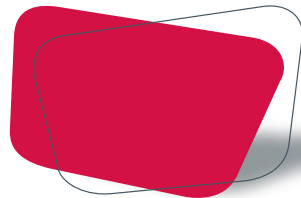


PROCEEDINGS



SÉRIE SERIES

The meetings of Fontainebleau



APA

ASSOCIATION
FOR AUDIOVISUAL
PROMOTION

9TH TV CREATIVITY DAY

THE FIRST EVENT DEDICATED TO TELEVISION SERIES
BY AND FOR THOSE WHO MAKE THEM

5th, 6th and 7th July 2012

This July 2012 has witnessed the launch of the very first Série Series festival in Fontainebleau, the only event exclusively dedicated to television series by and for those who make them.

This first edition has gathered 550 European professionals for three days of projections, with no competition and no prize-giving, of professional meetings and debate with the public, to create the television series of tomorrow.

For this launching year, Série Series and the 9th tv creativity day organized by the APA have decided to join their forces to bring together all professionals from an audiovisual sector undergoing profound mutation.

This document presents the proceedings of the debates, masterclass and case studies organized at Fontainebleau during these 3 days of unique meetings.

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THURSDAY 5TH JULY

9TH TV CREATIVITY DAY,
ORGANIZED BY THE APA,
the Association for Audiovisual Promotion

Opening speech by

JEAN-FRANÇOIS BOYER,

President of APA and producer

The « TV Creativity Day » which is in its 9th year today, is, above all, an opportunity for exchange and dialogue. Jean-François Boyer would like to thank all those who have for the past years contributed towards the organisation and the success of this event which has become a must for the profession.

He would especially like to highlight the clear-sightedness of the Commission of Cultural Affairs of the Senate which was able to recognize that the audiovisual world is not only a job-creating sector – at this moment he takes the opportunity to praise the delegation of young independent producers which is well-represented in the audience – but also an area for promoting our culture, via the programmes that are exported, and furthermore, an area for challenging our traditions and / or our « pre-conceived notions ». Moreover, this is why this year, a particular focus on TV series is being made, particularly conducive to shaking up our usual way of thinking !

Indeed, it has to be said that the TV series has become a genre in its

own right, a cultural asset as auteur films were in the Sixties. Television is certainly capable of producing « the best and the worst », but the cultural and, at the same time, political battle to produce series of distinction, is well and truly ongoing, a battle for innovation and for youthfulness. Concerning this, Jean-François Boyer, deeply regrets the Minister of Culture not being present today, whom he is inviting next year « without fail » !

TV series are the incarnation of a new sense of youth on the television scene. Jean-Paul Huchon himself, sees it as a « form of modernity ». It is often said that watching TV series « is uplifting and boosts our energy ». So, during this period of financial crisis and austerity, it is more important than ever to promote this genre, to make people more aware and foster its development.

This is why we are today proposing to those taking part in this event – retransmitted live on-line, via Public-Sénat, once again a partner of this convention; may we offer our thanks to Gilles Leclerc, its managing director who is here with us today - to open up the « series-making machine » : how does it work ? What makes it tick ? This event has to be the occasion to ask all sorts of stimulating questions, even the most embarrassing ones, to examine the current concerns – not to say the anger, of the professionals.

However, there is sufficient reason to remain confident: there is no lack of talent, French series stand out from the rest and have their own brand of coherence (but is that enough?), the screenwriter must maintain a central role (all the more reason for him to « reap the fortune of his work » as Beaumarchais rightly said!), the director has to impose his style and the musicians and technicians add their share of skills. Broadcasters also have a huge role to play, being not merely those who place the orders, but by becoming fully active partners; in the same way as the producers who also have to take full responsibility (as Henry Ford once said: « If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses! »); we will then, also deal with methods, « risk-taking » and financial support in today's debates.

It is this gathering of fascinating and complementary professions which make up the French audiovisual scene, and their amicable and productive encounter must help to continue this venture in the best possible conditions, conditions of high standards, as, deep down, all of them share the same pleasure and pursue a certain dream of creating something despite contingencies and other difficulties attached. Jean-François Boyer concludes his introduction by quoting Jean d'Ormesson: « I still run after women, but I no longer know why ... », inferring somewhat that the main thing is to carry on running, while having an inkling where we are going.

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Speech made by

RÉMY PFLIMLIN,

President of France Télévisions

Taking up Jean-François Boyer's introductory speech, Rémy Pflimlin states that « pleasure » must be in the heart of the work and of the reflection concerning the future of the French audiovisual scene: the pleasure of sharing, of being enthralled, of viewing together ...

It is commonplace to hear it being said « everything is going wrong » in France, but Rémy Pflimlin does not share this opinion. According to him, French cultural exception remains a reality. He wants to prove it by detailing a comparative analysis of our public channel ratings with those of our European neighbours, the Dutch, the English or the Germans: currently, the four channels of France Télévisions have the same bearing as the 13 channels of the BBC (that is, 35% of Hertzian broadcasting ratings). Rémy Pflimlin notably praises the excellent work carried out in the field of current affairs, an area in which democratic basics have been respected; the French make no mistake about that and are always there when it comes to viewing. He also praises the preservation of main broadcasting ownership of sporting events.

Aware of cut-throat international competition, Rémy Pflimlin knows that the secret rests in innovation, but that this cannot be decreed, it comes about with time, through patient effort. The skill of France Télévisions to remain this privileged and vital partner on the French cultural scene is directly linked with its ability to cope with changes, to develop what is on offer and to provide viewers with works which become an integral part of their lives. The viewer is indeed spoilt for choice and as well, we have to be able to convince him and to make him come back for more by offering him programmes that respect and structure his imagination, auteur programmes: in fact, one of main priorities of France Télévisions is to nurture authorial creation, the expression of its public service mission.

In other words, we must not succumb to American pressure, especially in the realm of TV series: trans-Atlantic ones tend to condition all their viewers! « Be daring, even more daring ! »: such is the guideline to be adopted so as not to blindly follow the trend. France Télévisions has the means to fulfil this ambition: France 2 and France 3 no longer count their successes (films and documentaries about the war in Algeria, musical shows, etc.). France 4 is doing very well (it is the favourite channel amongst young adults and supports independent and art films). France 5 is « the alternative to formatted TV » ... France 2 has tackled the reconstruction of its Friday « crime series slot ». France 3 maintains its characteristic proximity with people and regions areas ('Plus belle la vie' is the highest rated daily soap opera for the French and a TV film about « le Tigre de France », an intimate portrayal of Clemenceau is being programmed for the end of the year).

Work is also in progress to re-launch one-offs, the aim being here to get back to the 2005 level (that is, 40% of production).

Of course, all these goals must go hand-in-hand with an adapted financial policy. The level of financial aid is, as it happens, the highest ever : €272m, or 60% of all the fiction programme production budgets in the country put together! And it is really through the protection of the budgets allocated to culture – and the consecutive commitments of France Télévisions – that this challenge can be achieved. Even though France Télévisions experienced a decrease in its net income in 2011,



notably due to the wavering by the State of its commitments in terms of compensation, but also because of the advertising crisis, financial balances can still be maintained; we must not lose sight of this objective. To conclude, Rémy Pflimlin states that it is by defending the values of independence, solidarity, culture and exemplarity that France Télévisions will manage to stand its ground and contribute to creative freedom on the French audiovisual scene. Its mission is to rally the highest amount of French people possible in favour of these fundamental values that characterise our country.

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Speech made by

DAVID ASSOULINE, Senator of Paris, President of the Senatorial Commission for monitoring law application.

David Assouline would like to congratulate the APA for bringing together men and women involved in culture and on the French audiovisual scene; a meeting that he feels undoubtedly will once again prove fruitful.

Audiovisual production has henceforth acquired its pedigree: it was not always the case! For a long time, French TV series were a laughing stock, not even on a par with their Anglo-Saxon rivals, which were, in the main, American. Considered as a sub-genre, especially in the Eighties, when so many sitcoms sprung up and were met with a harsh reception, the TV series can now feel proud for having managed to convince a vast number of viewers and hold their interest by their intrinsic qualities, both in terms of writing craftsmanship as in terms of the directing; living proof that there is no insurmountable wall between the TV series and Art!

To continue along this road to success, the support of the State and the authorities is obviously indispensable; in any case they cannot turn their noses up at audiovisual activity which has become a major cultural vector, a fundamental societal asset. However, we are not out of the woods yet. The CSA findings of 2010, revealed that French fiction programmes were facing a crisis (low ratings, a lack of creativity, low amounts of broadcasting ...). And yet, there has been some success: 'Le village français', not to mention short programmes like 'Bref' or 'Un gars, une fille' have shown that we can be competitive ... The CSA highlighted the major role of the producer, on the frontier between creation and business flair, two indispensable, symbiotic ingredients. The 2010 Chevalier Report underlined various other problems: under-financing, a lack of initial and continual training, regulatory difficulties, the dispersion of French production, etc. It also drew up some proposals: consolidating the tripartite relationship between author, producer and broadcaster – the core element – or even suggesting ground-breaking tools and support mechanisms. These few days of reflection must enable us to assess the progress of this public action but also to spot remaining weak-points. In any case, the Senatorial Commission for monitoring law application has made audiovisual activity one of its main priorities and has the ambition to make the French audiovisual scene a highly-efficient area of excellence. We must, notably, make in-roads within the crucial arena of on-line TV. David Assouline also underlines that the removal of advertising has had a huge impact on the room for manoeuvre of France Télévisions, for which the new means of financing and policy-making remain contested; but he asserts that France Télévisions has to remain a major role-player in the area of fiction, and in this way, has to face changes and renewal. The dialogue between public authorities and private channels is by no means less important: they also have to benefit from a stimulating environment.

Finally, what is at stake obviously goes beyond a simple national framework... David Assouline's closing speech is in fact resolutely European: he believes in the importance of the setting up of a European audiovisual system, access to risk-capital for co-productions between neighbouring countries and partners.

He hopes, therefore, that at the end of these debates, we will know more about these cooperation perspectives and he sincerely wishes that a virtuous circle be established which will enable us to produce at the same time « better » and « more ».



Speech made by
MICHEL BOYON,
President of the CSA

If the CSA is obviously concerned with all forms of creative production from digital to the live show, Michel Boyon will confine what he has to say today to audiovisual fiction.

Finance is not the only mainstay. « Creation » is the most efficient way to stand out and make viewers stay with us. So the CSA regularly carries out the most cut-throat negotiations with television channels concerning this fundamental issue and this proves to be highly fruitful. This conviction has especially been an essential factor in the selection that was made for 6 new free TNT channels (5 out of 6 are well-known publishers and 4 are committed to upholding minimum quotas, to being think tanks, and a breeding ground for new talents, giving the lion's share to independent production, to animation films and other documentaries, original fiction and patrimonial works).

Michel Boyon appeals for quality in the creating process, without half-measures. He is not denying, however, that French programme creation has been facing a crisis for at least 5 years if the conclusions of recent studies, published in 2010, (the report of the Chevalier mission, a further report which advocates boosting fiction production, or in addition, the Club Galilée report) on this topic are to be believed. At the same time, between 1935 and 1939, people were already talking about the « cinema crisis » as if it was inevitable in this area and should finally be put into perspective.

The reasons for concern are, whatever may be said, real and numerous: the funds invested have decreased by 10% (€48m). French production exports on free channels have dropped by 18%, and only 4 French fictions figured among the top 100 ratings of the year 2000 (compared with 54 in 2005, only 6 years ago!). These problems have not arisen because a lack of creativity, but rather because of the structures which have borne « the brunt of the past », or due to the fact that contractual relationships between publishers and producers have not always been simple.

Michel Boyon visualizes more generally three main causes of the problems currently encountered in France: 1/ The chronic under-financing in publishing (twice as low as in the United States, for however a much heavier workload); 2/ The breaking up of the production sector (more than 2,000 companies, albeit a factor of flexibility but above all an obstacle for the production of exportable series on a long term basis; a trend of concentration is shaping itself but is from being satisfying...); 3/ the reluctance of primary financiers to take risks!

So, how do we get French fiction production out of this rut? Michel Boyer states, firstly the bad reflexes to be avoided; rejecting what we already have in its entirety, in other words, aid and support measures. Even worse, instead of succumbing to the pressure of the Anglo-Saxon machine or in other words, confining ourselves within a model which comes from elsewhere (i.e. the American model): to the contrary, let's be brave enough to be ourselves, we will be rewarded for it! Neither must we indulge ourselves in making things complicated, but « escape from complexity without losing out »: the challenge is not is not easy but it is well worth it.

Beyond these obstacles – therefore to be avoided – Michel Boyon suggests certain tips for improvement. It seems to him that we must

emphasize the importance of good scriptwriting: a good piece of fiction can only exist if it is based upon a good story, catchy dialogues... And to make this happen, screenwriters' salaries must be increased, from the beginning of the initial development agreements between producers and broadcasters. Besides, creation financing must be supported with budgets kept under control on the same model as public financing: in a context of globalization and piracy, it is necessary to rethink our strategy, to take advantage of existing financial aids without harming the entrepreneurial spirit. We can also extend the use of the tools which have shown their worth by making them available to everyone (for example, televised fictions should be entitled to receive research tax credit) or also consider new means of financing which are especially adapted to the digital environment. More generally, we have to rethink our legal and regulatory environment: here, Michel Boyon is referring to the professional agreements signed in 2008/2009 and suggests returning to a classical way framework on which « the state takes charge of the general matters and professionals of individual interests », without interference between the two systems. Finally, he announces he wants the producers and the public authorities to increase their efforts to fully support the process of making television series imbued with a strong sense of identity, close to real life; and our series – « Chronos of modern Times » – which reflect the period we live in will bring the viewers flocking in!

Michel Boyon concluded his speech by therefore confidently announcing « the end of the beginning »: it does not take much for our writers and producers to give the full extent of their talent!

And he quoted Jean Cocteau: "Dear friends of artistry, dazzle us!"





ECONOMIC DEBATE

HOW DO WE IMPROVE THE EXPORTATION OF FRENCH SERIES?

Taking part :

Mathieu BÉJOT, general delegate of TVFI

Jean-Pierre GUÉRIN, producer, president of the USPA

et président de la Confédération des Producteurs de l'Audiovisuel

Valérie LARDINOIS, buyer for RTBF (Belgium)

Laetitia RECAYTE, distributor, Newen

Jean-André YERLÈS, screenwriter and President of the Guilde française des scénaristes

Moderated by :

Pierre-Henri GERGONNE, journalist, deputy editor for Public Sénat

FRENCH SERIES PRODUCTION WHICH DOES NOT TRAVEL ENOUGH

Mathieu Bejot reminds us that with €20m worth of exports carried out by French companies producing fictional series, this is actually the second source of exports of the country. He adds that we are all aware that influential diplomacy does not exist without television and that, without series, it will be difficult to meet the crucial economical objectives which are at stake. It is actually a symbolic axis of influence. However, France produces in proportion less than some of its neighbours.

Parallel to this, because of the inexistence of a « great European market », fiction series do not get around enough, and not easily enough ; it is therefore more often local, or American ! On this occasion, he highlights the fact that even though, in proportion, the English or the Germans produce more than the French, at the end of the day, they do not export much more ; and recent studies continue to show that when French fiction is broadcast overseas, it gets good ratings.

He refers to the specificity of fiction broadcast during the day and especially the fact that prime time productions do not have the same economical impact when they are broadcast during the day.

Mathieu adds that selling a series is a complex activity and that it is highly likely that sales teams are not trained enough yet to and sell systematically in all trading markets outside France. In fact, to make a €1m fiction profitable, it has to be sold a vast amount of times – at about \$2,000 for each broadcast – and thus in a vast number of countries.

EUROPE, CORE MARKET FOR PRODUCERS

Pierre-Henri Gergonne confirms that from now on Europe must be the core market for all producers.

Mathieu Bejot insists moreover on the relevance of treating this territory as a united territory with nevertheless certain specificities, in terms of languages, but also enriched with a fine tradition of historical series productions in Eastern countries where much fervour for French series is noted. Selling in Asia for the prime time slot is a bit more complicated even if there are already some successful examples, for instance

in Korea.

Laetitia Recayte adds that exporting to English speaking countries is not easy but is not impossible. To support this, the series 'Spiral' was the first non-English speaking series sold to the BBC. After a slow beginning, the ratings increased regularly to the extent that this series became a real success on the English channel. As for Asia, difficulties arise notably from the fact that viewers are used to series made in English and that the people who understand English very rarely understand French.

THINKING ABOUT EXPORTING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT ?

Pierre-Henri Gergonne is asking producers whether when they are producing, they are thinking about exporting.

Jean-Pierre Guérin replies that he thinks about this at the same time as he sets up eventual co-productions and looking for partners who can be useful intermediaries for other territories. When this works, selling is then so much easier. He adds you have to be careful to offer standard formats and that it is much simpler to sell a series which has been made up of 52mn long episodes. In this ways, overseas programmers become allies more easily. The length of the series is equally an important element. We have to bear in mind that a minimum number of 12 episodes per necessary is needed to allow the series to find its place in a market.

The French know how to do it, they have excellent screenwriters, efficient actors... What is missing is quite simply the means to more numerous and more longstanding commissions. Do screenwriters think about exporting when they are in the process of writing ? Can we imagine that certain characters would be easier to export than others ?

Jean-André Yerlès replies answers that a screenwriter cannot foresee the international success of his work at the writing stage. He writes because he has a story to tell, and normally, the universality of his words and of his dramatization ensures that the stories have no nationality. They probably belong more to a screenwriter than to a country but this does not mean that the idea of exportation is integrated within the initial approach. All authors have the ambition to write something that will also reach out to an

audience somewhere else, but all authors start by looking for a producer who will allow them to find a domestic broadcaster so that the project can start coming to life.

Pierre-Henri Gergonne turning towards the purchasers asks them whether they have any particular worries when they are in the process of purchasing series that come from elsewhere. Valérie Lardinois replies that the programming schedule dictates what is bought, whether it be on a national level or on an international level. The purchaser is looking for products which will give its viewers pleasure while meeting the targets and by filling the slots planned by the broadcaster.

A certain number of elements, like the format of the episode or the volumetry, can obviously facilitate purchases that too many singular characteristics would to the contrary render this difficult.

Valérie Lardinois adds that at the moment when she is purchasing she obviously does not watch the whole series. So, she is in this way particularly interested in the opening and closing credits, to pilots when there are some, to initial episodes. We have to take care of this to be able to sell abroad.

Laetitia Recayte adds that sometimes she has to wait three or four years to be able to have a sufficient number of episodes available in the hope that a series can be sold outside France. This does not obviously facilitate a return on the investment.

Valérie Lardinois states that she has obviously made mistakes in her choices before, but generally the series that can be exported are coherent series from start to end.

FROM VOLUME TO HOMOGENITY

So should everyone copy the American model? Obviously everyone deems it important to maintain his specificities but in fact because the American model has managed to industrialize creative production, it must at least be a source of inspiration.

In the room, some people regret that generally speaking, in order to convince major producers, above all, you must not innovate, but simply remake what has already been made... Working on a well-known model rather than innovating, hoping for repeating successes is however not



very satisfying !

Pierre-Henri Gergonne states it is during the moment of development that risks are taken and that in fact sometimes the process stops well before the actual production of the series. Moreover, a consensus emerges concerning the weakness of the investment of the French audiovisual industry in «development» which is nevertheless the indispensable key preliminary element towards a rich, powerful and diversified production.

Are French « stars » an asset ?

Jean-Pierre Guérin replies that obviously they are in high demand but you have to have the means to pay them. According to him, the main issue is that French production is too frail and perhaps a bit out of touch with what is done in other countries even though the French industry has a wealth of young talents and has a high job creating potential.

Broadcasters are called upon to take risks and it is suggested that the sector gets better organized in order to progress collectively and boost all the connected trades. Pierre-Henri Gergonne hopes in this way to see a huge movement emerge in the series industry which would enable France to excel as much as she should do. Public authorities are equally called upon, as they too have a role to play in helping the industry to gather its forces and rally around the cause in order to ensure that the support schemes, particularly in exportation, do not fade away - to the contrary !

Called up by the audience, Rémy Pflimlin states that all possible means of development are to be explored and that TF1 has a particular attachment towards participating in web creation, which can open up possibilities abroad, and with probably fewer constraints than for producing series for mainstream broadcasting. This equally allows us to test the viewers, their reactions and eventually to adapt production as a result, like in a laboratory.

EXPORTING BETTER : NEW TRAILS TO EXPLORE

In the room, a question is asked about the generalization of writing in English. On this subject, Jean-André Yerlès answers that animation film script writers have had the know-how for a very long time. Indeed, it brings about more far-reaching co-operation networks, and «translating» should become an integral part of production reflexes.

However Laetitia Recayte mentions once again the difficulty in finding actors who can perform in several languages, and at least in one other language than their mother tongue. Pierre-Henri Gergonne adds that France is an « exportable country » without falling into the cliché trap, taking advantage of both its cultural wealth and the place she generally holds in people's hearts around the world is also a trail to be explored. «Let us not overlook the need to wet people's appetites, to share around attractive images and enjoyable plots». Indeed there are more advantages in being French than disadvantages !

In the room, some people regret that for more than 10 years people have been talking about this « French fiction film crisis », the difficulty in finding ideal formats and in finding distributors and producers who are capable of thinking globally... Is it not time to change our attitude in order to move on ? One of the strong points of the American industry is that it never falters, it confidently goes ahead and in this way it conquers without scruples all the markets it wants to enter.

To develop exports, perhaps it will be equally necessary to go down the road of selling the remake rights, suggests Laetitia Recayte, and to not only focus on exporting finished products. This would probably make distribution of French series and ideas more far-reaching. The ideal economic model is not however easy to find. But Laetitia Recayte insists on and feels very confident about the potential of French series overseas.

Pierre-Henri Gergonne would like to know if she has any ideas about what made, not only the English, but also the Danish, the Japanese and the Australians buy 'Spiral'.

According to Laetitia Recayte, it is precisely because it is a French series which takes place

in Paris, the latter being treated like a character in the series. Obviously, the quality of the series has equally played a role and appealed to international buyers.

Valérie Lardinois then intervenes and reminds us that quality is not always synonymous with ratings. For instance, the series 'Mad men' is excellent but does not work !

Going around the table, each person gives several ideas which could be taken into consideration to help the French export. Mathieu Béjot insists on the fact that we should be proud of what we do and above all that we should produce more. He reminds us that France is one of the top touristic destinations in the world and that it would be foolhardy not to take advantage of this. Jean-Pierre Guérin deems it necessary to have confidence in the excellent professionals this country has, and especially the producers, while hoping that the public channels get their strength back in order to rebuild a dynamic balance for the French audiovisual scene.

Jean-André Yerlès feels that if France wants to export, she must, in the first place, become organised like an industry, with clear contractual practices, the same work regulations as other industries, tenders which enable her to be involved in ambitious projects and from the word « go », work teams that attract multi-talented staff working together on the numerous developments which will then make series production fast-flowing enough to enable it to find a niche in the international market ! Today, unfortunately, we are paying the price, in this country, for all the shortcomings of this industry, without taking advantage of its strong points.

Valérie Lardinois believes that by producing much more, we will find the means to export more. Development is thus a priority axis for future investments. Laetitia Recayte equally agrees that volume is a not to be overlooked. Finally, Jean-André Yerlès would like us to let screenwriters work without being bothered with editorial policy which eventually lead to the production of series that are too specific and adapted to one broadcaster, and therefore to one individual situation.

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ARTISTIC DEBATE

WHICH STORY LINES, FOR WHICH PUBLIC ? MANUFACTURING METHODS FOR SUCCESSFUL SERIES

Speakers :

Pascale BREUGNOT, producer for Ego Productions
Emmanuel DAUCÉ, producer for Tétr Média Fiction
Isabelle DUBERNET, supervising screenwriter
Hervé HADMAR, screenwriter and director
Nathalie LAURENT, head of dramas for TF1
Thierry SOREL, head of dramas for France 2

Led by :

Sullivan LEPOSTEC, journalist, blogger and author

STORIES THAT RESEMBLE OUR LIVES... LET US STAND OUT FROM THE REST !

Sullivan Lepostec opens this debate with a deliberately thought provoking question : Why do we continue producing TV series in France when we have to cope with the tidal of foreign series – above all Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian – which carry off all the glittering prizes ? Besides the « investment obligation » mentioned not without a touch of humour – and a certain cynicism by Emmanuel Daucé –, there exists in France a strong “narrative tradition”. In fact, since the beginning of time, Man has enjoyed and continues to enjoy “story telling”, all the more so when they are about his own story or contains elements that he can identify with. This cultural tie does not leave us any choice : we are condemned to create for ourselves TV series which resemble our lives, at the same time as they stimulate our imagination...

Isabelle Dubernet illustrates this point by reminding us the success of ‘Plus belle la vie’ relies a lot on this possibility of identification with our daily lives : in the episodes, Christmas, or even The beginning of the school year are timed to coincide with the same real events in our lives. And that does not prevent us from offering, in addition, plots and twists and turns which are sometimes very far-fetched : The latter being the second most important ingredient of a series success ; besides the fore-mentioned mirror effect, we have to be able to take the viewers beyond reality, far into the construction of their imaginary world.

Emmanuel Daucé underlines the fact that the series ‘Les hommes de l’ombre’ equally reveals the benefits to be gained by choosing a theme connected with current events (as it happens, the presidential election). Due to this link with the viewers became patently much stronger. Thierry Sorel confirms, in turn, that this factor of « resonance planning » does not play a neutral role in the programming and choice of broadcasting horizon. For this series, we had to act particularly quickly, to find an area of mutual understanding, and a common language within accelerated deadlines which enabled to meet the requirements of this event.

When a foreign series is imported, it is equally important to make it « our own » highlights Pascale Breugnot who uses as an example the

success of ‘Doc Martin’, a typically English series which after being adapted for French viewers, has only kept 20% of the original format. And if the revised model has worked so well, it is partially due to the fact that the characters were able to « take control »... As it happens, they are « résistants » holding out against a form of established order who are prepared to go to all length to defend their convictions ; a bit like our dear relentless Gauls, and also like their no less famous village in the Côtes-d’Armor. By a streak of irony – if it can be seen that way – the series was shot in Brittany.

Nathalie Laurent confirms the importance of strong characters to keep viewers coming back. She gives the convincing example of ‘Julie Lescaut’ in which the main character acted all heartedly in such a way that she went beyond the original concept – certainly necessary but too sketchy – and deeply moved the viewers. A « French style mythology » really exists in the area of TV series – especially in detective stories adds Hervé Hadmar who concludes this first part of the debate by emphasizing that our cultural heritage makes us stand out from the Anglo-Saxons. Far from cowboys, westerns and other ‘wild, wild west’ types of series, we are closer to the ‘Mystères de Pigalle’ ; The foundations of our TV series are incidentally more concerned with « life in the neighbourhood » and « real people » who talk to us.

THE RECIPE TO SUCCESS IN MAKING SERIES : A WRITER, A UNIQUE VISION, HUMANITY

Noting the contrasting results of TV series, Sullivan Lepostec asks those participating about the way successful series are made. Is there an infallible alchemy ?

Hervé Hadmar proposes the following recipe which although not infallible is generally promising : the main ingredient, sort of common denominator for successful series, is according to him the screenwriter’s « unique point of view ». In the realm of artistic creation, he does not believe in democracy ! The author, the one and only owner of the original idea, has to defend his way of seeing things, preferably of course in perfect harmony with the director and the producer.

Possessing a great deal of experience as a direc-

tor of the writing workshop for ‘Plus belle la vie’, where the pace of work is particularly fast, Isabelle Dubernet confirms that the secret often lies in the quality of « author written series ». When the series was losing ratings, it took no less than two to three years of fierce struggle, initiated by the new main screenwriter – Olivier Szulzynger, who threatened to resign every day if we did not do what he wanted and who was able to lay down strict rules that he stood by come hell or high water – to re-boost the ratings and the audience followed him. They came flocking in and they stayed !

Nathalie Laurent, in turn, comes back to talking about the characters without whom a story cannot really take shape and appears soulless : it is up to them therefore to affect the viewers intimately and infinitely, and for her that is the key ingredient. After having quoted the example of ‘Julie Lescaut’, she evokes ‘Profilage’, a series in which the unusual character played by Chloé Saint-Laurent is one the strong argument for making the viewers watch regularly ; added to this, it is true, a unique and clear vision, held here by two screenwriters (a man and a woman : parity also has a part to play...).

From the characters... to human qualities, there is obviously only one step to be taken. So, besides everything else, Hervé Hadmar emphasizes the importance of empathy which must be perceivable from the first ten to fifteen minutes of the pilot : this will be a crucial argument.

This « empathy » was undoubtedly what was missing in ‘signature’. Not everyone agrees on the definition of empathy nor the way to arouse it. Pascale Breugnot views it naturally as the opposite of sympathy. We can easily « fall for » characters who could be seen as being unpleasant, as blameworthy as a ‘Dexter’ or a “Robin Renucci collaborator” in ‘un village français’ ; the term empathy does not necessarily rhyme with politically correct ! As it happens, she prefers the term « generosity » : the viewer becomes attached to characters who are fully involved, and he will support them during all the trials and tribulations from one episode to the next. She also underlines the necessary « auteur’s talent » which featured prominently in ‘Tiger Lily’, a series which depicts four women who have highly contrasted points of view and ways of life, each one being as appealing as another



because they are imbued with « total sincerity ». The screenwriter’s job therefore consists of amongst other things « writing from the heart » as much as possible with a full emotional force. Humanity is of course at the heart of success.

A SCRIPT WRITER IS GOOD BUT A SHOWRUNNER IS EVEN BETTER !

Thierry Sorel then seizes the example of ‘Tiger Lily’ to broach the subject of « showrunner », as in this series, both authors have emerged as screenwriters thus falling into line with the Anglo-Saxon model. Just a reminder, a showrunner is the person who creates a « show » / « series », and who supervises the writing, the production and the editing of it. In other words, he is the person who is there from the launching of the idea to the broadcasting of an episode.

In France, we are a long way away from this, notes Isabelle Dubernet : our screenwriters need to learn how to become showrunners, especially for economic reasons. Nathalie Laurent recognizes that this is the format of the future ; given the vast amount of writing, what is needed is such a person acting as « guarantor for the series », who will ensure that it is produced and broadcast over a longer period. Hervé Hadmar also agrees that this showrunner is the « artistic manager », and that, indeed, this profile needs to be more commonplace in France.

ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE BROADCASTER AND THE OBLIGATION TO BE BETTER

In reply to Sullivan Lepostec’s question, everyone notes that the broadcaster, of course, has equally his part to play in the recipe for success. He is notably the one who is responsible for finding the link between the writer and the viewers, adds Nathalie Laurent, even if the series has to be adapted. Viewers who are increasingly expert and demanding. Moreover, the avalanche of American series leave us no other choice than to be efficient : we are doomed to get better declares Thierry Sorel. France 2, while guaranteeing its public service mission, must henceforth cater for all different types of viewers, and not only for its traditional viewers of fiction programmes and other soap operas. The channel can no longer be just satisfied with its « best-sellers » (for instance ‘fais pas ci fais pas ça’), but has embarked a strategy of « catching

up ». The project of broadening the audience – and partially of its « rejuvenation » – has been set into motion.

However, Emmanuel Daucé warns us against the risk of no longer knowing who we are aiming at. We must therefore be careful in this target broadening strategy. And indeed the broadcaster also has the mission to help bring this about. Hervé Hadmar then goes on to say that taking a « calculated risk » has become an obligation. So everything is finally a question of « timing », adds Nathalie Laurent : in the early phases, you have to target you audience perfectly, and then allow for a bit of time for the series to take hold, a parameter which is unfortunately a little too rare due to economic pressure.

HOW TO CAPTIVATE THE 15 TO 35 AGE GROUP ?

If it is praiseworthy to want to reach out to a much vaster audience, can we really reconcile the 15 to 35 age group with French fiction programme /series ? asks Sullivan Lepostec at the end. Nathalie Laurent like Pascale Breugnot notice that in any case young people do on the whole watch series like ‘Profilage’ or ‘Doc Martin’. On the other hand, Hervé Hadmar is much more skeptical. There exists, according to him, a serious gap between the 15 to 35 year old viewers who love Anglo-Saxon series and the traditional viewers of French series who are older. Currently, the former are showing real defiance towards French programme-making in this area, and no channel really caters for them ; not even France 4 which Pascale Breugnot had assumed was going to specifically target this category of viewers... Hervé Hadmar concludes by declaring that in this quest for the series that will get the best artistic reviews, but also the best ratings, what is missing in France are areas of confrontation and other « research laboratories » ; He suggests « provoking collisions » to stimulate the process.

THE DEBATE IS HANDED OVER TO THE FLOOR

Sullivan Lepostec hands the debate to the floor. The first contribution comes from a member of the delegation of young independent producers who pleads in favour of opening up the sphere of tendering to small production companies,

who hardly have a say in matters today : however we must give the 15 to 35 age group their chance to suggest new formats ! Pascale Breugnot praises the often fighting spirit and the constructive attitude of these young producers who she likes working with, and who she would never hesitate to receive, just like Thierry Sorel by the way or also Nathalie Laurent who on the other hand mentions the requirements of the editorial policy : not all types of format can be developed.

Then another young person aged 34 intervenes and brings out the topic of the internet : young people go online a great deal, so should we not create a craze via the internet firstly, before targeting TV channel viewers ? Without denying the huge amount of creativity on the web (‘Norman fait des vidéos’ or ‘Bref’ in particular), Nathalie Laurent answers that the priority remains with television broadcasting, even internet formats can be offered further on down the line, using existing series. It cannot be denied that the future will mostly be « online television », notes Hervé Hadmar, that is to say « we will watch what we want when we want » ; and while saying this he praises the particular talent of the French in the short formats like ‘Bref’. Marc Nicolas, Director General of the FEMIS, reacts to the notion of « laboratory » mentioned by Hervé Hadmar. A school is precisely a place of training and experimentation for the formats of the future. A course project on the subject of TV series is, as it happens, in the process of being set up at the FEMIS, and the participants at this round table are thus potential teachers/ researchers at the FEMIS. Then, it is the turn of Patrick Vanetti, director of the CEEA, European Conservatory for Audiovisual Writing, to remind us of the merits of « the school which sets the trend », and who is also developing a sector of higher education devoted to TV series. A screenwriter then declares that to effectively train a writer, school is not enough ; we need to train him in « writing workshops » which are sadly lacking in this country. She is addressing not only the broadcasters, imploring them to « make long series », but also the financiers : these workshops have to be paid for ! Moreover, she is surprised that series like ‘Plus belle la vie’, ‘Profilage’ or ‘Le village français’ even if they already benefit from a large audience offer few ▶



Presentation of Baromètre 2012 by **BENOÎT DANARD**, Director of studies at CNC

workshops. Thierry Sorel adds that it is exactly the aim of the current work, at France 2, to give series enough time to get established, that is beyond the first 6 episodes.

The last contribution comes from an acting coach. He has well understood the argument about empathy, but he notices that the tools given to the actors in France are really sparse compared to what is done in The United States. Hervé Hadmar admits that the TV series is a specific time-space continuum, not always easy to manage, but that, for his part, he has never encountered any particular problems with actors. Emmanuel Daucé recognizes on the other hand that the TV series production process is not always favourable towards actors, as very often, after a long period of writing and development, leading to the shooting of the pilot, the timing speeds up after the commission, and the rush is on : casting, continuation of the script writing, shooting... This "rat race" sometimes takes its toll on the actors.

AS A CONCLUSION

Although « tables of the testimony » with commandments that cannot be ignored do not exist in the world of making TV series, it has become clear that certain rules are however necessary : having faith in producing something different and a certain type of « cultural heritage » as driving forces in the creating process, uniqueness of projects / ideas, the quality of the characters, the central role of the writer, harmonious work in a tripartite way (the writer, the director and the producer) or even on a quadripartite basis (broadcaster), the close links with the viewers... France like anywhere is not lacking in talents ; we just have to give them room to blossom.



In his preamble, Jean-Pierre Elkabbach expresses his renewed pleasure to meet everyone again on the occasion of the APA convention, this year in the midst of the Série Series festival. This convention reveals and demonstrates the creativity and inventiveness of the sector, the ambition and audacity which are reinforced every year.

These summits at Fontainebleau are already a success considering the quality of the points of view exchanged and it seems to him that they have come at an ideal moment for trying to structure this new screen culture which has made its mark.

BAROMETRE 2012

Benoît Danard comments on statistical data issued by Baromètre 2011.

Fiction production increased by 5.7% in 2011. It is mostly made up of series – 78%. The one-off programmes fell by 27%. The channels contributed towards 56% of the investments. He highlights the progression of pay-TV channels, in the knowledge that the new TNT channels only represent 3% of investments fiction, that is, about €1.7m ; and such is the case, despite the fact that the audience share continues to increase.

French fiction production thrives on the « 52 minute » programmes and on the development of short formats (+29 hours in a year) but nevertheless without pushing out the « 90 minute » programmes ; it remains the most common format – by a whisker – with 31% of the production.

Fiction is the most highly watched television genre with more than 25% of all the programmes offered for 27% of the viewing. Fiction is notably the first genre watched in pre-recorded form with 46% of pre-recorded viewing, and it represents an important part of repeat programmes with a 26% market share.

Examining more closely the world of series, 72 American series can be found in the top 100. However, some French series still figure amongst the top 5 ratings on French channels.

This indicator offers the opportunity to recall that we are comparing what is incomparable. Indeed, in France, when we watch American series, these are actually the best of American fiction as a selection has already taken place and what is not good is not exported. If we examine all the American series together and more specifically the novelties, only 25% of the programmes survive from one year to the next. 75% of American series are therefore not renewed for the second season. Parallel to this, French fiction are « over-performing » in relation to their slot in 48% of cases.

A complete version of Le Baromètre is being given out to those participating.



Introduction by **PHILIPPE BRUNET**, Chief of staff of the European Commission Androulla Vassiliou

THE EUROPEAN POSITION

Philippe Brunet, offering apologies on behalf of Madam The European Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou who is unable to take part in the convention taking place today, explains the European position. He highlights that even though European cultural and linguistic wealth is a great source of inspiration for everyone, it is sometimes equally an obstacle to co-production and to the widespread circulation of created works. As a consequence, the natural role of the commission is to promote the harmonization and the unification of the audiovisual industry.

The European television series can attract viewers far beyond national borders – ‘Les Borgia’ or ‘Lilyhammer’ are good examples of this. However, certain precautions are necessary to help the series cross the borders, and all the measures are not yet sufficiently developed to make the multinational, multilingual and multicultural approach standard.

Philippe Brunet reminds that a good series implies a creative investment at least equivalent to that offered for a good film, and that co-productions cannot be undertaken on a shoestring.

Subsidies should equally encourage innovative training schemes, and more generally the training of audiovisual professionals. Indeed, the high quality initial training must be followed up by in-service training. Thus, it has been decided to increase aid within the framework of the future programme « Creative Europe / Europe créative ». But training is not the only means of acquiring new skills ; meeting new partners, exchanging experiences are others, and he praises on this occasion the Fontainebleau Convention which brings all this to the dynamic professionals that he sees here today. “Europe creative” follows on from « medias 2007 » with a proposal of a 1.6 billion budgetary grant The aim is to strengthen the ability of European cultural and audiovisual protagonists so that they might get their works distributed around the world more effectively, and do this in this period when cultural budgets are often cut back. This particular effort is imperative.

It is stated that, within the framework of this programme, everything will be done to take into account what has previously been learnt ; for example, accompanying the change-over to digital television, or also, the need to help promote distribution by supporting broadcasters. One of the major challenges identified during the course of the latest public exchanges and consultations is indeed the need to support activities aimed at boosting ratings. With an increasing number of offers, it is essential, from now on, that producers and broadcasters be capable of even understanding viewers’ expectations much more keenly. Radio-broadcasters have, moreover, have always had the cutting edge in this field; the television and film sector could probably benefit from this experience in order to get to know their viewers better.

Obviously, one of the essential tools for increasing ratings is the production of high-quality programmes with innovative content, which stand out from those already available. This issue is even more vital in a area which, from now on, has to take into account the development of on-line television. On behalf of Madam Vassiliou, Philippe Brunet wishes to offer everyone the constructive debate that this subject deserves.





POLITICAL DEBATE

WHEN FRENCH SERIES AWAKEN

Speakers :

Éric GARANDEAU, president of the CNC
 Emmanuelle GUILBART, general director of France Télévisions
 Stéphane LE BARS, general delegate of the USPA
 Bénédicte LESAGE, producer, president of the SPI
 Pascal ROGARD, general director of the SACD
 Laurent STORCH, head of programmes of TF1

Moderated by :

Jean-Pierre ELKABBACH, journalist (Public Sénat & Europe 1)

A EUROPEAN REVIVAL DESPITE A STRONG AMERICAN PRESENCE

The world of series is a sphere which can give the impression that, for the moment, American series are triumphing over the rest but, in Europe, and more particularly in France, we sense a revival, exchanges, proposals are emerging... Series inspire each other while offering, at the same time, new formats and highly innovative atmospheres. Some of these recent experiments nurture a greater confidence in this territory to be conquered. And this is happening, despite the financial crisis which, however, leads to the crucial question concerning the means, co-writing, coproduction and financing, and thus often opening up international markets.

In this context, it is vital to protect ourselves from fear. Not to be afraid of globalisation which would break down the walls of culture, not to be afraid of the American hegemony, not to be afraid of filming in France... Here again, one of the points of the Fontainebleau meeting : to see all together the assets of the profession, the originality of what is going on in Europe and in France and to concentrate on everything that ensures that the period be really favourable towards the development of the French television series.

Eric Garandau confirms that fear needlessly paralyses action and suggests that we remember that Seneca said « It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that they are difficult »...

Bénédicte Lesage adds that if we can feel French series wake up, it can be noted, on one hand, the desire of the sector to become industrialised, and on the other a reinforcement of the vitality of the creativity factor. The different public funding agencies, both French or European, must strive to clarify their political position and clearly define what they really want to support.

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach would like to know « whether there is something else that can be said this year that that was not already said last year » ...

Bénédicte Lesage replies that audiovisual production was badly shaken up during the course of last year and that we ought to be able to go further in terms of creativity. Indeed,

we can see some really outstanding propositions spring up in Europe, and she would like this to happen even more frequently in France.

Stéphane Le Bars reminds us that series like 'Plus belle la vie' have « over-performed » and have achieved a market share higher than the market share of the channel. Indeed, the French series has therefore woken up. He returns, moreover, on this occasion, to the analysis of the top 100 which shows that French series are in the process of reconquering the evening slot ; even if this tool is not very well adapted to measuring it and that, on the contrary, it risks exacerbating the general climate of mistrust by showing the apparent predominance of American series.

AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS EXPANDING DUE TO NEW FORMATS AND NEW PROTAGONISTS : AN OPPORTUNITY OR A THREAT?

Is on-line television friend or foe? asks Jean-Pierre Elkabbach.

Bénédicte Lesage replies that it is probably a friend in terms of creativity and an incentive for thinking more about fiction-writing methods in general. This type of television, in the same vein, allows new types of series to appear and shows that the ratings achieved are not always those we expect. On this occasion, Jean-Pierre Elkabbach highlights the fact that the night before, a medieval thriller gained higher ratings than Marilyn Monroe ...

Laurent Storch evokes, in the same light, the disparity of formats which occasionally distorts comparisons, as well as the fact that all the genres are not always represented on an equal basis. In this way, in France, the series is very often a tool of proximity in which comedy is used. The series imported from the United States – which, do we need to be reminded, are a negligible selection of the major American production machine, and, in general, the better end of the market – very often deal with other genres. « There is an opening for making French-style comedies ». Emmanuelle Guilbart adds that there is equally room for daily trans-generational series.

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach then goes on to talk about the setting up of long-lasting series, the number of seasons and episodes, regretting, for example, that there are not enough episodes in the huge success 'Le village français'. Emmanuelle Guilbart replies that the team has the firm intention to increase the number of episodes in future series. The director, producer and screenwriter are working hand-in-hand towards increasing the number of episodes, as stability is obviously an advantage, notably for conquering overseas territories. A series takes time to get a hold, and by coming back again and again. The more episodes there are, the better it takes!

SUPPORT MEASURES ADAPTED FOR A CONSTANTLY CHANGING WORLD?

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach comes back to talk about the announcement of the increase in funds for series from the CNC. Eric Garandau confirms that a measure has been set up with a bonus for broadcasters who buy more than six episodes in one go. He adds that France has benefitted until now from the specific nature of resources from the CNC, which has handed out generous financial aid and by supporting fiction production despite the financial crisis. He would like this to continue happening.

The discussion then moves on to the eventual tax on Smartphones. Eric Garandau feels that it is essential to take into consideration the fact that fiction programmes are nowadays shown on all types of supports, and that in fact other countries tax these supports.

Pascal Rogard is however pessimistic as to the economic environment in which audiovisual programme-making is taking place. All the private channels are in great difficulty and the multiplication of channels, especially those of the TNT which have currently captured 25% of the ratings and contribute towards only 3% of the creative investment process, does not make things easy. Online television will allow the internet giants to play a larger role, and will probably give the Americans, and why not the Japanese, a free run in Europe. Pascal Rogard expresses his concern to see the development of all these new channels weaken mainstream ones which, for the moment, are



financing programme-making.

A few concerns are also voiced as to an eventual preparation for a « great European digital market », some recalling how important it is to protect our cultural exceptions and others feeling that much thought should be given to this and must affect all the sectors ; and that this could perhaps lead to a tax which could also be laid down on countries receiving the programmes ...

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach then asks whether the fact that there is now a single access point at France Télévisions has changed anything in the organisation of the profession. Emmanuelle Guilbart adds that this has changed nothing in terms of the number of projects, the editorial policies having remained distinct and enabling the diversity of what is on offer to continue.

TIPS SO THAT WHAT COMES ALIVE DOES NOT GO BACK TO SLEEP?

Stéphane Le Bars feels that to prevent up-and-coming French series from crashing down again, it is absolutely necessary that they be able to « stay on the air » for a certain number of evenings ; indeed, one of the keys to success is to keep viewers coming back for more. The massive predominance of American series plays in their favour then, like a vicious or virtuous circle, since its very existence reinforces the desire for more. One of the issues is therefore to ensure that French series are part of a regular broadcasting cycle and stay on the air.

While Jean-Pierre Elkabbach is asking whether those participating have any recommendations for the future, there is a common agreement that emerges on the importance of facilitating international, and more specifically European productions, in order to fight against the American hegemony. Indeed, if the American show-runner proves to be often highly efficient, this is not the only way to proceed and in Europe there are certain cultural and linguistic specificities that must be respected.

Eric Garandau also indicates that it is not because methods are adopted which prove to be effective, in particular, using the show-runner like our American counterparts, that this

systematically means that we have « sell our souls ». What has happened in films shows this: we can completely « build on national specificities in order to excel internationally ». The CNC has, moreover, opened up funding schemes linked to the English language in this area that it would like to see extended and more widely used for other languages. Laurent Storch underlines that, even if it can be deplored that the language that series are generally made in is English, that obviously gives Anglo-American production an advantage and that in Europe, generally speaking, English has equally been adopted so much so that it is difficult to attract foreign viewers towards languages from different countries. It is once again the occasion to regret that in France, even when there is a highly successful series, there are not enough episodes to be able to ensure that the breaking in of the series, its translation and its adaptation in an overseas market. Yet, when this is offered, foreign viewers love it.

Stéphane Le Bars wonders whether we should not tend towards giving more funding directly to screenwriters, which would enable them to arrive better prepared when they meet with producers. Eric Garandau answers that the rules are changing, that a decree is in the process of being adapted and that it should enable assistance to be offered more at the creation stage of the concept, to help the screenwriter directly and then to help with the writing and the development. He adds that, on this occasion, the spirit of the CNC is always to try to subtly arbitrate between selective and automatic funding.

A MORE SPECIFICALLY FRENCH TYPE OF STORYLINE?

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach then asks whether there are any storylines, or a certain type of storyline which would guarantee success more than any others. Emmanuelle Guilbart answers that producers offer broadcasters projects that correspond with their programming schedules and with their editorial policy.

Laurent Storch recalls that producers are the project managers and that moreover, often producer-screenwriters have more chance of

becoming known than producer-producers, as the producer-screenwriter often has a better sense of what viewers want. It is equally recalled that even though some series have a long lifespan, they evolve and if its specific brand is obviously well maintained, the main character like the storyline have, in general, changed along the line. The example of Julie Lescaut is quoted as an illustration.

The importance of the screenwriter's role should equally be highlighted, especially as the viewers' appetite for storylines that are well put together is increasing significantly. It is also the occasion to insist on the creative space opened up by the series, this format that enables the deployment of longer and narratively more complex storylines, just like the introduction of more nuanced protagonists.

Bénédicte Lesage pleads for the reinforcement of the trust between the different partners – broadcasters, producers, screenwriters – which could be the real liberating element of creative energy. Laurent Storch confirms how positive it is to share a common ambition with the producer, but adds that we must absolutely keep a close eye on costs : more series would be made in France if they were cheaper.

As for Stéphane Le Bars, he would like the decision-making line of authority to be simplified. Nowadays, we sometimes get the impression that everyone has the power to say « No » but no-one really has it to say « Yes ».

WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW?

What will the future bring? asks Jean-Pierre Elkabbach. Do channels have advisors who take part in preparing editorials and programmes according to what society could want in two or three years time?

Emmanuelle Guilbart replies that this is obviously necessary, even if we only take into account production deadlines. Other series, at the same time, are provided with the means to « stick to realism » ; in this way, 'Plus belle la vie' is written as it goes along : we see really well how the current atmosphere transpires and how the adaptation process is ongoing. Emmanuel Guilbart adds that the treatment of prime-time series differs from the work



OPENING OF THE 1ST EDITION OF SÉRIE SERIES



which can be carried out for other time slots. In this way, on France 2, at the moment, the teams are working on a weekly daytime fiction programme while looking for areas for diversifying on other channels. Stéphane Le Bars recalls that the daily soap opera is one of the biggest commitments and that he is pleased that today this project is in the process of being launched. Indeed, this was sadly lacking in France with no daily soap on either of the two major channels, that is TF1 and France 2.

Erci Garandeau confirms that daytime fiction must be made available, a genre that is planned to be developed. Moreover, the new channels will probably have a role to play, and the CNC is committed to seeing how it can also help web fictions.

Eric Garandeau refers, on this occasion, to the importance of preserving the resources of the CNC and letting the institution collect taxes in order to be able to continue irrigating the film and audiovisual industry. Regulation is not in any way protectionist, it simply enables us to harness the current and to reinvest in French programme creation.

Stéphane Le Bars recalls, in this way, that French films are the finest in Europe and that the clear rules of the game applying to everyone and obeyed by everyone, are an important asset.

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach then praises the presence of David Assouline in the room and asks him for his opinion on developments and the role of the Senatorial Commission over which he presides.

The latter adds that he has been called upon unexpectedly and that he has already stated a few of the principles that inspire him during his opening speech. For him, within the context of the financial crisis, uncertainty concerning the means of financing all industries is obvious. Nevertheless, he is convinced that it is not within the cultural sector that we should cut back on the budget. Creation, especially in the audiovisual sector, would be even more of an asset to make the country more dynamic and to develop it in the international context. We need to try to make savings elsewhere and try rather to get organised – why not with our European neighbours ?

– in order to develop more projects. Culture is never incompatible with economic development, and considering sacrificing the fiction programme genre, and more particularly that of the series, would, moreover, be especially dangerous as it represents in this case a vector of cultural appropriation, a means of strengthening social links and finally of «being a society». Has not everyone of us been affected, at one time or another by a particular series ? And then, for his part, it seems that more often or not, he only watches television with the whole family when soap operas are on, this genre which promotes sharing in particular. Concerning this, he states that he is, moreover, against targeting and hopes that there will still be lots of series which cater for both the young and the old together, without attempting at all costs to keep the generations apart.

The speakers then come back to the necessity of broadening the audiovisual financial base which nowadays can no longer rely on just mainstream broadcasters. The internet, like the telephone, must take part in drawing up the budget for programme-making and must be concerned worried about the weakening of the budget at France Télévisions which, deprived of advertising, has not yet found other resources to replace it with.

The diversity of the viewers and of the protagonists of the sector : a source of wealth highlighted by the speakers.

From the floor, questions are asked about the editorial trends of the various channels. Emmanuelle Guilbart adds, then, that indeed, a percentage of the budget of France 4 is devoted to fiction.

It is once again the occasion to insist on the fact that the clear, common game rules are an important asset for developing a vigorous, daring and creative industry. Michel Boyon indicates that, on this occasion, it would be necessary to also work on the clarification and the simplification of contracts. Finally, the consensus is great as to the idea that screenwriters must necessarily play a role in a dialogue which cannot only take place between the producer and the broadcaster. A delegation of young producers urge the broadcasters to have more curiosity. It must

be noted that diversity is a source of inspiration and that some very good ideas have in this way come from talents in suburban housing estates. Nerve and daring pay!

Laurent Storch obviously shares the idea according to which we must strive to draw out young talents, whilst Stéphane Le Bars regrets that some channels, whose viewers are nevertheless young and from varied backgrounds, often from minority ethnic groups, do not finance fiction programmes, but are just happy to limit themselves to using ready-made programmes. It does not make sense to leave all the responsibility of creative programme-making and investment in development to only the long-standing historic channels.

In conclusion to this debate, a vast number of people feel that these Fontainebleau meetings are to be considered in a long-term perspective and boost the audacity of a sector that is rich in various talents. There is every reason to be proud of the French series, which has all the means of competing on a par with other countries. It is a battle to be led but one which can and must be won!

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The opening ceremony of Série Series is notably the opportunity for Frédéric Valletoux, the mayor of Fontainebleau to thank Kandimari – Marie Barraco and Laetitia Duguet – and the « trio at the top » for having launched this new event – Nicole Jamet, screenwriter, Jean-François Boyer, producer, and Philippe Triboit, director – which he is glad and proud to welcome in his town, whose name, he teaches us in passing, means : « the red maple in the morning dew » in Mandarin. Then Jean-François Hébert, Director of the Château of Fontainebleau, expresses his immense joy at being a partner in this event. Moreover, he proposes that for future editions, to « make use of him more », suggesting closer links be fostered with the theatre and also that the gardens be used. It is indeed an edifice of the French patrimony which deserves to be made better known, a veritable « family home » in which all the kings lived and honoured between the 12th and 19th centuries.

And while we are on the subject of the family, Jean-François Boyer reminds us that this event was intended to be a « truce » between the various professions : screenwriters, producers, directors but also broadcasters, « a family reunion ». Moreover, these are precisely the real family stories that make good series !

Seizing this notion of family harmony, Julien Dray, Vice-President in charge of culture for the Ile-de-France region, concludes by declaring, with a pinch of humour « that in politics as well, we love each other a lot ! » also referring to the series 'The West Wing'. And he goes on to invite the French audiovisual industry to be even more productive, whenever possible in the Ile-de-France region, highlighting, beyond the cultural patronage, the strong economic issues at stake within the sector.





DOMINIC MINGHELLA, A SHOWRUNNER : THE BRITISH MODEL

Masterclass

Guest speaker :

Dominic MINGHELLA, creator of "Robin Hood" and "Doc Martin"

Moderated by :

Sandra OUAISS, So Consulting

INTERVIEW / MASTERCLASS

Sandra Ouais introduces Dominic Minghella and looks back over his career. He started out as a screenwriter on 'Hamish Macbeth', which launched Robert Carlyle. After several years in the United States, he returned to Great Britain and met Martin Clune who asked him to write the screenplay for the first season of 'Doc Martin'. This series, which was highly successful in Britain, won the award for the best fiction at the « British Comedy Awards » and gave rise to numerous remakes in France, Germany, Spain and Russia. He was then contacted by the BBC, via Tiger Aspect Productions, and worked as executive producer and showrunner on 'Robin Hood' which was for its distributor BBC Worldwide, the series with the most international sales.

Since then, Dominic Minghella has set up his own production company, Island Pictures ; an evolution which he considers logical. The creation of this company became obvious to him. He had been developing this project for several years, but his involvement in 'Robin Hood' – which he does not regret – meant that he had to put it on hold. For Dominic Minghella, production is a creative process in the same way as script-writing. All the decisions which traditionally fall on the producer – the organisation of shooting , financing, casting – fuel the creative process. You must obviously not be « afraid to talk money » and this, it is true, scares off some screenwriters.

Asked about the role of the show-runner, Dominic Minghella reminds us that this position applies essentially to Stateside production. The show-running culture is not yet established in Britain and it is difficult to give it a specific role. A hybrid position was however created for soap operas, but it is very different from the American model. Otherwise, the « screenwriters / producers » are always associated with « producers / producers ». In this way, for 'Robin Hood', Dominic Minghella was associated with Foz Allan, a producer at Tiger Aspects Productions. Nevertheless, the position of show-runner reassures broadcasters.

The number of show-runners should, according to Dominic Minghella, rise in Britain in years to come, and this, in spite of the crisis which has hit the audiovisual sector. Even though the channels are reduced today to a drastic policy of cutbacks, the quality of the fiction programmes that they broadcast remains their main objective. The system of show-running allows us not only to make large-scale savings, but at the same time to attract talents.

Otherwise, the success of a series is nowadays measured in terms of international sales. It is highly obvious that such a policy threatens the series that are considered « too local » but at the same time the formats that have been until now favoured by British channels; that is, the mini-series of 4 or 6 episodes, which are difficult to export, especially to the United States. If this format has been long favoured by broadcasters, explains Dominic Minghella, it is that the screenplays were traditionally entrusted to dramatists coming from the theatre. The latter, « when they consented to work for television », refused to write more than 6 episodes; which already represented a considerable amount of work. Moreover, the producers of 'Doc Martin' always refused to shoot more than 6 episodes per season; the main reason being the inhabitants of the village where the series is filmed hardly appreciate being invaded by film

crews and the leading actor – Martin Clune – does not want to become typecast in this role.

Sandra Ouais asks Dominic Minghella about the involvement of channels and their interventions in the writing process. Dominic Minghella, on this subject, makes the distinction between the BBC and ITV. The BBC, which benefits from larger work teams, is more involved in the screenwriters' work. Their interventions remain limited to a few details. But a screenwriter learns with experience that the most difficult thing in this job is « to impose his point of view » on the film crews, i.e. the actors and the directors. The broadcasters' opinions and remarks are secondary.

"Doc Martin" has been the object of several remakes in several countries. Sandra Ouais would like to know concerning this, whether Dominic Minghella took part in the adaptation of the series. He answers that he was not consulted and that he did not take part in the transactions ; partly for the simple fact that the producers had never imagined that the series – which had been so difficult to set up - could eventually be adapted overseas and, therefore they had not written this option in his contract. Dominic Minghella recalls that the series almost did not get off the ground and that ITV gave up on the project several times over before giving the go-ahead. Dominic Minghella confesses, somewhat embarrassed, to not having seen a single episode of the French version and he regrets this. He has however heard that the actors were fantastic. In conclusion, Dominic Minghella talks about his future projects. He is currently working on the adaptation of novel by Daphné du Maurier entitled « The Scapegoat ». The film will be directed by Charles Sturridge. At the same time, he is writing a series with a storyline that takes place in prison. Finally, he will direct a historical film about a maid employed in Puccini's Tuscan villa in 1903.



THE DEBATE IS THROWN OPEN TO THE FLOOR

You have worked in the United States. What memories do you have of this time ?

Dominic Minghella has very fond memories of this period. He likes working with the Americans a great deal ; he appreciates their enthusiasm and their spontaneity. The English, as everyone knows, are more reserved.

Do international co-productions have an impact on the creation process ?

Dominic Minghella feels that he has been lucky in this area. The American partners for 'Robin Hood' did not intervene during the scriptwriting stage. The only remark they made concerned the actors' teeth. Whatever happens, he is in favour of international co-productions and feels that it is, as paradoxical as it may seem, easier for a script writer to impose his point of view when the number of backers is high.

Does the evolution of the audiovisual scene and the arrival of new actors on the marketplace provide new opportunities for the screenwriters ?

Dominic Minghella thinks that the arrival of the satellite group Sky in the fiction marketplace should effectively provide new opportunities. At the same time, the economic crisis has strongly hit the BBC and Channel 4 whose budgets committed to fiction have been severely cut back. Moreover, he feels the need to state that it is more and more difficult for a young script writer to make a name for himself. The emergence of show-runners leads to an increasingly limited number of screenwriters in jobs.

Can collaboration with producers or broadcasters be a source of inspiration for a screenwriter ?

Writing is a solitary task. More than just for their collaboration, Dominic Minghella expects producers to give him their support, especially when he is overcome by doubt and when he gets stuck.

English series have got a very distinct visual quality that stands out.

How is the work with the director of photography carried out ?

The look of the series, the visual universe, the palette of colours or the choice of cameras must be defined beforehand, at the script writing stage and therefore before the shooting. The director of photography will be chosen with this in mind. The same goes for the music. The composer must, according to Dominic Minghella, be involved in the project before the shooting. The music can, for example, inspire the actors' performance.

Is writing a series different from writing a full-length feature film ?

In a full-length feature film, the narrative must accompany the character and make him evolve. On the contrary, in a series, the characters must not evolve too much, or only very slightly or subtly. The storyline changes from one episode to the next, but the characters remain true to themselves. In this way, the viewers do not want 'Doc Martin' to be happy !





FRIDAY 6TH JULY

'THE HOUR' (BBC – Great Britain)

Case study

Guest speakers :

Daniel ISAACS, chief operating officer, Kudos Films & TV

Derek WAX et Ruth KENLEY-LETTTS, producers, Kudos Films & TV

Moderated by :

Jean-Marc AUCLAIR, screenwriter

Before looking back over the spellbinding and « vintage » universe of the series 'The Hour', Jean-Marc Auclair asks those participating to talk about the audiovisual scene in Britain.

The BBC is financed solely by TV licence fees, which amount to 3 billion pounds. Out of this sum, £800,000 are absorbed by the channel BBC One alone. With 17 new series launched between July 2011 and June 2012, and 200 hours of programming in prime time (apart from soaps), BBC One is the top broadcaster in terms of original fiction. Fiction on ITV and Channel 4 represents respectively 250 and 154 hours of programming, once again in prime time. Daniel Isaacs indicates that although the BBC can pride itself publicly in not being concerned about audience ratings, the competition between the different channels – and especially with ITV – is fierce; which, moreover, complicates the work of fiction producers, broadcasting hours of series being kept secret until the last minute. In addition, this competition explains why the fiction programmes broadcasted are now very different from one channel to another; this was not the case 20 years ago, when you could not tell the difference between a BBC series and an ITV one. It should be noted, as well, that neither BBC One nor ITV broadcast American series in prime time.

The audiovisual market in Britain is still full of opportunities for fiction producers. Daniel Isaacs is persuaded that the industry is going to develop sharply in years to come, especially with the arrival of the Sky group in the fiction programme marketplace. Like AMC in the United States (responsible for the immense successes, 'Mad Men' and 'Walking Dead'), many English channels are beginning to show an interest in the series sector. Derek Wax confirms that the period is particularly favourable to programme creators, while adding that, since withdrawing 'Big Brother', Channel 4 has equally set its heart on becoming an important figure in the world of TV fiction.

Asked about Kudos Films and TV, Daniel Isaacs indicates that the company is celebrating twenty years of existence. It is today specialised in fiction programme production and has as its assets, series like 'Spooks', 'Hustle' and 'Life on Mars' which have been hugely successful amongst viewers. Kudos employs 32 members of staff and produces 50 hours of fiction programmes a year. 7 new series are in the process of being produced. Kudos was bought out by the Shine group in 2007. Jean-Marc Auclair would like to come back to the subject of 'The Hour', which some people regard as the English version of 'Mad Men'. Jane Featherstone, the director of Kudos, is responsible for creating this concept. She has always had the idea in mind to produce a series about what goes on behind the scenes of a television programme, and she shared with Abi Morgan, the screenwriter, a passion for the Fifties. You must realise that, just after the war, « televised news » was controlled by the Government, the BBC being, in a certain way, its spokesman. In the mid-Fifties, there emerged a new generation of journalists, and programmes like 'Panorama' were there right from the start when investigative journalism came into being. The series 'The Hour' is set during the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, the period in which, the BBC decided, for the first time, to « rebel » against the Government. The series is based on these events and the journalists who

covered the news at this crucial moment. Derek Wax understands that 'The Hour' could be compared to "Mad Men". Both series are indeed set in the Fifties, but the comparison ends there. Abi Morgan had the talent to create original characters and her storyline is more in line with the spy thriller genre. In the end, the two series are completely different.

Jean-Marc Auclair says that French channels refuse to produce series about the world of television. This was not the case with 'The Hour', and the BBC came to the decision in less than a week. It is obvious, adds Derek Wax, that having Abi Morgan's name as screenwriter amongst the credits – Abi's talent is renowned in Britain – won over the BBC chiefs who continue to make plenty of room for author-written fictions. You have to realise, besides, that the BBC makes a decision to film on the basis of one or two scripts, and this is due to the fact that, adds Daniel Isaacs, « no well-known screenwriter would accept to waste a year of his or her life to write an entire season without having the guarantee that the series will actually be made ».

Abi Morgan began her career by writing for theatre. Her first TV fiction – produced by BBC Two – was entitled 'Murder'. It revealed her talent for telling a story in an unusual and provoking way. Ten years ago, Derek Wax put her in charge of writing the mini-series 'Sex Traffic'. This work won more than twenty international awards and Abi Morgan became overnight one of the most popular screenwriters in Britain.

Abi Morgan was put in charge of all the writing of the six episodes of the first season. The most amazing thing was that, at the time, she was working on six other projects, one of which being Steve Mc Queen's film, 'Shame', an adaptation of a novel by Dickens and two plays. She was especially involved in 'The Hour' project. Ruth Kenley-Letts adds that she gave her opinion on all aspects of production, whether it concerned the choice of directors or actors, but equally on the editing. As the film was being shot in a huge block of flats in North London, an office was set up for her so that she could continue to write during the shooting. She could, moreover, take part in rehearsals and she received the rushes at the end of each day of shooting. During the first week of shooting, Ruth Kenley-Letts received everyday five-page emails which were full of notes, comments and remarks; you have to appreciate that Abi Morgan's scripts are extremely detailed, whether about the scenery or the costumes; which does not always please the directors who, let us not forget, only have eleven days to tie up an hour-long episode. It is therefore impossible for them to take into account every single stage direction. Jean-Marc Auclair then goes on to talk about the position of show-runner, but Daniel Isaacs objects to this term – which, according to him, only applies to Stateside production – adding that Abi Morgan was executive producer.

Jean-Marc Auclair asks about the involvement of broadcasters. Derek Wax states that the scripts are systematically sent to them. They take part in the reading sessions with the actors. Asked about the cost of the series, Daniel Isaacs replies that they can be anything up to 1 million pounds per episode. Each channel – he adds – defines a price scale for the fiction programmes it produces; this can vary between



£700,000 and £900,000.

'The Hour' being an Anglo-American co-production, Jean-Marc Auclair would like to know whether the American producers had anything to say about the actors' accents. Daniel Isaacs confirms it. Actually, they prefer actors not to have regional accents that are too strong. This was not the case with 'The Hour'. On the other hand, Derek Wax produced a TV film – 'Occupation' in which the actors came from Liverpool and Manchester. The series was sub-titled for broadcasting in the United States.

In conclusion, Derek Wax says that the BBC commissioned a second season one week after the broadcasting of the very first episode.

THE DEBATE IS THROWN OPEN TO THE FLOOR

What were the first elements presented to the BBC ?

Daniel Isaacs replies that the concept of the series (the universe and the characters), accompanied by a brief two-page description was presented to the BBC. The aim being to provide them with enough elements to whet their appetite and so that they would commission a screenplay. In Britain, broadcasters do not like receiving « sixty-page bibles » as they prefer to be involved in the development process. Once the script is finished, it is then handed over to them. In the best of situations, they love the script and give the go-ahead right away. In the most often of cases, broadcasters give back a list of comments which are then used to write the second draft. Derek Wax tells us that on average, out of 10 projects presented to the channels, only two or three are approved.

Do channels finance scripts in their entirety?

The BBC, Channel 4 and Sky finance scripts in their entirety, even if the series is not made. ITV contributes up to £10,000 towards its development. Daniel Isaacs adds that even though the BBC has available an in-house fiction production department, according to the law, it has to commission up to 25% of its series from independent studios; but in reality, this figure is more like 40%.

How many projects for series are sent to the BBC every year?

The BBC does not provide any information on this matter. Asked about her career, Ruth Kenley-Letts finally replies that she started it as an actress. She then took to filming, before becoming a producer. Daniel Isaacs adds that, as a director, she received the Oscar for the Best Short Film in 1995.





AUTHORS ROYALTIES AND INTERNATIONAL COPRODUCTION

Guest speakers :

Debra ABRAMOWICZ, irector of international projects
and developments at the SACD

Philippe LYON, screenwriter

Moderated by :

Nicole JAMET, screenwriter

Nicole Jamet introduces both speakers, Debra Abramowicz, director of international projects and developments at the SACD, and Philippe Lyon, the screenwriter for 'XIII' who has worked, notably within this framework, in a writing workshop.

FRENCH LAW VERSUS COPYRIGHT

Noting the emergence of new requests for international co-productions, Nicole Jamet wonders whether this represents a new trend.

Debra Abramowicz confirms that for the last year or two, there have been several major co-production projects like 'XIII' or 'Les Borgia', but at the SACD, they cannot go as far as talking about a trend, except perhaps in animation field.

It is then added – needless to say – that the SACD is not limited to French screenwriters and that foreigners be members, on condition that their contracts be in accordance with French law. Thus, foreign screenwriters can declare their works and receive the rights pertaining to, at least in theory, the guarantee of royalties.

Debra Abramowicz recalls the difference between the French or more generally European way of doing things and the American way in which rights are managed by local guilds which negotiate Canadian and American screenwriters' rights with minima previously set down in collective conventions and, in general, high initial flat fees seldom followed up by a few royalties for exploitation abroad. In fact, within this framework, screenwriters generally give up their rights for worldwide exploitation. Nicole Jamet understands that a French screenwriter can equally choose to be affiliated to Anglo-American law, but experience shows that more often things turn out better when there is an agent in the country in question.

Debra Abramowicz says that in practice, French screenwriters, more often than not, sign up with one of the French co-producers. Moreover, it seems to her to be the best system – « I would be on my guard against copyright if I were a French screenwriter », she says, – but if someone insists that the screenwriter sign a contract with « copyright » attached, the latter must be particularly watchful and make sure that he really understands all the ins and outs of the contract in question.

But why give in to the perils of copyright? Debra Abramowicz answers that the initial flat fee can sometimes be attractive and that, in this situation you must think it over, but often, several years down the line, you realise that you know longer have any rights over the work, and that is so, even if it has been adapted, toned down, widely distributed and exploited. Often the writer does not get a penny.

Philippe Lyon understands this argument, but recalls that on a royalty basis in which payments are spread out over years, very often, the screenwriter does not get anything either and finds it very difficult to make a living!

Debra Abramowicz adds, however, that the SACD keeps an eye on the countries which it has an agreement with.

Often, in order to simplify copyright management, co-producers share the same territories. This is very highly complex in French law, especially if the other co-producers refuse to pay their dues.

Philippe Lyon feels that it is important to compromise between both

systems, as if French law is obviously highly protective and theoretically favourable towards screenwriters, in practice, copyright is often much more remunerative.

Debra Abramowicz then insists once again on the importance of the producer's role, notably in Germany or in Scandinavia which do not have an agreement with the SACD and where the producer is consequently entirely responsible for paying the screenwriters. She adds that the SACD makes contract models which have been translated available for screenwriters and producers, and that concurrently some Anglo-Americans have been helped with amending their contract so that they can join the SACD.

French law, adds Debra Abramowicz, is often seen at the same time as being a law which makes a screenwriter seem « a nuisance », due to the fact that there is a final cut.

A FRENCHMAN AMONGST AMERICANS

Philippe Lyon talks about the way in which work was carried out on the series 'XIII', recalling that before the series itself, two 90-minute pilots had been written by him, with his co-writer, and that in this way they laid down the basis for the adaptation. He highlights that he was fortunate that the author of the comic strip 'XIII' could act as referee; this proved even more useful as this comic strip had not been translated into English, adapting this story with English-speaking partners was not always easy... He was, however, fascinated by the confrontation between the French way of working and the Canadian. Tensions were often high once the latter took over the shooting and introduced major issues concerning costs and money. Thus, for example, in the so-called Anglo-Saxon copyright system, screenwriters are paid in accordance with the opening and closing credits. This is therefore the major issue during contract discussions. The screenwriter does not budge an inch during negotiations over the title he will have in the credits and, on this occasion, often he even asks to have « producer credits ». As it happens, in this case his co-writer threatened to complain to the Canadian guild in order to prove that he was more of a writer than him.

Coming back to the experience of collective writing, Philippe Lyon adds that the Canadian crew worked alongside an American show-runner, but as it happened, they needed him to make the storyline stick to the original version which was particularly tentacular and, to accomplish the adaptation, he had to « tame it without distorting it ». The writing room, in the beginning, was a huge 2000 m2 hangar, of which 800 m2 were taken up by offices, and work started on a blank whiteboard, stuck on the wall, divided up into 13 columns in order to launch the writing of the season.

In true American style, it often happens that the venture begins without any real guarantee, just based on a handshake, carried out in the enthusiasm of new beginnings, and that does not happen without risks. Thus, he left for Los Angeles, penniless, and was only paid a month later. If he had been registered then in the Anglo-Saxon system, this would not have been possible as, being highly protective towards their writers and their rights, the screenwriters' associations would have kicked him out very quickly as they do with any screenwriter that does not « play by the



rules ». He would have then been ostracised by his union and lost out on a number of fringe benefits, and especially his pension rights. He understands moreover that the power of these American unions may scare off some producers, but acknowledges that they are, furthermore highly effective, especially thanks to standard contracts and common salary scales. Nicole Jamet confirms that guilds sometimes scare off even the writers themselves, but adds that if it happens in France that we also start working without a contract, we need to reorganise the work, notably with broadcasters, so that the latter accept to really commit themselves right from the start and before the drafting stage begins.

ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING BILINGUAL

Philippe Lyon states that at first he had one contract to create the Bible and a second to take part in this writing workshop and that, at that moment, the French producers as well as the two Belgian ones took charge of him, while the American producers took care of the Anglo-Saxon screenwriters. For him, if the firepower of American scriptwriting workshops is sometimes necessary, European writers do have their role to play in this system. Concerning this, Philippe Lyon highlights that he was obviously helped by the fact that he can write in English, and he advises young French and European screenwriters, on this occasion, to buckle down to mastering this language. It is indeed exciting to take part in programmes that will straightaway be conceived as being European or even worldwide.

Nicole Jamet also then goes on to highlight the importance for screenwriters to be bilingual; and this is not yet very common. Concerning this subject, she insists upon the importance of working on the training of screenwriters and this, especially, hand in hand with the screenwriters' guild.

Debra Abramowicz goes back over the importance of being able to speak English, even if it is just to exchange ideas with other screenwriters. She feels that co-producers should be incited to follow the example of what has been done in animation for ages.

If needs be, the importance of the development towards international co-productions which are easier to put into place is raised since today, budgetary issues are such that there can no longer be really ambitious projects which are not internationally co-financed and designed for overseas exploitation.

Language difficulties are once again explored taking into account the fact that for broadcasting in some countries, it will be obviously necessary to rewrite the series in the language in question. The grading of the screenwriters' involvement is then mentioned, as some people can be put in charge of the « concept » while others are in charge of the dialogue and the sometimes necessary cultural adaptation. Besides, it is perhaps necessary, in the future, to work more on the concepts in order to leave more space available for any eventual national adaptations, where necessary.

THEORETICAL ADVANTAGE OVER PRACTICAL ADVANTAGE

Philippe Lyon underlines a real paradox which shows that, theoretically, French law is particularly protective but that, in practice, it is in the United States that screenwriters manage to make a living and get paid. It

seems to him that we are in an interesting transitional period and looking at something that is in the process of taking place that we need to meet head-on in order to find solutions which would really enable us to make international co-productions happen with, comprehensible joint contracts for screenwriters.

It is thus suggested to work jointly with the SACD and to ask it, for example, to translate these collective conventions and regulations of the American guilds which are so thorough and so difficult to understand both for a French screenwriter as for a French producer.

Debra Abramowicz cannot ensure that this can be done, but will transmit the request and she reminds us that the SACD does offer advice for screenwriters and producers who want to negotiate in English. The contracts that are handed over are translated and it is explained to the agents from Anglo-Saxon countries what they must change in order to declare their works at the SACD. This is done free of charge.

THE DEBATE IS THROWN OPEN TO THE FLOOR : A NECESSARY UNION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FIELD, A STANDARDISATION AND A COMBINATION OF THE EFFORTS MADE BY EVERYONE

From the floor, questions are asked by young screenwriters who state that more and more often, they have to set up their own production company because nowadays, a screenwriter who wants to be received by a broadcaster is not as the broadcaster only receives producers. This is obviously not an ideal solution and the members of this field would be well-advised to get together in order to find better ways of doing things. The American show-runner is, for example, a screenwriter who has a great deal of influence and who combines his influence with that of the producer. Being too scattered, screenwriters are not powerful enough. They must unite in order to work together to improve their status and the consideration of their rights. And this essential work cannot come about solely between screenwriters and producers, without the broadcasters. We must make everyone aware of the urgency of the situation and the importance, on behalf of all the industry, to deal with these issues. This is even more important for the world of television in which the producer has less freedom than in films and is, even more closely linked to the explicit and implicit decisions made by the broadcaster.

Nicole Jamet insists upon the need to see the profession unite : producers, directors, screenwriters must get together and jointly find ways of working more efficiently in the creation of interesting series, in the consideration of the rights and the interests of every individual. This will in the same way facilitate international co-productions which are more and more often the only possibility for getting a large-scale project off the ground.

In France, this country rich in institutions that promote creation and highly efficient support and innovation systems, the situation is far from being desperate. This does not waive, however, the need for a strategy of concertation, clarification and simplification. Nicole Jamet is convinced of it : to ensure a creative and productive future, we need to fight to succeed, together.





EUROPEAN COPRODUCTION OF SERIES

Drawing a picture of today's situation of European co-productions

Guest speakers :

Tinny ANDREATTA, head of co-production, Rai fiction (Italy) / Stefan BARON, head of drama, SVT (Sweden) / Ingolf GABOLD, producer Eyeworks, former head of fiction for DR (Denmark) / Beatriz HERZOG Ruiz de Alegria, drama executive, Antena 3 (Spain) / Fabrice DE LA PATELLIÈRE, head of drama, Canal + (France) / Daniel ISAACS, chief operating officer, Kudos Films & TV (Great Britain) / Luca MILANO, director of marketing and animation, Rai fiction (Italy) / Dominic MINGHELLA, show-runner and screenwriter (Great Britain) / Tone C. RONNING, head of fiction, NRK (Norway) / Aviva SILVER, head of unit, Programme Media (Europe – Belgium) / Arlette ZYLBERBERG, ead of drama, RTBF (Belgium) / Steven VAN ZANDT, actor (USA)

Moderated by :

Jean-Marc AUCLAIR, screenwriter

Before opening the debate, Jean-Marc Auclair asks Aviva Silver to talk about market trends and on-going developments.

Although digital activity affects films and television differently, the multiplication of channel platforms and the use of social networks have a major impact on investment. When it comes to Europe, for example, it can be seen that the sharing out of advertising takings on this multitude of platforms has a negative effect on investment in fiction programmes. The question can also be raised about the visibility of works and the promotion of European content. Aviva Silver wishes it to be noted that the Americans have got an advantage on this point, but also that the series cannot have a highly positive promotional effect for the channel which broadcasts it. However, Europe must be in a position to take advantage of these developments.

A debate was organized yesterday on the work of the show-runner and its importance in getting a major series accepted for co-production. What are the new professions ? What are the necessary training schemes for this new environment ? The media programme supports three streams for television ; the first concerns training, which is intended to be international. Recognising that the market does not stop at Europe's borders, training schemes are set up with Argentina or even South Korea. The second stream is support for project development, and the third concerns aid for TV distribution (support given to independent producers for creating audiovisual works). The new media programme for 2014 aims to broaden its scope and will propose modules on new forms of writing, new professions (the show-runner) and co-production.

Jean-Marc Auclair proposes to open the debate and asks all those participating about the state of co-production in their respective countries.

Britain occupies a place apart on the European audiovisual scene. Daniel Isaacs states that the number of co-productions there is still very low, out of all of the new series which have been programmed these last 11 months, only two are co-produced with European partners. The funding mechanisms are such that channels rarely resort to them, and if ever they do, it is with the intention of producing series « on a much larger scale » and more ambitious or those which deal with subjects which are rarely – so as not to say never – dealt with in the fiction programmes offered by local broadcasters. Traditionally, Britain offers mini-series or historical fictions which are essentially aimed at local markets. Nowadays, however, English broadcasters are attempting to compete with fiction programmes developed in the United States, and these new ambitions demand much higher budgets, which will require – Daniel Isaacs is convinced of it – English channels to open up to co-productions. This inevitable transition will, however,

be slow. If BBC One and ITV are still very reluctant, the ambitions of the Sky group – which really intends to be more developed in the fiction programme market – are more orientated towards international dealings, as the satellite group wishes to offer viewers different products.

The case of Spain is slightly similar, notes Beatriz Herzog Ruiz de Alegria. It is true that the number of co-productions is still limited there. However, the situation is in the process of changing, and a channel like Antena 3 is gradually turning towards European partners. Spanish channels – in the same way as English ones – have always favoured fiction programmes that are set in a purely local context. This being said, viewers' tastes, especially those of the youngest members, have evolved and resorting to co-productions does not respond as much to a need for extra finances as to the need to develop new subject matter.

Belgium co-produces between 40 and 50 episodes of French series a year, and this is essentially for reasons of broadcasting rights. However, she has the most difficulty in getting Belgian series co-produced by France. It is true that, as Arlette Zylberberg underlines, Belgium didn't have any screenwriters for TV series. Since 8 years, the aim has been to promote the writing of series on a Belgian initiative. Paradoxically, although European co-productions are flourishing, Belgium is trying, to the contrary, to develop production approaches that are on a more local basis. Having said this, if Belgium does not co-produce series with other countries than France, it is also because the Belgian French-speaking television refuses to broadcast series in the original language with sub-titles.

In Italy, traditionally, international co-productions went hand in hand with major TV events. Luca Milano quotes the example of Franco Zeffereilli's 'Jesus of Nazareth' in the Seventies or more recently, 'Coco Chanel' or 'Pinocchio'; fiction programmes that deal with popular and well-known topics, being able to attract a European or even American viewing public. Nowadays, the trend is, for reasons that are both economic and editorial, to co-produce European series, in response to the emergence of a « European culture » amongst viewers, especially the youngest. In this way, Rai develops numerous partnerships with France and Germany. The attempts at co-productions with the English are rarer, the channels – most particularly the BBC – refusing any interference in the writing process ... And Tinny Andreatta draws attention to the fact that « the English want money, but nothing more ». Daniel Isaacs confirms it, explaining that English broadcasters feel that the subject matter must be aimed in priority at British viewers ; for them, English and Italian viewers' tastes are too different. Fabrice de La Patellière then remarks that the highly competitive



context compels broadcasters to find programmes that are more and more powerful. Canal +, a pay-channel, has to nowadays offer its subscribers series which can compete, in the international market, with programmes coming from the North-American market. Co-production allows us to double - or more - budgets for series and to get hold of subjects which it would be impossible to tackle in a local production ; the greatest difficulty being to find common subjects, without falling into the trap of the « European pudding ». It is, according to Dominic Minghella, one of the great risks producers who are involved in a co-production are confronted with, as the series produced, « through trying to get through to everyone, you do not get through to anyone » ! This fits into the debate on the difficulties Italy went through to develop co-production with Britain. The channels on the European market are very different, especially in terms of image, and broadcasters, unlike producers, have the greatest difficulty in identifying potential partners. Fabrice de La Patellière is convinced that « a project cannot hover between two artistic directions ». Co-productions are only viable if beforehand we ensure that the broadcasters share the same artistic vision.

According to Tone C. Rolling, the storyline takes prevails over all the other elements. « If the storyline is good, all the rest will fall into place ». She takes for example the series 'Lilyhammer', a co-production between the Norwegian channel NRK and Netflix, the VOD giant in the United States. It is the strength of the storyline which appealed to Steven Van Zandt and which made him accept the leading role in the series. In any event, Scandinavian countries have a long tradition in terms of co-production, a Nordic financing fund having been set up a very long time ago.

Jean-Marc Auclair brings up the issue of language. Are co-produced series necessarily made in English ? On this point, even if he admits that English is the language used in exchanges, Fabrice de la Patellière is convinced that it can be imagined that co-produced series are not filmed solely in the English language. Thus, Canal+ and Kudos are currently working on the adaptation of the magnificent series 'Broen' and uphold the principle of the coming together of two cultures : in this case France and England. In the original series, the body which was found in the middle of the bridge which links Sweden to Denmark, will be found, in this new version, in the middle of the Channel Tunnel. It must be noted, moreover, that an American adaptation of the same series is in the process of being drafted.

Still on the subject of language, Ingolf Gabold recalls that Europe is a multicultural continent and that the huge variety of languages spoken there gives it its strength. Unfortunately, broadcasters are reluctant to programme foreign series in subtitled original version. He takes as an example the case of a Danish and German co-production. The series was filmed in 13 European countries with local actors each speaking their own language. In Scandinavian countries, the series was shown in original version. In Germany, the broadcasters decided to dub the work in German, which meant that, in the end, all the characters spoke German. The very concept of the series had failed : it no longer made any sense. Series must respect everyone's identity and particularity.

'Lilyhammer' constitutes, in this respect, the best example of a co-production which was able to respect the specificities of the two countries associated : Norway and the United States. Cultural differences are the very subject of the series. Steven Van Zandt was convinced that 'Lilyhammer' should be « the most Norwegian possible ». Moreover, the American producers' keen interest in the series was such that they decided, for broadcasting in the United States – and this is a unique case – not to dub the Norwegian dialogues in English, in order to preserve the originality of the concept. Steven Van Zandt learnt from David Chase (the creator of the TV series 'The Sopranos') that « the more singular you are, the more universal you are » ; proof that co-productions are the future of TV fiction.



'REAL HUMANS' (Sweden – SVT) Case study

Guest speakers :

Stefan BARON, executive producer and head of fiction, SVT

Harald HAMRELL, director

Lars LUNDSTRÖM, screenwriter and creator Matador Films

Lisette PAGLER et Pia HALVORSEN, actresses

Henrik WIDMAN, producer Matador Film

Moderated by :

Philippe TRIBOIT, director

Those who have had the chance to attend the projection of the first episode of 'Real Humans' (Äkta Människor) will have understood that this series occupies a special place on the Swedish audiovisual scene. Indeed, contrary to Anglo-Saxon countries, Sweden (like France, by the way) is not traditionally keen on science-fiction. It is, however, in this universe that the series 'Real Humans' evolves, depicting a society in which humanoid robots have become everyday objects. Before coming back to this universe which is as astonishing as it is fascinating, Philippe Triboit asks the participants to present the TV fiction scene in Sweden.

With a 35% market share, Stefan Baron adds that STV1 (which belongs to the public group Sveriges Television) is the number one channel in Sweden. Its top rival is the private channel TV4 which ranks second (30% market share). Then come STV2 and two other commercial channels : Kanal 5 (ProSieben group) and TV3 (Modern Times group). With two fiction evenings a week – on Sunday and Monday evenings – the STV group is the number one broadcaster of original Swedish fiction programmes. STV1 produces 4 series a year, 5 mini-series and 1 sitcom. 40% of the series are today produced in-house, but this percentage has continued to fall for the last 4 years and should stabilise at 25%, the group having chosen to call upon independent studios more and more. TV4 produces essentially crime fiction, programmed in the nine o'clock slot on Sunday evenings. TV3 is more specialised in sitcoms, but certain rumours are going around that the channel wishes to branch out into the fiction market ; a competition that Stefan Baron regards as being positive, in as much as it will enable the availability of fiction programmes to increase in Sweden.

Asked about the origins of 'Real Humans', Lars Lundström says that « the idea came out of my head as if by a miracle », about seven years ago. The project seemed to him, at the time, too ambitious. All the more so because it is highly unusual to produce science-fiction series in Scandinavia, this genre being more associated with the United States. He therefore gave up on the project. The first episode of the series 'True Blood' (broadcast on HBO) proved to him that it was possible to impose a universe – as unusual as it may be – without prior explanation. The universe of 'True Blood' sets its own style and Lars Lundström understood that he could create a universe which the viewer could believe in without explaining how the robots came about. From the first episode onwards, the Hubots (humans + robots) exist, and what matters is not so much to talk about how they were made but to start from their very existence in order to develop storylines. 'Real Humans', is, in this way, a marvellous « story-telling machine ». Lars Lundström started working on the script in 2009 and completed it in September 2012, knowing that shooting had started in April 2011. The shooting of the season was divided into three blocks : two blocks of four episodes and a last one of two, the decision to produce 10 episodes (of 60 minutes) having been made long beforehand. The fact that he continued writing during shooting and seeing the robots in the flesh enabled him to be flexible in his way of writing. In the same way, the fact of seeing the quality of certain actors' way of acting inspired him to give their roles more substance.

The audiovisual industry in Sweden is made up of a small community in which everyone knows each other and Henrik Widman presented the project directly to Stefan Baron, who quickly expressed his enthusiasm. Concerning this, Lars Lundström praises Stefan Baron's courage as the latter was very much involved in all stages of the conception of the series and of its production. As science-fiction is not a unifying genre, the project could have never come into being without his involvement. Saying this, the series being, to say the least, unusual, Matador decided to shoot a pilot of several minutes to convince the directors at SVT. Harald Hamrell, who confesses that this idea seemed to him a little strange, was put in charge of directing it. He has filmed a great deal for television and it was the first time that he had been asked to direct a pilot. Today, he feels that it was « the best thing that could ever happen ». This seven minute fragment enabled him to not only define the visual aspect of the series, but, at the same time the robots' movements.

In terms of casting, the producers wanted the roles of robots to be attributed to little known actors, and this was to make it easier for viewers to believe in the universe which they saw. It is, of course, difficult for an actor used to expressing a whole range of emotions to handle the robots' coldness. The actress Lisette Pagler, who played a Hubot, relied on her experience as a professional dancer to control her body language. A workshop was organised with a mime coach to define a common body language for the all of the robots and to teach the actors how to break down their movements. However, during rehearsals, Harald Hamrell demanded that the actors playing the robots should act as though they were interpreting human beings, so that they really immersed themselves in the dramatic tension of the scene. During the shooting, all that remained was for the actors to add « a robotic layer » to their acting. It was enough for them, for example, to not look the other actors straight in the eye, but rather « between the eyes ». Pia Halvorsen, who plays a more traditional role, had to get used to working with actors whose style of acting was, for the least, minimalistic. The hubots are not really machines and the relationship that her character has with the robots incarnates the theme of the series ; that is, what makes human beings human.

Jean-Marc Auclair asks about the use of music in the series and would like to know at which stage of production the composer comes into play. Lars Lundström states that he listens to a lot of music when he is writing, but that this is never used in the end. In the case of 'Real Humans', the composer was brought in during the final stages of the editing of the first episode.

Asked about directing a second season, Stefan Baron replies that the commission was on its way, but that it has still not been made official. He adds that the option for a second season was not included in the actors' contracts, which complicates the process. On this precise point, Henrik Widman states that the actors have been rapidly informed that the aim was to shoot 2 or 3 seasons ; which Pia Halvorsen confirms.



QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

What were the ratings for the series?

Stefan Baron states that the ratings for the first two episodes of 'Real Humans', shown on Sunday evening were a little lower than expected. The series attracted 850,000 people, or 20% of the market, instead of the 25% that was hoped for. And yet, it has to be said that competition was very fierce, TV4 broadcasting on the same evening – at the same time – two previously unreleased episodes of 'Wallender'. Whatever, the media impact was enormous ; even the sports newspapers ended up referring to Äkta Människor!

How much does an episode cost?

The average sum of €1,000,000 is given.

What made Lars Lundström add to his role of creator that of co-producer?

Lars Lundström answers that the idea came to him very naturally. It seemed normal to him, considering the time he had invested in the development of the series, to hold onto the ownership. Henrik Widman adds that the position of co-producer allows him to maintain a really strong position in the decision-making process.

The series is halfway between several universes ; that of science-fiction, obviously, but equally those of a thriller, a horror story and a family chronicle. Was this choice deliberate ? Had it been imposed by the channel to « keep the viewers hooked » ?

This choice was deliberate and Lars Lundström was very attached to it. He wanted, right from the start, to mix several genres (the thriller, comedy and drama) which being persuaded that he should emphasise the emotional subject matter of the series. The fact of constantly mixing up all these universes made it effectively possible to keep the viewer hooked, as he never knows where the series is going to take him. Anything is possible. Saying that, the broadcasting slot of the series being traditionally reserved for crime fiction programmes, it was decided that the opening sequence of the first episode had to be shot like a thriller.





'THE KILLING' (Denmark) Case study

Guest speaker :

Ingolf GABOLD, producer Eyeworks, former head of fiction at DR

Moderated by :

François ANGELIER, producer of the programme 'Mauvais genres' on France Culture, and Benoît LAGANE, delegate producer of the programme 'Le Rendez-vous' by Laurent GOUMARRE

INTERVIEW / MASTERCLASS

Benoît Lagane praises the artistic director of the two not-to-be-missed series which are 'The Killing' and 'Borgen', reminding us that he started his career in music. How do you accomplish such a transition towards the Danish and European audiovisual scene?

Ingolf Gabold has been influenced by composers such as Stockhausen, Boulez or even Cage, who have largely guided his musical work. Despite his already significant role, at the time, in the Danish symphonic tradition, he felt the need to address an even vaster audience, via television. Of course, he by no means denies the expressive strength in music, which he deeply believes in, but he wanted to turn towards TV fiction which mixes up all the ingredients to create emotion: the sound, the image, the lighting, the colours, the framing, the actors, the costumes, the special effects... He recalls the scene from 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' which portrays Jack Nicholson interned in an asylum, guided by a disturbing woman, against the background music of Beethoven's 5th, the door – the trap – closes behind him...; a scene whose sensorial powerfulness is absolute! It is this absoluteness, this plurality which attracted him and made him want to undertake this new profession, for which Lars von Trier had, in turn, greatly influenced him; he remains, moreover, to this day, a major source of inspiration for him. It should be remembered that he worked alongside him during the Nineties on the series 'The Kingdom' (The hospital and its ghosts), shown on the channel DR1, at the beginning of the 21st century, of which Benoît Lagane highlights, in passing, the « wider audience » orientated programming policy, than its more cultural neighbour DR2 and the narrower target; as it happens, two complementary channels reunited in one and the same house.

François Angelier then talks about the very powerful psychological dimension of the characters in 'The Killing' as well as the particular treatment of this series with its slow pace which enables us to penetrate their intimacy...

Ingolf Gabold states that a series must be « characterised », have a specificity. This can indeed come from the characters or from the tempo of the narrative. More generally, he proposes to examine the keys to success concerning TV series.

In the first place – what he considers to be the indispensable condition of a good series –, there is the screenwriter. He is the creator, the only person who owns the original concept, it is he who « creates the verb », the « world » of the series. Neither the producer, nor the broadcaster have their word to say on this starting point. What counts above everything, is this intimate internal dialogue to be set up between a writer and an audience. The success of the series will depend on the ability to defend the writers' « unique vision ».

As it happens, the strength of 'The Killing' resides in a specific idea: the murder of a young girl will bring her loved ones closer together. Beyond the detective story plot, it is the « threats of fate » which give the series emotional intensity. After 20 episodes, the murderer has still not been identified and the viewers are still there, beside the victim's family and friends. It must be said that Karen Blixen is particularly gifted at writing about the notion of « fate »; she was especially so in her novel 'Out of Africa' adapted, this time, for cinema.

Benoît Lagane then asks Ingolf Gabold about the adaptation of 'The Killing' in the United States, and the latter then says that the Americans are in total control of what they buy, which they put their mark on. Also, you cannot ask anything from them; but, however, he notes that, in keeping with his own personal wish, the focal point remains what is human in this American version. He proposes the projection of the opening scene of the pilot episode of both versions to the audience, in order to make a comparison. The frenzied, desperate running away before the murder, then the discovery of the body and the horror experienced by the victim's parents are, in both cases, the subject of an effectiveness and dreadful intimate violence, in the visual and sound aesthetic qualities, on the whole comparable.

More generally, Ingolf Gabold says that in terms of selling the rights abroad, and more particularly to the Americans, the main thing is to build up trust. During the talks, you must, in fact, listen very carefully to the people you are talking to, understand what they like and want to do. It is on this human level that really « good relations » are built, not contractually speaking; as the terms of the contract are more often than not non-negotiable, given the underlying financial stakes. Also, the transposition to another culture is carried out in the best conditions if time has been taken to listen to one another mutually. It is true that, as it happens, the portrayal of violence and sexuality in the original version of 'The Killing' is particularly « crude »; it was therefore obvious that this would probably have to be « reprocessed » for other countries and target-audiences. Asked more generally about the rules of co-production, Ingolf Gabold underlines the importance of cultural diversity which is particularly intense in Europe. We must therefore, preserve our respective DNA, and combine it in order to be stronger and more creative. Co-productions must be the expression of these cultural alliances. His message here is political: « let's preserve our identities in order to feel much more European, including within the sphere of TV fiction programmes ».

Ingolf Gabold then talks about the particular character of Scandinavian fiction programmes which, beyond « the good story » are intended to deal with human relationships and social issues. In 'Borgen' a typically Danish series which deals with the political system of the country, the balance is subtle between this socio-cultural component peculiar to the Danish and the parallel human issues and adventures which are more universal. And it is this that made it an exportable series (the series was awarded 4 BAFTA in the United Kingdom). In fact, any woman wanting to « make a career for herself » would see herself in the leading female character, wife and public figure at the same time. It is this « double plot », mixing what is intimate and what is social, which captures the viewer, wherever he comes from. There again, it is not so much the anecdotes and the twists and turns of the plot which make the series exportable, as the characters' « trail of fate ».

Ingolf Gabold then proposes an illustration of this double plot – which is the writer's responsibility alone. Via two scenes from 'Borgen' (shown to the audience): the first shows the wife, who asks for her husband's advice concerning what she should wear for her TV appearance... She has put on weight and can no longer get into the elegant black dress that she had planned to wear; we are in the intimacy of her private marital family life.



The following scene takes place on the set of the TV programme in question – which is decisive for her career –, on which she appears alongside her main rivals, in a dress which is finally coloured, yet rather unexpected. Her speech is a sort of diatribe against political doublespeak, a flight of lyricism in favour of a real transparent democracy for Man. And she goes all out to use her femininity and her humanity to win the hearts of the viewers, her future electors.

Beyond this example, Ingolf Gabold likes to refer more generally to the mechanism of Greek tragedies. In ancient theatre, the worst cruelty always comes from the family. It is also on this ancestral reality that he likes to build his work as a TV series producer. It is one of the assets which guarantee success. To close, he adds to all this a final ingredient, with a more typically Scandinavian flavour, which, moreover, can also be found in Lars Von Trier's work, i.e. a certain darkness, a strange obscure atmosphere in slow motion, like an autumn or a winter that goes on forever... To conclude, he quotes this eloquent poem which according to him sums up the character of this particular Scandinavian atmosphere: « January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, November, November, December »...

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FINANCIAL TOOL KIT FOR PRODUCERS IN EUROPE

Guest speakers :

Jean-Baptiste BABIN, Back Up Films

Baptiste COELHO, Back Up Films

THE USEFULNESS OF DIVERSIFYING FINANCING SOURCES

Jean-Baptiste Babin and Baptiste Coelho quickly present their company Back Up Films, which is neither a producer nor a broadcaster and yet, which, as a financier, takes part in the film and television world. Indeed, their line of work is to find money to add to that of producers, outside their territory. Baptiste Coelho, the financial director, states that they invest directly in production and that they have already financed, in this way, seven generations of French films. Jean-Baptiste Babin adds that this goes from genre films to animation, and since recently, to the series sector. As it happens, thanks to fifteen investment funds, they have up till now participated in the financing of 45 series, mainly animation series but not only. This expansion towards series seems to them completely natural as this means of expression also needs international funds to add to the initial domestic financing. Jean-Baptiste Babin underlines that currently the context and the way of conducting business are changing in the media industry, more specifically in the financing of TV series. Indeed, for a long time, a broadcaster commissioned a producer, and when the series was delivered it was not considered as an asset as it did not have a residual value, once it had been broadcast. It was therefore difficult, not to say impossible, to finance these projects in a traditional financial investment perspective. In the new perspective of asset-building and with the will to loosen a little the bond of dependency between the producer and the broadcaster, all other financing methods must develop in a territory which becomes at least European.

SOFT MONEY, MARKET MONEY AND HARD MONEY

Baptiste Coelho enumerates different ways of financing a project, with at first « soft money » which comes from funds which do not require anything in return, most of the time based on subsidies. As it happens, the sources are often regional with dramatic disparities. The German tradition is particularly significant in this area, but this financial assistance gives rise to a few « territorial involvements ».

On this subject, he goes on to talk about tax credit, tax shelters in Belgium and Luxembourg, or also financing carried out by the CNC, the particularly dynamic supervisory body, even if it risks seeing some of its practices threatened by the European community...

The co-production solutions are equally mentioned in this area, knowing that there are, once again, always things in return which even if they are not financial can be restricting from an artistic or even organisational point of view. As the English say, « nothing is free », and it is vital to weigh up the pros and cons before committing yourself to a co-production which, moreover, becomes more than marginally complex when the number of partners increases.

These schemes (Sofica, Tepa, etc...) have generally existed for a long time, the producers are well aware of their existence, but nothing guarantees anything, neither their life expectancy nor their generosity, as the current economic context is forcing so much each state to cut back on expenditure, and especially to reduce the number of « tax loopholes ». It is therefore important to find a way of adding to this « soft money ».

Now, beyond the topic of « soft money », there is also « market money ». This money comes from the markets and will allow us to finance assets produced in a « market perspective ». This generally comes into play after the first part of « soft » financing, and after the producer has already raised eventual local subsidies. In this way, these subsidies which sometimes entitle them to grants to help fund broadcasting, generally come from small territories with a turnover of €150 to 200K and leave free access to look for financing in larger territories.

Now we come to « hard money », which groups together all the other possible capital contributions, and notably fund investments. Investors then acquire the rights to broadcast, invest in futures, take risks and moreover often take the risk of financing the « development ».

Jean-Baptiste Babin adds that it is more particularly in this area that series with a commercial potential for overseas development are looked for, this potential also being able to add to the success in the country of origin. He adds then that it can be useful to make the distinction between the commercialisation of a project and the good use of a portfolio. Baptiste Coelho states that his company sees many producers come and present projects because it is so important to have available a variety of funding especially for the ambitious projects which are generally series.

It is in the heart of this analysis that is brought up one of the specificities of the audiovisual sector, for which financial aid is not made easy by the huge asymmetry between loss and gain. Indeed, although a success can rapidly make 120 to 130% profit, failure can often lead to there being no return at all. Therefore, we find ourselves, in this case, in a situation of being « condemned to succeed ». A « profitability buffer » is then used to get those who can afford it to agree to financing this type of industry, by making use of tax reduction schemes – which perhaps will not be around for much longer.

CHANGING LOGIC, AN ISSUE SO THAT THE WORLD OF FINANCE CAN TAKE PART IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY MORE

Several examples of series which have managed to go through the process of this « logic of assets » are given ; the world of finance has thus been able to contribute towards funding them.

Jean-Baptiste Babin and Baptiste Coelho feel that it is indeed possible, not only to raise funds and to invest them in the media, but equally to attract private equity towards the audiovisual industry. 90% of the funds that they have today – often enhanced thanks to tax reduction and tax credit schemes – are reinvested in the film industry and more generally in the audiovisual industry.

EIS Entreprise in London, or also AIE in Spain are quoted as examples of financial instruments which can be mobilised, the former being a super Sofica that can be pushed up to £10m per tax household, the latter having made a low-key appearance, often attacked as a cash flow product for companies. It has suffered from the bankruptcy of the Spanish banks. Attention is drawn to a sort of bad reputation it has earned, due to a few financial disasters, but also more deeply to a culture where transparency does not prevail ... Thus, convincing the investors is no small task.



If needs be, it is noted that today, Luxembourg is a veritable Eldorado as shooting in this country allows, as soon as half the budget has been financed, a third of the budget to be guaranteed.

TO DETERMINE THE ACCEPTABLE MONETARY COST : MEASURE YOUR FINANCIAL PARTNER'S RISK LEVEL !

Baptiste Coelho insists on the need to diversify financing sources and, for someone who accompanies the producer, on the importance of choosing between the different means of financing. The choice is made on two levels, that of risk, step by step, and that of the monetary cost.

Jean-Baptiste Babin proposes, in fact, that producers learn how to take into account the degree of risk carried by the financial partner. Right at the bottom of the ladder, the person who takes the less risks is the one who brings in the funds. This happens in France as part of a counter-guarantee or else by discounting the investment in solid companies, with a State guarantee. The conditions are relatively comfortable, and in any case more comfortable than for someone who would take a risk on export. The latter, banking on « potential », will only be able to count on the company resources. In the middle of the scale, there are loans with a limited return on film takings, and the financial co-productions with, once more, risk-taking modulated between the short term and the medium term.

Obviously, if there were a perfect cocktail between soft, market and hard money, we would know about it. Therefore, for each project, we have to connect the three great financing families and bet in one go on the commercial potential, and the possibility to extend the projects over several territories.

Asked by the floor, the financial experts state that they make money not only when fund-raising has been achieved, but also on the management of funds with a lump sum payment, as it happens the weakest part of the market. It is therefore the funds themselves which pay them and which take all the risk of their investors. In the role of « packager », someone who accompanies, payment is made in a lump-sum or by means of commissions. It is up to the client to choose knowing that Back up Films is never in competition with its clients and therefore with the producers. The commission on the money raised is around 10% of presale commissions and can go up to 15%.

Asked about the existence of eventual artistic criteria in the choice of projects that they participate in, Jean-Baptiste Babin and Baptiste Coelho confirm in the end that one of their associates is also an « artistic director » and every year he examines about 800 projects. They base their independence on these criteria. Obviously, the editorial coherence is not always perfect, especially because they have to satisfy a certain volume logic, but all the funds are administrated by an independent board – always comprising a shareholding member of Sofica – and each one has its own « personality ».

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THE ORIGINAL MUSIC OF TELEVISION SERIES

Guest speakers :

Christophe JULIEN, composer, 'Kaboul Kitchen'

Allan MAUDUIT, director, 'Kaboul Kitchen'

Hervé HADMAR, screenwriter and director, 'Pigalle la Nuit'

Eric DEMARSAN, composer, 'Pigalle la Nuit'

Christine DE BOURBON-BUSSET, producer, 'Pigalle la Nuit'

Uno HELMERSSON, Patrick ANDREN, Johan SODERQVIST, composers, 'The Bridge'

Moderated by :

Nicolas JORELLE, composer

During the preamble, thanks are particularly given to the SACEM, a partner of Série Series.

COULD MUSIC FOR SERIES BE CONSIDERED A SPECIFIC GENRE ?

Allen Mauduit feels that there is a highly particular expectation in terms of music for series. Firstly, because in general, the volume of music that is needed is enormous. Therefore, it is useful to make clear and recognisable choices. For a series like 'Kaboul Kitchen', he wanted rock 'n' roll music for a rock 'n' roll series, both in terms of writing and of music. To this was added a desire to define colours by attempting to associate each of them to each character, but this very often falls apart at the seams. Finally, once an initial musical treasure trove has been put together, it is during editing that we dip into this musical reserve, and the more the composer has provided, the more the choices can be right, surprising and relevant.

We are obviously reminded that there is much less time to work on a soundtrack for a series than for a feature film and it important to have a stock from which we can draw as we go along during editing. Hervé Hadmar confirms that the soundtrack is very different from the one carried out for a feature film, even if it is always about expressing through the music who the characters are and the emotions that come to life from deep inside them. The music expresses these emotions that do not come out through the dialogue. However, basically, composing is no more different for a series than for films ; in any case, there are no less demands.

The small amount of time that can be left to the composer to write music is moreover rather a factor of extra requirement that imposes an intense preparatory work.

Nicolas Jorelle insists on the fact that it is important –even more particularly when you compose for a series - to work on the themes and a tone that figure regularly and will contribute towards holding the viewer's interest.

Eric Demarsan says that he is one of those who do not like themes very much and whenever he writes one, he always gets around this by camouflaging it in the orchestration so that it is not « understood » straight away. Hervé Hadmar adds that it can be useful to have a few seconds of music linked to such and such emotions, a few themes and to have all these available even before filming. In this way, the music is really taking part in the writing process.

Allan Mauduit tells us how to follow the same direction as the storyline, he found out about Afghan music, he bought a few traditional instruments, how he tried to integrate them into the rock 'n' roll spirit of the soundtrack and how finally before shooting took place, he provided an hour of music which he elaborated after the reactions during editing. The fact of shooting, in general, several episodes at the same

time, contributes equally towards advocating a way of operating with a musical database, composed beforehand, which the director can dip into as he goes along.

And then, what counts for everything in a series counts equally for the music. Budgetary issues mean that we are very often on a « knife edge ». Hervé Hadmar adds that the soundtrack for 'Pigalle' was written and then recorded with a symphonic orchestra, that there was no way that he was going to call upon a second time. The film crew therefore came from Sofia with 90 minutes of finalised music. This did not prevent them from increasing the amount of « stock » by notably using tracks in a selective way and then by getting by through mixing ; in this way the variations become infinite. As an example, Eric Demarsan says that from one hour of recording alone, he finally obtained more than four hours of music by choosing to keep back sometimes the whole orchestra, sometimes just the strings, by sometimes insisting more on the double basses and by reworking all this during mixing. Hervé Hadmar adds that he is obviously very lucky that the composer lets him « mess about » with his music in this way !

It is useful to take advantage of all the skills of those taking part in the series. Thus, when one of the actors of the series is a great jazzman, it will be highly advisable to ask him to play a bit of saxophone and to improvise using the « themes » specifically proposed for the series. Technological breakthroughs are equally mentioned because today, different types of recording can contribute to the same soundtrack, and it is possible for certain people to produce an excellent title just by using their telephone. Other people talk about software which enables them to play with what is prerecorded, and for example to make one second of music potentially last centuries.

Christophe Julien adds that finally it is not so much the format that influences the work on the music but more the genre. Indeed, the music for a comedy is not the same as that conceived for a thriller, the music often occurring in harmony with the story.

THE COMPOSER, A PERSON ON HIS OWN OR THE MEMBER OF A TEAM ?

Uno Helmersson, Patrick Andrén and Johan Söderqvist are, the three of them, a curiosity, as if composition can generally seem a particularly solitary action, they work together, and sign their music together. As it happens, they are responsible for creating the musical universe of the Scandinavian series 'The Bridge'. When asked about this alchemy which enables them to work together, they answer that they had firstly had the time to get to know each other, having already worked with one another on several occasions ; Uno Helmersson and Patrick Andrén being Johan Söderqvist's assistants. They have since found a symbiosis which means that today, when they listen to their music, it is often really difficult for them to know who is responsible for what. The daily teamwork obviously contributes equally towards weaving the necessary unity between the composers.

They composed the music for 'The Bridge', and say that they very easily discovered how to organize their strengths and weaknesses. One devoted himself specifically to the percussion, another to the guitar



and the third to giving generic impulse. The director of the series had, moreover, clear ideas about the type of music she wanted : the bridge in the series looks like a cross, it is a strange go-between and the music at the same time transversal and transcendent, a bit surprising, weird and disturbing has to resemble it.

A simple principle was thus chosen : « if before you were used to doing it like this, this time just do exactly the opposite ». In this way, the acoustic music was created like a piece of electric music and inversely the electronic music was treated so that it was played like acoustic music. It seems to them that as a result they have found an interesting area of expression which contributes towards enhancing the atmosphere and the personality of the series.

Nicolas Jorelle asking them if they are also the writers of the title song for the series, Johan Söderqvist answers that they were not, but that he recommended buying it and he is very proud to have convinced the producers to use it. This song sets the atmosphere which can then be enhanced and twisted through all the strange music that they add to it.

ADDITIONAL MUSIC AND SOUNDTRACK : MUSIC AND THE MARKET

Nicolas Jorelle brings up the topic of additional music which is added to series. Why is ready-made music sometimes bought ? Hervé Hadmar says that he is mad about music and tells us how before starting to write, he firstly spends loads of time amongst his music collection, thinking of which artistic direction to take. In this way, he often listens to underground groups, and admits that because of that, wishing to use their music in the series, he did not make the work easy for the production which had difficulties in tracking down the rights. Christine de Bourbon-Busset confirms that work on the rights is sometimes particularly long and that it is a good idea to fix right from the start a certain amount of money, especially when there are scenes set in nightclubs in which the background music is important. According to Alain Mauduit, a large amount of coordination and musical supervision are essential to making sure that the soundtrack is consistent. It is obviously a question of artistic discussion, and not only of purchasing rights.

Johan Söderqvist adds that financial issues do not only have a bad side and that budgetary restrictions mean that sometimes you have to be particularly artful. This then makes us rediscover things that are virtually unknown, and notably the « B-sides » of records made by groups which we had initially thought of. This forced inventiveness encourages them equally to work with artists who are sometimes perhaps a little unfairly forgotten or with artists that ought to be discovered. Finally, even though these occasions for dialogue and selection are frequent, it appears even so that when a director has a piece of music in mind, it is virtually impossible to get him to change his mind... Questions being asked about the life cycle of the soundtrack of a series, certain people regretting not being able to get it on CD as has been the case a long time for film music, Hervé Hadmar reminds us that the music industry is not doing very well at the moment and that in fact, sometimes you have to wait a long time, and be very pushy so

that the music for the series can be put on sale independently from the series. As it happens, for 'Pigalle' the CDs were finally made « in house ».

Allan Mauduit adds that in fact it is not easy to convince a record company to release a CD and then you have to create the soundtrack « product ». As it happens, he wanted to mix up chosen songs with the musical score of the series and was fortunate that Sony agreed to publish this soundtrack.

Eric Demarsan confirms, as well, that there are no longer many original soundtracks from series but he himself notices that some minor labels have taken this on board and put this music on discs and on the internet, which enables the music to carry on living after the series. He has even recently experienced the release of an original soundtrack which is more than 20 years old and had never been put on the market before.

THE MUSIC, A CHARACTER IN ITS OWN RIGHT IN SERIES ?

Listening to different extracts from series and their music is the occasion to show that in series, the music has a particularly important role to play : it creates the habit, a feeling of belonging, it can also be there to link all the characters together. Hervé Hadmar shows how, in 'Pigalle', the characters were caught in a sort of spider's web and how the music, by its abstraction, enables us to get into the characters' minds without needing words. Eric Demarsan adds that at the beginning of the work on the soundtrack of this series, he had written four musical themes, one for each of the main characters of the series, then, little by little, they merged into each other thus forming only one tangled up theme in the end. It seems to him that it is perhaps one advantage amongst others of having worked with a musical library, as, if he had « written with the pictures in mind », he would perhaps not have achieved this symbiosis.

Allan Mauduit, himself, also insists on the point of this method of work, a fruitful approach which, in the end, gives composers more freedom, or at least at the beginning.

Finally, the conclusion is shared by everyone : obviously, the music participates a great deal in the signature of a series !

In partnership with *sacem*



SATURDAY 7TH JULY

‘LILYHAMMER’, (Norway – NRK)

Case study

Guest speakers :

Anne BJORNSTAD et Elif SKODVIN, authors and screenwriters

Tone C. RONNING, head of fiction, NRK

Steven VAN ZANDT, executive producer and actor

Moderated by :

Jean-Marc AUCLAIR, screenwriter

The series ‘Lilyhammer’ – which enthused all those who had the chance to attend the projection of the first episode – has become a veritable phenomenon in Norway. Shown on Wednesday evening on the Norwegian channel NRK1, the first episode attracted more than 3 million viewers (that is, a 57% market share), thus breaking all the records. Tone C. Rønning states, as an example, that the market shares of the channel are traditionally estimated at 35%. ‘Lilyhammer’ has become, moreover, the favourite series of young people aged between 12 and 29, the age group the most difficult to attract. The first season consists of eight episodes which were shown on a one episode a week basis. Re-runs were programmed on the channels NRK2 and NRK3. Viewers’ habits have changed deeply in Norway and the series also had an immense success on the internet. It is estimated that the first episode was followed by 2,5 million internet users. The series was such a phenomenon the Prime Minister did not hesitate to tweet his impressions of the series.

The topic of the series – the misadventures of a New York mobster in Norway – came to Anne Bjørnstad and Elif Skodvin from 2004.... The idea seemed to them, for a long time, too absurd, until they met Tone C. Rønning and Steven Van Zandt. They presented a pitch to Tone C. Rønning who, was thrilled with this storyline and foreseeing the success of the project, made them sign a letter of engagement, and this happened well before being certain that Steven Van Zandt would actually take part in the venture. Of course, presenting this project to the former actor of the ‘Sopranos’ quickly became an obvious choice. There are few actors in the world who are capable of playing a mobster and who are familiar with Norway. Steven Van Zandt has actually been to Scandinavia on several occasions.

It was during one of his trips in 1982 that he set foot on Norwegian soil for the first time ; a country he fell in love with. Anne Bjørnstad and Elif Skodvin approached him while he was on a tour with Bruce Springsteen and their project immediately appealed to him. Very quickly, he let them know that he wished to take part in the writing process. For this, Anne Bjørnstad and Elif Skodvin went to New York to start drafting. Steven Van Zandt recalls that actors are egocentric by nature and the biggest challenge was to create a relationship based on trust and a veritable collaboration. This first meeting allowed them to get rid of their respective fears and the drafting of the first eight episodes was spread over a year and a half.

Tone C. Rønning has also collaborated on the writing of the series, regularly sending notes or comments, but taking care not to impose limits on the writers’ freedom ; knowing that most of the debates rested on the degree of violence in the series... On this point, Steven Van Zandt recalls that although Norway had no problem, in theory, with sex and nudity – which he judges most healthy – violence is much less accepted. « For Americans, it is the opposite. » It is, moreover, this cultural difference which led Steven Van Zandt not to approach the mainstream American broadcasters. ‘Lilyhammer’ is, in this respect, the first production of the American VOD giant : Netflix.

However, Steven Van Zandt rapidly foresaw that ‘Lilyhammer’ could appeal to American and Norwegian viewers. But in order to make this

happen, he was convinced that the particularities and the singularities of both countries had to be taken into consideration. He has learnt from David Chase that « the more singular you are, the more universal you are ». In other words, the series had to be « the most Norwegian possible ». Moreover, the American co-producers’ enthusiasm for the series was such that they decided that, for the broadcasting in the United States – and this is a unique case – not to dub the Norwegian dialogues into English, in order to preserve the originality of the concept. Steven Van Zandt praises Tone C. Rønning’s courage as he supported a project in which the leading actor could not speak the language of the country in which the series took place.

Asked about directing the series, Elif Skodvin says that three directors worked on ‘Lilyhammer’. They were not involved in the development of the series. It was decided beforehand, and for reasons to do with the scriptwriting, that shooting would start in winter. It was one of the coldest winters in Norwegian history, Steven Van Zandt emphasised ! Of course, productions avoid shooting at this time of the year, the hours of daylight being too short. Regulations being very strict in Norway, the shooting was limited to five days a week and eight hours a day. It was one of the first surprises for Steven Van Zandt who, with the ‘Sopranos’, had been used to 10 or even 15 hour days. As an actor, he was delighted. As a producer, he was panic-stricken !

Jean-Marc Auclair wants to know whether the second season is in the process of being written. Anne Bjørnstad confirms that there will be a second season, but she states that for reasons that are basically logistic, drafting has not yet begun. The final episode of the first season was shown last March in Norway. Taking into consideration the accumulated lateness, it will be impossible to broadcast a second season over the same period in 2013. Elif Skodvin says that unlike the commercial channels on which different seasons of a series are broadcast with regularity, it is not unusual for NRK1 to broadcast seasons of a series at more than a year’s interval. In the same way, the Netflix model is such that they do not broadcast the series episode by episode, but the series in its entirety on their network. This method of broadcasting represents the future for Steven Van Zandt who recalls that a lot of people prefer watching the whole series in one go over a weekend rather than waiting each week to see a new episode. Tone C. Rønning adds, on this subject, that 41% of people record the episodes of the series in order to watch them when they feel like it. This is why NRK1 aims to offer viewers « what they want, where and when they want it ». To conclude, and before handing over to the floor, Jean-Marc Auclair says that ‘Lilyhammer’ will be shown on Arte in 2013.



QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

How long does shooting last ?

You have to count about 10 days shooting per episode, which is very short. Steven Van Zandt admits that this first season was under-budgeted. The creators were probably too ambitious and adjustments had to be made every day. The preparation before shooting was too short and not enough care given to pre-production. Elif Skodvin would like it to be known that Netflix was involved – financially – very late in the day on the project and that shooting started, therefore, with a budget which was reduced, to say the least. Tone C. Rønning is, however, confident as to the fact that the budget for the second season will be more in line with the crews’ ambitions.

In conclusion, Steven Van Zandt insists on the fact that Norway is not a materialistic society ; which is very shocking for an American. This explains why the budget for the series will not be revealed today. Norwegians think in terms of collaboration rather than in financial terms. This is the reason why the screenplay of ‘Lilyhammer’ was so effective. The series tells the story of the misadventures of an egocentric mobster who lands in a society in which the notion of community takes on full meaning .





'INQUISITIO' (France 2 – France) Case study

Guest speakers :

Nicolas CUCHE, director

Vladislav GALARD et Lula COTTON, actors

Moderated by :

Philippe NIANG, director

A PERIOD SERIES WHICH IS RESOLUTELY MODERN ?

First and foremost, people are astonished to see the programming of such an original and potentially controversial series within the framework of « the summertime saga ». Is this the broadcaster's choice ? Nicolas Cuhe says that it is.

It is also the occasion to recall – and for certain people to regret – that at France Télévisions, those in charge of dramas are hired and fired at a much faster rate than during the four years that passed between the creators' initial meeting with the channel and the first broadcasting at the beginning of this summer. As it happens, between the first head of fiction – the one who gave the idea the go-ahead – and the wrapping up of the project, there were three of them.

And the choice of the period which the story takes place in, this moment of schism with the papacy ... How was this made ?

For Nicolas Cuhe, it is about being part of a form of modernity, at the moment when the world was complex and blurred. Explaining this would be difficult, as it concerns a desire which developed sufficiently within his mind for him to devote several years of his life to it. It was Nicolas Cuhe who transmitted the desire to work on a story whose main character was an inquisitor, to the producer who proposed it to the channel straightaway and to a head of fiction who made the launching of the venture possible. But taking an eye-witness's account, especially during a period when the Popes slept around surreptitiously, wasn't this inevitably guaranteed to spark off a controversy ?

Nicolas Cuhe says that it is only fiction. As it happens, he has been invited to talk about this film everywhere and has, for example, been interviewed by Radio-Notre-Dame or by Le Pèlerin which understood what the project really entailed even if, in fact, when it was shown, it came to light that the film hurts a certain fringe group of Catholic fundamentalists. It obviously was not about making an attack against the Church, it was not either a « history book » exercise. It is simply in the tradition of period TV films that he situated a character in a moment in history. Perhaps, however, he had not been careful enough, and had not taken into consideration the importance of involving Catherine of Siena in the story...

Philippe Niang then reacts to this notion of « a period film », as the characters express themselves in a very modern way like we do, and we get the impression that the film is deeply inspired by the pace of video games... Nicolas Cuhe confirms that it was out of the question for him to use a falsely refined and falsely period style of talking. His storyline takes place with characters who talk like we do today, in a direct manner. The fact that the story takes place during the Middle Ages, and not during a more « educated » period as was, for instance, the Renaissance, contributes – it seems to him – towards making this naturally easier to believe.

A BREATHTAKING, INVENTIVE AND LONG-STANDING ACTING EXPERIENCE

Philippe Niang turns towards the actors, one very young one, the other who performed with an eye-patch and asked whether it had been difficult and whether there are specific elements to consider when one plays in a series that takes place over several episodes.

Vladislav Galard answers that he had had the time to think about the character from the moment he passed the casting in September 2010 and throughout the numerous testing sessions. In this way, he went from merely wanting to play this role to a sensation that he « had to » play it, a progression – which seems to him, moreover, always indispensable to be able to act well – between the theoretical encounter with the character and this moment when he really got into him. This work had been carried out many months before starting. It is what fuels at the same time, the inner nature of the character and what inspires the action, as it happens, particularly necessary in this series. Asked about the way in which casting took place, Nicolas Cuhe then answers that it was particularly difficult to get everyone to understand his deep intuition that in this series, it was not about articulating the script around an inquisitor who was uniquely and profoundly wicked. The case of misunderstanding was real, and he almost secretly struggled to be able to choose an actor who would know how to play this main character who finally he was extremely fond of. In addition, the project was important and the pressure great to choose someone who would « obviously » play the character to the best of his ability. As for the young female character, it was equally difficult to explain that it consisted of someone who was very strong. In the beginning, the temptation was to choose an older actress. But the storyline did not allow her to be too old, if it was just to avoid an impression of « incestuousness » between the characters. He had therefore to be clear with the production team : it had to be a twelve year old actress ... « And then I saw Lola, and it was patently obvious » !

Lola Cotton had already had some minor roles, but never as long. She tells how she had to adapt both her work and school routines. 15 days at school, then 15 days of home teaching. And then, she tells us, even if it was sometimes tiring, we kept going as it was so exciting and, in any case, we had to, because there was not that much time to shoot each episode !

Every day on the set, time was then taken to discuss each sequence to come ; each and every one of the crew sometimes being able to suggest a few modifications , notably in terms of language. On this matter , the work was not , moreover, exactly the same for Vladislav Galard who plays a more traditional character, and who tries to maintain order and a more ancient world and who therefore, expresses himself in a more formal style of language than, for example, Aurélien Viik's character who is more natural and more oriented towards the future.

Asked about his desire to film eventually a historical film, once again, Nicolas Cuhe answers that he would like to, even if he enjoys varying the genres. He especially appreciated this alchemy that, on the set, we get the impression of crossing the little bridge of history and, like a child , being permanently in a play mode . There is, here, a real

pleasure and a particular challenge as you have to recreate a whole new universe.

A « CINEMATOGRAPHIC » SERIES

Philippe Niang underlines the excellent visual craftsmanship of this series, its originality in this, in as much as this is often lacking on television and that it is perhaps a story that could almost be seen as « cinematographic ». The help given by special effects is an impressive example ...

Nicolas Cuhe says he had never made a period film before so he had to learn everything from scratch. He therefore started out, in theory, as a complete novice in this work and, in fact, took great care, especially in the visual and artistic field. It is the occasion to assert that he feels that this is indispensable when you are working on a series. But the difficulty is real, if only financially, as the budgets are at least four or five times lower than what is usually invested in a feature film. With 11 days to shoot an episode « you have to be smart », and choose wisely which parts you should invest more in to give the viewers what they are expecting, but also will surprise them. He adds that his project to create universes which go beyond and transcend reality, working on pure fiction, obviously requires really particular attention towards this visual involvement .

The soundtrack was particularly worked on and supported his project, not only during the drafting process – «I often wrote while listening to a certain group, which probably explains the important place given to the electric guitar ... » – , but also then, to add rhythm to the storyline and to underline the modernity of the project. He adds that he worked for a long time, beforehand, on the soundtrack, exchanging demos, genre music, asking the composer to provide him with material to help him get into the universe, to give it a tone, right from its conception. There also, he had to take into consideration the fact that money was tight, as, had that not been the case, he would probably have called upon the services of an orchestra !

One of the listeners then insists upon the scenery, which was, in the series, almost like « an extra character ». But how can you shoot in natural settings, in 2012, whilst having to create a picture that « lives and breathes » the 14th century ?

Nicolas Cuhe recalls that most often, period films are shot in Eastern European countries, in the Czech Republic or in Romania, whilst 'Inquisito' was shot entirely in France. It is indeed quite complex to film this type of story in natural settings, even more so as you must manage to create a credibility that cannot be historically exact, not only because no-one really knows what the period was like and historians tear each other apart over this, but also because sometimes, what we do know of the reality of the time would not boost the viewers' imagination. Thus, if historical truth can enrich our thoughts, it is not essential in the end. For example, although, during the period, the walls and buildings, which had just been built, were clean, we chose to have a patina to be in keeping with the general fantasy of a certain medieval atmosphere. He adds that a certain number of aesthetic choices were made in this optic : for example, throughout the series, the walls were



not lit up because these white stones did not contribute towards the atmosphere that he wanted to give to the story. He had to think, find out how to film in this environment by remaining loyal to the spirit of the series and in the end, he made the decision to resort abundantly to special effects for dust and smoke.

Nicolas Cuhe adds that the chosen period is a highly particular one, around which there are very few traditional pictorial representations. At the time, painting was done using tempera, in a rather flat pictorial manner. Therefore, he sought inspiration from certain video games, which not only gave more freedom, but also enabled him to rely on a more contemporary imagination.

A SPECIFIC WORK ON THE SERIES MODE ?

Issues about the budget are raised. Knowing that if, the series ended up costing about ten million euros for eight episodes, Nicolas Cuhe says that there were several surprises. Thus, since it was a period film, the intervention of each extra was particularly costly as all the details, the costumes, had to be supplied and that each person had to have make-up, at any moment. Nevertheless, there was in this an interesting challenge : if the budgets were never sufficient, trying to make the most out of them made those concerned particularly creative.

Vladislav Galard has the impression that one of the secrets to the success of 'Inquisito' is that this series was treated, from start to finish, and by all the members of the crew, from the technicians, to the actors, right up to the producer, as an auteur film. Nicolas Cuhe, who came up with the initial idea, was the creator and pushed the project through to the finished product. It is the project of a man who brought everyone together around his energy and thus influenced all the filming with his style.

Philippe Niang asks him if he would change anything if he had to do this venture all over again. Nicolas Cuhe imagines that he would have presented the first episode differently ; it is indeed a bit less dynamic than the others, because it is the occasion to create the environment and the characters and does not have the ability that a pilot has to immediately draw viewers in. In the United States, we know that everything relies on the pilot which is produced prior to the series. It has to « grip » right before the start of the story. In France, this obligation does not exist ; in general, pilots are not made, and the series is finally conceived like a very long film which lasts seven or eight hours.

Philippe Niang would like to know whether this series will have a follow-on, Nicolas Cuhe says that obviously the story can be continued as the characters are powerful, they have henceforth developed and everyone has grown attached to them. Nevertheless, he did not think, when he was writing the script, of the 15 eventual seasons to come ! He adds that making up a series is particularly enjoyable, especially because you have the time to make the storyline and the characters become established, and that it seems to him that the series is finally the most praiseworthy thing in television. Besides, developments in this field all over the world are fascinating. The length of different series being mentioned, and notably the fact that it takes at least 12 or 13 episodes for the storyline to find its niche, for the « brand » of the series to be established and for it to be able to have a chance to be developed in the international market. Nicolas Cuhe talks about the ▶



notion of having to be careful when it comes to contracts ; as, especially with 'David Nolande', whilst this was a success amongst the public – the series being entirely in the hands of the screenwriter who not wanting to continue writing new episodes – it had to stop ; the writer refused to renew the copyright.

More generally, however, it is the broadcaster who does not commit himself, the channel who waits to know if « it will work or not », and it really takes an exceptional involvement for the production teams to be able to anticipate, write and thus prepare a follow-on. If we really wanted to see the series industry emerge, we would have to probably revise all the system. For the moment, in France, the world of the series is still at the stage of being semi home-made !

AN INTERNATIONAL DESTINY ?

The episode presented being sub-titled in English, some people ask whether the series has therefore already been sold abroad ...

Nicolas Cuche says that it was for the purpose of the Série Series festival, that this episode was sub-titled. It is the occasion to note that he has already directed other series, including 'David Nolande', which have been sold in more than 30 countries other than France, and that this has had no financial consequences for him.

Several participants agree that this is a real issue, some suggesting that all contracts should be given to lawyers for them to make sure that the writers get what they are owed, especially in the case of overseas sales, and in particular in countries in which there is no agreement with the SACD. A producer talks about the real accountability problem, announcing that a small group of producers has decided to set up a system which regulates accountability in order to be prepared for a profession which is changing due to the ever-growing influence of the internet and the appearance of new practices like that of « percentage at a click ».

More generally, reference is made once again to the lack of anticipation and to the fact that despite the talents, originality and involvement of some people, the world of series, in France, does not function like an industry and there is a lack of investment in the development and involvement on a more long-term basis which would enable us to unfold a story over a period of time. It is thus regrettable that we have to sometimes wait two years to know what happens next in the adventure ; this does not enable us to take advantage of the viewers' initial passion.

It is also suggested that the Anglo-Saxon industry, which has to invest massively, right from the start, in the pilot, is perhaps more motivated than the others to find partners, especially internationally.

Nicolas Cuche confirms, however, that there is obviously a licence on the series to try to sell it around the world and that then, in accordance with the traditions of different countries, it will be translated, dubbed or subtitled...

It is also added that, in France, the broadcaster has a lot of influence because he does not offer enough time slots and that the best broadcasting time – 8.40 p.m. – because of his hegemony, imposes very often that « he can't take too many risks ». Shown at other moments,

the series has much less of a chance to reach its viewers !

In conclusion, however, everyone is in agreement over a certain « French talent », based on the fact that anything is possible and that the energy of the Scandinavian creative scene must be a great inspiration for us to get organised, get moving and continue to create French series with artistic and aesthetic ambitions and strong development. We must resist in order to promote all the specificities while finding out how not to be left out of the market. This will not go well without real attention to French specificities, to the quality of what is produced, but equally to preserving the multiplicity of the professions of which, unfortunately, some are disappearing – Nicolas Cuche had the experience, notably when it comes to costumes that he has sometimes had to look for in other countries, although the crafts tradition in this area was strong in France, a short time ago.

Finally, the viewers' increasing sensitivity towards the quality of series is highlighted, as well as their interest for their visual qualities.

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'PROFILAGE' (TF1 – France)

Case study

Guest speakers :

Sophie **LEBARBIER**, co-creator and screenwriter

Alexandre **LAURENT**, director

Marie **GUILLAUMOND**, programmes advisor, TF1

Moderated by :

Philippe **NIANG**, director



AN X-RAY OF THE SERIES

With already 30 episodes, and a first broadcast which goes back to 2009, the success of 'Profilage' is an established fact. How did all this start up ? asks straightaway Philippe Niang who suggests, for this case study, carrying out a sort of « X-ray » of the series.

At the very beginning of a series, you need a « dramaturgic big bang », explains Sophie Lebarbier. The main idea here was to « see a police series from a woman's point of view » thus explaining the choice of this unusual psycho-criminologist as the main character. Beaubourg Production aimed at offering a series on prime time on TF1. After a marketing analysis, the project was thus presented to the channel in July 2006, then a development agreement was signed in October of the same year – for a first season of 6 episodes – and shooting started in August 2008. Sophie Lebarbier adds that she went from a project of mosaic fiction, to one with only one main male character, then to one with only one female character, and finally, to one with two main characters. This was not easy in terms of timing and left her with no other choice than to get stuck into the writing alongside Fanny Robert (the other screenwriters left) : their working in tandem came about from this new deal.

What was the degree of risk-taking ? Philippe Niang then asks.

Risk-taking is inevitable. But the main thing is to have confidence in your project. TF1 detected a huge potential, connected, moreover, as much to the original idea as to the characters ; Marie Guillaumond has especially added to the original idea of « soap opera-isation ». But the great opportunity of the series, adds Sophie Lebarbier, who has enabled this challenge to be converted into success, is, above all, the fact that it had the time to « get a hold ». Indeed, it took no less than 18 episodes in order to find the right narrative, artistic and visual codes. The series 'Profilage' having obtained high enough audience rating levels to be renewed, without, however, becoming a major asset for the channel, this has enabled the concept to gradually mature, to refine the characters' psychology. And yet, too many series fall into the urgency trap and disappear before even being able to come into being. Philippe Niang notes with interest the message addressed to broadcasters, appealing them to give TV series « time to mature ». He then asks the director about the particular « craftsmanship » of the series : what is it based on?

Alexandre Laurent replies that this « craftsmanship » relates at one and the same time to the scenery (we are in a totally Parisian universe, and the main character herself is, at the same time, typically Parisian ; even if 'Profilage' soon takes us to Switzerland), to the filming technique (high-sensitivity sensor and fixed focal-length lens ; more like in film-making), to the music (only a few guidelines are given to the composer with whom, work is carried out on a continual basis, which always enables him to have a sufficient « sound bank », the composer working, as it happens, long-distance from Los Angeles), but also a certain freedom of expression left to the actors and to the staging . Alexandre Laurent speaks openly « of sequence or acting intuition » rather than « cutting too precisely ». And during editing, there still remains room for manoeuvre ... In a nutshell, he is free enough to do

what he wants but he likes the pro-active role played by the actors, the fruitful and necessary exchange with the writers and, of course, the artistic director ; and all this before the final validation by the channel (which remains, of course the backer).

Philippe Niang sees in this way of working a springboard towards the status of show-runner. He concludes this first part of the debate with two questions of a more « technical » nature : are the actors « pre-empted » all the year round ? How many days of shooting were needed for the first episodes?

Alexandre Laurent announces a period of 21 days shooting on location, of which 2 to 3 days with a second crew, to which a week in the studio (the police station) is added. Shooting takes place at the rate of 4 to 5 minutes a day, a normal pace for a « TV film ». As for the actors, continues Sophie Lebarbier, 'Profilage' represents certainly for them a major commitment which scarcely leaves them the leisure to accept other jobs, but this is not, however, impossible ; and it is even advisable (the fact of associating with other crews, and film-sets and of getting into other roles is rewarding, including for their performance in 'Profilage'). Sophie Lebarbier insists, finally, on the quality of the actual team of five actors (including herself and Fanny Robert since the beginning) ; everyone knows each other well and takes pleasure in « brainstorming together ». This is one of the undeniable keys to success.

THE DEBAT IS THROWN OPEN TO THE FLOOR

How do you find out about real legal procedures?

This is done through the usual documentary research, mainly via the internet, but also through contacts with psychologists and criminologists.

Why did you add « soap opera-isation » ?

At the same time as the actors evolved (especially with the addition of a new main character), as the series matured, the soap opera format came into play like « the icing on the cake » ; it is an element which figures more and more in TV series and which is not an easy challenge, as it leads to an obvious and major, additional constraint : the order of the episodes.

Are there any perspectives for selling the series overseas ?

Italy purchased it right from the start : but there have been no other overseas sales up till now.

How much does an episode cost?

Without counting the producer, the crew spends on average about €800,000 per episode.

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'VESTIAIRES' - 'CHANGING ROOMS' (France 2 – France)

Case study

Guest speakers :

Fabrice CHANUT, screenwriter and director

Sophie DELOCHE, producer (Astarthe Productions)

Moderated by :

Philippe NIANG, director

AN X-RAY OF THE SERIES

After having underlined the paradox that consists of organising a round table on a series portraying some disabled people in a room, which is not, as it happens, accessible for the disabled (!), Philippe Niang proposes to talk about, with the team present, the conception of 'Vestiaires', whose universe straightaway, evoked for him Pierre Desproges ; he had, in fact, « felt his soul float over this series » in which we find his derision, his humour and his humanity.

Fabrice Chanut explains that 'Vestiaires' is inspired by his everyday life. He regularly trains with Adda Abdeli (who plays the role of Romy in the series), in the same Handisport club. While they were getting dressed in the changing room, they realised, through listening to their partners' conversations, that this changing room constituted a closed universe with « its references, its digs and its way of seeing the world ». They thus decided to set to work writing short modules of two minutes. They went to the Festival of Aubagne where they explained, at the FIFA Espace Kiosque, their project for a series to Philippe Braunstein, who then presented it to Sophie Deloche.

The project was, the least we can say, improbable, as it was about two disabled men in a changing room in a Handisport swimming pool, but it immediately appealed to Sophie Deloche who immediately asked the two writers to come and read their initial drafts. A meeting was organised in Paris and she asked Fabrice Chanut and Adda Abdeli to work for three months at a rate of five scripts a week. 26 scripts were selected out of the 70 written. Although the caustic humour of the series could find its place in the world of Canal +, « we intended for the programme to be shown on a public channel », explains Sophie Deloche. The channel, however, did not want to invest in short formats and did not have the budgets available for this type of series.

The screenwriters, thus, decided to film 6 episodes. They were quickly confronted with the problem of casting. It is very difficult to find disabled actors in France. The magic of this profession was such that they met Alexandre Philip, a marvellous actor who suffered from – which is very rare – the same disability as Fabrice Chanut. Production was launched in February 2011 and 6 modules were shot. Four days after having completed editing, Philippe Braunstein and Sophie Deloche presented the project to Perrine Fontaine, head of programmes for France 2, who gave the go-ahead.

The project was launched, but they still had to find directors. As Sophie Deloche outlines, many directors did not feel that they were capable, after having read the scripts, of fulfilling the project. « Projecting yourself in this universe can scare people off », she adds. Franck Lebon and Vincent Burgevin decided to take on the challenge. The final result is the fruit of the close collaboration between the writers and the directors, the latter having respected Fabrice Chanut and Adda Abdeli's vision.

Philippe Niang wants to come back and re-examine in more detail the small vignettes at the end of the episodes. Fabrice Chanut, also the artistic advisor for the project and in charge of the extras, brought the members of the Marseilles Handisport team onto the set and although they were not actors, they were delighted to take part in the venture.

The vignettes were made up, as they went along, with all those participating, extras and actors. The idea, adds Sophie Deloche, was to break away from the main story line within the episodes, but also to come out from the changing room. Still on the subject of the vignettes, Fabrice Chanut states that the whole of the crew often wondered « if it had not gone too far ». Of course, there is always a risk of giving into « the temptation of overdoing it », but Fabrice Chanut found a way round it. All the scripts were automatically presented to the producers. It is, in his opinion, the best way of getting the script writers back on track. Sophie Deloche insists on the fact that the screenwriters were not held on a tight leash, they were even sometimes encouraged to let themselves go even more and to make, as they like saying themselves, « cash but not trash ». It is this principle which guided the writing and the conception of the visual universe of 'Vestiaires'.

Philippe Niang attracts our attention to the fact that the series allows disability to assert its place in a sort of collective imagination. However, he wonders how the disabled have perceived the series. What have disabled people thought of the programme ? One of the first tests – and, probably, the most important – was for Sophie Deloche to organise a projection of the first edited episodes ; a projection to which she had invited one of her screenwriter friends who is in a wheel chair. His reaction was very positive. He found in the series the atmosphere that he had already experienced in the physical rehabilitation centres. In the same way, Fabrice Chanut says that his Handisport club partners and the President of the swimming federation were very enthusiastic towards it. He was moreover recently informed that the short sketches were used during training schemes on the subject of disability awareness. Sophie Deloche adds that the series was a success ; it attracted 1.6 million viewers. Besides, the channel has commissioned 40 new episodes.

Asked about broadcasting the series on the internet, Sophie Deloche replies that the programme has been offered to certain targeted communities. Fabrice Chanut adds that the success of the series has stepped outside the boundaries of disabled communities as the episode the most seen on the internet – an episode which he is particularly proud of – concerns homosexuality. In the same optic, Philippe Niang talks about the book written by a homosexual care assistant of North African origin who says it was through watching some of André Téchiné's films that he was able to overcome his loneliness... The strength of a series like 'Vestiaires' is that it probably enables disabled people to feel less lonely. Sophie Deloche confirms it : during a public projection in Aubagne, she met a man who was a foster parent for disabled children, who told her that the teenagers he looked after were overjoyed when they realised that they can exist on television. Fabrice Chanut himself meets a lot of young people in physical rehabilitation centres who are amazed that they could have a job that is not connected with being disabled. The series, therefore opens up new horizons for them.



QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

The visual universe of the series is very powerful. How was the opening title conceived ?

Sophie Deloche, as producer, wanted a great deal of thought to be given concerning the opening title. Graphic design in short formats seems to her fundamental. The opening title « comes and takes the viewer out of his daily routine », informs him that the television programme that he enjoys so much is going to start. As for the visual universe, she reminds us that television is a voyeuristic medium. The challenge is to go beyond this aspect so that the viewers experience « simply the pleasure of catching up with the actors every day ».

The film 'Intouchable' offers an idyllic vision of disability. 'Vestiaires', on the contrary, allows the notion of disability to become ordinary...

Fabrice Chanut is unable to explain what makes 'Intouchable' a success. However, he is persuaded that people want to « show an interest in those who are different ». We have to admit that disability is one of the taboos that continue to exist in France. Moreover, to draw the viewers into the intimacy of a tetraplegic, the film screenwriters had to make it happen using the figure of an « older brother from a suburban housing estate ». This « older brother's codes » are thus better known than those of a disabled person.

What is the budget per episode ?

The budget for the second season – which consists of 40 episodes – goes up to 686,000 euros.

Are the characters in 'Vestiaires' going to have new adventures outside of the series, for example in films ?

Sophie Deloche is persuaded that they must not go too fast. Fabrice Chanut and Adda Abdeli inspired each other to write. As a duo, they have found a unique style and they must see this venture through. But indeed, why not make it into a film ? « Anything is possible ».



'THE BRIDGE' (SVT, DR / SWEDEN, DENMARK)

Case study

Guest speakers :

Patrick ANDREN, Uno HELMERSSON et Johan SÖDERQVIST,
composers

Jorgen JOHANSSON, director of photography

Niels SEJER, producer

Charlotte SIELING, director

Moderated by :

Jean-Marc AUCLAIR, screenwriter

THE COMING TOGETHER OF TWO CULTURES : A CHALLENGE THAT PROMOTES CREATIVITY

Jean-Marc Auclair asks those participating about the eventual difficulties of working together from two countries that are geographically close, but with completely different cultures and languages. Charlotte Sieling answers that they understand each other « when we make the effort » and adds that as it happens, it was necessary to make several concessions, since half the crew was Swedish and the other Danish.

Moreover, this « game » was written into the series in which the main characters – a Swedish woman and a Danish man – offer the opportunity to explore – and above all to shake up – a few pre-conceived ideas and stereotypes. If, overall, everyone firmly agrees that Swedish and Danish cultures are different, it seems however difficult to define these differences without being too shallow. Charlotte Sieling nevertheless suggests one : the Danish are kind, the Swedish are very kind !

According to Niels Sejer, as in any fraternal relationship, on both sides they are very close and they have a lot of things to say about each other ! They are not always right and yet they are not always wrong either. The size of both countries means that, especially in terms of audiovisual activity, their coming together is a good thing as it enables the creation of a market of a viable size. As it happens, the idea of the series came from a screenwriter who had been supported by two broadcasters who had chosen to work together and to unite their broadcasting strengths in order to make this project profitable.

Jean-Marc Auclair wants to know whether it is difficult to work with two broadcasters. Charlotte Sieling replies that, as it happens, they had to handle the differences of perception with the Danish who felt that the series was too tough at the beginning and then who, once they had seen it, really went out of their way to sell it. The series was, therefore sold in Sweden and very often filmed in Swedish. Charlotte Sieling adds that in this co-production that took place « after the event », the Swedish screenwriter who was used to a Swedish director, expected to work with someone much more « dictatorial » than her although she herself was used to a Danish world in which screenwriters had more influence. In the end, everything turned out well in this « interspace » which bridged the gap.

The theme of the series – a shattered world in which the people are no longer connected – and the crew that was composed thus acted like « a reflection of each other », like « a mirror ». And the daily coming together of these differences was probably very useful for establishing a feeling of strangeness which accompanies the series.

But Charlotte Sieling concludes that beyond the differences, what counted above all, was what unites the Swedish and the Danish. If the strengths of a Swedish coffee and a Danish one are very different, both these types of coffee are drunk on the same chairs, around the same table ! In this way, the proof was established that when you work together a lot of obstacles which seemed at first insurmountable, were finally seen as opportunities for creating.

A SERIES AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF A SHATTERED WORLD : THE WEAKNESS, THE INTERSPACE, A SOURCE OF INEXHAUSTIBLE INSPIRATION

As for the musicians Johan Söderqvist, Uno Helmersson and Patrick Andren, they insist on the importance of this « interspace » between what separates those who are different. It is what allows the greatest creativity. All three of them have worked together in symbiosis on the music. Here again, at the start, the strengths and weaknesses of each person were combined with, as a guideline to always do things differently from what would have been the initial idea. Therefore, in the end, the sound is used like the storyline, held together by the weaknesses, the space of strangeness in which everything can be turned upside down. Beyond the music, the story of what happened to the production itself, with the Danish withdrawing temporarily which led to an imposed period of reflection, is finally seen as being positive as this not only allowed them to test each other's involvement, but also to define the scope of the responsibilities and to give the director more freedom. In fact, the Swedish channel accepted a Danish idea. The Danish were therefore well within their rights to defend their point of view – and the Danish could not prevent the Swedish from expressing their opinion since the latter had taken over production and broadcasting. This made the artistic team particularly united and due to this, probably more daring than what was foreseen. In the end, there was a type of sacred union around the idea that « everything was done back to front ».

A doctrine that Charlotte Sieling used fervently : that of the mistake.

The team was excited at the idea of making mistakes, and moreover, each person having already had numerous experiences of this elsewhere, became attached to the idea of developing this « language based on mistakes ». « We made mistakes with tools, we played with difficult situations especially for the actors, we gave them bad habits, we deliberately put ourselves in difficult situations so as not to work in what was expected but completely in this unexpected area which the bridge also represents, suspended between two lands ».

Jurgen Johansson adds that he has to admit that the delay in production also turned out for the best on the technical side, as the series ended up being shot with a newly released digital camera which they were the first to use in Scandinavia. In this way, he was able to reduce his lighting equipment by two thirds which was particularly advantageous for the budget and had consequences – in this instance, good ones – on capturing different types of atmospheres, especially at night. This gave the series a hue which is even more Scandinavian, a hue which resembles these countries in which people are not used to the daily comings and goings of the light, and in which they go for months without natural light. The series would have probably been shot completely differently in Paris.

On this subject, Niels Sejer enjoys describing the work process with the directors as being like a « conversation » which begins with the script and which proceeds more and more towards the real world, with specific visual grey areas. This is what enabled the handover to the following crew.



GIVING THE BROADCASTERS, THE DIRECTOR AND THE VIEWERS WHAT THEY WANT, BUT ALSO WHAT THEY DO NOT

Some budgetary and technical information is exchanged, and it appears that for this season there were only 60 days of shooting, and therefore about 15 days for the 57 minutes that an episode lasts for. The budget was about 10M euros for the ten episodes.

Season 2 – Charlotte Sieling recalls, on this occasion, that she was only responsible for the first few episodes as a Swedish team then took over – is in the process of being written. Asked why she is not taking part in this follow-up, Charlotte Sieling answers that the period of time between the commission and the decision to go ahead was such that she was already involved on another project.

As for the casting, Charlotte Sieling had a very specific idea of the man she wanted to cast. Fortunately, he agreed. As for the young woman, for Charlotte Sieling, the love story started from the outset of the casting. It was a case of love at first sight, to the extent that finally she had nothing to show the broadcasters in order to attempt to convince them of her choice.

Following this, the work with the actress proved to be particularly interesting, especially in the exploration of the illness and the ways of presenting this coldness which she has within her and which, little by little, will partially melt. For this, it was necessary, moreover, to face a lot of criticism as, for a long time, we do not know what the character's illness is and it could be easily thought then that the actress is useless at acting or that the director is no good at her job. But this difficulty finally turned out to be positive in itself, as the viewers grew to like someone – this slightly autistic woman who basically was incapable of being sociable and reaching out to others – who in the beginning they had frankly hated. Johan Söderqvist confirms that the actress's popularity rate constantly increased as the programme went on.

Jean-Marc Auclair is surprised then to see such an icy main character, as seen in many novels originating in Scandinavia, and he wonders if this represents a real character of women from the North. Charlotte Sieling replies that, in general, the authors are men and that it is then more likely to be the impression the Scandinavian man has of the woman rather than what women from the North are really like. She herself, merely built up the character using the script which portrayed her as being autistic.

Charlotte Sieling feels that one of the strengths of this series comes from the constant need for dialogue between producers, broadcasters, screenwriters, actors, and that in this context, it is particularly important to give everyone what he wants, but also what he does not. It is in this way, in fact, that we become alive, even by watching television. Of course, sometimes some requests for « mellowing » were expressed. The crew, being closely knit, resisted, often supported by a music which was more than convincing.

Moreover, it is stated that the musicians are the only ones to have worked since the launch of the series up till now, and therefore, they are the ones that guarantee a sort of homogeneity and loyalty towards the initial idea. They say, in any case, that very often they return to the very first ideas and guidelines firmly expressed by the director.

It is stated, besides, that the series has now been bought by all the Scandinavian countries, but also by the Netherlands, England and Germany.

Jean-Marc Auclair finally asks whether everything was sorted out at the end of the first season, and Charlotte Sieling says that they cannot go as far as to say that, but in fact, the situation that they talked about at the beginning of this case study has been resolved. The second season is dealing with another situation...

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'CAÏN' (France 2, France) Case study

Guest speakers :

Bertrand ARTHUYS, screenwriter and director

Linda CHABERT, producer (DEMD)

Bruno DEBRANDT, Julie DELARME

et Frédéric PELLEGEAY, actors

Fabrice MALAVAL, Bruno de Brandt's coach

Moderated by :

Philippe NIANG, director

X-RAY OF THE SERIES

With 'Caïn' and after 'Vestiaires' « we are therefore still in the realm of disability » underlines Philippe Niang who proposes with the team to talk about how the series came into being and its key factors for success.

Bertrand Arthuys is indeed amazed at this « synchronicity » concerning disability, enquiring, in passing, on the notion of something that has never been dealt with before and quoting as well « The Blind leading the Blind » (the painting by Bruegel which refers to the feeling of inevitable fatality concerning the human condition). His aim was, nevertheless, to portray « a cop in a wheelchair ». It obviously calls to mind 'Ironsides', and rather than a pitch, this was merely the starting point of the project. But, unlike the detective in 'Ironsides', the main character in 'Caïn' is completely autonomous and independent. This character, who is thus the focal point of the series, is surprising, out of sync, provocative ; his lines are outrageous and rock 'n' roll. He took shape, little by little, as the episodes progressed.

Philippe Niang compares it to 'Dr House', feeling that he has a « particular status » (he sleeps at the victim's house !). In fact, chimes in Bertrand Arthuys, the main character here, « breaks the rules », he is « in rebellion »; his handicap allows him to do so. The accident he has had, revealed his true nature, and he plays on it : facetious, playful, ironic, cynical, cheeky, sometimes sadistic. He only recovers his normality when he is behind the wheel of his car (and what a car !). The physical preparation was important, with the support of Fabrice Malaval who coached the leading actor how to tame the other major element in this particular case, an indispensable and inseparable accessory : the wheelchair, which « went faster than someone on foot », points out Bertrand Arthuys ; this presents a challenge for the shooting, as you have strove to achieve a certain harmony in the rhythm of the movements.

Asked more specifically about the vision of disability that is presented in the series, Fabrice Malaval remembers above all that once this initial problem - which is obviously prominent - has passed, we realise that the character is, in any case, marginal, « no matter what » ! All the crew working on 'Caïn', besides, willingly admit that « we are all disabled in some way or shape », and Bertrand Arthuys congratulates himself more particularly on the fact that the series could send a deeper message about humans, in other words that disability is none other than a pretext for going into the depth of the characters. Linda Chabert then adds that the role had been thought up straight-away for Bruno de Brandt, whom Bertrand Arthuys had already worked with in theatre. We must also praise the performance of his « right arm » in the series, Julie Delarme, who is not lacking either in energy and wit. As for choosing Marseilles, and after having equally considered Bordeaux or Lille, the former seemed the best choice as shooting had to take place in winter. The first three episodes were therefore made with the regional crews from France 3, before France 2 - whose new head of fiction was Thierry Sorel - commissioned the five following episodes. In the end, it took three years to really see the achievement of the project.

The irony was, continues Bertrand Arthuys : Marseilles is one of the French cities the most difficult to live in for the disabled, having steep winding streets... But it offers exterior settings that are unique, impressive and in great quantity at the same time. What is more, he declares that surprising the viewer through its outside shots, which remain largely dominant, will be one of the challenges of the series in the episodes to come. Concerning the interior shots in the police station - currently a type of « mock studio » - they are expected to have more action taking place... Finally, coming up as well, a « soap opera-isation » concerning the characters' private lives...

Finally, regarding the writing strategy, there are two screenwriters - now working together, Alexis le Sec and Bertrand Arthuys are co-writers - the latter would like to highlight the fact that the producer, Linda Chabert, has never asked to know about everything, leaving them a free rein concerning creativity, which of course means regular exchanges and comings and goings with the crew (the actors, production...). A writing workshop could be envisaged for afterwards (other screenwriters have rallied round the series and have already proposed pitches).

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Although the backdrop - disability, the criminal investigations... - is not to all extent and purposes « light-hearted », we often get the impression of a comedy...

Indeed, the episodes play purposely on various emotional registers and tones.

How much does an episode cost ?

The average sum of €700,000 is given.

How long does shooting last ?

It takes about 11 days of shooting per episode, a standard length of time for this type of format.

Have there ever been any accidents with the wheelchair ?

There was only one : one of the wheels had a blow-out in a hangar ; luckily no one was hurt !



'LES LASCARS' (Canal +, France) Case study

Guest speaker :

Ismaël SY SAVANE « IZM », screenwriter

Moderated by :

Pierre-Jean REY, screenwriter and producer (SIGGI)



A PLURI-FORMAT VENTURE TO ACHIEVE A HIGHLY SPECIFIC FORMAT : THE 13 MINUTE PROGRAMME

To retrace the origins of this venture, we have to go back to 2001, as everything started with a short online series, which was then taken up for a television format. A feature film has also been made and has been highly successful which explains why, two years later, the series continues to survive in its original format : the 13 minute mode.

Ismaël Sy Savané, screenwriter and artistic director, says that the idea of going from animation to real characters came from the producers who went to see Canal+. The channel found that this was effectively a good idea. The 13 minute format was then fixed, even though initially, the series was meant to be broken down into 26 minute episodes. The attempt to propose 13 minutes had been made but had not convinced the broadcaster. Having nothing to refer to on the subject, it was necessary to proceed tentatively until finally at the end of several episodes, the « 13 minutes » pace could be really set. He adds that even with a minimum budget of €600,000, the feature film is not profitable and the « 1 minute format » has not found its place in the market.

The fiction section of the channel requested that new characters be created for the new series. This was done.

Pierre-Jean Rey feels that nevertheless we find the same 'Lascars' spirit in the 1 minute version, the feature film and the 13 minute episodes. Were the latter particularly difficult to write ?

Ismaël Sy Savané replies that for the 12 episodes season there were 10 months of drafting before starting shooting, and that in fact there is a huge difference between writing a sketch with ordinary people, a feature film which necessitates a real comedy set up in which the characters take shape, a series made with 26 minute episodes which enabled them to really unfold a storyline and to really go into the characters' personalities in depth, and the drafting of 13 minute episodes which was finally selected. On the floor, some young screenwriters wonder about the eventual emergence of rules which could apply to 13 minute episodes...

Ismaël Sy Savané answers that they had to go very gently as it was not about reproducing the 'Working girl' model, the only other example seen in France up to now with themes and sketches. To the contrary, it was about telling stories and once again there were sometimes several regrets as to the 26 minute format which was initially planned, but in the end, once on the job, the pace was found - and the format equally enabled them to go much further and, for example, sometimes, to tell « stories that do not tell anything ». He is currently working with enthusiasm and impatience on the follow-up. If it is difficult to theorise, he adds that it is almost a question of tempo : you must go fast, be dynamic and you must not allow yourself the time to get bored. There is perhaps one rule : do not make things too complicated and, even if he personally is a great fan of sitcoms, he has to be determined to do things « in another way », because in the space of 13 minutes, « we do not have the time ! »

A LOT OF COLLECTIVE PREPARATION WORK, BEFOREHAND, TO THEN BE ABLE TO IMPROVISE AND BE FREE

Pierre-Jean Rey wants to understand how the three screenwriters shared out the tasks. Ismaël Sy Savané answers that he wrote the synopsis and

the storyboard with Eric Benzekri, and that he then wrote the dialogues with El Diablo. Afterwards, a real re-adaptation was made, with Tristan Arouët. Being present on the set, he also rewrote what was needed sometimes, when the pace was not right. He was, therefore, the guarantor of the homogeneity of the series, for the whole duration.

He adds that the advantage of having been the screenwriter for a series like 'Les Lascars', made from scratch in a particularly original universe is that the artistic direction seemed to « just fall into place » and that the screenwriters were naturally listened to from start to finish during the process. Asked about how the casting proceeded, Ismaël Sy Savané says that it took more than a year to find young actors who had to not only be experienced in the job, but also be young, and familiar with this universe so it could « seem real ». A month's rehearsal enabled each and everyone of them to work and to achieve this final mixture of immense freedom. The comedy was enriched by the actors themselves, once they had assimilated « the Lascars spirit ».

The casting had firstly been initiated by the production team who had in mind the idea of setting up street casting and to recruit young people who were totally unknown at the time. More than 200 applicants were seen, but it was finally with the help of a reputable casting director that the choice of trained actors was made, in less than two weeks. If, in fact, the series seems free-expressive and that a certain amount of improvisation is necessary, the acting technique is all the more complex for it. Furthermore, in real life, the actors are not like their characters at all. Besides, Ismaël Sy Savané is rather proud of having introduced some new professional faces on the French audiovisual scene.

Shooting conditions were not particularly simple as they had to manage to shoot 6 to 8 valid minutes every day. Some shooting took place in the studio and added to this were 3 weeks of outdoor shooting. It was this pressure which also justified the long rehearsal period, so that when shooting took place, everything could run as naturally and as quickly as possible. From the floor, there are many interventions underlining the excellent work undertaken by the actors and to praise the fact that a lot of time was devoted to the rehearsal periods.

Ismaël Sy Savané recalls that, in the end, there were only six weeks of shooting, comprising three and a half weeks indoors and two and a half weeks outdoors.

Before shooting, the rehearsal were basically the occasion to assert each character's personality ; each actor having received a list of tracks that his character likes, and information about his family, his behaviour - « is he agitated or not ? », for example. It was therefore sometimes necessary to rewrite several elements of the script to take into account the richness of this preparatory work and to make the characters, situations, dialogues and scenery more coherent.

Pierre-Jean Rey finally asks whether the broadcaster is pleased with the result and Ismaël Sy Savané replies that he must be, as a second season has been commissioned. Besides, the writing already started two years ago. He feels however that this is a niche product that would have probably been difficult to produce anywhere than in France and for Canal+.



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