

(FOR THE FILES)

FIAF COMMISSION ON DOCUMENTATION

Minutes of the meeting held March 21-23, 1973, in Copenhagen

Participants

Members:

Eileen Bowser, The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film (President)  
Brenda Davies, The National Film Archive of the British Film Institute  
Karen Jones, Det danske Filmmuseum (Vice-President)  
Michael Moulds, International Index to Film Periodicals  
Bujor T. Ripeanu, Arhiva Nationala de Filme  
Anne G. Schlosser, The American Film Institute, Los Angeles  
Eberhard Spiess, Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde

Absent Members:

John Luijckx, Nederlands Filmmuseum  
Vladimir Vimr, Cesky Filmovy Ustav

Observers

Vibeke Bach, Det danske Filmmuseum  
Margareta Nordström, Svenska Filminstitutet  
Luise Roos, Det danske Filmmuseum  
Milka Staykova, Bulgarska Nationalna Filmoteka

Agenda

- I. Periodical indexing project
- II. Standard classification scheme for film literature
- III. Documentation directory
- IV. Basic manual for film archives (documentation chapter)
- V. Standard rules for cataloguing scripts
- VI. An international filmography
- VII. Documentation of television
- VIII. La bibliographie internationale des livres de cinéma

Eileen Bowser called the meeting to order, with an expression of thanks to Eberhard Spiess for his work in previous years as President of the Commission. The Agenda was then discussed, some additions made, and adopted.

I. The discussion of the FIAF periodical indexing project began with the problems of the present system of working, in which the editing is done in London and the card reproduction in the Secretariat. It was agreed that Michael Moulds should go to Brussels as soon as possible to see if ways can be found to reduce the number of errors and to avoid sending offset forms back to London for proofreading, which had caused serious delays in sending out the first dispatches of 1973. Michael Moulds will explore with Jacques Ledoux the possibility of Jacqueline Martin doing the proofreading in Brussels.

There was a proposal that the titles of articles and films should be translated, but consideration of this possibility was postponed for the present, due to the lack of space on cards, the editorial time involved, and the difficulty of getting accurate translations.

It was agreed to eliminate altogether the free subscriptions for the FIAF archives in countries in the west. The editor is to notify Sam Kula of The American Film Institute (concerning the extra set going to Washington) and Robert Daudelin of the Cinémathèque Québécoise that the cards will be discontinued in June, 1973, unless they wish to subscribe. Eileen Bowser agreed that after she received copies of these letters she would follow up the matter by telephone calls. In addition, the editor will contact Freddy Buache of the Cinémathèque Suisse to ask him to subscribe, and to ask his archive to index Cinema.

It was decided that a brochure should be prepared as quickly as possible, for the purpose of selling subscriptions to the cards outside FIAF. Karen Jones is to prepare the copy, Michael Moulds will edit it and arrange printing in England. There was a discussion of the best ways to distribute it, and what the size of the edition should be. It was agreed to ask a few major publications to enclose it with their next issue, such as the Monthly Film Bulletin. It was possible it could go with the AFI newsletter mailing, which is monthly. Anne Schlosser will find out the size of this mailing as soon as possible.

There was a discussion of the 1974 budget which would be presented to the Moscow Congress in June 1973. It was decided to ask FIAF members to subscribe for another year at the same rate, that 20 subscribers outside FIAF could be expected, that the subscription fee would be raised for non-FIAF subscribers to make up for the devaluation of the dollar, to \$360 for non-European and \$330 for European subscribers. It was expected that royalties could be nearly doubled for 1974, since the royalties for 1973 would not be received until that year. It was also estimated that 20 subscriptions for the earlier card sets (1972 and 1973) could be sold, at a reduced rate. As to the expenses, it was decided to add 15 percent, on the basis of 10 percent for rising costs and 5 percent for the expenses of extra subscriptions. The wages should be increased to cover one and one-half employees and the editorial fee increased to cover a full-time editor, plus a cost-of-living increase, as the work load is increasing all the time and will be heavier in 1974. Michael Moulds agreed to complete details for this budget, to be prepared in Belgian Francs, and mailed to Eileen Bowser early enough in May to enable her to correspond with him about it if necessary before the Executive Committee meeting of June 4-6.

On the question of adding periodicals to the index, the following decisions were made: non-film periodicals will not be added at the present time, but will be considered again at the next Commission meeting; Journal of Popular Film was added to the list, and Anne Schlosser agreed to index; Sequence will be added only if the Cinémathèque Québécoise will index it, and we are presently waiting to hear from them; Michael Moulds will ask the Jugoslovenska Kinoteka whether Filmska Kultura is worth indexing, and if so, whether they will do it; as to Afterimage, Brenda Davies will investigate the possibilities of the editor of this periodical providing synopses, and will report back to the next Commission meeting; the National Library of Australia will probably be able to start indexing Lumière soon; the person who formerly indexed periodicals at the Canadian Film Archives and has left, will probably be willing to index Cinema Canada.

One of the indexers had asked for a definition of "first public showing" for the purpose of establishing the date of a film. After discussion, there was a proposal to include press, magazine, trade, and film club showings as "public." As the members were unable to agree on this proposal, it was brought to a vote, the results of which were five for, two against. The editor will send out the approved formulation to the indexers the next time he has a mailing to go to them. It was also suggested to the editor that he should recommend the indexers to do their own filing of the cards when they come from the Secretariat, in order to learn in what ways they are not conforming to the system in their indexing, and especially to look for errors, in the listings of their own national production when the reference is from another country.

II. Karen Jones reported on the status of the attempts of the Sub-commission on the classification of film literature to agree on a classification system. After some discussion, she agreed that there would be a resolution to the present disagreement between two proposed systems, before the Documentation Commission meets in October. There will be another meeting of the Sub-commission.

III. There was a discussion of the draft questionnaire for the preparation of the Documentation Directory which had been presented by Anne Schlosser, with additional notes by Brenda Davies. It was decided to re-draft it, dividing the information into sections headed "General information about your archive," "Statistics of the documentation holdings," and "Services," and all the questions to be asked under these headings were discussed in detail. It was then decided that Anne Schlosser should re-do the questionnaire along the lines discussed, together with Brenda Davies, who would also write a covering letter explaining the purpose of it and outlining the plans for the Documentation Directory. It would then be sent to the Secretariat for distribution, the replies to come to Brenda Davies. These would be analyzed for the next Commission meeting, and Brenda would prepare plans for producing the Directory, if replies are sufficient.

IV. Eileen Bowser presented the re-draft of her proposal for standard rules for describing scripts, which had been discussed at the previous meeting. The principles of the proposal were approved in general, with some changes in details. It was agreed to include size (height) in centimetres. The members stressed the need for card samples. It was agreed that the details would be completed by an exchange of card samples between Eileen Bowser, Karen Jones, and Michael Moulds. The final rules would be brought to the next meeting, including examples, together with the plans for an exchange of information on FIAF holdings.

V. The decisions of the Executive Committee regarding the Basic Manual for film archives were discussed. It was agreed that no one person was fully qualified to write the Chapter on Documentation for this Manual. Therefore, there would be a division of labor, under the general editorship of Eileen Bowser, in order to see that the chapter was written in a conformity of style. The notes prepared by Brenda Davies were useful in determining what the subjects should be. The plans are as follows: Eileen Bowser will write an introduction of about one half a page; Karen Jones will describe the functions of the library in about 20 pages; Eileen Bowser will discuss the script holdings in 2-3 pages; Brenda Davies will write about clippings in 2-3 pages; the section on posters will be assigned to Nederlands Film-museum, for 2-3 pages, and Eileen Bowser will write explaining what is wanted; the last section will include a general discussion of other kinds of materials to be collected, with a few practical notes when members have some advice to give. However, the commission felt that it had not the experience as yet to be able to give detailed advice on these subjects. In no more than two pages, Eileen Bowser will discuss the collecting of press books, special collections, tapes and discs, slides and film-strips, manuscripts, censorship records, and such matters as the storage of microfilm. Several members agreed to send some specific information for this last section. It was agreed all material must reach Eileen by September 1, as it is due in Belgrade by October 1. Each section was discussed to give the writers a general idea of what is expected.

VI. There was a discussion of the questionnaire prepared for the international filmography by Sam Kula, a project he had undertaken when he was observer at the New York meeting of the Commission. The Secretariat had held the questionnaire pending the current meeting. It was agreed that this questionnaire should only be sent as coming from the Documentation Commission, and in any case it would have to be reworded to avoid confusion with the project of the Arhiva Nacionala de Filme to collect national filmographies. At last, however, following the discussion of the whole project of an international filmography, it was decided not to send the questionnaire at all at this time.

The paper presented by Eberhard Spiess on the subject of the international filmography was discussed, with the final result that it was decided once again to postpone the proposal of an exchange of filmographic information among archives similar to the indexing project. Instead, the Commission approved the proposal of Karen Jones and Michael Moulds to begin with a smaller project, to index the filmographic periodicals, with minimum credits for the films cited, but only for the production of an annual volume, companion to the Index now under preparation, to be published at the end of the year. This proposal does not include a card exchange at the present time, but could do so in the future. Karen and Michael agreed to prepare some specific plans for this project, including costs, and Eileen Bowser agreed to talk to Bowker about a contract when these plans were ready. The final plans will be brought back to the Commission, and to FIAF, for approval.

However, the Commission expects to return again to the idea of the international filmography.

VII. Anne Schlosser and Brenda Davies presented written reports on the state of television documentation in their own countries, and the other members gave verbal reports. Some publications on the subject were cited, and institutions beginning to specialize in this field were described. Some of the members also reported that their own archives were now collecting documentation on television. It was concluded that all these efforts are only scratching the surface of the vast television field. However, no member had any proposals for further work for the Commission in this direction.

VIII. The Commission was requested to consider La Bibliographie internationale des livres de cinéma. Bujor Ripeanu gave a report on the problems of the project, and asked members for their opinions on its value. Most of the members thought that it was not as useful a tool for acquisition as the Venice annual bibliography, but at least potentially, they thought it could be useful as a reference tool. However, they found the present organization of the material to be difficult to use. Several suggestions were made: 1) that when the FIAF rules for classification of film literature were approved, they could be applied to the Bibliography, since it is a FIAF publication; 2) that even using the present system would be easier if some typographical changes were made, such as listing the subject at the top of every page; 3) that listings should be alphabetical within the larger subjects; 4) that each entry should be dated, since most users don't read the preface carefully enough to discover that all the books are published within one year. It was also proposed that there should be a subject index, and also that indexes could be combined. To the proposal of Bujor Ripeanu that publishers' addresses should be listed, it was felt by most of the members that contributors should not be asked to supply this information, since the basic bibliographical tools for finding such information should be found in any library where the Bibliography would be found. In general, it was hoped that the Bibliography could gradually incorporate the standards of the FIAF Indexing scheme, in order that one day the two projects might be combined.

It was announced that the Commission had two possible hosts for the next meeting in the fall of 1973, either the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen in Berlin, or the National Film Archive in London, and that the Nederlands Filmmuseum had offered for spring 1974. It was suggested that it might be a more practical way of working to have the full Commission meet only once a year, with small working parties on specific projects meeting between. However, no definite arrangement for this system has yet been adopted by the Commission.

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Eileen Bowser thanked the members for having done so much preparation for the meeting, the observers for their contributions, and Karen Jones for her excellent work in organizing the meeting. The meeting was then adjourned.