

Bologna
A.F. '94

REPORT FROM THE F.I.A.F. COMMISSION FOR PROGRAMMING AND ACCESS TO THE COLLECTIONS

Since our last written Report, presented in Mo i Rana, the Commission held three meetings:

- 1) in Mo i Rana, on 27 May 1993, during the Congress
- 2) in Locarno on 10, 11 and 12 August 1993, hosted by Marco Müller, Director of the Locarno Film Festival, with the generous support of Fondation Pro Helvetia.
- 3) in Bologna, on 25, 26 and 27 November 1993, hosted by Vittorio Boarini and Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, during the Festival "Il Cinema Ritrovato".

The meeting in Mo i Rana was a brief one, attended only by the remaining members of the Commission, after the resignation of Paolo Cherchi Usai and Enno Patalas. The four members of the Commission (João Bénard da Costa, Chairman, Gabrielle Claes, Catherine Gautier and Steven Ricci) took unanimously the decision to invite Dominique Païni, Director of Cinémathèque Française and Edith Kramer, Film Curator and Director of Pacific Film Archive, to replace Paolo Cherchi Usai and Enno Patalas. That decision was submitted to the new EC, elected in Mo i Rana, at its first meeting, May 31st, and was approved, also unanimously. According to the Commission proposal and following the new Commissions Rules, the EC appointed Gabrielle Claes as Deputy Chairman.

The meeting in Locarno was attended by João Bénard da Costa, Gabrielle Claes and Catherine Gautier, from the former Commission and by the two new members, Edith Kramer and Dominique Païni.

The same members attended the meeting in Bologna.

I - INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF THE COMMISSION

After Mo i Rana, and the selection of two new members, Steven Ricci, on July 14th, also announced to the Chairman his departure from our group. In making this decision, he was ultimately compelled by a series of unavoidable practical considerations, primarily his new responsibilities in the EC and in the organization of the 1995 FIAF Congress, which made it very difficult for him to continue a full-time effective contribution to the work of the Commission.

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view. For instance, the total amount of titles mentioned ranges from 50 titles (10 by category) to 500 (100 by category).

The Commission asked Gabrielle Claes to present the answers we received at the General Assembly and propose some programs, based on them, that eventually could be programmed and (or) circulated among Archives during the Centennial years.

All the Archives, which want to "play" that "game" are kindly requested to help the Commission, by proposing practical ways of mutual help and interchange.

3 - MANUAL FOR TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTION

As we reported in *Mo i Rana*, we expected to circulate there some chapters of this manual entrusted to Jean-Pierre Verscheure. But Jean-Pierre Verscheure, while writing the Manual, found out, that, before the manual, another work was necessary, called "The Book of Professional Motion Picture Films Identification". So, he decided to write this book first and postpone the Manual the Commission asked him to work on.

At the last EC meeting, in Paris, Jean-Pierre Verscheure asked Brigitte Van Der Elst to present a large part of this book to the EC members. He considered, that, in its actual conception, the book was no longer related to the specific brief of our Commission, but regarded FIAF as a whole.

In Paris, the EC asked the Chairman to discuss the matter with Jean-Pierre Verscheure and with the Commission. On November 23rd, Jean-Pierre Verscheure wrote to the Chairman stating his final position. He intended to finish the new book, and, only after that, could he consider working on the practical manual he was asked to do, being unable, at the moment, to give a final completion date for the presentation of the manual.

Considering this surprising development, the Commission, at the meeting in Bologna, found itself unable to continue to deal with Jean-Pierre Verscheure on that matter and decided to look for someone else who could work on the Manual. We hope to inform very soon on our new choice.

4 - MANUAL FOR RESEARCH AND ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

Last November, before the Commission Meeting in Bologna, Paolo Cherchi Usai confirmed to the Chairman his agreement to provide a draft version of the Manual by mid-summer 1994, insofar as his working duties and responsibilities will allow him to complete the text within such deadlines.

Unfortunately, the changes in Paolo Cherchi Usai's professional life didn't allow him to fulfill this agreement. At the time of writing, Paolo Cherchi Usai continues to be very interested in working on this Manual but he can

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not set a deadline. The Commission hopes to discuss that matter with Paolo Cherchi Usai during the Congress.

5 - GUIDELINES FOR THE CIRCULATION OF PRINTS BETWEEN FIAF MEMBERS

The rationalization of our work related to film screenings on an international level was, since the creation of our Commission, one of our larger issues and was debated at many of our meetings.

During our meeting in Locarno we discussed the creation of an international film collection of the most wanted films based in several parts of the world and becoming a central/regional FIAF repository, which could function independently or within the context of different film archives.

This problem was raised again at the last EC meeting in Paris, when the EC had to deal with the recent decision by the American archives to charge a fee of 150 US \$ for lending films to their overseas FIAF colleagues. It is the Commission's conviction that this controversial decision could be followed, sooner or later, by other FIAF archives, considering the growth of the membership and the increasing amount of demands, mainly from the "poor Archives" to the "rich Archives". This would change "les règles de jeu" within FIAF and would require thorough consideration. Moreover, many Archives are already paying - in addition to the US \$ 150 loan fee - another US \$ 150 for shipping and handling. If an Archive also requests previous clearance from the rights-owners, it could cost up to US \$ 500 or US \$ 600 to get a copy from an Archive collection.

Considering that unpleasant situation, the EC asked the Commission to examine that issue and to give some assistance in helping to solve it. The problem was widely debated during our last meeting in Bologna and the Commission agreed to propose some guidelines on that matter. This issue will be discussed at our next meeting, in La Rochelle, in July 1994.

6 - CINEMA MUSEUMS OR FILM MUSEUMS

The activity of programming and the concept of exhibition of a collection were further issues during the Commission's last meetings. Programming from archive collections, and criteria for programmer's selections were main themes in internal papers by Gabrielle Claes and the Chairman discussed in New York (1992) and in Locarno and Bologna(1993).

During the last EC meeting in Paris, this issue was considered, from a different angle, related to the written report Chris Horak made about cinema museums.

Principally, the FIAF Chairman emphasized that the concept of museology in the field of cinema was still non-existent and that it was time to start working on this issue. Other EC members thought, in agreement with

Considering the situation, the Chairman accepted Steven Ricci's resignation and informed all the other members and the EC.

During the Locarno and Bologna meetings, the Commission discussed an eventual replacement for Steven Ricci. The Commission also debated the situation of Manuel Martinez Carril who continues to be formally a member, but attended only one of our meetings (in Montevideo). In Bologna, it was decided to wait, till the next meeting, for a final position from Martinez Carril. If he is able to fulfill his duties as a member, the Commission will remain with six members. If not, the Commission should think of replacing him with another person from Latin America, or, at least, from a non-occidental country (maybe Japan). In that decision, the Commission was supported by the common feeling that a "different" point of view is very much needed.

II - ACTIVITIES AND RELATED PROJECTS UNDER DISCUSSION

1 - SURVEY ON PROGRAMMING AND ACCESS IN FILM ARCHIVES

After the first results of the 1992 Survey, distributed last year, in Mo i Rana and presented by Catherine Gautier at the "open forum" of the former General Assembly, more replies were received. Out of 92 questionnaires sent we have received, so far, 76 answers, which represents 80% of the total.

At the present Congress, the Commission will circulate the revised version of the statistics together with a report summarizing the general patterns we observed.

All the Archives are, again, kindly requested to study these documents and send to the Commission more specific information which could be highlighted and discussed in the future.

2 - CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS

After the document "As the Centennial is approaching..." presented by Gabrielle Claes at the General Assembly, in Mo i Rana, the Commission sent to the whole membership a formal proposal to join us in "the categories game", drawing their attention to five main categories, which, in our opinion, correspond to five different ways of approaching the history of film.

The five main categories were: **Film history; Film and the other arts; Film and reality; An archival viewpoint; National Production.** We proposed also a sixth category, not mandatory, as an "open category" according to the wishes of each Archive.

The proposal was sent in November 93. Out of 92 letters mailed, we have received by now, 40 answers, representing a great variety of points of

the Commission point of view, that it was time to consider the concept of museology in the wider sense (the idea of the "cinémathèque" as "film museum") not limited in itself to the acquisition, exchange, preservation and cataloguing of artefacts or even films. It was suggested that the relation between film archives and film museums should be the subject of FIAF's future major symposia.

The Commission widely debated this issue at our last meeting in Bologna in order to avoid a narrow approach to it. The commission agreed to prepare two documents, one, by the Chairman about the relation between film archives and film museums and another, by Dominique Paihi, about the links and the conflicts between programmers and archivists nowadays. The Commission strongly supported the idea of dedicating a FIAF future major symposium to these items.

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7 - THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBERSHIP

In Bologna, the Commission widely debated its relationship with all FIAF members. Although there had been a good response, from the Archives, to our proposals and suggestions (i.e. the survey on programming and access or "the categories game") we felt that the level of communication is well below what we expected.

In that sense, we felt that it is very important to hear the concerns and ideas of members and to learn, from them, which are the major issues of concern for those members who are presently or will in the future be involved in programming and offering access to their collections.

Thus, the Commission proposes that next year, in Los Angeles, FIAF organize a workshop to establish a constructive dialogue on the issues dealt with by the Commission till now and to determine other issues the Commission can properly, responsibly and practically address.

Among those issues, the Commission would like to debate the idea of programming from archival collections. In fact, it seems to us that there is a contradiction between our activity as exhibitors and our activity as archives, the programmation scarcely reflecting the specificity of the different collections. It would be very interesting to know the percentage of the Archives film collections never or rarely shown.

The preparation for this workshop will also be one of the items of our next meeting in La Rochelle, in July 1994.

THE CHAIRMAN



(João Bénard da Costa)

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