

**COMMISSION FOR PROGRAMMING AND ACCESS TO THE  
COLLECTIONS - REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
JERUSALEM APRIL 1996**

**Commission Members**

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**A. Meetings**

**Paris, November 1995**

All the members attended this Meeting, hosted by the Cinémathèque française.

**B. Activities**

**1. Manual for Access to the collections**

The members will remember that this Manual, conceived at first stage as a work in progress, circulated among the membership during the General Assembly in LA. The Commission was very anxious to receive comments and reactions to this first draft. We thank both Mr. Wolfgang Klaue and Ms. Meg Labrum of the National Film and Sound Archive in Australia for their excellent contributions: their comments were the subject of an article which is published in n° 52 of the Journal for Film Preservation. We hope very much to obtain further responses from the membership in order to give a final form to the Manual.

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## **2. The workshop of Los Angeles** (organized and moderated by Edith Kramer)

A series of topics were proposed to the membership several months before the workshop actually took place. Unfortunately very few reactions came. Nevertheless following topics were chosen and presented by the members of the commission in order to start a discussion on what are some of the main issues in archive activities in the field of programming and access:

- Programming based on the exhibition of an Archive's own collection (Dominique Païni)
- The relationship of programming to an Archive's preservation priorities and acquisition policies (Catherine Gautier)
- Programming as rewriting or revisiting the history of cinema (João Bénard da Costa)
- Access procedures: to whom, when and how access should be provided (cfr. Manual for Access)
- Copyright and/or donor restrictions to access and exhibition: loan fees, handling charges and other compensation for providing access (Gabrielle Claes)

After the presentations of Dominique Païni and João Bénard da Costa, a fundamental discussion was raised about the issue of the programming of non-fiction. How can the Archives which are preserving mainly non-fiction material deal with programming? The Commission will obviously discuss this controversial matter in its further meetings and it is already foreseen that the next Journal for Film Preservation will devote a large section to the several points of view which were expressed during the workshop.

### **3. Commemoration of the Centennial: the Categories Game**

By June 1995, the book on the Categories Game, published by the Cinemateca Portuguesa with the support of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and based on a large inquiry organised by the Commission among the membership, was ready. The membership was invited to designate the most important films, classified in five different categories: film history, film and the other arts, film versus reality, the national production and the work of the Archive. A total of 2.247 films were mentioned by 39 archives who replied to the inquiry. The book is actually more than an inquiry, since the several indexes, established with the help of the Royal Film Archive in Brussels, propose a classification not only by category but also by film title, by name of directors, by number of votes, and so forth. The publication was welcomed as an important reference book for the Centennial by some very important newspapers like "Le Monde" or "El País". The French periodical "Positif" is preparing a dossier on this publication. The choice proposed in this Categories Game was already a source of inspiration for several archival programs.

### **4. A program for the Jerusalem congress: "Film reflections: past and present. The restoration of film from its ruins as a metaphor for the saving of culture."**

Several colleagues asked us during the workshop in LA to propose a program during the next congress in order to give a concrete example of the possibilities -and difficulties- of programming. The Commission accepted this challenge and our meeting in Paris was mainly devoted to design this program. As a first example of possible programming, and since the frame would be the FIAF Congress, we choose the theme of the film preservation itself. How can programming deal with the issues of preservation, and more specifically, with the limitations of it? Incomplete films, decomposing images, reconstructed films, fragments, etc ... but also the creative way to use those "film ruins" by experimental film-makers and films which deal with the concept of "ruin" as a metaphor for cinematography and culture.

The whole concept will be presented as a series of 9 programs in Jerusalem. It is important to mention that all the prints have been traced by Commission member Catherine Gautier. An introduction has been written by Dominique Paini about the concept of the program and several members of the Commission wrote the program notes. Both will be published in the booklets of the congress and for the public.

### **C. Projects**

Unless some drastic changes should be requested by the EC and/or GA in Jerusalem, the Commission will continue its work according to the goals it defined at the beginning of its first mandate. One of the main projects we should like to carry out (proposed by Suresh Chabria) is to establish a "Touring East-West program". A first choice of films was already made but remains the delicate issues of material, copyright and fees - which depend not only of the Commissions members but of the entire FIAF body.

### **D. The future of the Commission**

The Commission is now at a turning point. Now that it already accomplished a good deal of its primary mandate since its creation in 1990, Mr. João Bénard da Costa found this was the appropriate moment to leave the Commissions presidency over to somebody else. He therefore resigned from his post of president of the Commission and recommended that the EC should accept Mrs. Claes as his successor, while he wished to remain a member of the Commission.

However the EC unanimously accepted this proposal, there was a heavy discussion about the (in)compatibility of being an elected member of the EC and at the same time President of one of the Commissions. We feel that this is an important issue, since it emphasizes the relationship between the commissions and the EC. At the Commission for Programming and Access, we always had the feeling that there was no very clear mandate given to the Commission. We established ourselves, at our very first meeting at the Azores in February 1991, what should be the main tasks for our Commission.

The statement was accepted both by the EC and the following General Assembly (Athens 1991), but after that there were many discussions about what the Commission should actually do. The last development of those discussions was observed at the workshop in LA, where the issue of non-fiction was very strongly raised. At the same time, as said before, when Edith Kramer prepared this workshop and asked the membership to make a choice of the topics they thought were the most important the Commission should deal with, very few reactions were received. So we feel sometimes a little bit like working in the fog. This should be taken into account in the discussions about the future of the commissions. More specifically, it should be more effective that the discussions about the work and future of the commissions should be held (either within the frame of the EC or at the GA) in the presence of their heads or representatives.