



Informations
on Films for
Children in
Europe!

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2nd Conference of
International
Children's
Film Festivals
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FOR AN ETHICAL CINEMA

The importance of children's film festivals in the present media landscape

"The Cinema must be ethical. A film has a right to exist in so far as it is necessary for the maker and for the viewer. Otherwise, one should rather not bother. One cannot and should not waste an occasion as rare and as beautiful as that of a film. To make a film is a great privilege, one should not spit in the face of fortune, and one must fight to do it right, against all odds. Nothing depresses me more than the corruption of good taste. A large proportion of the images that are presented, even to young viewers, are ugly and vulgar. Corruption of the public should be a culpable offence."
Gianni Amelio

Domenico Lucchini

In these past years, the festivals for children have developed in a relatively confused manner, partially due to the lack of references, rules and orchestration. The differences in the diverse approaches, with some excesses and drifting, risk further compromising the already limited space available for the diffusion of a quality cinema and the lively cultural milieu of children's cinema. The organisers of the festivals have therefore decided to meet again to reflect together and to seek the means for a better co-ordination (schedules, programmes, marketing, financing, audiences, relationships to other professionals and new media), but also to favour a certain „moralisation“ of their approaches. This does not mean the uniformisation of the conditions and objectives, but the presentation, in their multiplicity, of the whole range of the festivals targeted at children, attempting to create simultaneously a network of communications and new possibilities, of cooperation and co-ordination of the activities, and, above all, a redefinition of the roles within the changing audio-visual world.

As the etymology suggests, a festival is a celebration, a precise moment in the course of the year in which people change their daily routine for something out of the ordinary. But a festival is anticipated, prepared for, and experienced intensely. At a festival one talks, discusses, appreciates, and criticises, and, above all, one communicates and exchanges. According to the definition of the IFFPA (International Federation of Film Producers' Associations) the end aim of the cinematographic festi-

vals must be that of contributing to a better comprehension between peoples and to the development of the art and industry of the cinema“. When exploring a sector such as that of the children's cinema, an area which does not constitute, as is gradually becoming clear, a specific genre with its own themes and trends, it is necessary to choose an artistic approach which is well-defined and culturally convincing. This allows the purely film-related discussion to be extended to involve parents, educators, teachers, and the general public as well, and not just those associated with the industry, to consider and examine, along with the children, the themes concerning the young and their relationship to the universe of communication through images.

Festivals in general, and even more so those for children, should contribute to the development of an open sensibility to the world's problems, teaching, from not only within the school but also outside, a sense of responsibility and active personal participation, respect, attention to values, capacity for dialogue, as well as making a conscious stand on the rights of infants and children. As prescribed by the „Convention on the Rights of Children“, ratified by the UN in 1989: „The child has a right to peace and recreation, the right to devote itself to play, and to participate in cultural and artistic activities.“ Films for children and festivals for children are a part of such cultural and artistic activities. They are an integral part of cultural education in the sense of the democratic postulate „culture for all“. „Cultural education is aesthetic education, i.e. developing a relationship to

The 2nd Conference of International Children's Film Festivals in Europe

34 persons from 14 different countries met to work on several topics regarding children's films. Main topic was the improvement of the communication between festival directors, journalists, distributors, sales agents and producers.

Week of European Films for Children (6 - 11 years)

A filmprogram, which contained five European films, was shown in the local cinema. The films were especially selected for the schools of Krems and the nearby surrounding, which usually are not shown in the commercial cinema.

Action Film Workshop for Young People (15 - 17 years)

Four media pedagogists worked intensively in a seminar with pupils on the language of films by example of action films.

FOR AN ETHICAL CINEMA

Domenico Luccini

the perceptible environment. Therefore cultural education plays an important part in the everyday life of children. Playing, contact with different media, and the acquisition of media content, are meaningful activities in present-day childhood; i.e. :

„The „cultural competence“ of children refers above all to media, its availability and content.“ (Jürgen Barthelmes, Thesen zum Kinderkino, Essay on Children's Cinema).

Similarly, children's festivals, while not neglecting entertainment and spectacle, should present works with an artistic, sociological, historical and heritage viewpoint. In addition to presenting recently produced and distributed films, previews of „majors“, festivals should endeavour to include unknown filmmakers, limited distribution films, and also normal repertoire films, but with the addition of homages, backgrounds and retrospectives. A commitment which would be fulfilled, not just in the organisation of a real and proper review of films, but also in the organisation of opportunities for meetings and discussions, and the staging of exhibitions which assimilate the audio-visual language.

But, above all, the mission of festivals is to arouse and stimulate the curiosity of the general public, and to endeavour to promote their knowledge and education. A fundamental prerogative is a basic requirement that present-day man, and even more so youth, must possess a mental preparation and a critical-cultural habit for the interpretation of cinematographic works. The cinema phenomena illuminates the realities of man and the society he has constructed.

It is a language capable of expressing the joys, hopes and fears of man, it is an art form for communicating to humanity the richness of an artistic intuition which expresses itself through images in movement.

The cinema entertains, excites, exhorts, presents and represents the things of life. Children and youth in general often see, reflected in the narrations, their problems, their most secret aspirations, their difficulties in integrating and being accepted. Confronting, via a cinematographic work, some of the problems which interest youth the most can provide an opportunity for dialogue which would otherwise be impossible, a source of awareness of the reality which surrounds them, and which they will soon be called upon to experience at firsthand.

The proposals put forward for the Children's Festivals are based on these fundamental concepts and criteria. The cinema should not, therefore, have a pedagogic objective in the narrow sense, as it would have presented in a school context, to be analysed and used as a didactic tool as part of a cycle of lessons conceived and structured along the lines of a curriculum with a different scope and content. It should, rather, be an occasion to meet and to exchange experiences. Each film therefore ends up becoming, sometimes despite the author, often despite the public which willingly flocks to the festival, an inevitable opportunity for communication and dialogue.

I believe that the cinematographic medium as a communicative art form is a very valid instrument of cultural information. It is, nevertheless, important that some degree of selection is made for children.

Rather than create a cinema which is declared as being for children, I believe that we must bring the children to understand the cinema as a whole, the grand cinema.

What is important is to graduate this communication according to age: at all times maintaining the level high, bring the child closer to the better examples of cinematographic expression. I am convinced that the children of today have vast capacities for cultural reception, and are capable of understanding more, of going into the specifics of cinematography. Has nobody realised that the reader and member of the audience, after many years of not completely passive practice, have become the reference „experts“ as regards the communicative typologies which have often put us in the role of user?

Today, the figure of the end-recipient is considered of topical interest, regaining an active role in the science of communication as well as the attention of programme producers: on the basis of the emerging social drives and of theoretical arguments, often neglected in the past, the receiver is no longer considered as just a simple consumer, a passive client, but even an equal interlocutor of the mass media. The realistic hypothesis of placing the end-recipient on an equal footing to the originator, passes through the study of serious processes of educating consumers in the use of the media, processes in which the school should be involved in the first instance. It also passes through the political invention of new and more correct modalities of openness of the apparatus with respect to its users: modalities conscientiously aware of the problems of decentralisation, of access, of communicative exchange and of participation.

The school, while not surrendering its fundamental mission, must draw closer to the new audiovisual languages,

creating in the process learning situations which are more stimulating, more original and more participative. The objectives are straightforward and aimed at all participants as a whole. For the children, it is a case of inducing a socially responsible behaviour. Bringing the children to the cinema leads to an education through visual perception, the tapping of emotions which are individual and yet at the same time collective. Openness to other worlds, the approach to the unmentionable, awareness of differences, are sources of material which is richly pedagogic in nature.

Furthermore, this media allows the child to decipher the difference between fiction and reality. Television counterfeits reality in its imagery – the cinema presents itself as fiction, and evokes a possible reality. For teachers, these new practices imply a re-examination of traditional didactic methods. For the professionals in cinema, the partnership, with respect to respective missions and reciprocal roles, provides the scope for projects rich in potential.

The mission of the school finds a complement in the discovery of and initiation in the language of images, in the predisposition of children to the world of the future, in the enjoyment of cinematographic culture: conscious of being free, critical and aware when confronted by images.

Children normally give themselves to a different type of discussion involving memory, time, the present, history, morality, or whatever. The point is that the traditional verbal intercourse at root level takes on a basic and vulgar form, and so if the cinema for children is a lesser genre, the style should also be lesser. Over time, the child undergoes too many levels of banality. The easy trap of sentimentalisation, the dull and sugar-sweet affectation, the banalisation of the adolescent's moral universe, are the clichés which are invoking a slow and unstoppable decline of the genre.

The director Francois Truffaut, who for his masterpiece films on childhood can be considered the most authoritative voice on the subject, in an interview on the subject of the correct methodology for representing children in the cinema, highlighted two errors which can be easily committed:

the most common and serious would be that of starting a priori from a dramatic idea, albeit perhaps effective on the level of „fiction“, instead of from the real problems children have with the world. The other problem is that of not placing the child truly at the centre of the film, but to give it a supporting role to the adult star, or worse, to accompany the child with ponies, dogs, flying reindeer

and red balloons! Festivals, while not renouncing entertainment, should not indulge in sentimentalism or „adulthood“, but should simply help to grow.

On the other hand, the symbols, the codes of every artistic language, are not dependant on the age of the spectator to whom they are targeted. There is no difference in the nature of a film made for a child or an adult. At the level of the themes dealt with, there are none specifically and only for the child: the questions which cross and shake the world interest the child closely. Seeing as the languages of the arts function thanks to codes and conventions which are in constant evolution, the programmes for children should not only contain repertoire films, but also the more advanced forms of contemporary creation. On the other hand, the programmer must take account of a certain number of specific characteristics of the child: its age, its level of concentration, its capacity (greater or lesser) of conceptualising its creative potential. Before being a pupil, a child who attends the projection of a film during school, is, in the theatre, first of all a spectator. And this status as a spectator is even more pronounced if the child frequents the cinema on a regular basis. A child's sensibility, history, social class, imagination, intelligence, emotional and receptive faculties, makes each child a unique spectator. The meeting between a child and a film must pass, above all, through the notion of pleasure.

*„The cinema, the bearer of dreams, the memory of the world, remains essential in a period in which the television has the tendency to make the desires and tastes of children uniform. Hence the necessity of exposing the young spectator, from his most tender age, good films originating from all around the world (short length films, documentaries, fiction, masterpieces from the history of the cinema), to allow it to find gradually for itself its own space within the world of cinema.“ (Ginette Dislaire, *Ecole et cinema: Choisir un film pour les enfants*).*

The problem is to define, if possible, the centre of this network of planning: the cinema for children. And if today, the cinema for children no longer exists, and, perhaps, not even the children, the adolescents? Pre-adolescence appears, in the eyes of the culture industry, information systems and consumer promotion mechanisms, as an irregularity which must be controlled even at the cost of denying it.

„Childhood, as a cultural product, rather than as a fact of nature, is therefore disappearing“

Also as a result of the strong impact of television which „superimposes the knowledge of the adults onto that of the children via its images, and has annulled the code that separates the two age groups, the code which distinguished them by attributing to the one and to the other different statuses and roles“ (Marina Damato, *Childhood and Prejudice*, Rome, 1993). Towards the end of the seventies, the concept of the breakdown of the prevailing codes and paradigms ruling the classification of the works destined for children was considered positive, because it induced an openness to a higher level of civilisation, because it re-integrated childhood into the world, kept it within the course of time, restoring complete citizenship rights to the „children“. At the end of the eighties, abetted by the medium of mediums – the television – it is this completely liberated space which appears to go into crisis as a result of the indifference to the differences which legitimate everything and, equalating all subjects to the zero ideological degree, nullifies the point of communication and transforms it into a colossal, metalinguistic, self-referential jam. At this point, as radically affirmed by the organisers of an important festival, such as Giffoni, it is possible to assert that the cinema for children no longer exists, for the simple reason that all cinema is for children, absolute protagonists, on and off the screen, of the third age of the cinema?

*Or even, as some sociologists maintain, „suppress youth“ (Gianni Borgna, *The Myth of Youth*, Laterza 1997), abolish it by decree? Was Croce right, and the young man must simply force himself to become adult? And is it better to return to Nestor as the ideal model?*

We believe that the banner of childhood and youth has a perennial value. However, in the era of globalisation it is necessary to adapt, keep up to date. So in the audio-visual sector, and, more specifically, the cinema, it has become a power play for the festivals to enlarge their range as far as including works not reportedly destined for children (often entering into competition with other festivals) attempting in this way to escape the „trap“ of industrial codes.

On the other hand, by the very nature of the cinematographic product, the children's festival, and therefore any other festival, must be able to measure itself against the industrial character of the cinema, and not be indifferent to the range of offers available on the free market – which it must obviously be

able to look at with careful scrutiny to extract the quality (definable only in relation to our project) from the quantity.

As asserted this year by the director of the Festival of Locarno, Marco Müller, with reference to some driving ideas of a „new cinema“ and its programming:

„Thanks to the formulation of some proposals, options, narrative models and outlines of genre, there has been a renewed vigour in the more vital area of experience of elaborating strategies for continuing to communicate with very diverse groups of spectators. There is no need to be fettered by formulas of entertainment and spectacle which are too mediocre or unwanted to couple politics and popularity, analysis and denunciation, precision of dialogue and the joy of the screen (this has resulted in a new association between aesthetics and industry, which goes well beyond the traditional dialectic of author-professional, author-genre)“. (Marco Müller, *Catalogue of the Locarno International Film Festival*, 1998).

Remaining within this process means choosing films for children without having to follow the fashions imposed by the market, but also without forgetting the visual communication languages as codified by the market. Let's try to explain. The children are among the major „consumers“ of video-films, and, potentially, among the most frequent visitors to the cinema. To be able to determine their tastes, their tendencies, is certainly a culturally meaningful operation, but is also important on the commercial level. At present there is no market for cinema for children. Lost behind the rhetoric of the genre, today it occurs in church halls or in exclusive clubs of „cinema d'essai“, before letting itself die in the enchantment of television.

What to do?

We should create a market or at least a network for the distribution and diffusion of the works presented at the various festivals. Certainly not an easy operation which passes necessarily through meticulous care of the films presented. It would involve adopting the films, promoting them on the national and international scene, creating an appropriate network, attempting to gain access, penetrating established resistance and misunderstandings, to the commercial network, and, where possible, that of television.

In short, to become accomplices of all those who make films: from the producer, the director, to the distributor, as it is within this network that the cinematographic works live, or die.

The representatives of the different domains, which accomplish a festival, made short statements of the maximum of 4 minutes. The impulses that were given in these speeches, were afterwards discussed in the two workinggroups.

BERND NEUBURGER
FILM DIRECTOR

As one can observe, children films have vanished as a part of the program of most TV-stations over the last couple of years due to a reason commonly heard, namely that there is not enough room for long films anymore. They have also disappeared from cinemas, because there are supposedly not enough films, for children and thus it's impossible to continuously attract an audience. They also gradually disappear from the competition of children's film festivals. Thus, as children films can hardly be found on TV-screens, cinema screens and film festivals any more, the media inevitably neglects them, which consequently has a negative effect on the interest of the public. Since it is absurd for a capitalist society to supply a market when there is no demand, fewer film are being produced and consequently shown, which has a negative effect on ... and so on and so on....

The role Children's Film Festivals play in this death spiral is not unimportant. If one takes a look at the catalogues of International Children's Film Festivals of the last couple of years, one realizes that everything passes for a children film as long as a) the film includes a child and b) the film is a cartoon. A lot of these movies were not originally intended for children. Mostly, these film have the purpose of recollection:

the director tries to recollect his own childhood but does not loose the adult target group out of sight and thus does not spare with sex and crime. As 6 to 10

year olds don't know what to do with movies like that, the age for children that are in juries of festivals has been risen to appr. 15 years.- Obviously "baby-films" for 6 to 10 year olds have no chance in these juries.

Since Bruno Bettelheim was outet as a child molester, children apparently do not need fairy- tales any more but informative discussions on AIDS, cancer and death – in order to let them know what to expect from life. The knowledge that children do not deal with events rationally but intuitively has unfortunately been lost and with it also a child-adequate way to handle topic like illness, loss and death, a way that uses archetypes rather than rational information. If one takes a look at the programs of most children's film festivals, one has to be afraid that the knowledge about the phenomenon child is thrown back in a pre-Jung era, in other words: a child is nothing but a small, emotionally and physically under-developed adult.

Children's Film Festivals can help children films to get out of the trouble by focusing on the basic function of the children film and make this function the primary criterion for selecting films at a festival. This would increase the prestige of these film genre and the media cannot overlook children films any longer which translates into more interest of the public and, hopefully, more subsidies, which consequently means more and, due to a higher number of competitors, better children films.

ESZTER VOIJALA
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

WHAT ARE MY EXPECTATIONS FROM A CHILDREN'S FILM DIRECTOR?

✗ The director should not be ashamed of having made a children's film - some directors think, calling their film a children's film is somehow degrading

✗ If they have already decided to make a children's film, they should keep in mind, that they make the film for children.

✗ They should know their audience: children are very demanding, they should not be underestimated

✗ There should be action in a children's film, tension, humour, sentiments and some message – all these in proportion

✗ Please, directors, give children some hope in the end (there are some otherwise good films, but we can't screen them to a young audience, because they are too heavy – even the most tragic films can be balanced so, that if not a HAPPY END but SOME HOPE IN THE END is given)

✗ There are certain taboos in children's films – in different-cultures, different taboos. The taboos of children's films are: sex, violence, drugs and drinking. Directors can be confronted with the teachers, who oppose these taboos – sometimes very violently

✗ Americans like the term: FAMILY FILM. It means, that you want to please the whole big family: grandmother, father, brother, etc. there is only one problem: is the child forgotten? Why not to make a film for the child? Good children's films are eternal, new children are born every day – a common knowledge – a good children's film can very easily become a classic.

✗ Today's film directors must keep in mind that their audience was brought up by the nanny called VIDEO. Today's children are and have always been surrounded by products of visual arts. They have very refined taste and great expectations.

However, it is not enough to use the latest technical achievements, it is an honest script you need as well.

✗ Working with child-actors is very difficult. A director of a children's film must have the patience and all psychological and pedagogical abilities for this work.

✗ Directors should visit screenings, where their young audience is present. Children's film festivals are important, because filmmakers can face their audience. Children are also interested in these occasions.

✗ Last but not least: a good children's film is a good film, that has many levels. Children understand of it, what is for them and adults can also watch it, because there is some important message in it like:

try to preserve the child in yourself

MARINA HUGHES FILM PRODUCER

A considerable body of theoretical work has been developed in the area of children and the media in spite of cinema's relatively short career as dominant cultural form.

Much of the research in this field is concerned with the familiarity of and ease of access to film and television media and the consequent 'dangers' to which children are seen to be powerful forces in children's socialisation.

This notion of negative media effects has tended to dominate published research. However it is challenged by research which stresses the diversity which children themselves bring to the media, their capacity to make sense of media messages and relate them to their own life experiences.

The volume of film being produced and the proportion of time which children spend viewing this product draw attention to the need to develop children's understanding of the medium. It is important that children develop visual literacy so that they can decipher the codes and conventions as well as genre and narrati-

JERZY MOSZKOWIECZ FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

As the organiser of the International Festival of Films for Children ALE KINO I would like to draw your attention to this event and to express my best will to present your films to the audience, critics and representatives of audio-visual industry in my country.

The Festival creates the new spaces for the exhibition of the children's films in Poland. This means that we will do our best to promote your product and, hopefully, to facilitate your sales.

The Festival is at your service. Please, note that this service is free of charge.

To make our further collaboration better, I would like to kindly ask you:

- ✗ to response to our invitation to the Festival, even if the answer is negative;
- ✗ to answer all the questions given in the entry forms and send all the requested materials; do not hesitate to provide us with information and materials not requested, if you consider them useful for us; all of this should be sent by the deadline specified in the Festival regulations;
- ✗ not to charge the Festival either with the screenings or for the transport of the films to Poznan;
- ✗ to provide the Festival with the prints of the films with due advance, as you are advised in the entry form;
- ✗ and last but not least to be co-operative and open to discuss all the problems that we may encounter working together

Please, do not hesitate to present all your needs and suggestions regarding the exhibition and promotion of your films at the Festival.

ve of visual media.

It is against this background that Children's Film Festivals make a significant contribution to the spread of film appreciation among young People.

The Festival provides a forum for producers, directors, sales agents and distributors to discuss, define and develop their product for their target market. The Festival, through screenings, workshops and seminars, helps educate the film-maker's current and potential audience about his/her product. However, and perhaps more importantly, it educates the film-maker about his/her audience. And being a producer, to know your audience, is to survive.

The value of the Festival to the producer is potentially huge. However the relationship between the producer and the festival is underdeveloped and often fraught.

From a producers point of view – as the current structures stand – when the excitement of physically making a film is over, and the distribution rights have already been sold (often to finance the film in the first place) – and while you are trying to earn your living by developing other scripts) you are the person who is contacted by every festival or the circuit over a period of years to provide copies of photographic stills, and videocassettes, to fax dialogue lists and scripts and to ship prints – and for what? – to help fill a festival programme? To help get the director a free ticket for a weekend away

JOCHEN D. GIRSCH SALES AGENT

As a World sales company, our expectations regarding Children's Film Festivals are as follows (some of them are specific to Children's Film Festivals, others are more general)

- ✗ finding a larger audience for these very fragile creations of the 7th art.
- ✗ a 'great' campaign by Film Festival Organizer's to motivating not only the great public, but also professionals, i.e. Press, Buyers (theatrical, television, video) to take part in the Festivals.
- ✗ hoping to receiving at least two/three weeks in advance a list of professionals expected, if possible with address / phone / fax-datas.
- ✗ expecting the Film Festivals to be more reliable regarding booking, shipping etc. The producers and we cannot afford all the costs regarding the print's travelling around the world.
- ✗ expecting a better- 'feed-back' about the publics reaction after the screenings
- ✗ Due to the number of Film Festivals we must be sure to have the material (i.e. prints/photographs/dialogue-lists etc.) immediately returned or being for-

in a nice location to be wine and dined?

The Boy from Mercury – a film which I produced 3 years ago, came about because of a chance meeting between the writer and the producer at a childrens film festival (Cinemagic in Belfast)

Nonmarket childrens film festivals provide a relatively intimate atmosphere for a gathering – and film production is built on relationships. Not only the relationship between the writer, the director and the producer and the creative team – but also and just as importantly, the relationship between European producers, potential co-producers, financiers and agencies.

This latter set of relationships is critical for the survival of European Childrens film and minority language film in the current era of the dominance in the commercial space of mass marketed American/English language big budget exceeds the films budget and the distribution hegemony guarantees screen space for the studios product.

If European childrens films are to continue to be produced (never mind screened) my plea to this conference is to please involve producers in the festival network. Both sectors (the production sector and the festival sector) need to develop this symbolic relationship.

The festival must not overtook its potential as a forum, for all involved in getting an idea from the page to the screen, to discuss, define and develop this product in this certain era.

warded to the next Film Festival, which is waiting desperately for that material.

✗ Very often, after Festival's have closed, there seem to be nobody responsible for any replies to our phone-calls/faxes regarding the where about of the the mentioned stuff.

✗ it would be a luxury to receive a list/tape of the voice-over versions the Film Festival has produced in accordance with the copyright- laws. This would maybe give the opportunity to encourage some local initiatives to show foreign-language films to children: let's mention one Belgian example : on Saturday mornings, in a citycentre theatre, two films are screened: one for the parents, one for the kids. The film for the kids is monitored by a person who reads the subtitles list.

This is of course limited. One can imagine at a rather low cost to have this voice over recorded on tape, and a number of tape recorders rent/or lent to the younger audience, still unable to read the subtitles.

REINHARD T. SCHÖFFEL FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

International film festivals have an often underestimated meaning for film sales. Especially for independent producers, whose films are not included in the package deals of the multinational media market festivals often are the only way to present their films to an international audience as well as to potential buyers from distributors and for TV-stations.

The ambience of film festivals furthermore has two advantages:

The festivals offer the chance to see the films together with the audience the films have been made for, which is most important when it comes to children's films. We all have seen many films in our screeningrooms that we judged completely different if we had seen them together with a lively audience. At festivals with public audience films have the chance to prove their real attraction for the people.

Children Film Festivals are or should be meeting points for people who are involved in production, distribution and exhibition of films for children. Among these professionals communication is easy. The films we have seen we can immediately discuss with friends, colleagues, partners and with the filmmakers.

Some examples for films which have been sold to Germany because they were successful at festivals.

Henry and Verlin (Gary Ledbetter, Canada 1994) was screened at Frankfurt festival 1995 and was available on the German market in spring 1996.

Watch me Fly (Vibeke Gäd, DK 1995) was screened at the Berlin festival in

1996 and was available on the German market in spring 1997.

King of the Masks (Wu Tian Ming, China 1996) was screened at Frankfurt festival 1996 and is now available on the German market.

All of these Films have not been or will not be big box office hits. They have, will have or had their modest distribution in cinemas, they have been or will be shown on TV and they have their success in the non-commercial distribution.

What can festivals do to improve their attraction for film sales agents both producers /sellers, and buyers?

Festival programmers should use their knowledge and their contacts to look for films not only where we all usually find them, but should also keep their eyes and ears open for new talents in other countries. All over the world films are produced and we hardly have the possibility to see all of the best. Festival organizers should have the ambition and the courage to create their own profile of films in the program, which is not covered by other events. This is also the best way to attract exactly these professionals who might be interested to buy these films.

If the festival is still ignored by sales agents a special and well organized conference for these professionals can be helpful to establish the festival on the scene.

Create an attractive atmosphere for the local audience. A children film festival attended by 100 film people and ten children is rather boring. Fortunately with children film festivals we usually do not

have any problem with a lack of audience.

At the Nordic Filmdays at Luebeck we have a good tradition: During a final discussion at the end of the festival representatives from children film clubs vote for the films they would like to have in (non-commercial) distribution. This way we get a more distinguished opinion than from an audience's jury giving a prize to just one or two films. Similar discussions can be arranged with distributors, journalists, sales agents and representatives of the audience. This way you can also involve a wide circle of participants into children's film culture.

Finally some basics (for some of you certainly banalities) for a good communication between the professional participants during and after the festival:

- Polaroid fotos of the guests and participants on a pinboard help to recognize people you did not meet before.
- A meeting place at a pub or restaurant is almost as important as a good film program.
- Producers and distributor's addresses in the catalogues help to contact them after the festival.

Especially these films which have been made by artists who love both the cinema and the audience, often have problems to find their way to the market. Through the festivals these film makers have the chance to meet sales partners who maybe have the same features – and the certain enthusiasm which is necessary to deal with ambitious films.

DIMITRIS SPYROU FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

EXPECTATIONS FROM A FILM DISTRIBUTOR

What I, as a festival director, expect from the Greek Distributors, is first of all, all of them to attend the 2nd Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People, and not just one of them, as it happened at the 1st Festival.

After that, they have to begin to realize that film for children and youth isn't just Hollywood productions. And to realize that they have to understand that film for children and youth has a very important educational dimension. As soon as they perceive this dimension, everything concerning this kind of film will get better:

✗ The distributor will realize that all of us who are working in this area should co-operate: scriptwriters, producers, directors, distributors, cinema owners, educators, festivals and of course the State institutions,

✗ A film for youngsters shouldn't be screened with the same typical way that a

commercial screening takes place. It has to be combined with the presence of some of the film actors, a film critic or someone specialized on the subject of the film. That's how the film message reaches the children safely and at the same time the interest of children, parents and educators increases,

✗ The development of children's films production could be advantageous for everybody and, especially for the distributor, an additional profit margin.

✗ So, the distributor should factually express his interest, in order to encourage the producer to invest money and the scriptwriters to write, without fearing that their writings will be shelved,

This is what I basically expect from the Greek Distributor and, as artistic director of the Olympia Film Festival, I keep working in that direction.

I really believe that, if a future ECFA Conference could be held in Greece, it would have a great part in the culmination of the interest concerning the films for

children and young people.

And I'm talking about culmination of the interest in Greece because:

- ✗ The 1998 annual Conference of the Greek Film Clubs Organization in Kozani had the topic *Child and Cinema*.
- ✗ The Municipal Cinema Network has decided to present in the next winter films for children and youth from Greece and abroad.
- ✗ The interest of Greek filmmakers is already whipped up: pretty soon we will have feature films for children and young people.

FELIX VANGINDERHUYSEN

DISTRIBUTOR

One of the reasons for a distributor to visit children film festivals is the need to feel the audience, the reaction, the special needs of the children, for getting to know what they like most, what films they prefer to see, what films they enjoy most.

Often these films are not identical with the films that are awarded by the jury. And this is the reason why distributors are not feeling comfortable with an award dedicated especially to a national distribution. The awarded films are selected because of their artistic value, but that does not mean that they would be successful in the commercial cinemas. There are various criteria – one surely is that the jury does not have to respect the rules of the market, they simply have to stick to aesthetical criteria.

So one of the demands the distributors have – please choose an adequate jury for the distribution award.

MARIA AND ANTONIA

CHILDREN'S JURY

Just a little while ago we wanted to watch a good film. So we asked ourselves: Remember, where we have watched all these fantastic movies? At the Children's Film Festival we answered ourselves!

The films not only dealt with important topics, but also showed these topics in a way different from what we usually see in the cinema or on TV.

The Film Festival was an opportunity to get to know different cultures and thus to understand them better. There were stories about outsiders, about war and about friendship.

These films were a very important experience for us and we hope that we have the possibility to visit the Children's Film Festival more often.

SABINE FUCHS

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

What do I as an organizer of a children Film Festival expect from a Cinema Owner- Besides the fact, that I naturally expect the cinema to provide a perfect organisation concerning the ticket sale and a first rate screening, the festival time should be the time and cinema the place to discuss different experiences – based on the shown films.

In the first place the children have to be respected as partners not as consumers and treated with respect. So it is necessary, that the staff of the cinema should cooperate and communicate with the children without prejudices. The atmosphere of the cinema should be an inviting one. An invitation to stay and discuss. An invitation to watch with interest.

MARTIN BLANEY

JOURNALIST

This week, I was at the European Film Forum in Strasbourg where professionals from all over Europe were discussing the future of European cinema. One of the workshops – on distribution and promotion – concluded with a recommendation encouraging „continued support“ from the European Union for festivals as they play an essential role in the promotion of European cinema in the light of the fact that European films have problems traveling outside of their national borders.

A study of festivals by the European Audiovisual Observatory presented at the Forum shows that there has been a literal explosion in the number of film festivals: the European Commission estimated 800 in the 15 member states last year.

The number of festivals may be growing, but the editorial space given over to cinema in newspapers is not increasing correspondingly. In fact, as many film critic colleagues attest, the space is shrinking year by year. (I am an exception here as my newspaper, SCREEN INTERNATIONAL, is dedicated exclusively to reporting to the film, television and video industries on a weekly basis).

Editors are not prepared to pay for their film critics to travel to festivals or will only cover part of the stay at a festival. And my British colleague Derek Malcolm of The Guardian has observed that editors are increasingly more interested in star-based profiles than in serious film reviewing. If the critics are to persuade their bosses to send them to cover a festival, it is imperative that festivals ensure that they develop a clear and unmistakable profile and offer journalists a chance to make discoveries.

Festivals have not been spared public cost-cutting measures and there is less money to go around these days, but the offer of accommodation or help with travel costs to the festival can make that

important difference when a (freelance) journalist is deciding between the many festivals being staged each month.

Here are a few points for festival organisers to consider vis-a-vis their relations with the media:

1. Beware of charging fees for press accreditation and catalogues – the introduction of a DM 50 accreditation fee at the Berlin Film Festival created a lot of bad blood between the festival and the press, and you run the danger of the journalists using more space in their articles to write about this deterioration of their working conditions than about the films themselves.

2. The need to send out press releases about your festival's programme in good time as some magazines have a long lead-time – especially if they only appear monthly.

3. It is useful for journalists coming from outside to have a room at the festival centre where they can have access to a pay telephone and fax as well as a computer or typewriter.

4. Often, it is not possible to stay at a festival for the whole duration and so there is inevitably a danger that one will miss some interesting films showing once one has returned home. This is where the Videotheque comes in – a service which will also be welcomed by distributors, exhibitors and sales agents.

5. A festival's catalogue is a very useful reference work after the festival has finished: for everyone involved...from journalists through to other festivals. It is also a concrete record for the filmmaker that his film was shown at the festival. Please make sure that you include the addresses, telephone and fax numbers of the production companies and/or sales agents – this will add to the value of the catalogue.

If the cinema owner him/herself is interested in the children films as a media transporting values, aesthetic forms and not to forget joy, the basement for a partnership is layed.

There are many things the cinema could provide for the young audience

✘ space for special activities before and after the film – drawing, discussions, plays.

✘ Music the children like

✘ Pads to sit higher

✘ Employees who like and enjoy being with children and know how to meet their needs and behaviour without being annoyed.

✘ the cinema should be a place where regularly children films are shown, the

cinema should be established as known place for screenings of children films.

The children audience will be the later adult audience and wether they will have a special interest in films that depends on the way we guide them now.

more statements on page 12

Two working groups were formed who dealt separately with the same questions. The results were brought together and expressed in the following summary.

1. Selection of Films – Programming
2. Competition
3. Presentation
4. Public relations
5. Financial matters

1. There is a necessity to discuss the criteria for selecting a film. Festivals must take children seriously, which was taken for granted and thus had not to be discussed.

Wide variety – distinct profile

On the one hand should each festival show a wide variety of productions, on the other hand should each festival also develop its own distinct profile (which is mostly the case anyway, although the participants complain about the fact that the same productions are shown at all festivals).

Content: All participants agreed on the following viewpoint – after having seen a movie children should leave the cinema optimistically and full of hope. No matter what story has been told in the film, the end should leave enough room for hope (which is not identical to a Happy End). The life of children as a film-topic should be the main point of focus in selecting festival films. The cultural value of festivals has to be emphasized, thus it is important to stress the notion of film as an art-form.

Jury versus individual person

No agreement could be come to on the question who should be responsible for the actual selection of festival films, whether it should be a jury or an individual person. Nevertheless the majority of participants was in favor of the notion that an artistic director has positive influence on the development of a distinct artistic festival profile.

Sales agents and producers wish for and expect better communication with festivals as well as more infor-

mation of them, and they also want more transparency in the process of selecting or refusing a film. Especially sales agents are of the opinion that subsidized film copies would be of great help, as they could be sent to all the festivals.

Claim to producers: little children need films too!

As productions tend to focus more and more on older children and teenagers, festivals would like to see a higher number of productions for children age 5-7 (cf. Denmark). Production companies should be encouraged to take action to produce short films. Directors should be animated to work for young children, too.

To make communication between producers, sales agents and festivals easier, the conference participants agreed to collect material on all European Children's Film Festivals and to publish a folder including information on the program and profile of each festival.

Disagreement about entry fees

The workgroups were in disagreement about financial issues in terms of fees. On the one hand there were producers demanding festivals to pay for films, as well as distributors who want festivals to contribute to the expenses and on the other hand there was the fact that festivals do not earn enough money from entry-fees as they have to be kept to an absolute minimum. Thus, subsidized copies were considered a solution to the problem (cf. The Netherlands).

2. Awards are essential for the media, as they increase the importance of the festival and as they also make the festival atmosphere more exiting and enthusiastic. They also rise the expectations of the audience. In this respect a children's jury is very important. Its opinion should not only be accepted but also in no respect manipulated.

Awards are important – Who receives them?

It is important to distinguish between awards recognizing the artistic value of a production and awards granted for the increase of the national distribution of films. In order to be able to distinguish, it is essential to establish rules. The artistic value of a movie is not necessarily the decisive factor for the commercial success of a production, as well as an award as such does not ensure its successful distribution, e.g. if the film does not meet the criteria of the market.

3. A Children's Film Festival is an event. This event includes more than a mere presentation of movies. The ideal situation would thus be one in which the festival is the highlight of continuous work, work that includes the showing of children's film during the year on a regular basis.

Cherry on the cake

Unfortunately, it is mostly the financial situation that makes these regular showings impossible as festivals barely have enough money for their once-a-year-events. A festival on-tour would be an interesting way to tackle the problems, as the number of people who could see the films would inevitably go up, but – seen from the producers' and distributors' viewpoints – this also results in a reduction of its commercial use.

The presentation of a festival as an event has a number of advantages. For the media and consequently for the audience the actors are the highlights of a festival and thus most important.

4. Good connections to the Press pay off! The energy put into announcements, press material, press screenings is essential for the benefit of the festival. Thus, press work should not only include regional newspapers but also national film periodicals, although the amount of press work depends on the festivals' importance or status (regional, national, international), on its profile as a festival, and also on its program. A lot of festivals do not use the media. This has to be changed. Only a few use either new media such as the internet or approved, successful ways to promote themselves, such as trailers.

Cooperation with TV-Stations differs from festival to festival. Bellinzona and Poznan, for instance, have their daily TV program. It is very important to use all kinds of media to give out as much information about the festivals as possible. News are very important in this respect, as a short report in the prime-time news are definitely worth more than a 30 minutes program broadcast at an inappropriate spot. Although everyo-

the audience meets actors – pros meet each other

It is very exciting for children to meet actors and directors and to discuss their roles and films. For festival directors, however, it is meetings with sales agents and producers that are the most important and interesting factor of a festival, as these meetings can have lasting effects.

The notion of festivals as meeting-points for experts of all fields related to children's films is very important for future productions, as this communicative aspect of festivals allows participants to exchange experiences and suggestions. Thus, festivals should strengthen and extend their position as a (mediating) platform for discussions between people involved in film productions and the film audience.

Relationship to schools

For media-pedagogic goals it is neither sufficient nor sensible to organize one single festival per year. Thus, it is also not enough to contact schools only once a year (during the festival). On the contrary, a close

ne agreed on the importance of press work, it was also commonly acknowledged that press work is very time-consuming and intense.

Presentation

All festivals agree on the importance of marketing. The cooperate design is thus very essential and has to be well considered as it represents the festival in public, forms the public opinion of the festival and also strongly influences the commercial success of the festival. The festival in Oulu, Finland, for example, sends out its catalogue to approx. sixty thousand households, which guarantees its success, but is financially not feasible for other festivals.

Catalogues are important for the documentation of the festivals, both in terms of regional importance and development of the program. They should be a profound source of information and present the films so that people want to watch them. Since subsidies generally go back, new ways of cooperation and commercialization have to be found (cf. joint-ventures with multiplex-cinemas).

relationship to schools has to be established on a regular, year-round basis. Special showings for schools are important in this respect, also from a PR point of view. However, the audience should not only be from schools, as this would be too easy and on the long run not useful.

Film Version – various systems

There is no unified system of techniques, various different ways of presenting a film exist side by side. Festivals as such could not agree on which system is most appropriate, whether it is subtitles (starting at 9 years of age), voice-over versions with (slightly) turned down original voices, original version with real-time dubbing via headsets, or whether the children should be sufficiently prepared to watch and understand the original versions.

The soon-to-come voice-over CD-Rom system will solve this problem in the future.

5. In general subsidies have decreased. 80% of the budget of Children's Film Festivals is from public funds. Only a small percentage of the festivals receive subsidies granted by the European Union. Thus, more private funds have to be raised. Festivals agree that sponsors are important in this respect but nevertheless only with a few reservations. Firstly, for some festivals the energy put into sponsoring does not meet the (relatively) small financial outcome and secondly, some festivals have ideological reasons why not to be sponsored. However, for most festivals sponsoring as a means to increase their budget is feasible yet impossible. Nevertheless, Children's Film Festivals aim for sponsors like those in professional ski racing or car racing.

There is strong urge of Children's Film Festivals to get more support by the European Union including more transparency and less bureaucratic efforts in dealing with applications for subsidies. (This problem does not seem to be festival specific but EU-specific.)

An alternative to sponsoring are donations (cf. Gera). They are tax-deductible and also ideologically justifiable as nothing is expected in return.

Résumé des groupes de travail

Ces questions ont été traitées par deux groupes de travail différents. On a tenté dans ce résumé de réunir les résultats de ces deux groupes.

1. Sélection
2. Competition
3. Présentation
4. Relations Public
5. Financement

1. Discussion sur la nécessité de critères. Les festivals doivent prendre les enfants au sérieux, ce qui va de soi et ne faisait pas vraiment l'objet d'une discussion.

Large sélection/profil défini

D'un côté la sélection doit proposer un large spectre de production, et de l'autre chaque festival doit développer sa propre personnalité (ce qui en réalité est le cas si on y regarde de plus près, bien qu'on dise toujours que les festivals proposent toujours les mêmes films).

Aspect du contenu

Accord unanime sur le point suivant : les enfants doivent sortir du cinéma optimistes et pleins d'espoir quelle que soit l'histoire que le film a raconté, la fin doit laisser espérer (ce qui ne signifie pas nécessairement Happy End).

Tout tourne autour de la vie des enfants. La valeur culturelle du festival doit être réhaussée; le film comme forme d'art en est le point de mire.

On a pas pu se mettre d'accord sur le point de savoir qui devait être responsable de la sélection des films, si une personne en particulier ou une commission.

L'opinion la plus représentée est qu'un(e) directeur(trice) artistique serait capable de donner un profil culturel individuel.

SA et les firmes de production souhaitent et attendent de meilleures communication, information, transparence dans la décision concernant un film (raison pour laquelle un film a été choisi etc.) Les films promotionnels qui seraient envoyés aux festivals seraient une grande aide (surtout souhaité par les SA).

Etant donné que la tendance dans la production de films concerne de plus en plus des enfants plus âgés et adolescents, les festivals souhaitent de plus en plus une production dans le domaine des films destinés aux plus jeunes enfants : 5 à 7 ans (exemple à suivre Danemark).

Les firmes de production devraient

être encouragées par différents moyens à faire l'effort de créer des programmes de courts métrages par exemple. Les réalisateurs devraient être encouragés et incités à travailler pour les jeunes enfants. Afin de faciliter l'échange entre producteurs; SA et festivals, il a été décidé de rassembler le matériel existant sur les nombreux festivals de films pour enfants en Europe et de distribuer une brochure contenant tous les profils de festivals et les informations.

Un accord n'a pu être obtenu en ce qui concerne les frais: les producteurs exigent que les festivals paient pour les films, les distributeurs souhaitent que les festivals participent aux frais. D'autre part les revenus des festivals provenant des entrées sont minimes compte tenu des prix d'entrée maintenus très bas. Ici aussi demande de films promotionnels pour les festivals (comme aux Pays-Bas).

2. Les prix sont importants pour la presse. Ils augmentent la notoriété d'un festival et rendent l'ambiance plus décontractée et plus enthousiaste. On attend beaucoup trop de ces films. Le jury des enfants est très important. Son point de vue devrait être accepté et non pas manipulé. Qui devrait recevoir le prix ? Il est important de faire la différence entre un prix artistique et un autre destiné à promouvoir le film à l'échelle nationale. Les critères s'y rapportant devraient être définis. La valeur artistique n'est pas déterminante pour l'utilisation commerciale d'un film. Si un film ne correspond pas aux critères du marché, même s'il a reçu un prix, il sera difficile de l'insérer dans un circuit de distribution.

3. Un festival de films pour enfants est un événement. Il s'agit ici de quelque chose de plus que de montrer des films. L'idéal serait que ce festival soit le point culminant d'un travail continu. Il serait souhaitable d'avoir des programmes pour enfants régulièrement pendant l'année avec un festival comme point culminant (la situation

financière joue ici un très grand rôle, si même un festival annuel ne peut être financé, il ne reste plus rien pour le travail continu). Un cas spécifique serait le Festival on Tour qui aurait l'avantage de présenter le film à un public plus élargi; ce à quoi les producteurs et distributeurs s'opposent, arguant la commercialisation plus difficile sur le marché libre.

Le caractère événementiel du festival a plusieurs avantages : pour le public et les médias les acteurs sont le plus important. Cela représente pour les enfants une expérience excitante de rencontrer les acteurs et les réalisateurs et de pouvoir leur poser des questions après le film. Pour les directeurs de festivals par contre, les producteurs et les SA sont nettement plus intéressants. Les festivals comme point de rencontre, surtout des professionnels des films pour enfants sont nécessaires pour les productions ultérieures, parce que des expériences et des idées sont échangées. La rencontre simultanée de la production, du public et de l'intermédiaire (le festival) est stimulant pour la créativité et devrait être amplifié par les festivals.

Un festival annuel est insuffisant et n'a pas d'impacte s'il a lieu isolément. Le contact des écoles avec les médias ne peut pas être uniquement réalisé par les festivals. Le contact des festivals avec les écoles est important. Comme le souligne les relations publiques des présentations auprès des écoles sont importantes, mais ne recruter que le public scolaire est trop simple et à la longue sans intérêt.

Versions

Il n'y a pas de système unique, des pratiques et des techniques différentes existent en parallèle. Il n'y a pas non plus d'accord sur quel est le meilleur système : sous-titres (à partir de 9 ans), voix originale en demi sourdine avec voice-over, synchronisation avec écouteurs ou simplement voix originale avec préparation préalable. Le système prévu voice-over sur CD-ROM résoudra ce problème à l'avenir.

4. Des bons rapports avec la presse sont rentables. L'énergie investie dans l'envoi de matériel de presse, présentations est d'une grande utilité pour le festival. Pas seulement la presse spécialisée, mais également la presse régionale devrait recevoir toute l'attention.

L'importance d'un festival régional, national ou international et son profil décident du support de presse. Entrent également en ligne de compte le profil du festival, son orientation et l'offre qui y est présentée. Beaucoup de festivals n'utilisent pas encore les nouveaux médias que sont Internet ou les supports publicitaires tels que trailers. Ces moyens devraient en règle générale être intensifiés. La coopération avec les télévisions est inégale. Bellinzona et Proznan par exemple disposent d'une plage quotidienne. Il est important de se servir de tous les médias pour diffuser l'information sur les festivals. Les flashes d'information sont d'importance. Un message bref a certainement plus d'impact qu'un long discours pendant une mauvaise heure d'écoute. Même si l'accord est unanime concernant l'importance des contacts avec la presse, chacun est conscient que ça représente beaucoup de travail et de temps.

La présentation

Les festivals sont d'accord sur l'importance du bon marketing et sur le fait que l'image de marque doit être bien conçue. Il représente le festival devant le public, doit être imprégné dans le conscient collectif et faciliter la commercialisation..

A Oulu chaque foyer reçoit le catalogue (60.000 exemplaires) valable pour le festival mais irréalisable pour d'autres festivals du point de vue financier. Les catalogues sont importants dans la mesure où ils apportent une documentation sur le festival au delà de la région et à long terme. Ils devraient donc être conçus avec soin, présenter les films d'une manière avantageuse. A partir de cela le développement du festival est lisible au fur et à mesure. Les subventions publiques ayant tendance à diminuer en règle générale il faut songer à de nouveaux moyens de commercialisation, trouver des nouvelles coopérations (coopération avec Multiplex, etc.)

5. Une diminution des subventions est à noter. Les festivals de films pour enfants sont financés à 80 % par des fonds publics . Un pourcentage minime des festivals reçoit des aides de l'Union Européenne. Il faut trouver des fonds privés. Les sponsors sont importants. Mais ici les avis sont divergents. Pour certains la recherche de sponsors

requiert trop de travail par rapport aux résultats obtenus. Pour certains l'éthique les en écarte. Pour beaucoup cependant le souhait est de boucler le budget grâce aux sponsors. Le rêve serait de trouver un sponsoring international comme dans le ski ou la Formule 1.

L'aide de l'Union Européenne est ardemment souhaitée par tous. Une plus grande transparence et simplification dans la demande de fonds et leur attribution (ceci d'ailleurs ne devrait pas uniquement concerner les festivals de films, mais toutes les demandes adressées à l'UE).

Les fondations sont une alternative au sponsoring. Elles sont déductibles des impôts et acceptables au point de vue idéologique car elles n'impliquent pas de réciprocité.

Final Statement:

There is enormous demand for better coordination between the festivals including exchange of material and information.

Better cooperation and coordination by exchanging information:

ECFA Journal

Sending catalogues to other festivals

Hyperlinks at festival homepage, establishment/construction of coordination homepage (jump page)

(in planning) Guide to European Children's Film Festivals including a brief description of each festival (profile, rules)

Conclusion

Demande accrue de meilleure coordination des différents festivals.

Echange d'information et de matériel.

Coordination et collaboration accrue grâce aux échanges d'information:

Journal ECFA

Diffusion de catalogue à d'autres festivals

Création de „links“ entre les différentes homepages

Création d'une homepage de coordination

Création d'un petit guide des festivals de films pour enfants; contenant la description des différents festivals (règlements, profils)

HARRY PETERS FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Some people think that a filmfestival and the medium television are its opposites and there might be a reason for. A festival tries to raise the interest for a special filmart with young people and those adults who are professionally involved, television has a wider option but starts in itself. Should filmfestivals emphasize on art, visual language, aesthetic pleasure, and emotions; television is more the medium for the content in its own; the subject, the information or the amusement. Added to the totally different ways they reach their public (in which film is the handicapped one because of the effort to go there) the differences between a filmfestival and television should be obvious. Yet they are connected in more than one way and therefore one could say there should be more collaboration. The Dutch Cinekid-Festival is not only mentioned 'film and television-festival', it is one of the possibilities a filmfestival and television can work together.

Based on the theory that both media has qualified products and that those films and programmes are difficult to present to the audience, the two meet in the idea 'how to raise interest in quality?' Within the Cinekid-Festival we present – besides special programmes – a competition of newest films and an overview of the best television-programmes of the year before. The filmcompetition tries to reach the children directly, while the television-programmes have the intention to interest adults (programmers, makers etc.). People from television visit the festival, meet each other and international guests and see the best films and compare them to their own work. All the Dutch directors (a.o. Ben Sombogaart, Maria Peters, Esmöe Lammers) have strong connection with television and don't regard film and television as closed areas. And that is another practical point for collaboration; the way children's film

MARGRET ALBERS FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

ON THE ROLE OF CHILDREN DURING A FESTIVAL

From its beginning in 1979 on the Golden Sparrow has a children's jury. Since 1991 they award the main prizes in six categories and since 1993 the jury consists of 32 children, at the age of 9 – 13, from each German state.

The experience with the children demonstrates how seriously the children take their job, how thoroughly they analyse the films and TV productions and how detailed they are able to explain their decisions.

Further means of involving children:

- In collaboration with the schools in Gera we enable classes to attend screenings scheduled in the morning.

After the competition screenings there is the opportunity to discuss with the filmmakers

nowadays are produced, is becoming more and more the television series as the basic material and from which the feature film is made out. Film people sometimes regret this, but one can regard this development as a reality and sometimes the only possibility of the production at all. Only in case the visual language of the film is dominated by the grammar of television a second opinion is necessary. In Holland the producers, directors (and don't forget the editors) feel the need to tell the stories in a cinematographic way. There could be a problem in future if films become more and more 'televisionised', but harmony in interest and presentation at a festival could avoid this.

Working together with television over 12 years, we can say that television can support a festival. Not only by money (Dutch companies are financially involved) but also in publicity. Each year at least five programmes are totally dedicated to the festival. Two (!) of them only on the films! Fragments of the films and interviews with directors are every year a part of these programmes and a special live show of the prize-giving ceremony is broadcasted nation-wide in prime time. That raised a lot of public and therefore is one of the basic parts of the festival. Without mentioning the 'normal' free-publicity programs as news-journals or items in other programmes, we can say that the collaboration between the two media are good.

The goals of the festivals nowadays are widened; there should be more attention for the so called 'new media' (internet, computergames, etc.) All these belong to the field of the audiovisual environment of children and young people.

Just by working together we've realised in a way the isolated goals of film and dare to announce that there will be children's filmfestivals forever.

The children have the possibility to write down their opinion of the productions they viewed, These opinions are made public

Children interested in film who are organised in so called 'film clubs' are enabled to attend the festival.

We take children and their opinion seriously and want to offer a platform for a dialogue of filmprogramme makers and their target audience. A dialogue which can be interesting, funny, controversial and instructive for both parties,

Having this in mind mainly expect from children to simply be how they are. They should be curious and take the chance to ask those who are in charge for films and programmes what they want to know and to formulate their opinions, criticism and their wishes. And of course expect them to enjoy the festival.

GABRIELE ROSSLERBROICH CINEMA OWNER

My family is in the film business since 1907. Today we operate three cinemas with seven screens in small and medium-sized towns which are all close to Düsseldorf, Germany.

Films for children play an essential part and are firmly established in our program. Besides the daily, regular program for children we also have Sunday matinées, extra shows for kindergartens and we also organize KINDER-KINOFESTS. Our program was awarded by the Department of Internal Affairs of Nordrhein-westfalen several times.

I am also in charge of 'Films for Children in Cinemas', which is a project by the Main Board of German Cinemas. Thus, I cooperate with associations and subsidization committees and I also organize WORLD KIDS DAY in cinemas all over Germany. This I do in cooperation with the Department of Film Subsidies.

We are meeting here to talk about Children's Film Festivals and, from the viewpoint of a cinema owner, I see the situation as follows:

Basically festivals provide an informative basis for films to be shown for the first time. In addition, they also bring together producers, directors, etc and give them a chance to talk.

The most important reason, however, is to watch the reaction of the children while they are watching a movie and to see the audience reacting on a film.

Movies should not only be seen by a small group of festival devotees but by large audiences. Thus, festival films should not vanish in the big black box right after being presented.

Mostly, children's film festivals present good international productions but unfortunately only a small percentage of these films get to be shown on other screens as well.

Cinema owners are not really interested in festivals because, although they watch beautiful movies, they do not know whether they will be able to show these films in their own cinemas. Thus they rather wait and get information from the film press or from lists of distributors, telling them which films come on the market.

A lot of festival films do not find distributors, which means that they are irrelevant for regular cinemas.

Quite often financing a film also includes that the secondary and tertiary distribution rights have been sold at an early stage which means that this film has lost its appeal for the producer.

Thus let me ask you. Does that make sense? – Well, I believe not.

Cinemas are the last link of the chain in terms of producing and they are also the first in terms of showing. We need children films for cinemas.

Why isn't it possible for a children's film festival to go on tour?

Children only go to the cinema in their home town, they don't travel through the country to visit a festival for example in Berlin or Frankfurt.

The Participants

FESTIVALS

Margret Albers
Deutsches Kinderfilmfestival Gera (Germany)

Luc Bonfils
Transversale (France)

Florence Dupont
Festival International du Cinema Jeune Public
(Laon / Frankreich)

Sabine Fuchs
Kinderfilmfestival Graz (Austria)

Jan Gogola
Kinderfilmfestival Zlin (Tschechien)

Marina Hughes
Junior Dublin Film Festival (Ireland)

El-Sheikh Kamal
Children's Filmfestival Kairo / Arab Union
Artist (Egypt)

Katrijn Korten
European Youthfilmfestival Antwerpen
(Belgium)

Elisabeth Lichtkoppler
Internationales Kinderfilmfestival Wien
(Austria)

Jerzy Moszkowicz
Children's Filmfestival Poznan (Poland)

Harry Peters
Cinekid Amsterdam (Niederlande)

Reinhold T. Schöffel
Bundesverband Jugend und Film /
Kinderfilmfestival Frankfurt (Germany)

Dimitris Spirou
Olympia International Filmfestival for Children
and Young People (Greece)

Eszter Voujala
Oulu International Children's Filmfestival
(Finnland)

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Martin Blaney
(Screen International, Germany)

Reinhard Kleber
(Filmecho/Filmwoche, Germany)

Heinz Wagner
(Kurier, Austria)

WORK IN PROGRESS PRESENTATION OF NEW EUROPEAN CHILDREN FILMS IN THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION

1. Que vecinos tan animales (My neighbours are real animals)
Director: Maite Ruiz de Austri
Production: EXTRA - Extremadura de Audiovisuales S.A., Urb „Castellanos“, C/Alejo Carpentier, 15 - 10001 - Cáceres (Spain),
T. + 34 - 927 23 27 70,
F. + 34 - 927 23 02 72

2. The Magic Forest (Hänsel and Gretel im Zauberwald)
Director: Volker Collmann
Production: Atlas Saskia/CineVox, Fama Film
Iris Productions - 18, Val Sainte-Croix L-1370 Luxembourg, T. + 352 25 03 93
F. + 352 25 03 94, e-mail: iris@pt.lu

3. De Bal
Postproduction
Production:
A PRIVATE VIEW; Lostr. 62, 9920 Lovendegem, Belgium
T. + 32-9-321 91 91, F. + 32-9-321 91 99
contact: Jean-Claude Van Rijckeghem

We would love to organize a children's film festival in our cinemas. But for a private company this is almost impossible.

Our efforts to cooperate with the Children's Film Festival of Essen, Germany or to establish a 'Rhein-Ruhr Festival' together with other cities failed due to the cost of distribution rights.

Children that like to watch movies most likely grow up to adults that are enthusiastic about films and probably become script writers, directors, producers, actors, festival directors or cinema owners.

This is my motto which is also an appeal for you and everybody else in the business: Do not give up trying to bring the medium film closer to the children, to present it to them.

Children are the audience of tomorrow.

PHILOSOPHICAL REMARKS ON FILM FESTIVALS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Dimitris Spyrou

In order for a Children's Film Festival to exist, there are certain preconditions.

Its three basic ingredients are:

- a) Children's movies
- b) Projector machine – sound system – theater
- c) Audience, and since we are talking about a Children's Festival, the majority of the audience are Children and Young people.

The first thing a festival needs are, therefore, the movies. And in order to have a Good Festival we should above all, have good movies.

But what do we mean by good movies? What should a member of the selection jury know in order to choose the best movies? Undoubtedly there is no recipe. The only guarantee is his or her culture, the freedom of choice, his or her instinct, his or her ability to see the world through the eyes of a child.

And since we are talking about children, please allow me to remind you of a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen: The old man making children to close their eyes and sleep, was holding an umbrella under each one of his armpits.

One of the umbrellas had all kinds of pictures painted on its cloth. This one was for good children. He opened it over their heads and they dreamed the most wonderful fairy tales all night. The other umbrella had no pictures. That one was for the bad children. He opened it over their heads and they slept heavily with no dreams what so ever and they had nothing to remember when they woke up in the morning.

We may compare children's films with the two umbrellas, that Andersen's Old Man was holding under his armpits. There were films of the „colored“ umbrella. These films excite children, they fascinate them, they allow them to dream. There also are films of the „colorless umbrella“. When they see these films, children are bored and when they leave the theater they have nothing to remember, to talk about, to disagree or to agree with.

What should films show to children and what should they conceal? I believe that we can tell children everything, so long as we find the proper way. According to a popular song in my country „how can you hide from children? They know everything anyway“.

Film history leads us to the conclusion that the element of past experience and children's memories are significant components of film making and are presented in a variety of ways.

Hoping not to take too much advantage

of your patience, I shall now attempt to analyze the phenomenon: the child in cinematography.

I shall use examples from films by well known directors not listed in the category „children's movies directors“. By thus generalizing, I shall also try to explain „How do we determine the border between children's films and adult films?“

I believe that we should all agree that the directors' childhood memories often become the lever behind films with obvious (and some times concealed) references to child naiveté and the enigmatic world of childhood.

„Even if, for example, there are no children seeing my films, this does not mean that my childhood experiences are not included in them“, was the answer of Rainer Werner Fassbinder to a related question.

The child, the archetype form, the incarceration of naiveté, of the primary element and at the same time an agent of happiness and hope, actively fascinates directors and screenwriters.

„I know, I know, I know / that a forty year old man / always has clean hands / I too wash my hands twice a day / But only when I see my hands dirty / do I remember / the time when I was a child“.

This is how the literary version of *Amarcord* (1973) by Frederico Fellini and Tonino Guerra, begins.

Fellini often referred to the effect the interpretation of his childhood memories had in his work.

It is thus obvious, that film makers used material from other arts, literature even psychoanalysis in order to find ways of developing their childhood experience into films.

As an example, we recall to your memory the scene where the child plays with a thread in *La Luna* by B. Bertolucci, which is a concrete reference to Sigmund Freud's work *Beyond the beginning of pleasure*.

The long and hard way that painting followed in order to approach the child and its world in various ways, that, finally, in the early years of our century led to various perceptions and interpretations was especially valuable in cinematography.

Films did not have to go through the *child with the flower* phase, this painting cliché of the 19th century, in order to imply the relation between the flower and the sensitive child.

Cinematography has the luck and the luxury to observe the timid appearance of the child in the *Yard of the Dutch House*,

a 1658 painting by Peter de Hooch, and with a long jump it reaches the baroque painting *Morning Washing* by Sarden, where children behave like adults and adults want to see children as their mirrors. And then, by loosing 107 years, films wonder „why does the girl in have an exploratory look?“ in the *Girl with the cricket*, the famous painting by Von Mendel, the painter - observer of the light and the ambience. And then it observes the multitude of paintings tracing various aspects of the child in the framework of the multiplicity and polyphony of the artistic expressions and in relation to the dynamic of different factors (historical circumstances, social structure, ideological considerations, foreign influences) that form societies.

The great film makers transform the memory of childhood play to an exercise of creative imagination for the young and the old. They are fascinated by the sense of the evolutionary character of childhood and of the fact that children are still unshaped.

„Children are able to wait, they do not reach to conclusions about people immediately. The way they face the world is a virtual „charming situation“ according to Wim Wenders.

The emotion that one feels when seeing the world for the first time, may be vividly expressed through the eyes of a child.

Wenders, with his film *As time goes by* (1975-1976) attempts to penetrate both the „innerscape“ himself, as well as a real country, Germany, with no prejudices. One of the heroes of this movie, Robert Lander (Hans Zischler) is a scientist working on children's reactions when they learn to write. In a scene of the film he says :

„I knew a child that thought that the writing book were streets where letters circulated using a vehicle, the pen. These children do not read the world, they do not only see what they previously thought of (the names of the things, the right words) but the thing it self, with no prefabricated ideas“.

Childhood in the films of great film makers is approached in various ways, always with affection and sincerity.

Children gives a pleasant alibi to film makers to be nostalgic, to seek the lost childhood naiveté, an opportunity to express daring questions, a seemingly way to criticize authoritative education, family, the system of society, an attempt to read history anew, to avoid commonplace answers.

Very often children are considered agents of a primitive force and power, a

primary stage of existence affiliated to nature. The six year old Kourmas, in the film *The Grey Wolf* by Talamous Okeyev, on a script by L. Michalkov, is such sort of a character. The script is based on a novel by Muhtar Auezof, from Kazakstan.

Francois Truffaut, in 1969 with his film *A wild beast in town* tells the story of a boy that in 1798 was found in the Averon woods, and was „domesticated“ by Jacques Ytar.

Truffaut has often turned to childhood in order to describe how it is perplex and persistent. In 1957, he shot the short film *The troublemakers* where he presents an aspect of the children, who are cruel because the mysteries of love and death are yet unknown to them.

And two years later, he „strikes“ again with his formidable *The 400 Strikes*, his first feature film, that won him the director award in the Cannes Film Festival. It is a perceptive look in the life of children that were „unlucky“ enough to be born at the east side, the wrong side of La Seine. The hero of the film, little Antoine, is not a „poor and unfortunate“ person, that calls for sympathy, but convinces the spectator that he will be able to win in his life because he dreams and because he revolts.

The 400 strikes are the most proud, most stubborn, most hardheaded, in other words the most free thinking film in the world – according to Godard.

It would be no exaggeration to say that children became the „bridge“ for the French nouvelle vague to meet the German „new sensitivity“ and the other national cinematographies to meet Italian new realism.

Isn't *Ivan's Childhood* (1962) by Andrei Tarkovski, the film that made the existence of a Russian nouvelle vague an official fact?

Indeed, even the realization of the child's absence, when handled by a film maker as sensitive and talented as the famous Hungarian Martha Mezaros (*Adoption*, 1975) sheds light to the dark aspects of a woman's personality .

When film makers wanted to demonstrate the horror of war, they often turned to children and they made them their main heroes. This choice was not only due to the fact that children better described its results, on their pure and unsullied souls, but also because they looked for a symbol of mirrored life and the future.

The Superb Rainbow (1943) by Mark Donskoi. The pioneer nouvelle vague film *Forbidden Games* (1952) by René Clement. The lyric film *A Stop Called Sky* (1972) by Karel Kachyna, are some of the masterpieces of this spectacular unity. On the Greek side, *The Barefoot Battalion* by the Greek American film maker Greg Talas (Grigoris Thalassinos).

As far as the effect of war on children during the post - war period, we only have to cite *Germany Year Zero* (1947-1948) by Roberto Rossellini. *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973) by Victor Erithe, *The Blurred River* (1981) by Kohei Oguri, *The Boy* (1969) by Nagisa Oshima and so

many others.

To close the „war“ unity, let us refer to the Golden Phoenix in the Cannes Film Festival, in 1979. *The Drum*, by Faulker Slendrof. The main hero of the film, based on the allegoric Gunter Gras' book by the same name, is Oscar, a child of premature growth, that refuses to grow up any more than his age of three years, protesting for the imminent rise of nazism.

„Oscar, is for me the symbol of refusal and protest“, Slendrof said once.

The child, with its inquiring look to the „outer world“, a world it is just starting to discover, often becomes the eye of the camera, when the camera is used by film makers wanting to see the world as seeing it for the first time, to work off stereotypical types and to join forces with imagination.

Film makers offer children the most valuable things, and like the hippie Venders hero Alice in town, they entrust little Alice with their hair.

After this, I believe that we are easily led to the conclusion, that it is extremely hard for the member of a Festival jury, to decide which film would be appropriate for the Festival program and which film should be rejected.

After deciding, however, and since films are anyway the most important thing in a festival, the festival organizers should, during the festival but also after the festival's closure, do the following:

„Stick together with the festival staff, with the people who work for the festival, and share the festival's philosophy with them. The festival staff should love its work and this feeling could create a very friendly atmosphere.

Before the festival, the organizers should be in contact with educators and invite them to participate to the whole procedure. Because, you see, we shouldn't decide for them without them. The organizers should make educators understand how important a festival is, its cultural dimension. So the educators can talk to the children about the festival, providing them the right information.

To do everything possible to secure perfect screening conditions. Thus, the imagination, the effort and the agony and hope of all those participating in the making of each film : the producer, the screenwriter, the director, the actors, the members of the film crew, the technicians of the photography, editing and sound labs, will not be undermined.

Thus, the sense of taste of the audience will not be insulted.

Prepare a high quality press material for newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations. And to do that, the organizers should find a way to make the festival look attractive for the Press.

During the Festival, there should be a warm atmosphere, in order for all the participants to spend a pleasant week and to have a perfect organization so as to provide the creators the possibility to communicate with the audience, the reporters, their colleagues from other films, the distributors. Thus, in this agreeable atmosphere, film makers may be rewarded for

their pains, to find new partners, to begin contemplating new films, to make new plans.

Young spectators, will be able to see films, discuss them with their makers, to understand how people of their age live in other countries, and to realize that Earth is only a big garden we inherited from our ancestors and we temporarily use, and that we have to pass it to our offspring even better.

I believe that in a children's festival, everybody should have there attention turned to children. Children should be the stars of the festival. Rivalries, stardom and glamour, have no place in a children's festival.

Finally, I think a Film Festival for Children and Young People could be successful if all the above mentioned things happen.

But still, this is not enough. A festival should also develop cultural activities during the whole year, in order to facilitate the production and distribution of children's films.

This is the Festival of my dreams.

Besides the conference an additional programm for the local city was organized.

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ACTION FILM

towards a critical use of media by means of film language -

A MEDIAPEDAGOGIC SEMINAR IN THE PÄDAGOGISCHE AKADEMIE, KREMS

Sept. 16th to 18th 1998

Action movies are by far the most popular film genre among teenagers.

Thus it is especially interesting to analyse the language of these films:

✕ because the fear of entering a discussion about theory is reduced in this case

✕ because of the great popularity and the ostensible filmhistoric insignificance of this genre, a lot of messages are transported that cannot be decoded by teenagers due to insufficient media education.

✕ content analysis of the presentation of violence and the relevancy or necessity of action in everyday life

The aim of the seminar was the critical use of media through the learning of film language, especially the language of action movies

action as energy-kick

„cause it's sooo boring' boredom is not just a phenomenon of the 90ies, but the ways to fight it have become more drastic, the stimulus threshold has constantly risen, and the attraction of entertainment has also been constantly intensified and thus become more dramatic.

Four media pedagogues and film theorists were invited to lead the groups teenagers aged 14 – 17 yrs.

Cinematographic experiences were analysed, relationships of violence and suspense, suspense and comic elements, comic elements and violence established. Role behaviour and communication behaviour as well as moral concepts were examined watching cinematic examples.

Examples of films were shown, including a scenic presentation of the reconstruction of suspense.

Various clips which use different techniques (cut, music, presentation, etc.) but result in a similar presentation of suspense are watched and 'read', aiming for a revelation of the quality and message and abandoning a stigmatization of the movies, a mere distinction of good and bad. 'Reading' the film was learned and the hidden has been disclosed.

Teenagers (13 to 17 years of age) were asked to analyse their own, individual situation - is action important? why? what is action for you personally? what is action for your environment? is action absent in your life? and do action movies serve as a substitution? why is action always related to violence?

The workshop was held by:

Elisabeth Büttner / Christian Dewald

Isabella Reicher / Drehli Robnik

WEEK OF EUROPEAN FILMS IN THE ZENTRALKINO KREMS

14. – 18. 9. 1998

The screenings were especially organized for the schools of Krems and surrounding

Number of spectators:
725 persons

Frida

(Norway, 1990/91)
by Berit Nesheim

Ein Rucksack voller Lügen

(Austria, 1996)
by Wolfram Paulus

Anna annA

(Switzerland / Germany /
Luxembourg, 1992)
by Greti Kläy and Jürgen Bauer

Ma vie en rose

(France / Belgium / GB, 1997)
by Alain Berliner

My Friend Joe

(Germany / Ireland / GB, 1995)
by Chris Bould