PRESS RELEASE

Academic Year 2019: Integration of the Screenwriting Academy into the DFFB as a specialisation, and start of the postgraduate programme NEXT WAVE

Berlin, October 14, 2019. We are pleased to announce that as of the 2019/20 academic year, the Screenwriting Academy—which was until now externally funded—will be fully integrated into the DFFB as a specialisation in Screenwriting. Moreover, NEXT WAVE, the first 9-month European training programme in film distribution and audience development, will begin its first round.

Integration of the Screenwriting Academy

“It is an exciting time to be a screenwriter in Germany. New markets are opening up and many of our recent graduates are already winning prizes and finding interesting work beyond the school.”

– Ellis Freeman, senior screenwriting lecturer

Since 1996, the Screenwriting Academy has been an external study program connected to the DFFB. The programme was financed by the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and the Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg. The complete integration of the Screenwriting Academy into the DFFB is the logical result of developments in recent years. The course has now been extended from two to four years and the curriculum is closely linked to the DFFB’s core curriculum.

Screenwriting students take part in seminars with students from other specialisations, especially during the basic studies. And, like all students, they direct a first-year film in their first year of basic studies. Since 2017, Ellis Freeman has been the senior lecturer for screenwriting and story development.

Formally, the integration will accomplish what the DFFB has been experiencing and teaching for years: the idea that screenwriting is a craft that is applied to all forms—from feature films to television to web series—and that it is the starting point of filmmaking. The DFFB lives up to this idea by offering a wide range of interdisciplinary screenwriting courses: these courses teach the basics of the craft with the aim of developing tools that are immediately applicable to a student’s own writing practice. With a range of approaches to creative writing, character sketching, scene building, story arc development, etc., the curriculum is designed to challenge students in the best possible way.

“I’m happy to say that more and more, within the school, screenwriters are working in collaboration with directors and producers on short and long form fiction and seeing their work realized. This chance to see your work filmed is a fantastic moment in a writer’s development”, says Ellis Freeman, summarising the goal of the Screenwriting Academy’s full integration into the DFFB. Through the formal equality of all students, student writers can come into even closer contact with other filmmaking trades, and the DFFB can focus even more on the central importance of the screenplay and story development for all students.

Additionally, all DFFB resources are now available to screenwriting students. “This change also comes at a moment when we are deepening and professionalizing our support for students making graduate films and co-productions with broadcasters and the MBB”, explains Ben Gibson, Director of the DFFB. Moreover, screenwriting students are now in a better position financially—because they must no longer pay the previous tuition fees, which were higher than other specialisations, they are now on an equal footing with other students.
Growth for DFFB postgraduate programmes

NEXT WAVE is concerned with new developments in film distribution and sales, marketing, programming, and audience development in cinemas and festivals. The programme starts today with fifteen participants from thirteen countries. Over the next nine months, they will research and develop concepts and strategies for the film experiences of the future. Excursions to the MediaTech Hub Conference in Potsdam and to La Fémis film school in Paris are planned for 2019. In 2020, students will visit Rotterdam, the Berlinale’s EFM, CPH:DOX in Copenhagen, and Cannes. The focus of the programme will be on the current opportunities and challenges of distribution strategies within the European film market.

Participants will be accompanied by programme director Lysann Windisch, leading lecturer Erwin M. Schmidt (Cinemathon), and an advisory commission of experts comprising four renowned members: Bobby Allen, Senior Vice President of the streaming service MUBI; Maddy Probst, Strategic Developer of the cinema and creative centre Watershed in Bristol and Vice President of Europa Cinema; Sten-Kristian Saluveer, Programme Director of the NEXT section of Marché du Film Cannes and founder of storytek; Matthijs Wouter Knol, Director of the European Film Market of the Berlinale. The programme is supported by Creative Europe MEDIA and the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg.

About the DFFB:

The German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB) has been the state of Berlin’s film school since its establishment in 1966. Its training focuses on the fundamental crafts of filmmaking: Screenwriting, Cinematography, Directing, Producing, and Editing & Sound. The DFFB is a place where young filmmakers from Germany and abroad come together to tell stories and make creative and innovative films. The DFFB also offers attractive networking and specialisation opportunities through its internationally oriented training programmes: Serial Eyes, NEXT WAVE, UP.GRADE, and Filmnetzwerk Berlin.

Material
Download the DFFB’s logo here.

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