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Educational Offer at Polish Film Festivals Directed at Film Industry Representatives

Although film knowledge has long been shared outside academies (as educational activities have been conducted by various associations, the press, film discussion clubs, film societies and film festivals), in terms of practical filmmaking, film academies and profiled secondary schools have held a virtual monopoly. Professional filmmakers are people actively working on development, production (e.g. on film sets) and postproduction of films. Their tangible and intangible work has a direct impact on the final effect – the finished film. It is shaped by their individual sense of artistic value as well as the knowledge on how to use specialist tools and skills to shape individual elements of a picture. Until very recently, this knowledge has always been the result of film school education.

This has changed, however, and nowadays not only is film knowledge widely available but there are also many opportunities to learn about the practical side of filmmaking. Aside from the Leon Schiller Film School in Lodz and the Krzysztof Kieślowski Faculty of Radio and Television at the University of Silesia, there is a range of private film schools offering both short- and long-term courses (e.g. the Andrzej Wajda School, the Warsaw Film School, the Multi Art Academy in Cracow, the Film School in Gdynia and StoryLab.pro – an institution dedicated to educating scriptwriters). Additional schooling is offered by numerous institutions working in the domain of culture. In addition, festival organisers use the opportunity to share practical knowledge on film production outside the academic system. Such activities are conducted by festivals devoted to feature films and documentaries, as well as animated films.

At present, festival coordinators increasingly often plan events addressed at professionals and practitioners, offering them not only a chance to meet their audience

in person but also elite seminars where they may enhance their knowledge. Such courses can be interpreted as a kind of postgraduate education, especially given the fact that the participants are recruited from among practising filmmakers and film school graduates who desire to continue their professional development.

Among festivals organised in Poland there are events focused specifically on certain areas of film art and related professions. These include, among others: the Camerimage International Festival of the Art of Cinematography in Bydgoszcz, Script Fiesta in Warsaw, the Regiofun International Film Producers Festival in Katowice, the Camera Action Film Critics Festival in Lodz and Transatlantyk Festival (the last two, especially Transatlantyk Festival, are not strictly dedicated to film professionals but also include industry sections and undertake actions aimed at educating film practitioners).

The present article is an attempt to analyse existing film festivals from the perspective of a practising filmmaker and artist working with other audiovisual forms, hoping to develop practical filmmaking skills and enhance specialised knowledge in that field. It is also a subjective survey of workshops offered to film professionals as part of film festivals as well as a reflection on my own experiences of participating in such events. This may prove useful, as although the festivals put much effort into promoting branch events in advance, there are very few materials available that follow the event (in the specialised press or on the Internet). As a result, individual meetings and interviews with participants often offer a unique opportunity to find out what kind of knowledge is transmitted during the events.

Master Classes and Case Studies as Film Festival Components

In recent years there has been a rise in the number of festivals which are focused not only on film theory but also on practical filmmaking. These are not traditional festivals, focused on film analysis and following a schedule based on film screenings and meetings with artists. The new formula proposes a programme incorporating master classes (i.e. meetings with experts in a given field), workshops and case studies (i.e. presentations focused on explaining a certain issue). Cinema lobbies are no longer used for film poster exhibitions; instead, they are adapted for filmmaking equipment fairs and industry pavilions, where a British producer can talk with a Lithuanian director and Polish camera operator over a cup of coffee. Such meetings are priceless and they often provide an impulse for future (international) projects. Increasingly often, festivals are eager to recruit their guests from among camera operators, producers and set designers, who have hitherto been overshadowed by directors and actors.

Significantly, festival organisers now tend to focus on a selected discipline. For instance, the 2014 Warsaw Film Festival included a case study of Greg Zgliński's *Courage* (*Wymyk*, 2011) focused on designing film posters and discussing subsequent stages of their creation. In the same year, the OFF Camera Independent

Film Festival in Cracow offered a seven-hour set design workshop organised in the Alvernia film studio.

Such events are no longer isolated initiatives. Since 2010, the Warsaw Film Festival has included a cycle titled “Warsaw Next” – “workshops, case studies, lectures and discussion panels devoted to key aspects of filmmaking”, offered especially to film producers. The programme includes lectures and master classes in law, economics, advertising and promotion. According to the organisers, the “Pro Industry is a chance to gain useful contacts, learn more about film producing and meet leading representatives of Polish and international cinema. In 2017, we are offering lectures, round table meetings and brunches where you may establish interesting professional contacts” (Offcamera.pl). This year’s edition of the industry sessions was commented upon by Dagmara Romanowska in *Magazyn Filmowy* [Film Magazine]: “professional sessions at Off Camera are dominated by three main elements: focusing on full-length feature films, new talents and the international character of the event” (Romanowska, 2017, p. 9). A similar section has appeared as part of the New Horizons International Film Festival in Wrocław. The New Horizons Studio offers training sessions with international professionals in film producing, promoting and distributing, addressed at the so-called “executive duos”, i.e. directors and producers:

New Horizons+ Studio organised by the New Horizons Association and Creative Europe Desk Poland comprises four days of workshops and lectures focused on various aspects of promotion and developing film projects. Its main goal is to supply young professionals with specialist knowledge of international film markets as well as assist them in pursuing their careers in Poland and abroad. From this year on, the New Horizons+ Studio has changed its formula and now invites director-producer duos working on their first or second full-length feature film. A project in progress is a prerequisite for participation (Nowehoryzonty.pl).

The workshops in Wrocław are very important, as they are also addressed at pre-debut artists who still find it very hard to commence their careers in the Polish audiovisual industry; especially given the gap in the educational offer between film school graduation and full-length film debut.

Festivals also cater to the needs of animated film makers. In 2017, the Animation Animated Film Festival in Bydgoszcz offered a cycle of meetings devoted to stop motion animation; there was also a section focused on Japanese animation, accompanied by an origami workshop. Similar educational sessions are offered by the OFAFA Author’s Film Festival in Cracow, where workshop participants have had an opportunity to get acquainted with the sound realisation process (Foley effects especially) or stop motion animation making. More ambitious still are the organisers of the Etiuda & Anima Festival in Cracow, schooling their participants in animated film scriptwriting, storyboard making, 3D animation and new technological opportunities in animated film – all of the above being strictly professional skills.

In contrast, the Polish Feature Film Festival in Gdynia offers industry discussion panels featuring specialists from film-funding institutions but also journalists and promotion and distribution specialists. Even though these meetings set ground for a useful industry discussions, they are not educational events in the sense of teaching specific professional skills.

Other industry events include the Krakow Film Festival Market (KFF Market). Held yearly during the Krakow Film Festival, the KFF Market is a cycle of events addressed at documentary film artists. Over a couple of days, documentary film makers from all over the world participate in master classes, fundraising workshops, promotion and distribution workshops and training sessions on using specialised equipment – all focused on producing quality documentary films. Even though the festival is mainly dedicated to presenting new, ambitious documentary cinema, the KFF industry meetings offer valuable educational space for all practitioners.

It is impossible to discuss all industry events in this article; moreover, this would require discussing individual programmes, which are, after all, subject to continuous change. The examples above are thus meant rather to frame certain space and to signal the scope of professional education offered as part of film festivals. While festival workshops often present the same content as certain film school courses, some events transgress the educational minimum. This makes festivals more attractive and at the same time more prestigious in the sense of catering to professionals. Moreover, “industry zones” allow young Polish filmmakers to meet international specialists, with whom they can exchange their views and experiences. Workshops often include classes and lectures in promotion, distribution and festival strategy. Neither Polish universities nor film schools offer specialised courses in film marketing, which plays an increasingly important role in filmmaking. Finally, the festivals’ catering to directors, producers and other filmmakers need for continued professional training translates into the growing quality of Polish cinema, which is confirmed by awards won at international festivals.

For Beginners – Meetings and Integration

Following the lead of the largest festivals in Poland, minor film-related events have also started to introduce workshops in producing audiovisual works. Participants are asked to subscribe in advance and the workshops seem to enjoy immense popularity, even though they only transmit basic knowledge. Among others, such events include: workshops for young Visegrád Group artists at the Zoom International Film Festival in Jelenia Góra, workshops for young artists at the Lublin Film Festival and the Professionals’ Academy during Kameralne Lato [Camera Summer] in Radom (e.g. in 2017, the workshop was dedicated to advertising films). Such workshops allow participants to get more first-hand practice with film cameras and learn effective teamwork. The importance of the Zoom Festival workshops was commented upon by Janusz Kołodziej in his article published in *Kino* [Cinema]: “An important part of the event is the workshop for beginning filmmakers, future

critics and film activists. It is a great opportunity for young people from Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Germany to make useful contacts and learn the tricks of the trade” (2017, p. 64).

What active feature film makers find in the Off Pro Industry or New Horizons Studio events, debuting and short film artists can look for at the Młodzi i Film [Youths and Film] Festival in Koszalin. The 2017 programme includes an industry section offering special panels with professionals focused on script writing, pitching, cinematography (co-organised with the Polish Society of Cinematographers) and festival selection – virtually, on every aspect of creating and promoting film works, concentrating on presenting basic but sound knowledge on the subject.

Short-term (even if intensive) festival courses cannot be treated as a form of any thorough professional training, especially given that amateurs are joined together (and although they are supervised by professionals, they still lack professional equipment), unless we decide that practice makes perfect. Still, it is important to stress the unique atmosphere and quality of psychosocial conditions that help young people get to know one another and learn to cooperate. Such meetings often result in new friendships and allow artistic partnerships to develop. They also motivate participants to pursue film professionally, enter film academies or steer their careers towards independent filmmaking.

Film Festivals Addressed at Co-Creators and Specialists

The majority of film festivals in Poland focus on directors and actors; producers, cinematographers and other film-related professions seldom receive similar attention. This tendency is reflected in prizes, guests and Q&A sessions, which usually feature directors and actors. As a result, the growing interest in filmmaking practice-oriented events should come as no surprise. Camerimage Festival, Script Fiesta, Regiofun, Transatlantyk and Camera Action – all the abovementioned festivals offer interesting programmes and consequently invite their audiences to focus on selected film-related professions. Let us now inspect them individually in more detail.

The Camerimage International Film Festival (known also as the International Cinematography Festival) in Bydgoszcz is an excellent example of an event dedicated to a single aspect of filmmaking (cinematography and related professions). The festival owes its prestige to the fact that its organisers treat cinematographers like artists and co-creators of film works, combating the stereotype of cinematography as mechanical craft. The process of developing its brand through the festival, focused on one specific film-related profession (both in relation to fundraising and educating audiences), is described by Michał Pabiś-Orzeszyna in his article *Conflict Management: The Camerimage Festival and the Dialectics of Prestige*. The author claims that the newly created image helps the festival distinguish its presence among other similar events (Pabiś-Orzeszyna, 2015, pp. 14–15). Festival

guests are mostly cinematographers who are often asked to enter the spotlight and describe their work for the audience for the first time. The festival's main award – the Golden Frog – goes to the best cinematographer. The films included in the programme are selected on the basis of their interesting use of image, the interplay of depth, colour and dynamism. The Camerimage Festival offers master classes with eminent cinematographers, presentations of new equipment and workshops allowing participants to get acquainted with technological issues related to the equipment as well as camera, lens, filter and lamp fairs addressed at working cinematographers. A conversation between Janusz Kołodziej and the festival's director Marek Żydowicz conducted in 2012 included the following explanation:

[...] our festival needs to have a centre, a large building offering enough space for all guests and audience members to meet, talk and show films and technologies. This formula is also very attractive for filmmaking equipment producers, as they may access their potential buyers directly. In this respect, there are not many similar events on a global scale. In addition, the Camerimage Festival offers an opportunity to meet several hundred working cinematographers from all over the world. We also host film school students from all continents who are on the brink of entering into the profession; it is also useful for them to get acquainted with new technological opportunities (2012, p. 5).

The festival is also directed at film enthusiasts. It thus performs a major educational role, popularising the art of cinematography and battling the stereotype of a cinematographer as someone who blindly follows directors' guidelines.

Another film-related profession which seldom receives proper attention is film editing. Fortunately, this aspect of filmmaking is also prioritised at Camerimage, with special events dedicated to this issue taking place every year. Since 2008, the festival has awarded a special prize to film editors for outstanding visual sensitivity.

Watching a film, we admire not isolated frames but rather scenes and sequences. And yet we are seldom aware how much impact film editing has on finished cinematic works. Film editors are responsible for transforming dozens, if not hundreds, of hours of recorded material into two-hour films. They condense it, infuse it with life and help it create emotions that draw us to cinemas every time (Camerimage.pl).

Festival regulars leave Bydgoszcz enriched with a great deal of new cinematographic knowledge as well as inspirations. They also learn a lot about tools that may help them develop their own visual imagination and expand their professional skills.

Another festival fully focused on film practitioners is the Script Fiesta Festival in Warsaw, which concentrates on scriptwriters. The 1st edition was held only in 2012 and yet the festival has already gained the reputation of an important industry event. The programme includes workshops, discussion panels and meetings

with authors. There is also the possibility of presenting one's script and putting it forward for discussion. Film screenings, selected from among new titles, are rather of secondary importance and mostly offer much needed relief after a whole day of exhausting lectures, being an enjoyable addition to inspiring meetings. The festival's specificity is defined not only by its content-oriented programme but also through industry events catering to the main guests – scriptwriters and producers. One such event is Pitch Fiesta consisting of five-minute talks by scriptwriters and producers. The main concept is that of pitching – namely, how to present one's idea in a sufficiently attractive manner, allowing one to establish contact with a producer as a potential business partner. In an article published in *Magazyn Filmowy* [Film Magazine], Albert Kiciński and Marcin Radomski thus described the 6th edition of the festival: "Script Fiesta is a specialised educational-cultural project, linking training sessions, discussion panels, meetings and workshops focused on scriptwriting, accompanied by a contest aimed at rewarding and promoting the most promising authors" (Kiciński, Radomski, 2017, p. 16).

Even though relatively young, Script Fiesta can boast a large attendance and great atmosphere integrating the industry. The organisers' emphasis on making new contacts, meeting people and exchanging experiences stimulates creative energy that can be felt during the event. Every year, the main contest, Script Pro (a continuation of the Hartley-Merrill contest), has attracted more participants. As the festival's director Maciej Ślesicki claimed before its 6th edition: "It seems that the level of submitted projects exceeds that of previous editions [...]. There were no amateurish projects in the selection, while more projects were well-thought-out and developed with commendable attention to detail" (Pisf.pl, 2017).

The Regiofun International Film Producers Festival in Katowice combines elements of a traditional film festival (i.e. film screenings and discussions) with industry-oriented events such as workshops addressed at film producers. According to the organisers, producers are key figures in all film projects. It is worth mentioning that in Poland the director-oriented model, in which the director is viewed as the main author of a cinematic work, still prevails. Nevertheless, with the expanding knowledge of the film production process (both among filmmakers and audience members), as well as dynamic changes in the film industry, there have been some films made in a producer-oriented model. Festivals such as Regiofun contribute to a positive evaluation and appreciation of the role of producers, presenting them as people devoted to the process of filmmaking who assist directors in carrying out their visions. Using their professional knowledge, intelligence and charisma, producers may also influence the artistic shape of films. In Poland, the role of film producers is still downplayed, which finds its reflection in the fact that there are no academic degrees in the field of film production, which bars producers from pursuing academic careers. Yet most academic teachers teaching courses in film and television production at film schools are people pursuing doctoral degrees at universities.

The organisers of the Regiofun Festival address their industry events especially at film producers. The most important one is "Look for Fund" – a "cycle

of meetings of producers and film industry representatives, aimed at establishing new contacts and partnerships as well as initiating an increasing number of film projects supported by regions and cities. Individual conversations allow producers to gather information concerning fundraising opportunities and eligibility conditions” (Regiofun.pl). Artistic and independent cinema projects are mostly funded by national institutions, which means that financing comes from state funds. Application procedures are usually complex and time-consuming, which requires involvement from a number of people. Minor modifications of general legislation trigger changes in individual regulations, which means that professionals need to constantly update their knowledge. Regiofun is an important step taken in this direction, though by no means the only one (similar attempts are made by Off Camera Pro Industry and New Horizons Studio).

Simultaneously with industry events, the Regiofun festival involves screenings of films arranged according to a pre-selected key corresponding to the festival’s main concept: “The Regiofun International Film Producers Festival is the only event in Europe dedicated to films developed owing to regional film funds and city funds, focusing on film producers. For six days in October, we are presenting the most interesting feature films, documentaries and animated films from all over the world, which would never have been created if it hadn’t been for their modern ways of funding” (Regiofun.pl).

Another interesting example of a festival directed at professionals is the Camera Action Film Festival (Festiwal Krytyków Sztuki Filmowej Kamera Akcja) in Łódź. The event is addressed at young film critics, who have an important role to play in film culture. Ever since the festival was initiated in 2010, the organisers have consistently been pursuing their idea. Year after year, the festival’s programme is increasingly interesting, which has been reflected in growing attendance (at first the event was held in the tiny Miejski Punkt Kultury Prexer [Prexer City Culture Spot]; the venue of the 7th edition was Wytwórnia 3D [3D Factory] Cinema) and its impressive guest lists. One of the most popular items included in the festival programme is the Film Scholars-Filmmakers events, i.e. meetings with filmmakers who are also film studies graduates. Festival workshops cover topics such as film sound (a workshop held in the Toya Studio), radio broadcasting, video-essay making and consultations with speech therapists. Festival events – the Critics Speak contest, workshops and film cycles such as “Critics’ Voice” and “Critics’ Classics” – are addressed at the festival audience consisting of both amateurs and professional film critics.

This is the only festival in Europe dedicated entirely to film criticism. The festival contributes to the development of film criticism and dispels stereotypes through presenting film critics in some unusual contexts. Our chief aim is to educate viewers and inspire them to discover their individual artistic sensitivity, shaping their preferences and exploring new directions of cinema. An important part of the festival is the **vivid, stimulating discussions with film industry representatives, accompanied by screenings of films ac-**

claimed at international festivals. Contests and workshops help many people start their careers as film critics. The festival is a continuation of Lodz's long-standing tradition as a filmmaking centre (Kameraakcja.com.pl).

The main achievement of the organisers lies in creating an attractive industry festival, which proves that film critics are not merely audiovisual art theorists but also practitioners drawing on tools and techniques developed by other areas of study. Even though critics do not participate directly in the making of films, they can still have a substantial influence on the way in which films are received (the court case between the critic Tomasz Raczek and the producer of *Kac Wawa* [Warsaw Hangover] [2011, dir. Łukasz Karwowski] is a case in point).

The last industry-oriented event (even if less pronouncedly so) that I would like to discuss is Transatlantyk Festival, also organised in Lodz. Apart from presenting important contemporary films, the festival is dedicated to film scores and their composers. Significantly, the artistic director of the festival is the composer Jan A.P. Kaczmarek, an Oscar winner for his music for the film *Finding Neverland* (2004, dir. Marc Forster). The festival's website reads as follows: "Transatlantyk is a festival of ideas. Through the power of films and music we want to stimulate discussions on important subjects" (Transatlantyk.org). The programme elements addressed specially at composers are two prestigious contests: The Transatlantyk Film Music Competition based on submitted music scores and The Transatlantyk Instant Composition Contest, in which composers are asked to improvise music to match film fragments. The main difference between Transatlantyk and other contests lies in the fact that here the contenders' craft is judged on the spot, simultaneously letting the audience catch a glimpse of one particular stage of the filmmaking process. The audience – consisting of film enthusiasts, young filmmakers and film professionals – may see film music composers' work in a nutshell and then benefit from the opportunity to talk to the artists directly. As a result, Transatlantyk should be treated as one of the festivals dedicated to one particular group of filmmakers – not only because of its artistic director, whose reputation also adds to the event's prestige, but also based on the quality of the composers' contests.

Additionally, the programme of the festival includes several workshops and discussion panels devoted to film music and sound. There are also multiple accompanying events. It seems to me, however, that despite their great appeal, they rather dilute the main focus of the festival. The programme's seems incoherent because of its multiple and diverse workshops, discussion panels and meetings.

Education During Festivals as a Form of In-Service Training

All the film festivals discussed above have one common denominator: attractive meetings and healthy competition integrate the industry and educate audiences. It is important to remember that filmmaking is a team effort and successful communication between all involved parties is the key to success. Of course, certain

film-related professions require individual work and not always all people involved in the same project have an opportunity to meet on set. In interviews, the creators of the abovementioned festivals often bring up claims that some artists, for example composers and scriptwriters, are introverts by profession and tend to live in isolation. Festivals dedicated to these professions offer a chance for communication within the industry, providing the artists with an opportunity to interact with one another as well as with the audience.

It is important to point out that although festivals have a rich offer of workshops, they cannot be treated as a substitute for thorough academic education in a given field. Nevertheless, they present perfect opportunities for self-development, the pursuit of selected career paths or gaining a first impression of a given speciality in order to select the right type of studies in the future.

Industry-oriented film festivals are much needed in Poland, as they perform an important educational role. The large number of film-related professions in existence open up a wide spectrum for future events. There is still no festival devoted strictly to film costumes and makeup (there are no university studies in film makeup and prosthetics) despite growing interest in fantasy and historical productions (e.g. *Game of Thrones* [2011–, dir. David Benioff, Daniel B. Weiss] or *Bodo* [2016, dir. Michał Kwieciński, Michał Rosa]). It is also worth mentioning that with the development of audiovisual arts, film-related professions change continually. Describing these shifts in his book *Praca i film. Problemy ekonomiki pracy w produkcji filmowej* [Work and Film. Work Economy Problems in the Film Industry], Edward Zajiček comments on the fact that economic and technological progress has eliminated certain professions, such as film projector technician or live accompanist in silent cinema. Simultaneously, new professions have appeared, including sound technician, boom operator and others (1997, p. 82). Among new film-related professions are also colour grading and CGI specialists or producers specialising in co-productions, to name but a few. It would be impossible to list all the new professions related to the film – or, broader still, audiovisual – industry.

Academic education does not always manage to keep up with these changes; consequently, specialist training sessions offered during film festivals which develop their programmes on a yearly basis are a precious, if not the only, way of gaining supplementary education. Admittedly, focusing on specialised audiences poses the risk of a reduced attendance, but at the same time industry members' participation guarantees (and increases) the prestige of a given event.

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Summary

The article considers industry workshops organised during film festivals and festivals dedicated to the film profession in Poland. It puts forward the fact that during film festivals not only screenings, contact between a filmmaker and a viewer are important, but also workshops and industry meetings dedicated to artists. This kind of education seems to be needed because after graduating from film school it is a possibility to develop one's own skills and to update knowledge about the profession. The author also concentrates on Polish film festivals fully dedicated to the film profession, such as Camerimage International Film Festival in Bydgoszcz, Script Fiesta in Warsaw, Regiofun Film Festival in Katowice, Kamera Akcja Festival and Transatlantyk Film Festival both in Lodz. Even though there are not so many film festivals dedicated to one film profession, they are important because of their educational value for filmmakers and for audience.

Keywords: film literacy, film education