

FIAF CATALOGUING COMMISSION REPORT

to the

FIAF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CANCUN, Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 1995

The Cataloguing Commission held its annual meetings in Bois d'Arcy in early September. We were ably hosted by Michelle Aubert, newly elected President of FIAF. We are very grateful to Mme. Aubert for her kind hospitality and for sharing her ideas and advice with us.

Of major concern to all the members of the Commission was the topic of the Commission's plans for the future:

Cataloguing Kit: At Mme. Aubert's suggestion, the Commission has decided to put together a training kit package for catalogers at developing archives. Through our work on the kit, we will bring together essential elements from our previous Commission projects, distilling them into their most basic essentials. Central to the concept will be a "core record," consisting of data elements chosen according to principles from both the FIAF Cataloguing Rules for Film Archives and the Commission's computer format project.

In compiling the list, we will also confer with other groups working to establish cataloguing guidelines and principles for the overall field of audio-visual media. We have established specific links with the IASA AV Cataloguing Rules Editorial Committee, where work is underway to develop archival rules for cataloguing sound recordings, slides, and videos, etc. The Committee is using our FIAF Cataloguing Rules as a guide. The Committee plans to have a draft document ready for review in 1997.

Cataloguing Commission Report, Cancun, p. 2.

Intellectual Access Symposium: The Cataloguing Commission is prepared to offer a special symposium on the problems of providing intellectual access to our collections. Organized around the theme of analyzing and describing the content of moving image materials, our plan will be to show a variety of film examples, incorporating fictional, documentary, and amateur work. Symposium participants will be invited to suggest terms (names, themes, locations, subjects) which might be used to retrieve specific examples. The suggested terms will be matched against existing thesauri, subject heading lists, and classification schemes in order to study their effectiveness. A test of computer retrieval systems (free text, keywords) will also be conducted to see how well they are able to respond to the same inquiries. Further discussion will focus around the following questions: How well do existing thesauri, subject heading lists, and classification schemes work to provide access? Which is better -- a topical approach, or a hierarchically organized approach? For which kinds of topics should we provide access: people, places, events, psychological and social issues, promotional purposes, items visually represented on the screen, etc.? Are computer-driven text retrieval or keyword access sufficient, or is authority required to provide adequate access for our users?

Work continues on the Commission's computer format project, our genre study, and the Occasional Papers. At our September meetings, Carlos Roberto de Souza gave us a demonstration of work in progress. Olwen Terris presented a list of film and television genres created at the NFTVA. The list includes definitions and examples. Three more Occasional Papers are planned: Olwen Terris -- "Cataloguing Unidentified Film;" Carlos Roberto de Souza -- "Report on Progress: FIAF Computer Format;" and Eric Le Roy -- "Using Researchers to Help Identify and Catalogue Films." Harriet Harrison forwarded copies of all our published Occasional Papers to Paolo Cherchi Usai for consideration as possible future articles in the Journal of Film Preservation.

Following up on a persistent rumor, Eva Orbanz and Harriet Harrison succeeded in gaining a response from K.G. Saur concerning the status of the FIAF Cataloguing Rules for Film Archives. The publication is still in print, and the price remains DM 98. (See letter from Saur, attached.)