



SEPT 10

FILMMAKERS *WITHOUT* FILM SCHOOL

interview:
Boris Mitić

spotlight:
Visions of Prague



6 SEPTEMBER

Call for Participants network communications training

10 SEPTEMBER

Call for Participants Nisimazine IDFA 2010

20 SEPT. - 16 OCT

Istanbul Express filmmaking workshop



editorial

We don't need no thought control!

I always try my best to encourage friends who want to become filmmakers, but I don't advise them to take the film school exams, or even apply at all. *"You can make films without a film school, school is not the only way. No one is stopping you from becoming a filmmaker, just do it!"* Of course it's easy for me to say: as a graduate from two Finnish film schools I've been lucky to get resources from the schools for free, and met many of my dear present colleagues during my studies. Although the quality of teaching can always be criticized, I've had things easy. The road to becoming a filmmaker is much more tricky for those who don't go to film schools.

In this issue of Mas y Mas we're focusing on some weather-beaten filmmakers who made it on their own, without film schools. We're not going into bitter interviews of *"They didn't take me to any school"*, but more showing that many filmmakers are better off self-taught, and school is really not the best place for everyone, like for Xavier

Dolan (page 4). You'll also find an interview with Boris Mitić (page 5). By the way, Boris is one of the tutors in the grand NISI MASA Istanbul Express -project, which launches on the 20th of September.

Check out also all the upcoming happenings on page 6, and on page 8 you'll find an article about the latest NISI MASA workshop that was held in the Czech Republic last month: Visions of Prague.

And finally, as I have my own personal quest for encouraging those who are lacking self-esteem due to not being in some school, I want to say one thing: when the lights in the cinema go down and the film starts, at that point no one is interested in your CV.

by Hannaleena Hauru

Mas y Mas is a monthly newsletter published by the association NISI MASA.

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credits.

3 Filmmakers without film school dossier

A SMALL SELECTION OF DIRECTORS WHO DID NOT STUDY AT FILM SCHOOLS

The History of cinema is studded with very important and talented directors who never had an education as directors. Or, for that matter, any kind of formal education. D.W. Griffith, the Founding Father of American cinema, did not even finish high school. He ran away to NYC and started out as an actor. Stanley Kubrick was unable to successfully finish high school and then he found a job as a photographer. Billy Wilder dropped out from law school, Fellini registered in the same course but never took an exam. Surely, generalising is quite impossible, as there are too many differences in the educational systems and organizations to make comparisons between the US and Europe. But judging from these and other CVs, film schools look like the worst place on earth for a young director to start his or her career.

Especially in the past, the personal story of a director was either that of the rich bourgeois or the lower-class poor kid. The bourgeois (Hitchcock, Truffaut, Godard) would either do something generic in human studies, such as ethnology (Jean-Luc Godard); or start a professionalising school and then usually drop out. The poor kids never contemplated the idea of college, instead starting to work in the business at the age of 20, whether as actors, screenwriters or assistant directors. John Ford, for example, reached his older brother in Los Angeles and started from there. Unfortunately, with the development of the society of spectacles, everyone decided he or she wanted to make it in the cinema industry, whether as actor, dancer, or in television. Cinema being established and the technical creativity of the early moments being sold, hundred of thousands of film schools have sprouted up all around the world,

promising success and pulling huge capitals from people who can afford to be artists. Sure, now times are changing and there is the need for a set of competencies: hence, the schools.

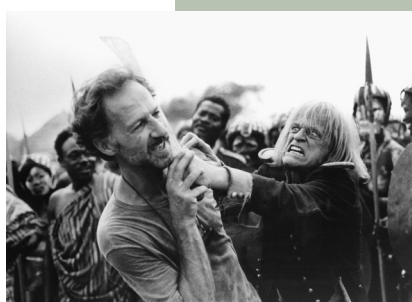
Many directors from newer generations, from Aronofsky to Ethan Coen, have had a proper film education. Now, the "next best" of world cinema all come from universities, yes, but mostly from a variety of disciplines in human studies. Nothing technical. This is a sign of something which is even true in cinema: anybody can hold a brush in his hand, or a camera for that matter, but a solid cultural background is fundamental to make something out of your passion.

By Marta Musso

top: D.W. Griffith on the set of *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)

middle: the Nouvelle Vague

bottom: Ethan Coen (right) on the set of *No country for old men* (2007)



ROGUE FILM SCHOOL

Yes, yes, we know this issue is about filmmaking WITHOUT a school, but still we did not want to keep you from this one, especially since it focuses on everything besides a regular curriculum. It does not teach you the technical aspect of filmmaking, but amongst other essentials - lock picking, travelling on foot, being shot at, forgery and neutralization of bureaucracy. The school

is carried out in the form of weekend seminars taught by Werner Herzog (who mastered filmmaking by himself in similar style, after having stolen a camera from the Munich Film School). The courses advertise themselves as a way of life, being about poetry, films, music, images and literature. The next application period is from 27th of December to 12th of February.

www.roguefilmschool.com

TEACH ME TALENT

When dealing with the fact that many film directors have never gone through any academic cinema school, the issue is not to turn the question to the filmmakers, but to the teaching of art in general. If no one disputes that specific, exact sciences can - and should - be taught (could anyone understand all mathematical and physical domains with no guidance at all?), art seems to have

less determined codes. This question is not new, and it takes us back to the ancient discussion: are arts a matter of talent or a matter of skill?

On one hand, we have powerful artistic figures such as Mozart, who pretty much taught himself. But then, the ideas of learning and creating are contradictory, the first coming from another individual, and the second coming from oneself. Painting illustrates this conflict the best, attributing value to the great masters and students of the XVII century, but according even more attention to those who seem to subvert the rules in their own. In art, reproduction has

always been appreciated, but creation and invention carry a more powerful social status.

One of the reasons for this is the fact that humans highly appreciate what they cannot understand. Technique can be mapped out and summed up, but personal talent comes from a place we cannot identify. How are geniuses created? More importantly, how do we create those who can recognize them? The answer to the recognition of talent is highly complex and sociology still spends a lot of time trying to figure out how societies decide. For example, that Picasso is better than Braque, or Martin Scorsese is better than Brian de Palma.

The matter of talent in cinema gets more complicated when one thinks that it's the art most connected to, and dependent on, technology. We can write books with only a pen and a piece of paper (or excrement and some walls, to think of Sade), but a movie can't be made - for now, at least - with no machinery at all, whether it be a 35 mm camera or a cell phone.

In order to really separate those who operate machines from those who create for them, ancient critics used to separate "artisan" from "artist", meaning, on one hand, the one who possesses a form of knowledge, and on the other hand, the one who possesses an inner talent. This dichotomy hasn't changed much in contemporary art: film critics, especially the highly influential ones of the Cahiers du Cinéma in the 50s, separated "metteur en scène" from "auteur", or author, the first term emphasizing the profession, and the other emphasizing the independent creation.



fitr: Spielberg, Scorsese, De Palma, Lucas and Coppola

Well-loved directors - let's say, Hitchcock back then, or perhaps Gus Van Sant today - are given the precious label of authors, while others (Minelli, Tornatore, Haneke, you pick) are called by terms related to the technical aspect of cinema: filmmakers, film directors, metteurs en scene. As usual, everything related to hands-on work is put on a lower level in comparison to the work of the mind - or the heart, the spirit or whatever we may call it.

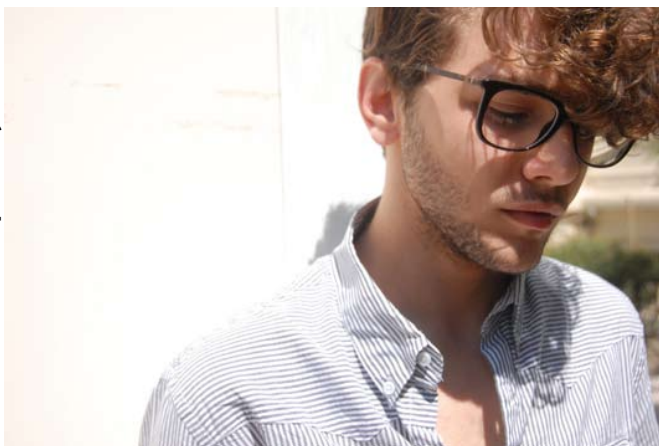
For that reason, film schools seem able to teach only the less appreciated form of cinema: that of the work, of the technique and the history of art. It's not surprising to see that icons directly out of cinema schools, such as Spielberg and Lucas, are directly related to the industry, the money, the technique (and therefore a lower form of art), while troubled self-taught geniuses like Pasolini and Kubrick are recognized as real inventors. To sum up, what's at stake here is an incompatibility between the romantic concept of cinema and the pragmatic, contemporary one. The question is not "can cinema be taught?", but "can transmissible knowledge be recognized as art?" We are not close to an answer.

By Bruno Carmelo



Pier Paolo Pasolini

photo by Luis Sens



Xavier Dolan - a prodigy college drop-out.

"It [going to school] was an awful experiment and I dropped out of college .../ All my friends were working and studying and I was alone, so I figured I should kill time," says Xavier Dolan in an interview for Macleans.ca. And so, to cure boredom, the former child-actor (born in 1989) made a full-length feature that swept away most of the awards from the Directors' Fortnight programme at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival. In *I killed my mother* (*J'ai tué ma mère*), an emotionally-detached, animal-print-loving mother (Anne Dorval) and a sensitive homosexual son (Dolan himself) deal with emotional and trust issues, clashing in heated fights often on the verge of absurdity. After the Cannes screening earned an eight-minute standing ovation, at the age of only 20 the slim hipster became a media sensation and resident prodigy. Although mostly favourable, especially praising the excellent dialogues, certain critics thought his visual style, inspired by Kar Wai, Van Sant, and Goddard, came off as insincere. Dolan's cinematic coming-of-age happened while trying to raise funds, painting sets, experimenting with visual styles and dealing with the fact that some of the scenes he directed were impossible to edit. Despite the obstacles and inexperience, he managed to pull off a debut that showcases his unquestionable talent and quirky personality. *Heartbeats* is his second film and the learning curve continues with *Laurence any ways*, a film dealing with transsexuality planned for release in 2012.

By Srđan Laterza

Read our Nisimazine Cannes 2009 portrait on Xavier by Eftihia Stefanidi: <http://www.nisimazine.eu/Dolan-Xavier>



INTERVIEW BORIS MITIĆ

Boris Mitić, author of several documentaries and the tutor on the Turin train of "Istanbul Express" never went to film school. We asked him to explain his path towards filmmaking.

As I understand you never actually wanted to be a filmmaker, but filmmaking found its way to you by itself, how did this happen?

Well, for me it was a kind of a natural development, it was not an ego decision or a childhood fantasy. I came to documentary filmmaking after aborting a very well paid journalistic job and after five years of high profile journalism. I was 27 at the time.

While shooting your first film, Pretty Dyana, you say that you were not aware that you were making a film.

I was only recording souvenir footage from these cool neighbors that I discovered and befriended. I didn't have a photo camera, so I filmed on video, for the first time in my life. I installed a pirated copy of Adobe Premiere 6.5 on my Pentium III and started putting images together. People liked them but they kept wanting more information, so I returned to filming until they had no more questions about the material, until the story was self-explanatory. It was pure instinct.

Your technique for making movies seems to be best described as bricolage. Do you think that this is something that can be taught in the conventional education system?

Bricolage is also a question of character, of improvising, learning by doing and of learning to bluff yourself that all is going well. *Pretty Dyana* was pure improvisation, *Good Bye, How Are You?*, my last film, was also bricolage,

but with a very clear idea that took four years to build. Documentary bricolage is like building a Lego set with a huge box of bricks, but without a clear blueprint. Some kids need instructions, some can improvise. It is good to acknowledge the instructions, but you will lose if you can't improvise.

What about the student selection process in film schools, do you think it is possible to judge if the person has what it takes in, let's say, a week?

I think that the moment when people really decide to become filmmakers varies from person to person. Some authors have always wanted to be filmmakers and have devoted their lives to it. Others, like me have done many other things, and came to filmmaking in a natural way, by realizing that this is the best way for them to express themselves, to do a job that they like and to do it regardless of potential successes or failures. I never made any calculations in that sense. But to answer your question, it all depends on how people react to their first real filmmaking experiences. Everyone should be given a chance, many more freshman filmmakers should be admitted to film schools than now. The real selection would be made later. This selection depends on how much the students can take out of filmmaking and how much filmmaking can take out of them. If they don't want to grow as individual people and authors, if they don't

want to push filmmaking to higher levels, then this is where you should make the cut. Already now we have enough standard, routine filmmakers who can execute filmmaking assignments on any level. I really think film schools should create authors, not technicians.

You give lectures titled What they don't teach in film school worldwide.

I started taking notes of many things, almost everything, a long time ago. Recently, I took a year off to reorganize and crosslink to all these notes, because everything we read or learn, we do it in a very disposable way. We treat our own knowledge like fast food, we don't recycle it. When I present my lectures, I am saying nothing new, but I am saying it in a way that makes people understand certain connections. Of course, I am mostly interested in making movies, but lecturing can only contribute to my filmmaking. One day it could be a more serious source of income, but even if it doesn't, I'll be a little bit better as a filmmaker and a whole lot better as an intellectual person in any case.

Read the extended interview on the Istanbul Express blog!

www.nisimasa.com/istanbulexpress

By Jass Seljamaa

news & screen

NETWORK COMMUNICATION TRAININGS IN HUNGARY & KOSOVO

Of this two step training for the NISI MASA network on communication, the first part, held in Budapest from the 8th to the 12th of December 2010, will deal with network communications, finding new members and volunteers, integrating and motivating them. The second part in Kosovo, held from the 2nd until the 8th of May 2011, will concentrate on network communication and project communication using new media tools.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS OPEN ON 6TH OF SEPTEMBER.

ISTANBUL EXPRESS TRAINS DEPART!

The trains of Istanbul Express start on the 20th of September and will pass by 23 European cities, which means a lot of events scheduled in the coming weeks!

They will visit:

Tallinn	(20. – 22.09)
Helsinki	(23.09)
Turku	(24.09)
Stockholm	(26, 27.09)
Berlin	(29, 30.09)
Prague	(01, 02.10)
Bratislava	(03 – 05.10)
Bucharest	(07, 08.10)

Turin	(20 – 22.09)
Ljubljana	(24 – 26.09)
Zagreb	(27 – 29.09)
Pecs	(30.09 – 01.10)
Belgrade	(02 - 04.10)
Skopje	(05, 06.10)
Thessaloniki	(07, 08.10)

San Sebastian	(20 – 22.09)
Paris	(24, 25.09)
Brussels	(26, 27.09)
Amsterdam	(28, 29.09)
Essen	(30.09, 01.10)
Vienna	(02, 03.10)
Budapest	(04, 05.10)
Sofia	(07 – 09.10)

and last but not least
Istanbul (10 – 16.10)

EDN ONLINE PITCHING: CALL FOR PROJECTS

The European Documentary Network (EDN) presents Online Pitching, a format based on an online video conference, where a selected number documentary projects are introduced. For the first session EDN is calling for documentary projects with a cross-platform potential.

DEADLINE: 15TH OF SEPTEMBER.

More info at:

<http://www.edn.dk/activities/edn-activity-texts/edn-online-pitching-session-cross-platform-projects>.

NISIMAZINE IDFA IS BACK!

After one year of silence we are proud to announce that a new edition of Nisimazine will be made at the International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam, The Netherlands this coming November! The workshop will be held from the 18th until the 25th.



CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS OPEN ON 10TH OF SEPTEMBER.

BERLIN TODAY AWARD 2012



This is a hands-on training programme for former and current directing participants of the Berlinale Talent Campus. The Berlin Today Award offers five young directors the chance to produce a short film in cooperation with a Berlin or Brandenburg based production company. The Berlinale talent campus awards 5 best ideas on the theme "Every step you take", with a chance to produce a short film in cooperation with a Berlin or Brandenburg based production company.

DEADLINE: 6TH OF OCTOBER.

www.berlinale-talentcampus.de/story/94/3594.html

COVERAGE OF ADANA FESTIVAL BY NISIMAZINE JOURNALISTS

Two of our Nisimazine journalists, Moa Geistrand, Sweden, Cannes 2009) and Hanna Mironenko, Russia, Helsinki 2008)

will be attending the Altın Koza International Film Festival in Turkey from the 20th until the 26th of September! You can follow their coverage on the blog of Nisimazine.eu:

www.nisimazine.eu/-Blog-.html

www.goldenbollfilmfestival.com



ings

FRANCE

24.09.2010 - 19:00

European short-films screening in Paris at the Maison de l'Europe (34 Rue des Francs Bourgeois, 75004)

ESTONIA

21.09.2010 - 18:00

NISI MASA short films screening in Tallinn, Kinomaja (Uus tn. 3)

The NETHERLANDS

25.09.2010 - 01.10.2010

The Cinetrain 2008 films will be viewable on-demand on Holland Doc, the multimedia platform for documentary of the Public Broadcasting Services in the Netherlands. The online screening will be in the week of the 25th of september to the 1st of October as an introduction to the further coverage on the website of Istanbul Express.

www.hollanddoc.nl



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spotlight

VISIONS OF PRAGUE

After Paris, Istanbul, Kars and Budapest, NISI MASA's 'Visions of...' workshop took place in Prague, with a sub-theme "the invaders". Sara Barberis, one of the Prague invaders, shares her experience with us.

AND THEN GOD CREATED THE VISION.

Trust what you see, keep curious and be there when reality discloses its beautiful stories to you.

This is in a nutshell what I've experienced during the NISI MASA workshop "Visions of.." held in Prague from the 22nd to the 29th of August in conjunction with the 2010 edition of the Fresh Film Fest. A bunch of eager filmmakers exploring Prague under the wise and challenging guidance of Miroslav Janek, who has seen, shot and edited visions around the world and loves sharing the view.

We arrive from Italy, Spain and France and are divided in groups composed of a director, a cinematographer and an editor, before being sent off to find our location in Prague, with a warning. Mira, as we learnt to call him, asks us to leave any judgements at home as it could blind our vision. It's about how we look at things, not necessarily what we look at. Each group is accompanied by a local volunteer, which is a great way to invade the city without being invasive. At the end of the first day each presents the first impressions and ideas gathered in the city. Mira, as if he was cutting raw diamonds, finds a good perspective for every proposal: a French circus on the outskirts of the city, the Kafkaesque exploitation of Kafka's image by the touristic network, the Key Sculpture, a symbol of the newly-found freedom in the Velvet Revolution, the tragi-comic stillness of the guards at the gates of Prague's castle and finally, a tunnel in the middle of nowhere.

At night we stumble across the city without really knowing who we are: tourists, filmmakers, invaders, plain idiots. We talk about why we love Herzog, about why we hate Herzog, about the fact that we will never try to learn Czech, about the mysterious nature of Czech dumplings, about how hot our coordinators are, about Hrabal, our solitude and the fact that beer is cheaper than bread. Nevertheless the day after each group is completely absorbed by its own project. We are already shooting. The girls of the circus are all in love with the circus men (and some will never find the way back home), the Kafka group is completely overwhelmed by an oppressing sense of paranoia, the guards group is closely guarding the guardians, the Keys/Revolution people are hunting down every possible key-maker in Prague and the tunnel project team is staring at an empty tunnel (waiting for anything to happen). Jan Sipek, a talented young filmmaker, watches over us like Mr. Wolf solving all sorts of technical problems, from camera compatibility to existential doubts regarding Final Cut.

Two days after we are all feverishly editing our material: we edit in teams, alone, at lunch time, in our dreams. Meanwhile the Fresh Film Fest has kicked off but most of us only manage to see the opening movie *Scott Pilgrim vs the World*, a teen-indie-action-vegan-super-heroes-from-cool-comics movie that really takes the steam off as we are approaching the final decisive moment: the first reel screening. *Les jeux sont faits* and Mira helps us working on the strong and the weak points, the fine-tuning. The night of the screening we all meet at FAMU, the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. Each movie has captured an aspect of Prague and the essence of the people who were making it. Overall they were good but one keeps a special place in my heart: in front of a tunnel we see two kids trying to climb a concrete barrier. Nothing else happens and yet everything happens. Because we all laughed, we all felt sorry for them and we identified completely with their struggle.

Text and photos by Sara Barberis

