Hybrid Films
with Lars Henrik Gass, Maike Mia Höhne, Jukka-Pekka Laakso, Laurence Reymond, Peter van Hoof
conducted by John Canciani

A Debriefing of a Panel Discussion: Interview Part 2

John Canciani: Most of you chose a film mixing medias or genres, a “hybrid film”, as Laurence designated it. PARANMANJANG uses this practice to guide the narration of the film. Starting out as a music video, then turning into a fiction movie with elements of suspense and Asian horror to transit into the second part of the film. The ritual then feels like an ethnological documentary (also like the film PORCOS RAIVOSOS chosen by Laurence) and at the end it goes back to fictional film. This practice has been done before but it’s getting more and more common (also the study of German shorts from the AG Kurzfilm mentions this point1). Do you think we have now reached the peak, or/and in what direction could it go?

Maike: I didn’t see too many movies done the way PARANMANJANG was done. To do a musical in a film and combine the music with “normal” storytelling is very common - I agree. I think PARANMANJANG is special, especially because Korean traditions - and ways of understanding the complexity of life and death - lies within, and not at the end, it is very different to our understanding here. That marks the documentary part - in which, I am sure, a Korean audience knows much faster than us, what is going on. Still, I don’t think there is such a thing as a one single way of film coming up, but films are made. There are always trends, movements, technical achievements that allow certain new ways of understanding the material itself - but very few people really ride this wave.

Since then, I haven’t seen another film like PARANMANJANG, so perhaps this peak is taken…

Laurence: When I had to make a statement for this panel the word “Hybrid film” was the most convenient, and the most precise one. I was much more driven by the content of PORCOS RAIVOSOS. Formally it is something between documentary, storytelling and performance but I don’t believe there is a peak. There has always been avant garde films, or very independent voices in cinema to try to find new ways in storytelling, I believe. But now, we have easier access to the films, with internet, vimeo, etc. So those voices get to be heard. Before, those voices would remain in confined circles, and were maybe rediscovered later with the work of film archives or festivals.

Lars: There are more hybrid films, because there are less fewer specific outlets for short films, that possibly might be able to impose certain patterns. That’s something I find very encouraging and exiting in general to see how film is liberated from the boundaries of TV, commercial cinema, etc. The same happened to music videos a while ago, when music television disappeared. That was amazing, because the genre that was generated once by music television survived it, and even became more interesting than it used to be, artistically speaking.

John: This guidance of the different techniques and genres seems to be contemporary but analysing them as single pieces of work, the filmmakers use classical elements of cinema. One could say that looking into the future also means looking back. Is there a trend that young filmmakers reflect cinema itself, maybe now even more when there is a voice in the public and also in the art world, claiming that cinema is dead?
Hybrid Films – Panel Discussion 2 The Future of Short Film

programs and the art world regularly dismisses film history in curating. How can we as festivals change this and should we?

Jukka-Pekka: Definitely. Film festivals should show films from the history for many reasons. If and when history of cinema is forgotten, festivals should do even more.

Lars: You sort of have to force people at gunpoint, that’s all you can do.

John: Do you think the direction of hybrid films is the future? Or is it interesting because film seems to struggle to let go of the genre theories, not like music, where the critics seem to invent new genres constantly like folk, neofolk, freak folk, etc?

Jukka-Pekka: I think that film theories are interesting (sometimes), but filmmakers should not think about what genre they belong to. This categorizing is a tool to communicate something in advance, to find funding etc. And then a tool to those who deal with the finished film, but I believe or rather would like to promote filmmaking that could be free of pre-existing categorising. And hybrid is just one possibility, on top of any other style and method and all the traditional ways; classic animation, fiction or any documentary style are still valid, if and when there is a new way to have an impact to the viewer.

Peter: No, I believe that apart from small changes in genres and playing around with technical possibilities, the single screen works for a dark room will stay important. The more exciting direction to further develop is the film festival as live event, where filmmakers show their works in different ways: as installations, performances or present it together with other artists.

Notes


Biographies: See introduction
PARKing CHANce (PARK Chan-wook, PARK Chan-kyong)
Paranmanjang (2011/ South Korea)