

## **Summary of 2010 Participants' Projects' Review**

We have seen that the majority of the presented projects are documentaries, and a few fiction projects, all are low budget projects. Most participants saw TV and festival screenings as main (initial) delivery medium for distribution.

Projects have been examined in terms of content, workflow and distribution.

Several topics have been covered for groups of similar projects:

### **The impact of DSLR cameras**

You should consider well what you want to achieve. With DSLR there are advantages and disadvantages. The Canon D5 looks amazing once you have prepared things well. In terms of budget it's heaven. Furthermore, this camera makes people feel more at ease while being interviewed, since they are less aware of being filmed. Always take care of the weight of the camera once the lens is mounted – sometimes it will be impossible for the cameraman to hold it for a long time.

Regarding the data management you have to take care, because you have to unload data at the end of the day and erase the original. DSLR cameras, as many digital cameras, have focus problems: if something is out of focus, it's totally out of focus, and the results will be very evident on the big screen. In consequence there also are problems with movements, so think twice about using it in architecture situations, you might get strange artifacts. On the other hand DSLR is perfect for stop-motion and animation movies because the codec of the still camera is different from the codec in video mode. Try to use it in situations which are close to still. On the other hand, the eye could get used to this new type of aesthetic and we might just see it as a kind of style.

You should go through tests during night and day situations. During night shoots faces might be split in half with a flash on one side and the rest disappearing.

The compression is very strong in DSLR, therefore you should check what quality of data you have in colour grading. On the web you may find cheap ways to correct the artifacts, but they work well only on a computer screen and you will see twice as much artifacts on a big screen. Correcting this in post will cost money. Therefore: Use the camera according to your subject.

### **Sony X1 vs. Sony X3**



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You can put different types of lenses on the X3, which is a great advantage, but the support of the lens is weak. You may have to create a platform to carry the lens. The files of both the X1 and the X3 are not large – so don't be afraid to use a file-based system. You can handle it.

### **Archive material**

For documentaries the problem is often that you have to spend a lot on rights for archive material and you end up with a collection of different formats.

### **Sound**

If you shoot for the US market, you have to take into consideration that you have to edit in a different frame frequency. You have to anticipate these costs for editing and conforming. Sometimes it will be easier to shoot in 24 than in 25fps. It is easier to convert from 24 to 25 fps than the other way round because you might have problems syncing the sound. Your post provider will tell you what is the best choice.

### **Delivery**

You should check with the TV station which format they are accepting. If you plan a delivery for TV in the first place, don't shoot in 1.85 aspect ratio. This is good for a cinema release. Stick to 16:9 or 4:3, otherwise you will have to reformat.

### **Production and distribution in a changing world**

Digital technology has made film production tools accessible to everybody, and as a consequence we have seen a rise in low-(or no-)budget-productions. At the same time, it becomes more and more difficult to finance 2 to 4 Mio € films because distributors and exhibitors hesitate to invest. But: Do producers still need distributors? Could they build a stronger bond with the audience and perform their own releases direct from the post-production provider?

The above-mentioned reduced budgets have to be used in new, innovative ways. So why should you split your limited budget into production, post-production and overheads, minimizing its chances in every part from the beginning? Why not invest the maximum amount in production, and move on from there? Which means: produce a film (or a couple of scenes) with the money you have. Start to see the post-production houses as creative partners, possibly offering them a portfolio of projects and striking a package deal. Discuss your results with the post-house, define which quality level you could reach investing a certain amount of money. Subse-



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quently you may show your project on the internet, present it to potential investors, raise more money which you could then invest in the post-production and in finishing the film for the devices defined in the meantime.

On the other hand, a producer is used to see a budget from the beginning to the end. How could financiers trust a project if it is not financed until the end? Would there be anyone willing to invest in a film if its theatrical release is not guaranteed? There is a need for a change of consciousness in all parts of the production chain. Funders could provide an initial financing and decide subsequently on giving a second round of financing.

If the distributor is completely cast out of the process, the producer will also have to cope with losing the co-financing provided by the distributor, and would have to look for new sources of risk capital. Left on his own, the producer would have to quickly build experience in marketing, finding the target audience and booking cinemas, which is the core business of distributors. Therefore the direct link between producer and postproduction house, eliminating the distributor, might be a viable model for small releases or for documentaries, but not for bigger feature films and might be viable only in a few years from now.