

International Taur Conference, 22nd and 23rd of March 2021 – Call for papers

The accelerators of development and production of audiovisual projects. Pitch sessions, Workshops, Networking: production practices, stakes, and experiences.

The Taur Conference (previously the Sorèze colloquium), organized by the LARA team from the LARA-SEPPIA research unit at the Université de Toulouse - Jean Jaurès, is an annual opportunity for swapping ideas around audiovisual topics.

The Taur Conference of 2021 will focus on the practices and mechanisms that underlie the development process of an audiovisual project in its search for partners and funding.

It will be held during the Cinélatino festival held in Toulouse (19th to 28th March 2021), so as to offer attending researchers exclusive observation opportunities, thus allowing a convergence of academic and professional sectors.

In the highly competitive audiovisual industry, the selection of projects happens both structurally, (networking, institutions, artistic agents) as well as through various events (festivals, markets). These events have now become the foremost opportunities for projects to be selected.

The 2021 conference has chosen to focus on exploring the role these events play in the processes of valuating and selecting audiovisual projects, through methods of intermediation between professionals (such as pitches, workshops, and networking).

While academic work has often focused on determining what makes a “good movie” on an aesthetic level (Art Theory) or on a commercial level (Information and Communication Sciences and Management Sciences), the key topic of this conference is an invitation to reflect on what makes a “good project” in the audiovisual field, and the way in which such an assessment can be reached. To that end, notions of creation and talent will have to be explored in view of highlighting what exactly must be assessed to judge a project’s value.

The aim will be to deepen the selection mechanism, which is all about making a choice, and the mechanism of selectivity which focuses on the organization of the selection through tools and methods.

These two concepts raise questions about the decisive factors and mechanisms of valuation of the works and the process of their legitimization in interdisciplinary issues (financial, sociological, managerial, communicational).

To give some examples, we can cite a few events (out of the hundreds of existing ones) that illustrate this intermediation function in audiovisual festivals or fairs, as well as the diversity in their fields:

- “Goes to Cannes”: intended to spot the emergent talent in Cannes
- the “Co-Pro Pitching Sessions” facilitating international co-productions in Lille, or at Sunny Side of the Doc in La Rochelle

- the "Professional' Training Sessions" at European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE), at ACE Producers, or at the Torino Film Lab (development, production, and distribution).

As production "accelerators", finders of talent, tools for selection, and barometers of artistic and financial feasibility of the projects, these mechanisms go hand in hand with the development process in all its stages: finding partners, an author, a producer, specialists, experts; facilitating financing and co-productions.

The various sectors of audiovisual creation are all involved (fiction, documentaries, series), as well as the various levels of activity (authors, screenwriters, or producers).

In the context of film festivals and fairs, we wish to highlight the following topics:

- **What system(s) of value underlie this logic?**

In particular, we might try to think through the notions of talent and quality in the audiovisual sector and try to work out how the criteria used in project-assessment arbitrate between artistic quality and commercial potential. (axiological dissonance).

- What kind of profile is present in the legitimacy and expertise among those judging the projects (axiological resources)?

What is going to be questioned is the whole work setup of the audiovisual industry through the role of its intermediaries in the development phase of the audiovisual work.

- What are the characteristics of the works resulting from the projects selected through these mechanisms?

We might look into the processes of standardization and labelling of the topics, as well as the formats of the audiovisual productions created thanks to these mechanisms while bearing in mind the constraints of a "mise en marché" and a "culturalisme de marché"¹ (Romain Lecler), as well as the anglicization of the relevant vocabulary (as witnessed by such terms as pitch, workshop, and network) and the generalized use of English to present projects during these events.

- What is the legitimacy of the resulting costs of these mechanisms? What returns can be expected?

Should the investment required by the organization of such events be thought of in terms of the (financial) returns for the project itself (future public entries or awards for the films) or in terms of the returns on the attendance of festivals and markets? In other words, are these mechanisms now part of an arsenal of events that aim to energize audiovisual events?

¹ These expressions refer to the influence of the market on how projects become formatted in order for them to correspond to market expectations, how they are "put on the market", and influenced by the "market culture".

Various particularly fruitful research areas might be mobilized to address these questions:

- The works of Production Studies (Meyer, Banks, Thorton) that aim to conceptualize the work practices of professionals, while putting the emphasis on the world of production as a culture, and on the study of professionals' practices.
- The branch of Festival Studies, and particularly Film Festival Studies with a majority of Anglo-Saxon works (De Valck, Lordonova), which see the film festival as an object of specific research, distinct from other festivals, particularly due to the important financial challenges in the field.
- The work on the economy of creation, which allow for deepening the debates around concepts of quality and talent in the artistic domains (Menger, De Nora, Shotté, Jeanpierre, Leveratto). Studies related to the instances of legitimization and valorisation of a work (Mourreau & Sagot-Duvauroux, Jullier & Leveratto, Benghozi, Duval & Marty, Gimello-Mespomb).
- Works related to the artistic and financial dynamics (Grefe, Benghozi, Roueff, Creton), studies of the role of film fairs (Laurichesse, Leclerc).
- Sociological works about the industry of cinema and the audiovisual field (Roueff, Rot, Wincelas) and on the nature of this intermediation based on expertise (Mourreau, Sagot-Duvauroux).

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Abstract proposal deadline: Tuesday December 22, 2020.

Interested contributors should provide the following:

A PDF format file ((entitled "Name of the authorTaur2021") containing the following and sent to berenice.bonhomme@univ-tlse2.fr and helene.laurichesse@free.fr

- **Names**, including first name, and the authors' affiliation
- **Title**
- **Summary** (maximum 3000 characters including spaces)
- 3 to 6 keywords
- A short biography of the author(s), including scientific titles and recent principal publications, one page maximum

Proposals may be written in Fench or English.

The committee's decision will be communicated to the authors January 15, 2021.

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