

Sunchica Veselinovska
NI Cinematheque of Macedonia, Skopje

ARCHIVING, PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF AUDIOVISUAL CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MACEDONIA

Abstract: This paper will review the film archives and the films in Macedonia in general. Special emphasis will be placed on the activities related to preservation of audiovisual cultural heritage in Cinematheque of Macedonia. An attempt is made to define the term audiovisual cultural heritage.

Key words: audiovisual goods, film, archive, protection.

Definition of the term audiovisual heritage

The moving pictures and recorded sound that expresses the cultural achievement of one nation, as a record of history and everyday life, determines the term audiovisual heritage.

Audiovisual goods

- (1) Audiovisual goods include: original material and tone copy of feature, documentary, animated, experimental and alternative film and other audiovisual works, presented in form of connected moving images with or without sound, regardless of the medium, intended for public display.
- (2) Audiovisual goods encompass also the accompanying materials related to the motion pictures, such as written documentation, scripts, book of shooting, stage design and costume sketches, costumes, stage design props, microfilms, photographs, slides, posters and other advertising material, as well as the mandatory sample, which is submitted to the parent institution.

Audiovisual archiving

History of film archives

Accumulation and transfer of memory from one generation to another is permanent motivation of human society. But the twentieth century is marked by new, technological form of memory - sound recording and moving image.

In the early twentieth century it was thought that the sound recordings and moving images have a certain value. A British newspaper from that time notes the dilemma: The film is neither a print nor a book, nor ... in fact, anyone could say what the film is not, but no one can say what the film really is. The situation is not fully sorted in folders. The real trouble is that no one could say to which folder the film belongs to." (Edmondson 2005: 107).

When in 1898 Boleslas Matuszewski indicated the value of film as a new historic source and the necessity and the importance of its preservation, he probably did not dream of the extent the film archiving will develop. Later, all those movie lovers, collectors, activists from the pioneer period of the history of the archive movement, probably did not believe that they were building the foundations of movie archives, without which the current history of world culture and art could not be imagined.

Therefore, the General Assembly of UNESCO on October 27, 1980 at the congress in Belgrade adopts a document with Recommendations for storage, conservation and preservation of moving images. This document gives the audiovisual archiving and protection of moving images a complete and comprehensive status, as well as high universal cultural legitimacy. Thus, film archiving will reach the level of profession, with its own indigenous living and its own philosophy. The main function of the audiovisual archive is collection, documentation, management, protection, preservation and enabling access and usage of the collection.

History of film in Macedonia

Film production in Macedonia started spontaneously in the early XX century, as an individual experiment of individuals, who were fascinated by the motion pictures, as a new medium. In 1905, only a decade after the appearance of the film, brothers Janaki and Milton Manaki with their 35 mm film camera "Bioscope No. 300", made the first film footage, not only in Macedonia, but also in the Balkans.

This pioneer feat of the Manaki brothers will be continued by Arsenij Jovkov, who in 1923 shot the movie "Macedonia in pictures" with clearly defined sense of national cinematography.

Still, what created the phenomenon called movie was the spirit of the film pioneers: Drnkov, Miladinov, Pop Stefanija and others. In Macedonia the case was the same. The visions of the pioneers soon became reality, so after the World War II institutions were established, which stimulated organized film production. It was the true beginning of the institutional period in the development of the Macedonian cinematography.

It was in those times that institutions were established, that for long will be the pillars of this branch in all its segments: Vardar Film, Makedonija Film, Institute for Scientific-educational Film, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, City Cinema, Cinematheque of Macedonia... The Macedonian Television could not be ignored as well, as its huge body of work has played a major role in the design of our visual awareness.

Cinematheque of Macedonia

On April 29, 1974 Law for establishment of the Cinematheque of Macedonia was passed. Officially, the Cinematheque began its work in 1976, as an institution of special interest for the Republic of Macedonia, with the task to collect, process, store, protect and present films and film materials with particular artistic, cultural, scientific, historical and other social significance.

In order to realize the above-defined activity, Cinematheque of Macedonia is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Cinematheque of Macedonia is a member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) and the Association of European Cinémathèques (ACE).

Cinematheque of Macedonia has a fund of more than 15,000 film prints, more than 72,000 pieces of promotional material, photos and posters, and more than 100,000 written documents. Within the Cinematheque there is a specialized library with over 4,000 books and journals on the history and theory of film and 32,500 press clippings. The Cinematheque has a collection of old cinematographic equipment.

Archive materials, i.e. the overall Macedonian film production (1905 onwards), as well as the films made by foreign authors in Macedonia during the Second World War, are stored in a separate section at the Cinematheque depots. Other film materials are stored in depots in the Havzipasha lodgings in the village of Bardovci - Skopje.

In accordance with the Decision to establish national classification, with regards to the audiovisual goods, the following groups are defined: Macedonian film production, foreign film production for Macedonia, foreign film production, television production, film documentation and mandatory archival

copy. Within this classification, further classification is developed according to the nature of film production, as well as the type of medium. Classification of accompanying documentation covers all types of written and photographic documentation, posters, stage design and costume sketches and video documentation.

There are three departments in the Cinematheque of Macedonia: Film archives or Department for protection, storage and processing of films and film materials, Department for documentation, composed of units for written documentation, photo-library and library; Department of public affairs, which incorporates the publishing activity of the Cinematheque.

Department for collection, protection, storage and processing of films and film materials

The Film archives (Department for protection, storage and processing of films and film materials) of the Cinematheque of Macedonia collects, protects, restores, catalogs and processes film material, produced mainly on film, but also on film tape. In the Film archive over 6,000 titles in 11,041 copies (films and documentation), or 44.363 rolls of footage from national and foreign production are deposited.



Depot for film

Department for written and photo-documentation

The Department for written documentation collects, protects and processes the written documentation related to films: synopses, screenplays, shooting scripts and other documents (copyright agreements, co-production agreements, personal papers of filmmakers, etc.). Until now, this department has more than 100.000 units of various documents and materials.



Depot for written and photo-documentation

Photo-library

Film photographs, posters and other promotional materials, as an integral part of film production, are kept in the photo-library. 37.045 photos and 5.142 posters, as well as 25.005 copies of other advertising material (catalogs, programs, etc.) are stored and processed there. It makes a total of 67.192 units - national production only. The photo-library of the Cinematheque of Macedonia has a large number of posters and promotional materials of foreign production as well.

The Department for museum exhibits stores and displays artifacts such as cameras, projectors and other evidence related to audiovisual goods.



Museum exhibits

Library

The Cinematheque of Macedonia has a specialized library for various publications (books, periodicals, magazines, etc.) related to film history, theory and aesthetics. The library has 3.472 titles of books and journals. Besides these titles, more than 30.000 clips (press clipping) of the daily and periodical press are made available to anyone interested.



Library

Department for research, publishing activity and public affairs

The Department for public affairs conducts activities related to presentation and promotion of the film material owned by the Cinematheque - publishes movies, film and other materials, organizes various events and retrospective events and exhibitions - in the country, as well as abroad.



Publishing activity

Publishing and printing of various publications (books, catalogs, brochures) in the field of history and film theory is among the activities conducted by the Cinematheque. So far, the Cinematheque has published twenty titles. The Cinematheque also publishes the periodical magazine for history, theory and culture of film and other arts "Kinopis", which comes out twice a year. Moreover, in the field of electronic publishing the Cinematheque in 2000 released the CD-ROM "The Century of the film in Macedonia", in 2004 – the DVD edition of the movie "Night Wolf", "Mis Ston" and "Crno Seme" and in 2012 the DVD edition with the digitally restored films by Stole Popov.

Protection of audiovisual heritage

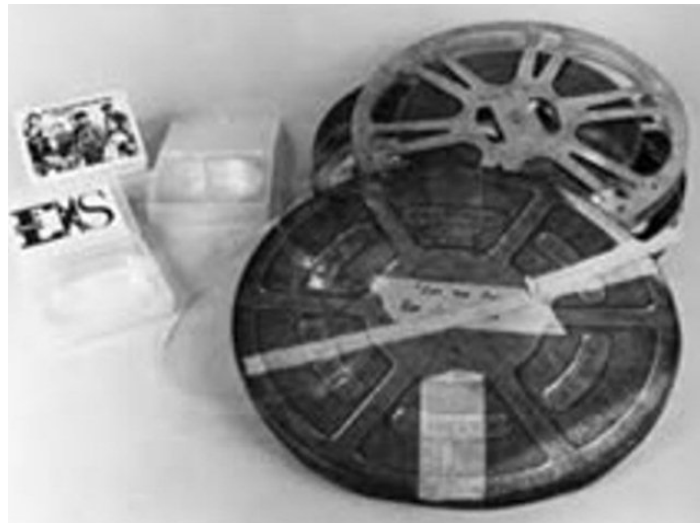
The protection of film material, as a comprehensive activity, is comprised of different measures and methods related to restoration and reconstruction of film material. The preventive activities for protection, or storage of film material are a part of this process as well.

The film archives are the only ones responsible for the longevity of the film works, and they do that through restoration and showing of films. Seen through the perspective of archiving of films, the main purpose of the protection of film material is to preserve the originals of film footage.

Although the film can be chemically and physically frangible, it is made of permanent material that can survive for more than a hundred years, if adequately stored and taken care of. It is already proven that its lifespan is much longer than the lifespan of other carriers of picture and sound (such as videotapes, which were developed after the film). Digital information has value only if it can be reproduced and digital carriers are also subject to physical and chemical destruction, while the hardware and software necessary for reproduction get outdated.

In the middle of the XX century the producers of motion picture materials rapidly abandoned nitrate, in favor of triacetate, due to economic and practical reasons. Consequently, the nitrate film soon was considered a "hazardous substance" that prompted the destruction of nitrate films. Now we know that this destruction was a mistake. By the eighties of the last century the triacetate film as well began to reveal his self-destructive "vinegar syndrome" (syndrome of release of acetic acid), so it became apparent that the nitrate film, well stored and processed, can survive much longer than it was thought (there are rolls over 100 years old, that are still in good condition). The surviving nitrate

prints are still in better condition than the triacetate copies, made up just 20 or 30 years ago.



Priority task of the Cinematheque of Macedonia is storage, protection and restoration of audiovisual heritage. The projects for protection and restoration of audiovisual heritage are very specific and expensive, since laboratory processes are realized in film laboratories abroad. The Cinematheque is the only institution in the country responsible for protection of audiovisual heritage, and for over three decades it protects the audiovisual heritage in the most professional manner.

For many years the audiovisual heritage was kept inappropriately. Three years ago the whole national film production was located in five cooling chambers equipped according to international standards, with optimal storage conditions at a temperature of 4-12°C and humidity of 50%. The Cinematheque owns three modern depots for storage and protection of the written documentation.

This project made the Cinematheque of Macedonia a center for preservation of the rich audio-visual material, and consequently a real example for presentation and popularization of our rich cultural heritage.



Modern depots for film tracks

Protection of audiovisual heritage in the event of armed conflict and natural disaster

Audiovisual heritage is an important segment of the national and cultural identity of the Macedonian people, an indicator of their confirmation and affirmation within the broader community of nations and states, which for centuries testifies about their own existence and creation. Therefore, its protection is of great importance for our country, but also for the wider European and global audiovisual cultural heritage.

Throughout history, to the present time, we have witnessed numerous natural disasters and armed conflicts around the world. Apart from human suffering and unnecessary loss of human lives, the cultural and historical heritage of nations and of mankind is threatened.

The two world wars, during which there was uncontrollable destruction of cultural heritage, increased the concern of the international community, which resulted in the adoption of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural property in the Event of Armed Conflict, in The Hague, 1954, under UNESCO.

The Second Protocol to the Convention was adopted on March 26, 1999, in the Hague, at the conference organized by UNESCO and the Government of the Netherlands, with participation of representatives from 93 countries (74 countries - members of the 1954 Hague Convention and 19 states - observers), representatives of the Red Cross and the International Committee of the Blue Shield.

The protection of the audiovisual goods could not be effective unless appropriate measures are undertaken at national and international level. This should be initiated during peace times, with particular emphasis placed on strengthening the awareness of values and awareness of the need to preserve the cultural heritage for future generations, especially in the event of natural disasters, internal armed conflicts occurring between different social groups (nations, classes, religious, ethnic, social and other groups) within a sovereign state, as well as during military conflicts.

Therefore, in 2004 the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Law for protection of cultural heritage. The Cinematheque of Macedonia, as an important national cultural institution of broad social interest and owner of protected goods, has the duty to undertake the necessary precautionary measures for protection in the events of natural disasters and armed conflicts (provision of documentation for the protected goods, preparation for evacuation, planning of emergency measures for protection in case of fire or demolition, procurement of protection equipment, determining personnel, professionals and operational teams, planning of security measures in the event of armed conflict, etc.).

Accordingly, the Cinematheque of Macedonia has a complete system of electronic devices to protect against theft, system of alarm devices for notification in case of fire, but it also undertakes additional measures for protection of the audiovisual goods. Nevertheless, the Cinematheque needs professional help from competent institutions for protection and rescue, so it can establish a more comprehensive system of care, and determine the space for dislocation of audiovisual goods in case of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

References:

1. Едмондсон, Реј, *Аудиовизуелно архивирање: филозофија и принципи*, Кинотека на Македонија, Скопје, 2005.
2. Knežević, Srdjan (Uvod i izbor), *Film i istorija*, Institut za film, Beograd, 1987.
3. Knežević, Srdjan, *Film kao istorijski izvor - dosadašnja teorijska razmišljanja*, Institut za film, Beograd, 1987.
4. Македонски информациски центар. Достапно преку: <http://www.maccinema.com>