

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT FILM PRODUCTION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The arts at universities and colleges are dedicated to the development of art education, research and creative work of students, teachers and researchers who act in accordance with the academic values. The goal is excellence and creativity in learning, creation and research, and also in artistic production. Thus, in an open and productive cooperation with the environment, we develop society, economy, arts and culture based on knowledge, creativity, innovation, sustainable development and democratic principles.

The fields of music, applied and fine arts, dramatic arts, and theater and film art, as well, in the countries of the Western Balkans are concentrated and distributed to one or more of the arts academy. This paper focuses on the field of film art in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a state that 25 years ago survived a terrible war. According to its characteristics, it is often called "a small Balkan". Area of the film in this young country has become something that made BH recognizable in the region and the world, mostly thanks to the authors who have made their first creative steps at art academies as students.

A serious study of film art in schools and universities began considerably after the first film had been created. Initially, there were organized courses for cinema acting but later the scope of occupations that were studied in such schools was expanded. The first true film school in the world was founded in Russia in 1919. It was the *VGIK, Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography*; here actors, directors, cinematographers and film experts of different profiles received the third-level education.

The study of film in the world was usually founded on the already formed theater academies as a new study that was supposed to educate a growing number of stakeholders, young, creative lovers of the seventh art, but also those who were already engaged in professional film and they had a need for additional education. Such was the case in the former Yugoslavia. The first academies were founded in Belgrade (the Academy of Theatre Arts - *Akademija za pozorišnu umetnost*) in 1948, and in Zagreb (the Academy of Theatre Arts - *Akademija za kazališnu umjetnost*) in 1950. Over time, by opening up new departments for film and television, the two academies have changed their names to get those they still have – the Faculty of Dramatic Arts and the Academy of Dramatic Art.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the most time an integral part of Yugoslavia since the beginning of the film history, the development of film art has largely been tied to the cinema of the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, the education of drama and audiovisual artist was bound for Zagreb and Belgrade. Until 1992, most film professionals were either self-taught or were graduates of some of the film schools or academies in Belgrade, Zagreb, Prague or other parts of the world. In 1981, there was established the first educational institution in BH in the field of performing and audiovisual arts – the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo (*Akademija scenskih umjetnosti Univerziteta u Sarajevu*). It was primarily founded due to the need for professional actors; at the time only 24 of 180 engaged actors in theaters had the necessary qualifications. The establishment of this Academy and the gradual creation of a large number of departments that train artists and professionals from various fields of Dramatic Arts will be a very important part in the development of cinema in Bosnia and Herzegovina because the Academy graduates will make the best quality constellation of film artists - primarily directors.

Since the academic year 1989 -1990 the Department of Directing (the study of multimedia) has been operating. The Department of Dramaturgy was established in 1994, while the Department of Production and Management in the field of performing arts has been operating since the academic year 2010-2011. Also, the studies of audio-visual art (camera, editing and sound design) have been at the Department of Directing since 2011.

Due to the growing need for education, theater, film, television and radio creators, and a new administrative postwar structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina (two entities – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska and the Brčko District), the academies in Banja Luka and Tuzla began their operations in 1998. By means of Dramatic Arts Department, and later Dramatic Arts Study Programme, the Academy of Arts of the University of Banja Luka (*Akademija umjetnosti Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci*) has been educating actors, theater directors, editors, screenwriters, cameramen and film and television directors. Similarly to the Sarajevo Academy, the studies of Acting were established first, and already in 2000, the first generation of students were enrolled at the TV Department (now it is the Film and TV Department). In 2003, the studies of Dramaturgy started, and 2005 the studies of Theater Directing. In 2014, the first classes of the students of Production and Animated films were enrolled. In the academic year 2010-11 the first students of master studies were enrolled.

As soon as it had been established, the Academy of Dramatic Arts of the University of Tuzla (*Akademija dramskih umjetnosti Univerziteta u Tuzli*), established the Department of Acting. The first postgraduate study programme named Theater and Drama started at dramatic arts academies in BH in the academic year 2001-2001. Then, in the academic year 2004-2005, the Production Department was established, and in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, a new postgraduate programme – Theater studies. Since the academic year 2007- 2008, the admission to both departments has been conducted biannually so that each academic year alternately is enrolled one class for acting and production.

Initially, associates, i.e., teachers from other colleges in BH and abroad performed teaching in all three academies. Today the teaching process is mainly performed by teachers and assistants who were educated at these academies, which is common to higher education institutions in the world.

Since 2005, as an organizational unit of a private university – Slobomir University P - in Bijeljina, there has been the Academy of Arts (*Akademija umjetnosti*) with the Dramatic and Film Art Department. Students of acting are educated there. Apart from this, the Study Programme of the Audiovisual Arts in Film and TV was established in 2010; it focuses its studies on audiovisual arts: Directing, Editing, Camera and Sound Design of all forms of features and documentaries as well as film and television forms. The Film and TV Art Study Programme started as well at the Sinergija University in Bijeljina in 2013.

In the academic year 2010-11, the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology University established the Sarajevo Film Academy (SFA), a private film school and the only school of directing in the Balkans with a complete curriculum in English. The Sarajevo Film Academy focuses on the field of directing, offering BA and MA studies according to the Bologna curriculum. In 2013, as part of the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, the Film Factory started; these are the first international three-year doctoral studies in the field of the film led by Hungarian director Bela Tarr. The classes at this institution are conducted by big- name personalities in the world of film.

Different departments have gradually started in all academies depending on the social needs and available educational resources. It is evident that the studies of acting have always been founded the first as they are the link between theater and film, and then the film studies. In order to have a quality performed teaching process, the admission policy at art

studies entitles the enrollment of a small number of students, typically up to 10 students per department or group.

The students who have completed their studies in the Film and Television Directing, Editing, Camera, Production, and Dramaturgy are employed in different private or public production companies, in both television and film. The largest number of graduates who are film workers are in Sarajevo. This is due to the fact that Sarajevo has a long cinematic tradition, a developed film industry and production as well as a large number of acclaimed filmmakers, and a solved issue of institutional support for cinematography by line ministries of the government. In the BH entity Republic of Srpska, there is still no willingness of governing structures to systematically resolve the issue of film financing or to assist in the implementation of student films. Therefore, students are forced to find their own way to finish their movies required for exams as their Academies cannot provide all necessary resources for their finishing.

Private film schools plan student tuitions fees so as to be sufficient to cover all expenses necessary for teaching and functioning of studies, and also to allocate funds for the implementation of exam exercises, i.e., movies and to partially cover the costs of the realization of the final film, as well. Prices range according to the year from 2900 Euros for BA studies up to 15000 Euro for doctoral studies. The tuition for the co-financing students at public universities is much lower and ranges from 600 to 900 Euros for BA studies and 1500 Euros for MA studies at the Academy. A larger number of students are financed from the budget of the entity or canton. However, the funds allocated by the Government for the operation of the Academy are often insufficient to ensure good functioning and performance of the teaching-learning process.

The Association of Filmmakers in Bosnia and Herzegovina organizes the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival as part of the Sarajevo Film Festival. By means of this programme, the Festival shows nearly all the annual film production in BH, but also present the movies of our authors who live and work abroad. In addition, it organizes a competitive part for student films with the participation of all the academies in Bosnia and Herzegovina dealing with film education.

Due to the presence of guests from abroad and film professionals, this festival is the perfect platform for the promotion of BH film production, and the only place that brings together young filmmakers from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina, and allows them to meet and find future associates for their projects. In recent years, the goal of the festival has not changed; the goal is the promotion of BH filmmakers, directors, writers, actors and other film professionals, as well as the encouragement of local production and distributors of domestic films.

In late 90s and early 2000s, a generation of young artists from the Academy of Performing Arts have made a number of successful short films as precursors to the future success of their feature debuts. The Sarajevo Film Festival has become an important festival in the world that actively contributes to the development of domestic and regional cinema. Also, the success of the film *No Man's Land*, which was produced entirely outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina but with the crucial participation of local authors and actors, has created a critical mass for the restoration of the system of state care about cinema. This resulted in the establishment of the Foundation for Cinematography in 2002. The BH cinema has transformed from a severely destroyed economical and artistic sector into a modern and diversified sector, capable of producing high-quality audio-visual content whose target groups are local and international audience. This has become evident by winning the largest worldwide recognitions for domestic feature films, as the Golden bear of the Berlin film

festival, the Grand Prix at Cannes critics' Week, and the Grand Prix and the Special Mention at the Cannes festival, the Silver Leopard at Locarno, Rotterdam Tiger, Heart of Sarajevo and many others, as well as numerous successful titles distributed in the various media in the country and abroad. By operating through specialized sources of funding in the country as a precondition for international cooperation in the field of cinema, and as a membership in the fund Eurimages Council of Europe and the MEDIA Programme of the European Union, BH cinematography is today one of the few areas in which Bosnia and Herzegovina is fully integrated in Europe.

A link between the Academy of Performing Arts and the production of feature films in Sarajevo is highly pronounced as well as the impact of the Sarajevo Film Festival. For 20 years, many generations of creators have graduated and, with their full-length, short and documentary films, marked not only BH or just regional film scene, but they have also shaped Europe's film landscape. More than 250 awards were won by students, graduates and teachers of the ASU Sarajevo.

On the other hand, we may find the link between the Academy of Arts in Banja Luka and the films produced in Banja Luka. However, this impact does not exist when it comes to the production of documentaries and short films which are made in the eastern part of the Republic of Srpska entity. A systematic film financing in the entity Republic of Srpska still does not exist. Therefore, it is the key problem for the production of feature films, documentaries or short films. While the authors from Sarajevo have been winning prestigious awards for their films (since 2003), the authors from RS were narrow-minded or interested only for the production in Serbia. The visits to student festivals were rare. However, a number of student films have recently won prestigious awards at many festivals around the world (Javorac, Kavić, Tesić, Ilić, Karanović, etc). Apart from this, the development of cinematography in the Republic of Srpska is supported by the process of connecting the academies in Bosnia and Herzegovina; their joint participation in the BH Film Festival as well as the joint projects of the Sarajevo and Banja Luka Academies, the exchange of actors and creative energy, and also an active regional and international cooperation between students and academies.

One of the joint projects which included the participation of the Academy of Arts of the University of Banja Luka and the Academy of Performing Arts of University of Sarajevo is the Student Audio / Video Production which is the acronym for Tempus IV project the *Development of higher education and society by creating a collaborative environment in the field of arts and media through regional student partnership in production of audio/video content*. The project includes 6 countries, of which three European Union countries - Slovenia, Slovakia and Bulgaria, the three countries from the Western Balkans - Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania. The total includes 10 institutions of higher education.

The project has been designed to improve the student educational process as well as their connecting to the professional media environment, mainly television. By creating a certain synergy between the media and educational institutions, there were established new methods of communication for students. Besides, students have gained more practical experience and media partners were presented as potential future employers. The Project is consistent with the Europe 2020 strategy, the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training and the Bologna process.

During the first year of the project, following the Open Call 2014, a total of 11 student works were realized, of which 7 were short films, 1 was a medium-length feature film, 1 was a documentary and 2 were audio works. In the second year of the project, media partners in cooperation with higher education institutions published an open invitation (Open Call 2015) for the implementation of various programme formats that were of particular interest to broadcasters; 18 projects were realized of which 6 short films, 9 documentaries, 1 pilot episode of sitcom and 2

audio works. In the third year of the project (Open Call 2016) a medium film was realized in which all the partners were involved. The students of several colleges were engaged in the realization of each Student work. The teams were mixed, from the stage of writing the script and mentoring until the shooting and postproduction. Students traveled to different cities to realize some films and works.

Generally speaking, it is crucial for the film, and the film industry quality education of film students who need to be the backbone of the future development of cinematography in each country. Although short student films from Bosnia and Herzegovina have achieved significant results at numerous film festivals around the world, without the major financial support of the state, hardly can more significant results be expected, especially when it comes to feature films which imposes much larger funds. Therefore, a strong bond between a quality educational process, a systematical copying with cinematography issues by state structures, and openness to joint film projects in the region and the world are basic guidelines for the film industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

References

- Levi, Pavle. 2009. Raspad Jugoslavije na filmu. Beograd : Biblioteka XX vek
- Marjanović, Jovan. Bakšić Čamo, Amra. Solomun, Predrag. 2013. Mapiranje filmske industrije u Bosni i Hercegovini. Banja Luka: Vizart. Sarajevo: Obala Ard Centar
- Pavičić, Jurica. 2011. Postjugoslavenski film – Stil i ideologija. Zagreb: HFS
- Tataragić, Elma. Fajković, Vedran. 2009. Kratka historija BH filma. Sarajevo: Udruženje filmskih radnika BiH
- Tataragić, Elma. 2010. Kinematografija Bosne i Hercegovine 2009/2010. Sarajevo: Udruženje filmskih radnika BiH