

FIAF COMMISSION ON DOCUMENTATION

Minutes of the meeting held April 11-13, 1972, in New York.

Participants

Eileen Bowser, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art
Brenda Davies, The National Film Archive, London
Karen Jones, Det Danske Filmmuseum (Vice-President)
Sam Kula, The American Film Institute Archives, Washington (Observer)
John Luijckx, Nederlands Filmmuseum
Michael Moulds, Canadian Film Archives
Ann Schlosser, The American Film Institute, Los Angeles
Patrick Sheehan, Motion Picture Section, The Library of Congress (Observer)
Charles Silver, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art (Observer)
Paul Spehr, Motion Picture Section, The Library of Congress (Observer)
Eberhard Spiess, Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde (President)

Dorothy Gromann, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art
(Recording Secretary)

Guests: April 11 -- David Beasel of R. R. Bowker Company
April 13 -- Bruce Warren of Autographics

Agenda

- I. Indexing project
 - 1) indexing practice
 - 2) indexing and book publication
 - 3) financing problems
- II. Discussion of the Newsletter and prospect for a Directory for documentation
- III. International standards for preparing script checklists
- IV. An international filmography
- V. Standard classification scheme for film book libraries
- VI. Use of computers for documentation on the cinema

Willard Van Dyke, Director of the Department of Film, welcomed the FIAF Commission on Documentation and expressed his appreciation of the importance of the work undertaken by the commission. President of the Commission Eberhard Spiess thanked Mr. Van Dyke, and welcomed the members, together with the observers, Sam Kula of The American Film Institute, Paul Spehr and Patrick Sheehan of the Library of Congress, Charles Silver of the Department of Film, and the invited guest, David Beasel of the R. R. Bowker Company. He regretted the absence of one member, Vladimir Vimr of Cesky Filmovy Ustav, who had sent a cable in the last minute saying he was unable to attend.

I. Karen Jones reported on the functioning of the periodical indexing project. She submitted accounts, budgets and statistics. She explained some of the difficulties she had from receiving inadequately-prepared indexing forms, and some of the misunderstandings had by the indexers. It was evident that some training of the indexers is needed, and it was suggested that some archives might try submitting forms in French or German if they had insufficient knowledge of English. Mrs. Jones raised the question of periodicals dated in 1971 but not published until 1972. After some discussion, it was decided not to include these in the 1972 volume, even though it would be necessary to include such periodicals in future years. It was also decided to adopt a deadline of January 15, 1973, for receiving periodicals to be included in the 1972 volume.

Karen Jones pointed out that four archives promising to pay had not yet paid their 1972 subscriptions: Toulouse, Helsinki, and the two Istanbul archives. Eileen Bowser promised to bring this fact before the Congress in Bucharest. In addition, Mrs. Jones reported that some expenses, such as the cards, were higher than anticipated, and she expected to go over budget by the end of the year. After some discussion, it was agreed that those archives which neither pay subscriptions nor participate in the indexing should not receive the cards free after June, 1972, and they should be so notified at the time of the Congress. These archives are Rome, the Imperial War Museum of London, Turin, and the two Istanbul archives if they have not fulfilled their promise to pay.

It was decided to add four United States periodicals to the list of those being indexed: Action, Cinema, Cinema Journal, and The Journal of the Producers Guild of America. The American Film Institute agreed to index Action and Cinema, The Museum of Modern Art to index Cinema Journal, and it was hoped that UCLA would accept to index the Journal. The National Film Archive of London agreed to index Cinema Nuovo, one of the periodicals for which an indexer had not yet been found. Other periodicals were discussed, including the difficult question of Variety, but decisions were postponed to a later date. It was agreed to send a questionnaire to the subscribers to the cards, to try to discover what periodicals are subscribed to.

Eileen Bowser reported on the terms of the contract signed in February with R. R. Bowker Company. There was a discussion of the budget for 1973, which was much higher than that for 1972, because the Danish Filmmuseum had paid the wages for the first year. It was decided that additional income could be found by selling subscriptions to the cards, as a means of increasing income for 1972 as well as in 1973. David Beasel of Bowker agreed that FIAF could sell such subscriptions, and believed it could only help the sale of the book. It was discovered, however, that only 20 extra subscriptions could be sold for 1972, because of the limits of card sets and the reproducing equipment.

It was decided that if there was a much larger market for the cards in 1973, additional reproducing equipment would have to be purchased. The Commission agreed on a price of \$300 for the European market and \$325 for the non-European market, in recognition of the fact that postage costs are much higher when the cards must be sent air mail.

Plans were discussed for selling subscriptions, and a letter was drafted for the purpose. It was agreed that the United States members would divide up the work of contacting prospects in their country. Eberhard Spiess agreed to contact institutions in Germany and Italy, Brenda Davies agreed to take care of Great Britain and France, and Karen Jones promised to pursue the matter in the Scandinavian countries. Paul Spehr said he would give an announcement to the Journal of the Library of Congress and Sam Kula promised a mailing to universities with motion picture departments together with the AFI report. Everyone agreed to send a list of their contacts to Copenhagen, although this could be done after the contact was made.

As the commission has had several requests from periodicals to use the indexing material to provide their own indexes, David Beasel was asked whether Bowker would have any objection to this. He said they would not.

Eileen Bowser said that The Museum of Modern Art would provide the list of American and English release titles for films produced in other countries, for the book publication. Brenda Davies agreed that the National Film Archive would provide the dates of first public showing of the films indexed, for the same purpose. It was decided that these dates would not appear on the cards, but would still be required on the indexing form.

II. The FIAF Commission on Documentation Newsletter prepared by Eberhard Spiess was presented and discussed. The cover design was admired, and the usefulness of the contents was agreed upon, especially the section devoted to a directory of the documentation departments of the various archives. Brenda Davies suggested that it might be useful to divide the section "Comments on the Questionnaire" by subject, to make it easier to use as a reference. Eileen Bowser suggested that it might be possible to combine the information in the newsletter with the FIAF Newsletter now being produced by Jan de Vaal for the Executive Committee. It was pointed out that the FIAF Newsletter had thanked Ib Monty for the support of the Danish Filmmuseum for the periodical indexing project, but had neglected to thank Karen Jones for her extraordinary work on it. It was agreed that this should be pointed out to the editor. Eberhard Spiess reported that there was still money to do a second issue of the Documentation Newsletter, as promised, and agreed he would ask Jan de Vaal about the possibility of carrying occasional documentation news in the FIAF Newsletter after that, in order to avoid any unnecessary duplication. It was then decided to go back to the original idea of a Documentation Directory, which would have a more permanent form than a newsletter. It was agreed to try to make a directory in a loose-leaf form, in order that papers on special holdings could be added, under each archive's main entry, as the reports could be prepared. Brenda Davies has agreed to draft a budget for this, and to find out about purchasing standard-size binders and loose-leaf sheets, for distribution to all the archives. Each archive will then have a cover sheet, containing such basic information as the address and names of staff in charge of documentation. Eberhard Spiess agreed to send the results of his earlier questionnaire to London, where Brenda Davies will send out additional questionnaires as she judges them necessary.

III. The proposal for international standards for cataloguing scripts or preparing script checklists was presented by Eileen Bowser. After some discussion, it was decided that scripts should be broken down into three main categories: 1) pre-production script material; 2) production scripts; 3) post-production scripts, in order to avoid the use of terms which are currently employed in no standard manner. Under these categories, the various kinds of scripts would be described as much as possible in terms of the characteristics to be found in the script itself, in order to help the librarian or cataloguer who is not familiar with production terms. It was agreed that the information about the film should appear first, clearly separated from the information about the script to follow, and that it would be simpler not to include information about the literary source. Eileen Bowser agreed to prepare a new draft of the script rules, based on the discussion, for the next meeting of the Commission.

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It was proposed that we should ask once again for an exchange of minutes with the Cataloguing Commission, and Eileen Bowser agreed to ask for this.

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IV. The problems of the International Filmography were then discussed, both from the point of view of an exchange of cards between archives now making such filmographies in their own documentation departments, and that of a possible book publication. It was pointed out that this would be less work than the periodical indexing, since there would be no editorial work involved. In each case, the archive in the country of the production would be responsible for the accuracy of the information. Sam Kula agreed to investigate the possibilities of a card exchange: to discover which archives were currently maintaining such cards, how many cards they were preparing, and what are the sources they use for their information. The need for one archive to be the center for such an exchange was discussed, and it was agreed it could not be Copenhagen. It was also agreed that it might be possible to limit the filmography to feature films for the present, in order to simplify the task. The possibility of using the data in a computer in order to produce a printed volume was discussed in a general way.

V. The FIAF Scheme for the Classification of Film Literature, discussed by the Sub-Commission on Classification, and prepared in draft form by Michael Moulds, was brought forward. It was proposed by Karen Jones that the classification system should be ready in time to be used for the publication of the International Index to Film Periodicals in early 1973. It was also suggested that the subject classification scheme form a part of the revised indexing rules, for a publication to be sold to libraries and in library schools. Earlier, David Beasel had confirmed Bowker's interest in such a publication, although, as he explained, they probably could not produce a cheap paperback edition, since Bowker is geared to hardcover editions for the library market only. The discussion of the classification scheme centered on Sam Kula's contention that it should incorporate television with film, as another form of the moving image, rather than making television a separate classification. The Sub-Commission agreed to prepare a final version of the proposed scheme for the next meeting of the Documentation Commission.

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Referring to the current state of documentation of television, it was agreed that members of the commission should investigate the conditions in their own country, and report on it at the next Documentation Commission meeting.

Sam Kula asked the help of the members in his efforts to expand his Bibliography of Film Libraries.

Brenda Davies asked whether Frances Thorpe could have observer status at the next meeting, and the Chairman agreed to this.

Eileen Bowser announced the arrival, during the sessions, of a check for \$500, representing the first half of the advance on royalties due on the Bowker contract for the FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals.

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VI. Bruce Warren of Autographics was then introduced as a special guest. He explained that he represented the computer firm which prepared the program for the AFI Catalog of Feature Films 1921-1930, which was published by Bowker. He brought materials which he distributed to the members, which explained all the steps by which the Catalog was produced. He discussed the ways in which the computer can save time, work and money, compared to manual methods of producing indexes, and explained some of the problems that had been encountered during the production of the AFI Catalog. He expressed very great interest in working out a program for the FIAF Documentation Commission, both for the periodical indexing project and the proposed international filmography. Eileen Bowser showed the Commission some materials from The Museum of Modern Art's computer program, which was for the purpose of feeding data of the film holdings into a data bank, now about one-third completed. These materials illustrated some of the subjects discussed by Mr. Warren. David Beasel of Bowker then returned to the sessions to explain some of Bowker's experiences with other computer-produced indexes, such as Books in Print, the Saturday Review Index, the American Men and Women of Science, etc. He urged a realistic approach to computers, emphasizing that they could only produce material as good and as accurate as that which was fed into them. It was his belief that a trial period of producing the index or the filmography by manual means was useful, because the editors should learn to know the body of information very well before designing a program with the computer experts. It was the general agreement that the best results were obtained when an editorial board and the computer experts work as closely as possible together.

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It was agreed that John Luijckx would attend the meeting of The International Section of Performing Arts Libraries and Museums, in Brussels in October, 1972, on behalf of the Documentation Commission.

John Luijckx reported that he hoped to be able to invite the Commission to have their next meeting in Amsterdam, but that it was likely the members would have to pay their own expenses during their stay. It was also proposed that the Commission might ask for some FIAF funds to meet these expenses, should it appear unlikely the meeting could be held otherwise. It was recalled that Dr. Krautz of the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen had invited the Commission at the Prague meeting to hold the 1973 meeting in Berlin. Eberhard Spiess reported the possibility of adding a member from the Bucharest archive by the time of the next meeting.

The Commission expressed thanks to their host, Willard Van Dyke and the Department of Film. The meeting was then adjourned.