



REPORT

Women Behind the Camera in Europe Reflection & Action Day

20.09.2012 - Amazone Women Center, Brussels, Belgium
ELLES TOURNENT - DAMES DRAAIEN 2012

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Experts and professionals from several countries were invited to present their analysis of the current situation of women in the film and television industry in Europe and to highlight examples of best practices.

In her welcome address, Marie Vermeiren, President of 'Elles Tournent – Dames Draaien', spoke of a great aspiration to change society, with every creative idea very welcome.

The Reflection and Action Day was a first step towards change and a call for a further action program.

Introduction

Nadine Plateau

ETDD founding member

Cinema in feminism is not new. A feminist gaze in film and the issue of film and culture is not a new phenomenon. "*Camera Obscura*" has already brought a feminist critique on the depiction of women in film in the 70's, but the subject wasn't considered as urgent as other struggles at the time, such as abortion rights or equal pay.

Since then, these inequalities have not been widely studied but they still exist. Inequalities in the world of culture are still not viewed as a priority, despite the fact that it is urgent to change the cultural perceptions and depiction of gender relations.

These inequalities are not well documented. Different systems, such as quotas, exist to fight these inequalities. However political representatives oppose this system because "there would be a risk to limit the access to the expression of creativity of some people by excluding them". The notion of "talent" itself in western culture contributes to occulting very subtle discrimination mechanism in the world of film. The same patriarchal logic also prevails in the film industry.

The specificity of the audiovisual sector is that it involves double gender discrimination. The first is discrimination in employment, work conditions and salaries. The second one concerns gender stereotypes on the content of cultural production by women. The idea of what has creative value has been created by a certain privileged category of men. Work by women is considered to be of a lesser quality, as would be the choice of the themes and the development of the latter. Patriarchal resistance must be broken in these sectors by challenging the production of norms. It is necessary to create various strategies considering that it is not possible to deal with all sides of the problem at the same time.

Feminist experience and vision have to be pushed into the mainstream. If one wants to fight discrimination, one has to make it visible. Figures and detailed surveys are now available regarding quality and quantity. Besides figures, there is a need of qualitative analysis, in depth interviews, text reviews, such as "*Encore Pionnières*" which deconstructs stereotypes on women and cinema in Quebec. This study shows, for instance, that women make more documentaries than fiction because the budget for the latter is more consequent, more difficult to complete and is financially insecure. Such these studies help to identify where the sore points are, such as the power of exclusion of a non-mixed world: inequalities between actors and actresses, different position facing age issues, etc. Some striking

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comments do take place, for example, a supervisor of an LGBT film festival in Brussels stating not being interested in a film with two women as main characters. Female experience is not perceived as having a universal dimension. Women's cinema is still referred to as specificity, whereas men's cinema can claim universality.

More research is needed and strategies to process the data are necessary. We have to establish priorities. At political level, there is no anti-sexist European legislation in the field of Arts and Media. It is possible to use the general legislation or the reference in « Handbook of Good Practice to Combat Gender Stereotypes and Promote Equal Opportunities in Film, Television and Theatre in Europe ». How can this general legislation be applied not only to employment discrimination and also to gender stereotypes in the content of film and television production? Content legislation remains very weak.

Numerous surveys show that segregation begins early, within the educational system for instance. This might be a priority in a European context. Surveys in art and film schools should also be conducted and questions asked about gender studies in Film and Art schools. There is a real lack of positive examples, women role models, encouragement of female students and information on male advantages. Professional training has to be rethought.

Another important issue is public funding. The cultural sector is financed by taxes and the financing should follow certain conditions in a democratic society. Equal opportunity measures exist, but they might not be implemented and it is important to put pressure on the decision makers. NGO's have the responsibility to push the authorities and to introduce a feminist intervention in culture. Therefore strong networking is necessary.

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Part 1

Women and money in the film and audiovisual industry.

Case study 1: Elles Tournent en chiffres/Dames Draaien in cijfers/Roll'm ladies in figures

Rita Van Gool, ETDD member, Vrouwenraad

The exploratory study by ETDD made in 2010 on public funding of projects by women filmmakers in Belgium aimed at discovering the proportion of men and women in audiovisual schools in Belgium, the projects submitted and accepted for funding as well as the funding allocated to women and men. The survey was carried out in a very short time. The data compared two Belgian communities. Four schools and two funding entities were analysed. The period covered was the academic year 2009-2010 and the civil year 2009.

The data does not allow to draw scientific conclusions as it is too fragmented and numbers too small. Too many questions still have to be answered. However, women's projects received less funding than men's do in both parts of the country. The proportion of women's accepted projects was slightly higher than men's. Women introduce fewer projects and are much more present in documentary, but almost absent from fiction and especially feature fiction. Further research is needed to identify the reasons.

Another question that has to be answered is whether more women in decision-making committees reduce inequalities and why are there so few women in these committees. What measures would change the situation, concrete targets, quotas, awareness raising? The importance of networking is raised again.

Case study 2 : Key statistics on women in audiovisual industry in Europe

Francine Raveney, European Consultant, Eurimages

A survey was conducted on the European Box Office (500 first feature films) between 1997 and 2011. This survey represents how many women filmmakers applied with a project that received funding and was completed. The following data has been collected: out of 500 projects, 46 projects by women directors were completed between 1997 and 2001, 56 between 2002 and 2006, and 55 between 2006 and 2011. In the USA, for the same periods, 29, 29 and 20 films made by women filmmakers achieved box-office hits. That is hardly one in twenty successful films.

As for Eurimages: the organisation supports European Art-House co-production under the authority of the Council of Europe. Films receive support according to their artistic merit and not their box office potential. Eurimages promotes international co-production films by encouraging cooperation between film professionals from 27 member states (including Russia and Turkey). It is necessary to create a political support system at European level for women in the film industry. The statistics of the study come from the 27 EU member countries.

In 2008 15 projects by female directors were introduced and 7 received financial support out of the 57 projects submitted to Eurimages. In 2009 out of 55 submitted to Eurimages, 27 projects by female directors were introduced and 11 were supported. In 2010, 56 projects submitted, 23 female directors and 8 projects supported.

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Due to the change of policy in Eurimages' politics, first and second feature films receive stronger encouragement. In 2011 and 2012 the percentage of women director's projects that were supported has increased. The most productive women filmmakers come from the Netherlands, Germany, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France and Switzerland. Out of numerous projects presented by French women, only 3 have been selected.

There is a serious lack of transparency concerning statistical data on women directors. Creating a Gender Observatory would be very useful to promote women directors. This is a sensitive subject and a decision cannot be made without exact figures and data. The data is incomplete and precise surveys must be conducted in every country. Information and discussion are crucial to understanding the whole situation of women filmmakers in Europe.

Case Study 3: The Swedish Film Agreement

Tove Torbiörnsson, Director of the Department Film/Society of the Swedish Film Institute (SFI).

Looking at moving images represents 8% of our lifetime and what these images are telling us is very important, as is who creates them. Women make only 20% of these images. Sweden has introduced the « Film Agreement » to change the gender imbalance in the film industry. It concerned all the audiovisual industry and turned out to be a powerful tool. The agreement states that men and women should be represented at a minimum of 40/60. The new goal is 50/50.

The first filmmakers in Sweden were women. However in one Swedish Film School, a poster listing one hundred important films included only one made by a woman director. How were these films chosen? Which criteria were used? Which books and manuals are used? What stereotypes do we have on women filmmakers? All these questions arise when looking at that list. The Agreement develops projects working on this issue. It is a well-established fact that more women than men directors graduate from various film schools, but they do not get access to the industry as film professionals. Women are forgotten in the industry, women role models disappear and there is a need to recreate them.

With the support of the film Agreement, more than half of women's projects are financed. Women are more present in documentary and short films making. Now the target is to introduce and develop more female directors' projects in feature fiction.

To change this data and encourage young women filmmakers to introduce their projects, the Swedish Film Institute created a "Rookie project". Its goal is to encourage and support first and second features created with a new, unique and avant-garde point of view. Part of the funding was reserved for women. The fact is that when women filmmakers are informed that a part of the funding is reserved for them, they dare to submit their film projects. Indeed many more film projects by young women directors were submitted. Women need to break their intellectual barriers down and dare to present projects in different programs.

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Case study 4: Quota regulations in Spain

Susana de la Sierra, Director General of the Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA)

Spain does not have a Gender Observatory in the film industry, but it is essential to create one. In 2010 and 2011, several surveys were carried out. According to the surveys, women filmmakers made up 13 to 20 percent of the submitted projects and received 15 to 23% of the aid. In Spain also women apply less than men. Women obtain more funding than men for animated films (66% in 2010), and 62% of the specific funding for the use of new technologies goes to women filmmakers.

There exists in Spain an interesting framework for public policies that takes women in consideration. The Equality law adopted by the Spanish Parliament in 2008 did initiate a change in mentalities and administrative culture, but patriarchal resistance persisted. It is almost only men who take part and are invited to speak at seminars, colloquiums, conferences and there is a reluctance to apply quotas. Cultural change is far from being completed.

The development of effective equality measures, economical incitement included, is provided by the Article N°26 of the Equality Legislation. The issue of quotas has not been a real debate. No serious discussion on gender took place on the composition of the committees but the 40/60 proportion must be respected, especially for the committees in charge of funding and prizes. If it is not respected, the jury or the committee has to be reappointed. There are some other legal measures: applications for funding are awarded more points if the director or the writer is a woman.

Recently, Goya, the Spanish Film Industry Prize (Spanish Oscars) was awarded to a woman technician and a costume designer, for the whole of their career. Before that event, the only women granted a Goya had been 6 actresses. There is no obligation for festivals to have an egalitarian jury but it is compulsory for the festivals that receive public funding from the department to guarantee parity and equality.

An interesting fact on women's self esteem and cultural practices: various associations suggest names of men and women for positions in juries or expert panels but women often do not feel competent enough to participate or do not believe they are able to speak in front of their colleagues and, as young female director, to judge them. These self-limitations and lack of confidence prevent women from participating in actions that would let them express their knowledge and professionalism.

Visibility is another issue. Films convey cultural values and the image of women in film is of greatest importance. Hence, it is necessary to classify films by their approach to gender equality. In 2011 the "Gender Equality" label was created to address the issue of fair representation of gender. To obtain this label, a few criteria have to be respected by the film, such as non-sexist language, an egalitarian representation of gender relations, deconstructing stereotypes, raising public consciousness on gender-based violence etc.

However, feminists have spotted one important problem. The decision-making committees have other functions and are not trained in gender equality, so they are not able to judge the criteria correctly. They are not attentive to details and subtlety. For instance, films

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addressing the major themes of violence and stereotypes are rewarded points and films with a woman as a main character, deciding to take back her life, are not.

Networking is essential, the power of lobbying is extremely important to make women visible. Media and gender literacy is significant. Women's self esteem has to be reinforced, as well as their belief in their capacity for emancipation and taking responsibilities.

Panel Discussion

How to reach gender equality in the film and audiovisual sectors ? Proposals and strategies.

The Belgian film industry is far from promoting equality. Film commissions are supposed to be constituted of 50% of women and 50% of men, but it is mostly men who judge fiction films and mostly women who judge documentaries. Women producers do not make supporting women directors their goal. In Belgium, two or three out of 25 women producers help women directors without ever publicly acknowledging it because do not want to "be called feminists". The quota system is difficult to introduce in Belgium even if it would help women to progress.

As barriers disappear, more women appear. When quotas exist in Belgium, personal relationships are stronger when the committees are selected, with unfortunately a rather "natural" division of women in documentaries and shorts and men in feature fiction films.

The quota system is not a magic solution. Germany, for instance, has no statistics but a survey made on the composition of film committees showed that, in spite of the absence of quotas, the committees' composition reached 50/50. Nevertheless, the situation has not changed for women filmmakers as the women present in the committees do not stand for women-made projects. It is clear that the women in the committees should also be feminists.

Quotas are important to include women in decision-making. The reason that too few women are selected yet is that they are still reluctant to express their opinion, are afraid to be called feminists and are not gender-aware. The impact would certainly be different if these problems were seriously considered.

Women filmmakers also often portray male protagonists. In Germany, women filmmakers made films about women and then, as if influenced by a fad, became interested in male protagonists. This does not empower women and female directors must also address women's specific issues. The Swedish Film Agreement has a checklist of values to promote the positive portrayal of women. Such initiatives are necessary.

Having women in charge is not enough. The BBC and Channel3 financial directors are women and they say that women are difficult to encourage when they submit a project, as they undervalue themselves in their presentation. Women have to be able to fight for themselves and be daring. They have to learn to be strong and be respected, and not just be 'nice'. Women are still not brought up to function as a leader and what kind of leader to choose to be. There are various types of leadership, forcing people or negotiating and women can find their own.

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There are both internal and external obstacles and it is important to say that there are many measures that can be taken to let women be themselves. In the Netherlands, the Equal Opportunity Commission imagined to have one person from the Equality Department present in the decision-making process to enforce the rules.

The issue of children and family life is still part of the issue of women's careers. Men also should take responsibility for the education and care of children, as it already the case in Sweden. Sweden is more equal society. Men can say, I have to leave at 5 to pick up my kid. Networking is also a solution: groups of solidarity between women are very important as they do offer real solutions. Part of the solution is to make producers understand that a shooting can end at 5 and that children can be taken to meetings and not excluded from society.

As public funding might shrink very fast, it could be important to explore the possibilities of private funding and establish if gender discrimination also exists in the private sector. Up to now there has been no analysis on the question, but it is known that a huge gap in private funding exists. In Spain, for instance, women are able to get better financing in public funding because the legislation exists.

Conclusion of the morning session

The fact there already is progress in the data and statistics is a good sign. It is very important to get precise numbers and statistics and is urgent to develop strategies to lobby the advisory board of the European Observatory. Encouraging and developing women networking all over Europe, as it is done in UK, the USA and Germany is imperative.

Networking, lobbying, work and life balance policies and gender education + gender mainstreaming are key issues. The "Creative Europe Program" must be used, the women's visibility in the film industry expanded, and women's role models developed. The creation of an Observatory on Women in Arts and Media is a must, and it must integrate women filmmakers' associations. The visibility of networking is essential. National Film Institutes have to be integrated and included in the gender-awareness programs.

Gender awareness is fundamental. Women are still considered less competent, especially in technical sectors and they have to deal with a lot of direct discrimination. It is a real absence of democracy.

Women should empower each other. It is necessary to understand, and make society understand, male privileges instead of accentuating the discrimination of women.

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Part 2:

Women and networking in the film and audiovisual industry.

"We are not talking about money, we are talking about empowerment"

Presentation 1: Association of Women Filmmakers and audiovisual media (CIMA)

Isabel de Ocampo, European Women Audiovisual Network (EWA) Carla Reyes

Isabel de Ocampo, President of CIMA

The CIMA has 300 members from various sectors of the film industry: directors, producers, DOPs etc. the CIMA has been created on the intuition, confirmed by a study (2000-2006): the Spanish film industry has a very low number of women and this affects every side of the industry. The study showed there were only 7% women directors, 15% women scriptwriters and 20% women producers.

The fact the 90% of the audio-visual production is in male hands affects the narrative. Half of the population is consequently excluded from the real story. This imbalance influences the way female characters are represented on the screen: they are stereotyped, gender violence is trivialised and justified. An interesting example is that prostitutes are only 0,7% of the 22 million women living in Spain and yet they are the majority of female characters. Film and television are socialising agents and create fictional realities. There is a great lack of woman role models and too much chauvinist portrayal of passive women on screen. It is a problem of social education. Female role models are very strongly needed.

CIMA positioned itself as an association politically addressing a problem that no one has properly addressed until now. CIMA is making the Spanish film industry aware of the importance of having gender-equal selection committees where women are represented to make films with role models that women can identify with.

CIMA managed to increase the participation of women in the sector by developing networking and collaboration between women professionals. International networking is part of the project: CIMA organised colloquiums in 2008 in Madrid with Latin American networks and in 2010 with European filmmakers.

Gender issues and discriminations exist and it is necessary to work on them: creating and consolidating a European Women Filmmakers' network is urgent. This network has to be developed on political and industrial levels. The first step is to create a European institution to work on gender policies. The second, industrial, is to acknowledge the fact that we want to work and we can work and create links between countries to make the situation that suits us all. The Latin American network, MICA for example, has a project of creating a database of film directed by women in Spanish language.

Women filmmakers and professionals do not receive enough public recognition. The National Film Award was recently given to a woman for the first time. Since the establishment of the NFA in 1981, there have been 40 winners, of which only 6 were women – all of them actresses. The recognition of a costume designer for her entire career is an important event.

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But the most important thing is to uniting professionals, analysis and actions in particular, that will make the difference to build an inclusive society. We need your support.

Carla Reyes, EWA Manager

It is important to guarantee equal access to decision-making processes, promote equal chances in the audiovisual industry decision-making processes and increase the presence of women in the public sector. EWA is a women's audiovisual professionals' network with a goal to creating an all-European network. It is open to everyone and film professionals create an on-line profile to register. So far, about 100 professionals have registered and the network is supported by more than 60 Spanish personalities in the cultural, political, economical and artistic spheres.

In the education system, there are more women and girls than men and boys in communication and media. They are more successful and get better grades in all sections, yet there are fewer women as one goes up the hierarch. Therefore they have no control of their image and the image that the ones in control present is negative – as was mentioned previously when considering the number of prostitute characters in films.

One of EWA's projects would be to create a European database of women film professionals in every country and every discipline, where every woman could create her profile. The next project and one of the conclusions of the symposium is to initiate a survey on women's film professionals because the few available statistics show that discriminations in funding and budget exist We need precise numbers to implement politics at European. The study must gather figures from all over the Europe and must be financed by important structures. Lobbying must be developed, especially by establishing contact with the decision makers, such as the European Parliament and Commission, places where Equality Policies are adopted. These policies must be strictly implemented and the European Broadcasting Union play its role of control public television and observing of equality strategies. The presence of EWA and other women directors' associations should be a requirement at important international audiovisual markets.

The creation of a European Equality Prize is urgent. The European Equality Forum and Prize must be itinerant through Europe and the professional European jury must be heterogeneous. The Gender Observatory evoked during previous presentations is an important and useful project and must offer solutions for problems that quotas cannot solve.

A Commission for Equality must be created within EWA and making sure that criteria and quotas are precisely defined. It is also necessary to expend membership, as it is important for women professionals to know of each other. Film production is a group's creation, so it is necessary to work together and create a European network including all organisations and branches of the industry.

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Presentation 2: Women in Film and Television (WFTV-UK).

Kate Kinninmont, CEO

The situation in UK is different. In 23 years of WFTV-UK existence, women directors have learned a lot from their American colleagues. Women in Film and Television, UK has 1100 members and it is part of a global organization with 40 branches across the world. The WFTV-UK is self-financed by membership fees of £100/year, various fundraisers activities and support of celebrities such as Dame Helen Mirren for 2012.

It is interesting to remember the fact that women, as Alice Guy Blaché, were the first ones to use film to tell stories, and it is only when cinema shifted from experiment and art to industry that men took control of the medium: when it became about money. Script supervisors, a very tough profession, are mostly women as well, and it comes from the tradition that male bosses had two assistant-secretaries and one of them would keep an eye on the script. Gender policing is still very strong today.

When she started working on television in late 1980s, Kate Kinninmont had to deal with patronizing colleagues. On her first day at the BBC, the DOP addressed the crew: "All right boys, mind your language, we have a lady director". And he was one of the nice ones.

Funding gatekeepers in television are mostly women, drama departments are mainly women and after two equality laws, one would believe that things might have changed. But statistics speak for themselves: more women work in TV than in film in the UK. And more women work in TV when they are young. Women are more qualified in term of degrees, work longer hours and do more training but they still earn on average around £7000 a year less than their male counterparts. How does that happen? After all, there is equal pay! The woman director of BBC1 explained that women are not good at negotiating salaries. Once again, having quotas and women in decision-making position is not enough. By the age of 35, half of women have left the industry and they never get back in. Getting back after having children is very hard: equipment and technology change fast and a lot of young qualified people graduate every year (35000 in UK).

BFI's figures on gender across the jobs are very interesting: women are very present as producers – 50 to 59% are women. But in more technical fields as camera and sound there are only 6 to 10% of women. Crew is still considered as being a man's job: "woman cannot carry the equipment". If any man has just tried to carry our handbags... There are no women role models in technical jobs either.

WFTV decided to make a survey on successful women in film, asking them what were the ingredients of their success and how is it possible to integrate it in training. But women do not recognise their success themselves. After convincing objectively chosen professionals (women) that there are, in fact, successful, some facts became clear: they did use networking. Mostly they had all gone to all girl boarding schools and came from creative families, met people with various creative professions and it never occurred to them that they couldn't do something. They were brought up to be creative and have high self-esteem. This survey does help to understand what the barriers can be.

The BBC fired TV Anchor Myriam O'Reilly, member of WFTV UK, because they felt she was too old to present an evening TV Show. When she was getting into her 40, people start telling her: "Myriam, once we get High Definition, you should really think about botox". A

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woman historian presenting a TV show has been attacked for her lack of make up and grey hair by a Sunday Times journalist. But no man has ever been attacked on basis of his looks, and there is a lot of old fat ugly bold male show hosts on television in general. Radio does not have women voices either: the film minister was listing Radio 4 for 2 hours and did not hear a woman voice, and he wanted to know why.

After Myriam O'Reilly has been sacked, she went to court and won her case: she has been hired back. The director general of the BBC said that the case was a "wake up call" and some changes started to occur. They started hiring older women on TV. Departments of culture now ask WFTV what should be done to include women in the media.

Legislation exists, but figures still haven't changed. So a lot of work must be and is being done. There's no doubt that women are not always putting themselves up to the next stage. Programs for middle-aged women are created to reintegrate them into the industry and to encourage them to apply to higher positions. The confidence and the self-esteem of women are developed as they learn to be their own "guardian angel". WFTV UK shows role models and establishes a "Power List". This power-list still has very few non-white people and this issue must be address.

Presentation 3: Doris Film (Sweden)

Annika Hellström, producer

Doris film is a Swedish network of women filmmakers. In 1999, a group of women extremely tired of the portrayal of women in film (as sexual objects or idiots) and their presence in film festivals got together and decided to act. There were 20 members at the beginning and at times, when working on film production and manifesto, there were 100 members. For the moment, they are 7 women on the board. Women take a lot of responsibilities but usually until after they have all the answers. What Doris did, was not to consider all the solutions, but just going for it.

Every month, an informal workshop was organized to find the reasons and to change the system. The importance of networking was apparent right away. The only rule in the group was not to whine. Not that there were no reasons to whine, but the goal of the meeting was to have fun and not complain about one's problems. It turns out that if one is not aloud to whine, one has to think further and find solutions to the problems.

There is no unique solution and the problems are spread out in the structure of society. There is no miracle answer. So the Doris group decided to look at the way men worked. Men are good at getting what they want, and that's what women must work on. Doris created an affirmative Manifesto for the films. For 100 years we have been watching films made by men, mostly, now it is time to find out what would change if it was women making movies: a number of films with the same criteria is needed. A goal of 3 shorts done with the manifesto in 3 years was established.

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The Doris Manifesto:

- Women written scripts
- Women main character
- Women crew members (DOP, sound etc)
- Women composer

Doris went after funding of the Swedish Film Institute, which they did not get, but finally 50 000 euros were obtained from another organization. The sum was not enough, but Doris still started the script competition – they did like men do. The competition was announced during the film festival and in two and a half months they received more than 700 scripts. It was also anonymous. Producers were contacted to know whether they would produce those scripts and only one responded. Being part of a feminist project does scare and brings rejection. Finally 8 and not 9 films were made.

Films are art objects but they make one realise that images we see affect us, so the idea was also to create films that would function as educational material for teachers and children. Tutorials were made to make work with films possible. For example, one of the films was at first about a male robber. When the writer found out about the competition, she changed the main character to a woman – the robber became much more interesting, not a lousy bad cliché guy, but a girl - environmental activist. All the change was positive for the whole script. The director decided to inhabit the film with only women as a personal move for the Doris Manifesto.

A Lecture Day was also created, where films are analysed with the participation of a internationally recognized gender specialist. Doris Genius and Doris Platform Days are organised to promote the work of the group. The Doris Group also created 4 years ago a Doris Film Award – for a woman promoting gender equality in film industry. The Prize is rewarded with the participation of gender study specialists. Doris also participates in programs teaching questions on equal rights and possibilities. The tutorials and films are translated in different languages – Russian, Serbian, and Estonian, which helps to establish an international network.

Presentation 4: International Women Film Festival Network (IWFFN).

Betty Schiel, Frauenfilmfestival Dortmund/Cologne (Germany)

Marina Mazotti, Festival de Films de Femmes de Créteil (France)

Betty Schiel, programmer of the Dortmund/Cologne Film Festival:

Let us remember the Bechdel test, with it's three simple criteria: a film must have at least two main female characters talking to each other about something else than a man for more than a few seconds. Not many films pass this test. Women Film Festivals have in common the work on the lack of representation on women on screen. All women film festivals are different; there is a great variety. Asia does have a very good network. There has always been contact between women film festivals. In 1996, a research was conducted and after discovering the important amount of these festivals, a first conference was organised in Dortmund in September 1997 on Women Film Festivals in Europe. Representatives of 17 festivals were present, all eager to work with each other.

A Women Film Festival Network was created, funded by the EU and allowing staff

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exchange. But to keep the network going is very difficult – most of the festivals lack time, money and staff to develop these projects. This Network does not exist anymore – but Dortmund is trying to re-develop it by collaborating with other festivals. Last year another network was created. Women seemed angry and open to a feminist discussion again. Before, some women did not want to even be presented in a Woman's Film festival being afraid to fall into a "ghetto". But important film festivals have very few films made by women – Cannes, for instance, had no film directed by a woman in 2012.

New women film festivals are created every year, and Dortmund film festival conducted a survey on what is a women's film festival. What do women filmmakers expect? Is a women film festival a ghetto? What are the differences between the festivals? What are the motivations? Are they important for younger filmmakers and how established filmmakers see them? What networks are good? What about the voluntary work? The discussion is open. Nowadays feminism seems to be a great taboo. Is it perceived as a loss and what can we do about it?

Mission statement and communication tools as blog and website as well as the new network were created. The map is growing. The problem of mainstream festivals is that the more important the festival, the less woman filmmakers are selected. It is important to find out what happens in the black box between film school and film festivals – so, it is important for all Women Film Festivals to combine their data. The organisers have never asked for any funding, the whole project started as a hobby. Dortmund WFF collaborated with other networks such as Documentary festivals and networks (Golden Feminists in Berlin etc).

Marina Mazotti, in charge of short films selections and extra screenings at the Festival de Films de Femmes de Créteil.

In France the anti-feminist backlash in the film industry is very strong. As it has already been stated, during the last Cannes film festival, not a single film directed by a woman was selected in the competition. The feminist group "La Barbe" prepared a petition but many women filmmakers were afraid to sign it because they did not want to be considered a "women filmmaker" but "filmmaker". It is both understandable and not. In France, the "auteur" still exists as an idea of a neutral entity, which is of course male in reality, as neutral is masculine. Aurélie Filipetti, French Minister of Culture, declined to comment.

Networking in Women Film Festivals has existed since the 80's. One of the first meetings, the Pandora Group, took place in Brussels in the mid-eighties with Violaine de Villers, recently deceased Françoise Collin and the Créteil Women Film Festival. Then there was the Kiwi network gathering several women filmmakers from the former USSR zone. As it was very difficult to keep the network alive, it did not survive. Many networks disappeared due to lack of finances and members.

In 2008 in Créteil a new FFF network was founded with the collaboration of some 20 Women Film Festivals, such as Créteil, Elles Tournent Dames Draaien, Chéris Chéries, festivals in Saragosa, Barcelona, Corea, Taiwan, Sweden and others. This network is an important tool for the members on different levels. Exchange programs, workshops, thematic researches are organised as well as exchange of information, films, and database. Créteil still organises thematic meetings but it is more and more difficult financially. One festival alone cannot take on the whole organisation and the networking.

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Panel Discussion

How to strengthen women's position in the film audiovisual sector by connecting and developing networks?

Some important key words have been mentioned more than once during the presentations: inclusiveness of the industry; targeting of people in power; observatories, data, importance of studies and research; solidarity; women are angry again; getting read of fears; reintroducing feminism; guardian angels, mentoring, role models; manifestos and mission statements; lobbying...

The fact that freelance work and short-term contracts are common in the industry, and the industry is mostly directed by men, make feminist networks extremely important. Recently, feminist film networks seem to be developing all over Europe, in Eastern Europe (Croatia) for instance. Another sign is the fact that six members of different Women in Film Networks and 3 members of institutions attended the symposium, and more asked to be excused because of previous commitments.

While there is a revival of women networks, there is still a strong aversion to the "women only organisations". It is necessary to influence and to work on gender mainstreaming. Dortmund festival is an example of a functioning connection: it is competing and gets invited with other, more mainstream, festivals (Munich, Mannheim). Different festivals introduce women filmmakers and their films to Dortmund festival, for instance, meeting Balkan women directors. Technical training is organised, such as counseling for women DOP's, presenting directors and crew members. The network started as activism but became very professional. Dortmund is perceived and is respected as a competitive film festival. Nevertheless the jury remains women only – there is no wish to be judged by men.

Working with EWA and WFTV to develop a pan European network is necessary. Francine Raveney offers to use her privileged position at the Council of Europe to lobby, to mobilise decision-makers and to fundraise with European and private funds. It is important to organise meetings during festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Toronto to "make a big fuss" and use the press presence to attract attention to the issue.

Solutions must be found to help women find their strengths and qualities. Communication is essential. Pitching sessions are a very good technique. Some festivals have big pitching competitions and at the end of the day we all have to be able to pitch ourselves and our projects. Women filmmakers can do it. But they have to trust they can, as the following example shows. It is reported that when a man and a women look at job specifications, their reactions are very different. Women choose not to apply if they do not correspond to one of the criteria, and men will apply if there is only one criterion they correspond to. If you want to make business, you have to learn to become part of the business. But life is too short, every single woman should not change herself, the society must evolve and we must initiate this evolution.

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Improving policies at national and EU level

While the organizers had invited several Ministers and EU Commissioners in charge of Culture and Equality to discuss policies and possible actions, the response was disappointing with only one official attended the symposium.

Tom Sierens, representing Ingrid Lieten, Vice-minister-president van de Vlaamse regering en Vlaams minister van Innovatie, Overheidsinstellingen, Media en Armoedebestrijding, outlined the policies in the audiovisual sector encouraged by the Flemish government in Belgium.

Everyone counts, said Tom Sierens, adding that an inclusive society is one that welcomes diversity and respects differences; a society that is proud to have everyone participate and feeling involved. He stressed that diversity was also “about sexual identity, disability, age, social-economic status and... gender”.

The new management contract between the public broadcasting company VRT and the Flemish government strongly focuses on diversity. The aim of the VRT is to give diversity a central role in its organisation. The issue has also been adopted by the program makers. Each year, the VRT has to create an action plan regarding the representation of specific target groups, which is translated into target figures. This plan consists of recommendations for program makers, and this year the VRT decided to put the focus on representation of women. According to the management contract, there has to be a good representation of women in TV programs – minimum 33% of all internally and externally produced TV programs.

The VRT also has to work towards ensuring that the composition of its own staff adequately reflects the Flemish social diversity. By the end of 2014 the VRT-staff has to count at least 40% women and 33% women in management functions.

In order to verify the success of their policy, the VRT will annually organize an independent audit will be organize to check the implementation of these policies.

On the other hand, the electronic news archive from the so-called ‘Steunpunt Media’, an academic research consortium, is doing audits about news programs in general. It found that, between 2003 and 2011, less than one in four news sources was a woman. VRT-news programs are doing worse than news programs from the commercial broadcaster VTM.

Finally, ‘Expert Database’ is a government’s initiative aiming at breaking through the stereotypical images of women (and ethnic groups, persons with a disability and transgender persons) in the media and encouraging to focus on their areas of expertise. They are for example relatively rarely interviewed as experts in news programs.

The Flemish Minister of Media Ingrid Lieten actively supports this initiative. Her representative stated that the Minister fully endorses the Brussels Declaration, a 2010 initiative by Elles Tournent –Dames Draaien, demanding extensive research on the position of women in the film and audiovisual sectors, quotas or numerical targets to encourage women in the various forms of artistic creation, specific support for creating promotion and distribution networks of works created by women, gender parity on the boards of directors and targets for increasing the presence or films created by women.

In the words of Tom Sierens, the representative of Minister Lieten: “The Dames Draaien – Elles Tournent study is of great importance, as well as the Cinegalité-Cinemagelijk award.

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A balanced image is crucial and it is the responsibility of everyone in the audiovisual sector. And that means men and women!"

Conclusions

As women, we must be aware of being of a culture that has been suppressed historically. We discover and re-discover often and now that women have been active and we must continue to reveal this herstory.

This meeting day, rich with analysis, witnessing and action, is part of the 5th edition of ETDD. The whole day was structured by reflection, and action has began at international level. New networking and representation must be created in a culture that still reflects society's patriarchy. Producers of images are stereotype agents and it is clearly a political issue, a question of democracy, to ask what is our image, because images have such an important impact. It is urgent to stop the self-limitation and deconstruct stereotypes that women still impose to themselves even in the countries with more equalitarian systems. We have to change the lens through which we look at the world. There have been discussions on the ways that women filmmakers can mix work life and private life. But this question is one for society and should not be an issue of quality of women's work. Quotas are needed but are never enough, it is important to have women who are gender-sensitive and are aware of the male privilege. And at last, the most important question is the importance of gendering funding.

All those proposals are not only stimulating, but also very practical. Many initiatives have already been implemented. There are many very interesting ideas. We need to make a better impact of women in culture by lobbying, by raising women's visibility in the industry. Thus, precise and unbiased true data is needed desperately everywhere. There is a serious lack of data on gender in every field and every country, not only in the film industry. Surveys, research and data must be developed at European level. Data on women in industry must be collected on different levels: film schools, funding, career, visibility in the media as well as funds distribution.

Some other steps improving women visibility would be to multiply awards and prizes for women, but also for gender equality. It is important to highlight good films, and show society that women-made films are quality films, not labeled "for women" but films for the entire society bringing a different point of view. Creating observatories would be a strong asset as observatories can be collecting data and centralizing networking experience. The fact that networks are coming back is not an accident. We mentioned the anti-feminist backlash during the symposium and many countries are facing it. As the financial crisis develops, women often feel the backlash and networking becomes very significant. Action has started, we need now to go to the next step. The stage of gathering information and think about what is possible, what strategies are possible, is happening. Establishing strong contact with mainstream festivals is a fundamental step in the networking experience. There is a need for gender experts in the mainstream festivals. Exchanging mentoring practices and knowledge is compulsory.

The network will continue its journey, different participants can contribute different things and the change has started.