PICS Transnational Hollywood

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**Emulating the « American model » in European movie and TV industry**

**Hollywood Screenwriting Gurus in Paris**

**TV Series and the development of international coproductions in Europe**

Our focus in this program is the importance of the « American model » for the making of films and TV series in Europe, and the impact of such a model on local broadcasting networks’ and producers’ strategies for the development of new scripts and projects that could compete – in terms of quality, budget, branding and international audience rates – with Hollywood film industry and American « quality TV » series.

We intend to explore this issue through two different and complementary researches.

**1. Hollywood Screenwriting Gurus in Paris**

Our first fieldwork is the study of Hollywood *screenwriting gurus*’ workshops and masterclasses in Paris. Since the 2000s, a few internationally famous script doctors/writers – The LA Times has identified 5 of them in 2004 – have developed a large range of activities such as lectures, workshops, online courses and the publication of manuals on storytelling, narrative formats, budget proposals or casting strategies, based on their experience and acute knowledge of Hollywood codes regarding screenwriting and production in the movie industry.

 In this context, our field enquiry will be based on three types of empirical sources: 1. ethnographic observation during workshops and specialized classes in order to understand the relationships between these “story specialists” and the masterclass attendees; 2. questionnaires and open-focused interviews both with these specialists (about their career paths, the constitution of their expertise and of their will to teach the “tricks of the trade” around the world) and with members of the audience (about their expectations, their professional experience, etc); 3. discourse analysis of these story specialists’ books and conferences, in order to understand what happens when these American professionals cross the Atlantic to meet Europeans professionals, willing to implement and adapt Hollywood norms to European taste and contexts.

**2. TV Series and the development of international coproductions in Europe**

For a long time, American reality TV programs, family sitcoms, afternoon soap operas, low budget TV films, etc. have been massively exported and broadcast on European TVs, creating a kind of transnational popular culture based on American values and tastes. Things began to change with the emergence of « quality TV » in the US, since the 1990s. Newly produced series, then, started to become more profitable both in economic and (especially) in *symbolic* capital. The most famous example of this evolution is the radical transformation of HBO in the early 2000s, challenging even the independent movie industry on its own field, with innovative scripts, subversive topics, respected movie actors, etc.

Ten years later, in Europe, these quality TV series are unanimously perceived as the best way to develop new ideas, achieve critical acclaim and generate profits. Several strategies are actually put into motion to emulate this « American model » in Europe – one of them is the active development of international coproductions, i.e. access to local financial support, to European funding, and to an international audience.

Through an extensive study of publications on the topic in the European professional and mainstream press, and through the study of the financial and cultural impact of the European Commission *Creative Europe/MEDIA* *program*, we want to address questions regarding some of the practical problems raised by international coproductions: are coproductions only possible among countries sharing the same methods in TV series production? How and by which countries are these transnational projects developed? How are tasks divided between all the protagonists and nationalities involved? We will eventually examine an unexpected and paradoxical consequence of this system, since the efforts to develop genuinely European projects seem to result in some kind of « Americanization » of local production processes.

**Research schedule:**

. January-May 2017 : Fieldwork on Screenwriting Gurus

. September 2017-December 2017 : Transcriptions, analysis, preliminary results

. January-May 2018 : Fieldwork on International Coproductions

. September 2018-December 2018 : Analysis and final report