and thinkers. But then, what happened was the MIXING, the transcendence of one into the other. So, beyond Eurocentric views- it is about an open mind to see films that are not afraid of crossing borders and combining what is not to be combined (on the first hand).

Latin American cinema of the early 1990s was for me very, very important. A feature film like *BUE-NOS AIRES VICE VERSA* (1996) by Alejandro Agresti and a short *CIUDAD DE DIOS* (1996) by Victor Gonzalez, both shot by Ramiro Civita, both absolutely felt in a corporal way- very much changed my reception of cinema.

John: Jukka-Pekka, when you were approached with the idea for the panel you wrote a text for Winterthur. There you mentioned that there are a lot of works, which clearly belong in the tradition of cinema exhibited in galleries and art museums today. Which films belong in which institutions?

Jukka-Pekka: I think that galleries and museums are not very good at presenting works that should be seen in its totality, that are more than two to three minutes long. Because the idea of an art museum or gallery is that one can decide what is of interest for how long, there usually are disturbances etc. The thing I tried to say is that short films (sometimes quite long short films) are in an environment where they are not in their best. I do not mind that films are shown everywhere, but I wish one could see cinematic works properly.

Peter: Nothing “belongs” anywhere, it's up to the filmmakers and other artist to search for new ways to stage their work. It's up to the programmers to create a context that can add something to the conventions. Conventions and institutions as such are not very interesting.

John: Do you think it's good if also curators coming from the art industry should attend short film programs? If yes why, or if not, why not?

Peter: Yes, we can learn and steal from each other. And we are able to seduce artists towards the stage with an audience, and filmmakers towards a stage where they make a living. Only artists that play with the notion of popular culture, like Phil Collins

or Keren Cytter, seem to be able to enter the secret society of art.

Biographies: See introduction

Jukka-Pekka: I do think they should and I believe some do, but the field of art and art curating, is different from the world of cinema. I find it interesting for instance to be in Oberhausen where these two worlds, arts and art of cinema, collide. I also find it interesting (if not quite revealing) that in Oberhausen, the international Jury consists of people who come from outside the cinema, the selection is quite heavy on things made by artists, not filmmakers and yet the awards usually go to works that are quite “cinematic“. But definitely one needs to look always to other arts.

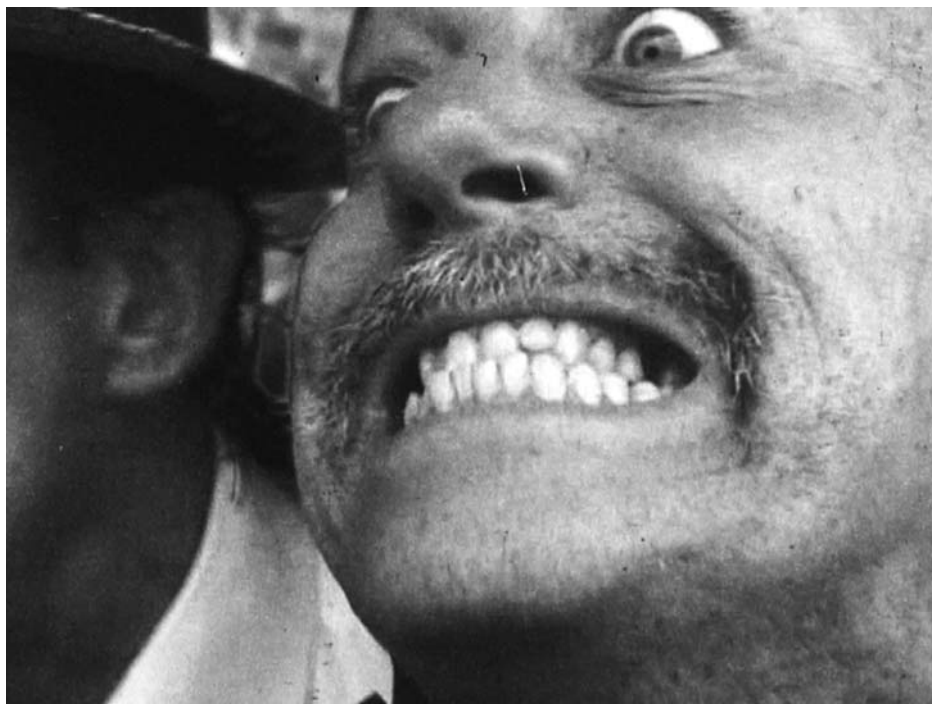
Maike: It is always good to see what the other one does - it is about understanding the different perspectives on film.

Lars: Well, the problem simply is that most art curators I know are rather watching out for big names than really spending the time to watch the works. That's very sad. The art world is a symbolic system of values rather than a market. So, it matters a lot who says what about whom. That's something I dislike a lot. To sit somewhere to watch things on your own would be far more productive.

John: **Maike said that there is still a lot to experiment with regarding the storytelling in films. I think here lies the interesting part of narrative films and I often think that those kind of films would perfectly fit in art exhibitions instead of permanently showing essays, documentaries or films with exploiting positions. Do you have an explanation (besides how films should be shown at exhibitions) why they aren't shown there?**

Peter: The art world makes different choices, and in my point of view, is mainly interested in works that can represent a certain economic value. Mainly artists that are not part of the popular culture but play with the notion of popular culture, like Phil Collins or Keren Cytter, are able to enter the secret society of art.

Lars: And there really are lots of such narratives shown in exhibitions, think of Salla Tykää, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Omer Fast, etc. So, Peter is right, it is basically not so much an artistic evaluation why someone is shown or not, it has more to do with questions like: What is the degree of “criticality“ in this, how “hot“ is someone, is a work suitable for a collector's wall? Very funny criteria indeed.



Kote Camacho
La gran carrera (2010/Spain)

Festival List

Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, Berlinale Shorts – Germany

The short film is radical and independent, at times controversial, disturbing, testing the limits of our comprehension. It is as multi-layered as the possibilities offered by its creation. It can be an open-ended question, a bold thesis, a sketched thought or a carefully staged drama. The short film often carries the seed of the stylistic and thematic characteristics that will later become the signature style of the artist. The much smaller production budget requires uncompromising exploration and contributes to the formation of an individual style.

Since 1955, the Berlinale awards the Golden and the Silver Bear for short films, since 2003 with a dedicated international jury, which developed out of the Panorama Short Film Jury, founded in 1990. In 2006, the short film programmes of Competition and Panorama were merged into a single section. With the introduction of a separate section, the festival management wanted to underscore the importance of short films, for the film industry in general.

www.berlinale.de

International Film Festival Rotterdam – Netherlands

International Film Festival Rotterdam grew out to become one of the largest audience driven film festivals in the world, while maintaining its focus on innovative filmmaking by talented newcomers and established auteurs as well as on presenting cutting edge media art.

Next to the festival's "Hivos Tiger Awards Competition", the short films have their own competition. What differentiates this from the "Hivos Tiger Awards Competition", is the fact that it's not just for young and upcoming talents; all filmmakers have a chance at winning.

Short films occupy a prominent position throughout the programme. They are everywhere: in the "Tiger Awards Competition for Short Films", as part of an installation, as a short preceding a Pathé premiere and, naturally, many of them are shown at the shorts headquarters LantarenVenster.

filmfestivalrotterdam.com

Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen – Germany

Short film is still the prime source of innovation for the art of film - the experimental field in which future cinematic vocabularies first crystallize. Today its diversity of forms, themes and approaches across the globe is greater than ever - video or film, short fiction film or essay, installation, graduation film or artist's video, animation, documentary, and all imaginable hybrids thereof.

The International Short Film Festival Oberhausen has been part of this highly charged field for over 50 years now, as a catalyst and a showcase for contemporary developments, a forum for what are often heated discussions, a discoverer of new trends and talent, and not least as one of the most important short film institutions anywhere in the world. Some 6000 films submitted on average per year, around 500 films shown in the festival programmes and over 1100 accredited industry professionals are proof enough.

In the course of more than five decades, the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen has become one of the world's most respected film events - a place

where filmmakers and artists ranging from Roman Polanski to Cate Shortland, from George Lucas to Pipilotti Rist, have presented their first films. Oberhausen has managed to instigate various political and aesthetic developments, for instance through the **Oberhausen Manifesto**, perhaps the most important group document in the history of German film. Careful programming and a pioneering choice of subjects, have helped the Festival to build up its exclusive position in an increasingly unpredictable market.

www.kurzfilmtage.de

Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur – Switzerland

The International Short Film Festival Winterthur is Switzerland's most important short film festival. The festival takes place each year in November. It is a popular audience event and an important platform for the short film industry.

It takes place each year in November (November 4 – 9, 2014) and attracts an average of 16,500 spectators. Former jury members include Lars Henrik Gass (Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen), Linda O. Olszewski (Shorts International Los Angeles), Laurence Reymond (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, Cannes), Sergio Fant (Venice Film Festival), Ardiouma Soma (FESPACO, Burkina Faso), Maïke Mia Höhne (Berlinale Shorts), Vanja Kaludjercic (Sarajevo Film Festival), Jukka-Pekka Laakso (Tampere Film Festival), Mario Micaelo (Curtas Vila do Conde), Shane Smith (Sundance) or Barbara Orlicz-Szczypula (Krakow Film Festival).

Apart from compiling innovative programs both for its competitions and our out-of-competition series, the Kurzfilmtage are anxious to establish a lively international platform for professional exchange. Its film archive, which contains more than 30,000 short films, is available to industry professionals for research purposes all year around. During the festival itself, the framework program comprises activities like the Producer's Day or panel talks with renowned names such as Hans op de Beeck, Köken Ergun, Deimantas Narkevičius, Artavazd Pelechian, John Smith, Želimir Žilnik, Tom Kalin or Nicolas Provost.

www.kurzfilmtage.ch

Quinzaine des Réalisateurs – France

Created by the French Directors Guild in the wake of the events of May '68, the Directors' Fortnight seeks to aid filmmakers and contribute to their discovery by the critics and audiences alike. From its initial program in 1969, it cast its lot with the avant-garde (the glorious seventies), even as it created a breeding ground where the Cannes Festival would regularly find its prestigious auteurs.

Since its inception, the Directors' Fortnight has showcased the first films of Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Nagisa Oshima, George Lucas, Martin Scorsese, Ken Loach, Jim Jarmusch, Michael Haneke, Chantal Akerman, Spike Lee, Luc et Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Sofia Coppola. Who in turn invite Robert Bresson, Manoel de Oliveira, Stephen Frears, Jerzy Skolimowski, William Friedkin and Francis Ford Coppola among others.

Among the various sections at the Cannes Film Festival, the Directors' Fortnight is distinguished by its independent-mindedness, its non-competitive nature and its concern to cater to non-professional Cannes audiences, which can buy a subscription for the entire Fortnight program or purchase tickets for individual screenings.

Striving to be eclectic and receptive to all forms of cinematic expression, the Directors' Fortnight pays particular attention to the annual production of fiction

features, short films and documentaries, to the emergence of independent fringe filmmaking, and even to contemporary popular genres, provided these films are the expression of an individual talent and an original directorial style.

www.quinzaine-realisateurs.com

Riga International Short Film Festival 2ANNAS – Latvia

Riga International Short Film Festival 2ANNAS is an independent festival of film and audio-visual arts, held annually in Riga, Latvia, and is dedicated to seeking out and presenting innovative modes of visual communication. 2ANNAS is a platform that, in addition to the traditional means of filmmaking promotes new forms of content and expression. Their main objective is to promote the works of professional filmmakers, outside of and as an alternative to the mainstream cinema products, both locally and internationally. They especially want to see the development of the Baltic films, and their trends within the context of the world, to advertise them by creating appropriate environment for developing new ideas and cooperation projects.

Every year 2ANNAS offers a range of short film collections: International and Baltic Competition programmes, guest programmes, retrospectives, and others, presenting films of all genres - fiction, animation, documentary, experimental film/video art, etc. In our programmes we seek for the innovative, experimental, unseen or long forgotten in the film world. No idea or event can last without an inner drive or a wish to express something. Therefore when selecting films for 2ANNAS competition programmes, they search for works with an individual and unique signature, creativity, aesthetic and technical performance corresponding to the artistic idea. The festival hosts lectures and photo exhibitions, as well as theatre and music performances, "out-of-box events", and other activities within the rich city environment and the vibrant multi-talented 2ANNAS atmosphere. The festival invites special guests – film directors, VJs and DJs, lecturers, jury members and collaboration partners – from a number of different countries. 2ANNAS draws large crowds of visitors, most of which are filmmakers, artists, and students from the Baltic and European countries.

2ANNAS exists in a context in which short film is not merely a step to the first feature, but can be viewed as an authentic work of art.

www.2annas.lv

Tampere Film Festival – Finland

Tampere Film Festival evolved from Tampere Short Film Days. Today, it's still the oldest and the largest short film competition in Northern Europe and the Grand Prix winner and the Main Prize winner of the National Competition short category will qualify for consideration for Oscar®.

Besides its high quality screenings, it aims to provide an international meeting place for film professionals and enthusiasts. Film market, started in 1992, has become an important viewing place for professionals and today it includes over 5000 films.

www.tamperefilmfestival.fi

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