

NisiMazine

MARCH 08



Special Focus
Archives

Editorial

What is the purpose of film archives? How do they work? Who has access to them? How are they so closely linked with the present, whilst other kinds of archives are only focused on the past?

Young European filmmakers and students usually don't really know much about archives. They can sometimes be rather closed sites; difficult to enter, and you may need a special reason for asking to access the material. Often the only visible side is the screening programmes that these archives present to the general public.

First of all, these institutions directly concern all directors who want to deposit a film for legal registration in the national list. The archives have to approve the quality of the copy given, because this will be the official preservation material of the film.

Then, they have to preserve it, in order to maintain the national film heritage. This copy, or negative, will be available for directors if all other materials disappear or are damaged. That's why it's particularly important for smaller productions, even

if the process seems expensive for young directors; the fewer copies that exist and the narrower the distribution the film has, the more useful the role of archives – so particularly important then for directors of alternative cinema!

Finally, here patrimony is by no means disconnected from new creation. In fact, there are an increasing number of films being made using images from archives, not only in documentary but in all genres (fiction, experimental...). These images can become part of the artistic process, in a society which wants to recycle its heritage, which likes to reuse old images in order to realise something new.

That's why we will try in this edition to give an overview of the work done by archives; their projects and their approaches. Simply because they are interesting for cinema's new generations!

Caroline Fournier

Agenda

March, 5-10th

Alba, Italy

First workshop of Script&Pitch + publication of Nisimazine Alba

March, 6-8th

Alba, Italy Alba, Italy

General Assembly

March, 31st

In all the network

Application deadline for CineTrain

March, 27th-30th

Bourges, France

European Video Letters Screenings



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- FILMARCHE IN THE SPOTLIGHT
- PORTRAIT: STEPHANIE GIERTTA (NISI MINI)

NISIMAZINE is a monthly newsletter published by the association NISI MASA. **EDITORIAL STAFF** Editor-in-chief Matthieu Darras Secretary of the editorial Jude Lister Editor for the Special Focus on Archives Caroline Fournier Layout Emilie Padellec Contributors to this issue Mercedes Cubría, Daniel Deak, Caroline Fournier, Atso Parnanen, Eva Sancho Rodríguez,

Cover picture: Film still from *A Trick of the Light*, by Win Wenders (1995) © Positif

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! Mention of credit for last month's cover: Charlotte Vandriessche



Special Focus: Film Archives

Archives are not seen as the most glamorous field of the cinema industry, the word conjuring up dusty rows of film reels tucked away in dark basements. So this month, *Nisimazine* decided to uncover the myth by discovering the essential (and yes, dynamic!) work carried out by these institutions, and its relevance to contemporary production.

Images for the Future

As celluloid inevitably decays, archives are in danger of disappearing forever. In a large scale effort to preserve the country's heritage, the Dutch government has granted 154 million euros to the **Images for the Future** project. This will allow the Filmmuseum, the Institute for Sound and Vision (the public television archives) and the National Archives to conserve and digitize 137 200 hours of video, 22 510 hours of film, 123 900 hours of audio, and 2.9 million photos over the course of the next 7 years.

Digitization simultaneously increases and diversifies accessibility. New portals are being developed with help of the Central Discotheque, the Public Library Association and the think-tank 'Knowledgeland'. However putting the archive online is not as simple as it seems, and will not mean free access for everyone. The key is to create relevant portals for specific audiences. **Nikki Timmermans** is part of the research team at Knowledgeland: "*The primary focus is developing the content into material for education. But it's difficult to put a price tag on those services. School budgets are already stretched.*"

At the same time internet audiences are getting used to media being free of charge and it's difficult to predict what audiences will expect 7 years from now. "*We would really like to know what young filmmakers expect from the archives. What should be free to access and what are they willing to pay for? The archives want to be more than one-dimensional platforms and work from the Web 2.0 principle.*"

To reply to these topics go to the blog <http://research.imagesforthefuture.org/category/user-research/>



> The old (above) and the new (right) Filmmuseum buildings.



Interview with: Sandra den Hamer

Change is coming to the Dutch Filmmuseum. The new director talks about the digitization project and the two new facilities to be completed in 2010, a public museum and a collection centre.

What's going happen in the new buildings?

We have a broad range of tasks. A new museum will allow us to truly showcase that, offering us more ways to present our collection (roughly 36 000 titles). It will provide four cinema theatres instead of two, and a large exhibition space. Viewing portals will show the results of the digitization to visitors.

I want the Filmmuseum to become more relevant to the international creative industry. Housing the entire collection, the new centre will provide a workspace to restore and conserve film. There will be room for students of the University of Amsterdam (doing an MA in preservation and presentation) and the **Binger Filmlab**. Artists-in-residence will be invited to use the collection for their work. We want to become a meeting place for creatives and film students, dusting off the perception of archives as inaccessible and old-fashioned.

We also need to become more commercially viable. Part of the government grant for the digitization needs to be paid back. Digitized film can be beamed in cinemas across the world, and advertising companies can search our film banks. We are also planning a VoD platform based on the Spanish Filmotech.

Does this mean that commercial criteria will influence the selection for preservation in the Images for the Future project?

No, the selection is made on the same principles as the acquisition for the collection. Artistic merit and historical relevance are the guidelines. Researchers have occupied portable cabins next to farm barns currently storing the collection. We need to preserve film first before we can digitize it. This is done by the Amsterdam firm **Haghefilm**. Once the optimal prints are made, the digitization phase will start.

To know more about the Amsterdam-based free museum, visit: <http://www.filmmuseum.nl>

Eva Sancho Rodríguez



Special Focus: Film Archives

The Person who Paints on a Photogram

“Ah, how interesting your job must be! Do you paint directly onto the photograms? How is it possible to remake a decomposed fragment of image?”

It's nice that people can imagine such a creative activity when hear that I “preserve” and “restore” films. I picture myself, with a tiny pencil, trying to draw in the character who disappeared in the top-left corner of the photogram. It reminds me of those Pathé Color women who painted the black and white copies in the earlier days of cinema...

Yet this is exactly the opposite of the work undertaken at an archive. If a film is incomplete, we can't fix it ourselves. What we actually do is check if the film is complete and in good condition. If not, then we find out why, if there are other versions in existence, and which version has been most frequently shown.

Let's take an example: *Calabuch* by Luis Garcia Berlanga, one of the most popular Spanish directors. I was in charge of selecting negatives from this film in order to reproduce it for the Valencia Film Archive. In general we use the original negative, if it still exists.

In the case of *Calabuch* it did, but there was a big problem: scotch had been added at each splice, and it was visible onscreen! There was a duplicate negative from the same year, but when I started to make the

comparison, I realised that three plans were lacking from it! To make things worse, all of the documents written by critics, historians and researchers focus on the lack of censorship in this movie; the fact that it was distributed in its original version. In fact, the production company had decided, from the third copy onwards, to cut three minutes of the movie for economical reasons.



The movie was thus distributed in two versions, and nobody noticed the difference. So I wrote a report for the Database of Film Archives in Madrid, but who else will know about it? Students, teachers, researchers and historians are still generally working with the “short” version that is edited on DVD. That's why I think there should be a wider diffusion of the work of archives. If not, we just work for a little number of specialists and not for the rest of the interested public.

Caroline Fournier

Il cinema ritrovato



The ‘Re-found Cinema’ festival, which has been taking place every year in Bologna, Italy for over 2 decades (since 1986), is dedicated to rediscovering cinema in all its variety; from the eloquence of silent film to the spectacle of Cinemascope, passing through newly restored classics and rarely seen treasures.

Last year's highlights included a dedication to **Charlie Chaplin**, and works from **Sacha Guitry** and **Raffaello Matarazzo**. The programme was also complemented by seminars, exhibitions, and open-air evening projections (in the spectacular Piazza Maggiore).

The event is organised by the Cineteca di Bologna, which was founded in the 1960s. After extensive renovations in 2003, the Cineteca now consists of two libraries (cinematheque and photographic/graphic collections) and several cinema theatres.

The next edition of ‘Il Cinema Ritrovato’ will take place in July 2008. www.cinetecadibologna.it

Film Archives Online

Filmarchives Online provides free access to catalogue information of film archives from all over Europe, via a multi-lingual web portal.

Films can be searched for by content, filmographic data and physical characteristics.

The focus of the database is on non-fiction material (documentary, educational films, newsreels, travelogue, advertising, etc), as well as animation films.

The website is a result of the MIDAS project (Moving Image Database for Access and Re-use of European Film Collections), initiated in 2006 by the MEDIA Plus programme of the European Commission in order to provide a gateway for public access to archive material.

www.filmarchives-online.eu



Interview: Antonio Weinrichter



Spanish critic and assistant professor at Universidad Carlos III and Film School of the Community of Madrid (ECAM), Antonio Weinrichter is an expert on found footage films.

What are the tools of a director who makes found footage films?

This is cinema without a camera, because the authors don't shoot... they select the archival material. This act can have legal consequences like copyrights. The director creates an artistic work, stamping his own personal meaning [on the material]. Obviously, every movie is edited. For this reason, Eugeni Bonet prefers to use the term 'desmontaje' (un-editing). I think that the correct one would be remontaje (re-editing) because it changes the original sense to create a new one.

How can we consider this genre: fiction or non-fiction?

The source material can be from documentary or narrative movies, but the result is a sort of 'visual study'... the director compares different kinds of images after taking them out of context.

We can also find archival images in other films...

It is more efficient to make a comment by inserting an image which can be easily recognised by the spectator. The directors of documentary classics learnt this from found footage films... it doesn't fit into the documentary tradition, aimed at objectivity. Editing in an archive image is a manipulation: it's clear that somebody is telling us that.

When was compilation cinema born?

It started in the 20s in the Russian school, but the most famous examples come from the war years, like *Why we fight* (1943-1944) by Frank Capra.

In that period, it was divided in two different branches: archival documentary, linked to politic propaganda, and avant-gardes connected with the artistic tradition of collage.

Later, in the 60s, 70s and 80s both branches joined, producing films like the ones of Michael Moore. During the last twenty years, copying has become easier. Now it is common to see this kind of movies, it is a typical TV product. On the other hand, we can affirm that the avant-garde branch is, nowadays, the main one.

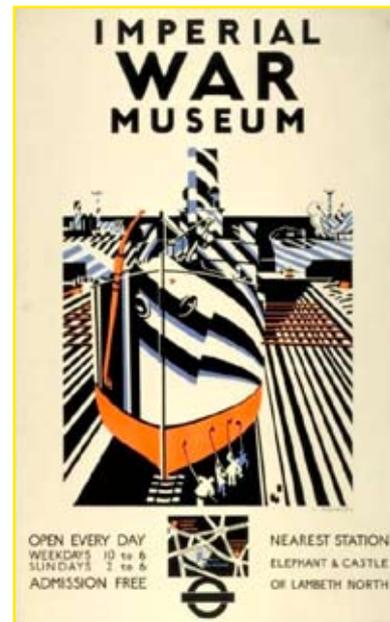
Mercedes Cubría

A Film Archive of a Different kind

It started with a cocktail event. An awards gala with sandwiches, cheese and some drinks. People in suits and a photographer who exposed a surprising amount of film. But what made all this a bit different was that we were surrounded by tanks, artillery and some Spitfires and Messerschmidts hanging from the ceiling.

The Imperial War Museum in London showcases and preserves the finest (and worst) moments of British military history. There are many wars to cover in the history of an empire.

It was the culmination of a film project that I had been working on a few years ago, when I had the pleasure and privilege to go through the notes and correspondence of



of an Allied soldier, finding proof that the kind of love stories we see in Hollywood movies indeed happened in reality too. To do further research and search for original film footage for our little documentary about the Normandy D-Day landings, I visited the Film & Video Archive of the Imperial War Museum. In the online catalogue alone there are over 22 000 records.

I listened to an interview with the first woman on the beach of Normandy after the landings (a nurse), and another wherein a group of soldiers were doing a game show-like questionnaire. The day ended with hours and hours of footage from Normandy that could possibly be of use in our film. Many more were left to the cans and endless shelves of the archive.

As we got ready to move into the theatre, a jury member pulled me aside and kindly told me that we had been only a vote or two away from winning an award. Very nice of him to tell me this, but like the great general Douglas MacArthur said, "*there is no substitute for victory*".

For more info:
www.iwm.org.uk

Atso Pärnänen

Latest news

EUROPEAN VIDEO LETTERS



In 2007, NISI MASA co-organised the 'Euro-Balkans Video Letters' project, which allowed young people to correspond on the theme "Am I a European citizen?" via short video letters. Wishing to repeat the success of this initiative, our partner, the **International Screenwriter's Festival of Bourges**, decided to continue the project this year.

Since mid-December, 16 young European filmmakers have been corresponding on the theme "The Border". Participants include members of Franti - NISI MASA Italia and Meccapanza (NISI MASA Netherlands), and students from the Fine Arts Academy of Wroclaw, Poland, and a high school in Vierzon (France).

The audiovisual correspondences will be shown in full during the festival, which will take place in Bourges, France (27th - 30th March).

You can already check out some of the videos online at the following links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NigQDhznVUY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtiJVgrzfQ0&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-p4qWfFu8E&feature=related>

GULLIVER CONNECT

Gulliver Connect is a mobility programme which coordinates work placements for young artists, art managers and cultural operators in Europe. It is organised by **The Central European Foundation** (Bratislava), **KulturKontakt** (Austria) and **The Felix Meritis Foundation** (Amsterdam).

Candidates should have 2-3 years working experience in the field of performing arts, visual arts, (new) media, arts management or film as well as project co-ordination, art development or management at a local/regional level in their country. Grants of around 1 500 euros will be available to cover the costs of the work placement, travel, accommodation and a daily allowance for a period of 3 - 6 weeks.

Deadline for applications: **March 15th**. Placements will take place between the end of April and the end of November 2008.

More information and application form on: www.gulliverconnect.org

DESIGN CINEMA '08

The third **International Design and Cinema Conference** will take place from November 19th - 22nd in Istanbul, Turkey.

It will bring together scholars and practitioners to interrogate the role of designed environments that expand our experiences. Debates will cover a broad range of issues extending from the material at one end to the potential at the other; "from actual to virtual, real to hyper-real, imagined to digitally-created".

The organisers are currently accepting research papers. Applied, theoretical, results-oriented and

speculative papers from both academia and industry will all be considered for inclusion. Submitted works will be reviewed by an international scientific committee.

Application deadline: **March 30th 2008**.

More information at: www.designcinema2008.org

SHORT FILM CORNER

The **Short Film Corner** is a meeting place for professionals (directors, producers, buyers, festival programmers), which proposes films from all over the world, most previously unseen, as well as the films included in the Official Competition, Cinéfondation, Director's Fortnight and Critic's Week.



Registration costs 75 euros, and includes digitalisation, festival badge and unlimited access to cinando.com, the online international film industry database. Films must have been produced after January 1st 2007, be under 35 minutes in length, and if not made in French or English, with subtitles in either language.

Registered films will be viewable on demand on 40 interactive screens during the whole event, and listed in the official catalogue. Filmmakers will also have the opportunity to take part in workshops and networking events. The Short Film Corner will take place from the 14th - 24th May.

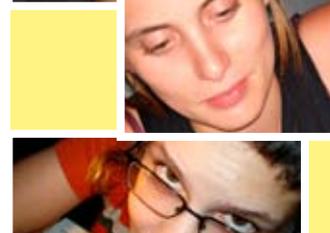
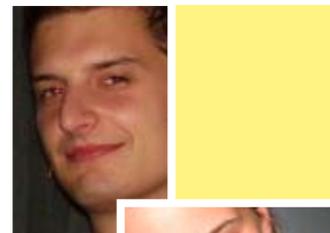
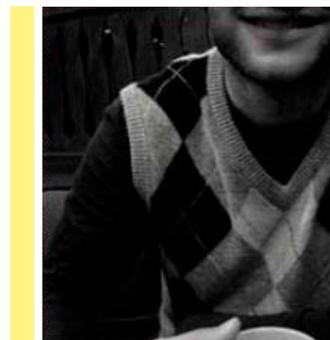
Registration deadline **April 18th**. Limited number of places available.

Palunko In the spotlight

Palunko is a project of the Croatian Film Clubs' Association, founded in 2003, with the goal of promoting the art of scripwriting in Croatia.

Its main activities include organising scriptwriting workshop, seminars, disussions and contests.

Palunko has been a NISI MASA member since 2005.



Some members

ANTONIO GABELIĆ

Antonio is currently finishing his studies at the Academy of dramatic arts, but he also works as a sriptwriter for sitcoms, animated and short films, adverts etc. as well as being a producer and director. He has participated in various NISI MASA projects and his film *Travelling* was shown during the Critic's Week in Cannes in 2007. Besided two Palunko workshops, he also took part in many other film related workshops tutored by, amongst others, Bela Tarr and Abel Ferrara. His hobbies include old-timers, canoeing and paragliding. Currently he is finishing a short movie called *Recycle*.

SRĐAN LATERZA

Srđan is from Dubrovnik but studies Electrical Engineering in Zagreb. Film is however his main interest. He first got in touch with Palunko through a screenwriting workshop, and took part in NISI MASA's Euro-Balkans Video Letters Project in 2007. His short films have been shown at some local festivals. Now he's working on an experimental film called *Copiae*. He is also looking forward to more international experiences.

FILIP PERUZOVIĆ

Filip studies Comparative Literature and Philosophy and is also a member of Kino Club Zagreb. His screenplay *Taxideyo* (meaning 'to travel' in Greek) won the Palunko award in 2006. It was made into a short film and screened at the Zagreb Film Festival in 2007. He recently participated in European Short Pitch with his script *Why not?* and also won an important Croatian scriptwriting prize for a feature script. His personal motto is "Life is in not being ahead of yourself".

IVANA ŠKRABALO

Ivana is a qualified professional architect, but she also studies film directing at the Academy of Drama Arts in Zagreb. She took part in the first Palunko workshop and after that wrote a few short film scripts, which she also directed. Her interest is exploring simple everyday romantic relationships and friendships, but she would like to put her love of life on the Adriatic coast on film more often.

JASNA ŽMAK

A student of marketing and dramaturgy, Jasna is the driving force behind Palunko. After taking part in the first workshop in 2004, she became the coordinator of the project and has organised all activities since then. She has taken part in many NISI MASA events (Paris script marathon, Visions of Istanbul, Balkan seminar...). She also works part-time for some film festivals and writes short stories.

Pictures on the left from the top: Antonio, Filip, Srđan, Ivana & Jasna



Scriptwriting Workshops

So far five workshops have been organised with more than 40 participants altogether, many of whom have continued working in the field of film after participating in the workshop. Since 2006, each year the best script of the workshop has been produced into a short film and premiered at the Zagreb Film Festival.

Palunko Tuesdays

During 2007, Palunko organised monthly talks with well-known and successful Croatian scriptwriters (Dalibor Matanić, Vinko Brešan...) These discussions were open to the public; it was clear that this initiative was much-needed in the city of Zagreb since most of them were very crowded!

One day Palunko hopes to host not only Croatian scriptwriters but also foreign ones.

Website

<http://www.filmski-programi.hr/palunko/>

Email

palunko@hfs.hr

Information compiled by Jasna: thanks!

Robert Lakatos

Róbert is one of the most experienced members of the NISI MASA network in terms of filmmaking. The leader of Romanian association **Argo** is a professional filmmaker and director of photography. Yet despite his accomplishments, he is one of the most modest people I've met; always straight, clear-headed and calm - everybody likes to work with him.

Born in Kolozsvár - the cultural centre of Transylvania (the Western region of Romania), in his youth he was not obsessed with cinema or filmmaking at all. As a kid, cheerful and spirited, he tried to put himself in the spotlight, then in his early teenage years felt a strong drive to get involved in the arts. Yet despite his field of interest, Róbert began studies at the Kolozsvár University of Technology. It just happened that he then got awarded a scholarship to study sociology in Łódź (Poland), which he was able to change for film theory classes. That was the moment when he knew: he was going to be a film director and a director of photography. Róbert bought a photo camera and started visiting the university classes for cameramen. He never misses the chance to say thanks to Mr. István Kovács, the director of the Hungarian Cultural Center in Łódź, who helped him to get the scholarship for entering the Director of photography course.

The most important value of filmmaking is being worthy, deserving the credit for the actual content of your work, says Róbert. His first films were about the rural culture of Transylvania - on the boundary between documentary and fiction.

"People have been thinking that this is the only topic I'm interested in. But it's more of a milieu than a real topic for me" he admits. Robert appreciates the work of directors who can create abstracted visions - such as **David Lynch**, **Emir Kusturica** and **Sergei Panadjev**. As for himself as a filmmaker, he would never illustrate a philosophical thesis:

"finding real, living worlds, be they dry or wet, cold or warm - in a word, creating your own style" - this is the main focus of his *Ars Poetica*.

After graduating he contacted several Hungarian producers whose main field was supporting young directors: **György Durst** and **András Muhi**. He'd been making many documentaries and short films (just to mention the most successful ones: *Country of Quiet*; *In Summer Red*, *In*



Winter Blue), until the chance came along to make his first feature: *Bahrtało*. Róbert had worked on the script for three years. The 25-minute long documentary film shot with the same title was completed to become a longer movie, from which a shortened television version will also be made. It is a road movie story, based on two characters, Lali and Lóri, who travel from Romania to Egypt, across Hungary and Austria. Róbert comments on the making of the film:

"the actors' performances were highly improvisatory. We let the characters unfold, do irrelevant or uninteresting things, kept the camera rolling for long scenes so that we could select the best moments later on."

The structure of the film is episodic, and subtitles are used to inform the viewers about where the characters are at each stage. The Borat-style comedy (which is even better, and more honest, than *Borat*) was one of the most talked-about films at the Hungarian Film Week - but Róbert handled the success in his own modest style:

"I am happy to see it - but ask me after the public premiere"

After *Bahrtało*, he has had many projects in development; both creative documentaries and new features. But - despite the success of *Bahrtało* - he doesn't plan to start filming again for a while. He still teaches the students of the film theory faculty at Kolozsvár University, which is the basis of the Argo association - represented at the Film Week also by **Cecília Felméri's** brave short film *Cuckoo* (the producer and the co-scriptwriter was Róbert).