Digitizing analogue collections
– selection and curatorial policies

- Jon Wengström
Curator of Archival Film Collections
The Swedish Film Institute, Stockholm
Background

- 2011 – Lobbying for additional funding
- 2012 – Existing funding re-allocated to get going
- 2013 – Seminar (April)
- 2013 – Additional funding granted (September)
- 2014 – SEK 40M (approx 4,2M Euros) to digitize 500 films in five years
• Digitization done in-house
  - curatorial reasons
  - financial reasons
How additional funding was used

- **Equipment**
  - Grading stations
  - Sound transfer facilities
  - Workflow set-up (SAN etc)
  - Image scanning done at external facility

- **Staff**
  - Grading (3)
  - Image restoration (1)
  - Sound transfer, restoration, synching (2)
  - Digital archiving (1)
  - Selection of elements, preparation, scanning (2)
Selection criteria

Number of films subject of digitization

- 2,500 feature-length titles
- 6,000 short films

- International co-productions
- Unique non-Swedish holdings

- Selection....
- ....or order of priority?
- 100 films a year = 40 years
Selection criteria

• National films
• Appropriate source elements
• Children & Youth (directive from government)
• Variation of
  - Periods
  - Genres
  - Rights holders
• Films with uncertain legal status?
• Canon, revised?
  - Digitized by others
  - Female creators
Relation with rights holders

- Agreements
  - Rights holders access to digital elements
  - Archive’s right to use and lend digital elements

- Quota
  - Up to 20% of the films made on demand from rights holders
  - Release or distribution plans required
Access

- Plans for access
  - quota films guaranteed being used
  - SFI distribution
  - facilitate agreements between rights holders and providers of VoD services, etc

- Access increases chances of additional (and permanent?) funding after 2018
Curatorial policy

- Why a curatorial policy?
  - integration of new staff
  - common set of principles to which everyone adheres
  - reoccurring issues
Curatorial policy (cont)

What does it cover?

• Source elements
  - Sound and image

• Treatment of image
  - Aspect ratio
  - Stabilization
  - Restoration
  - Grading
Curatorial policy (cont)

- Treatment of sound
  - Synching
  - Restoration
- Approval
  - Digital master
  - Sound master
  - DCP
- Arbitration
- Documentation
- Digital elements to be preserved
Experience of curatorial policy

• Purpose of integrating old and new team successful
• Avoiding discussions over re-occurring issues
• Facilitates integration of new staff
Aims of selection and curatorial policies

- Transparency
  - Further efforts to involve academia
  - Establishing an external advisory committee
  - Guide for staff carrying out the work
  - Coherent and consistent practice
Policies available

- Policy of the digitization selection committee
- Policy of the digitization of film heritage

Both policies available in Swedish and English at SFI website

www.sfi.se/filmarkivet
That’s it!

Thanks!