Placement Report for Faculty of Arts
University of Groningen

Internship at film production company WAKE UP FILMS

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Abstract

In this report I will shortly present my tasks, goals and results during the 10-weeks internship at the film production company WAKE UP FILMS situated in Novi Sad, Serbia. Throughout several chapters I will try to show as detailed as I can how I spent my internship and what is the result of my stay at this firm.

Keywords

Internship, documentary film, production house, internal tasks.

Internship at WAKE UP FILMS

Finding a placement

My decision to start my internship at WAKE UP FILMS production company came as a product of my deep and long interest in documentary filmmaking, production and organization. My idea was to find an internship in Serbia – the country of my birth, where I could implement what I learned in the Netherlands and combine my knowledge with a working environment of Serbia. Therefore, while I was searching for an internship place, I got acquainted with WAKE UP FILMS. I thought it could be a wonderful opportunity to spend 10 weeks working in a region of my country I have never lived in, where I could learn about documentary field, film industry and technology.

During the April I sent my CV and motivation later, after what, in the month of May, my future internal supervisor Biljana Tutorov and I organized Skype meeting, where I found out more about the company, what they do and their goals. During the Skype meeting I expressed my motivation and interest in being a part of this company. After I spoke to Ms. Tutorov, I contacted my supervisor from the University of Groningen – Ms. Annie van den Oever, who approved my internship, finding it very exciting.

Before I started my internship, Ms. Tutorov had sent me a short description of my internship week-by-week, stating working environment has a very lively dynamic, and that since they
work as a production house, there have a lot practical, hands-on tasks, that could not be pre-planned. However, some of my tasks will include doing a research for one of the future projects, while others will be social media coordinating and writing the news for the new website. On June 5\textsuperscript{th}, my internship started.

**WAKE UP FILMS: About the company**

WAKE UP FILMS is an independent production company founded in 2010 in Novi Sad, Serbia by Biljana Tutorov. Its predominant activity is the production of films, audio-visual and TV program and co-productions. With a passion, WAKE UP FILMS defends stories that question our humanity and our deep sense of being. There are several cross-media and documentary TV films in the WAKE UP Film’s and different projects in different phases of development, such as: *Aunts, Cargo Lost and Found, When Pigs Come*. WAKE UP FILMS is the one of three Serbian film production houses specialized for documentary form, which enables a wide network of contacts, projects and regional collaborations. Therefore, the experience I gained was very unique because it gave me an opportunity to go through various phases of different movie projects.

**Description of the nature, organizational structure**

WAKE UP FILMS is, at the first place, small production house with a director – Biljana Tutorov, and assistant of production. However, even though there are only two persons working at the house, there are many external co-workers, that were part of the collective on a daily basis.

My supervisor was Biljana Tutorov, an art historian, director and producer, who is also a selector of Free Zone Film Festival, and who occasionally teaches master class programmes. Not only she has been running a documentary agency for many years, but she is at the first place film director, with an experience in curating and writing. Her rich background, and diversity of the work she is doing, enabled me to approach film art from different angles – as an art, industry and form theoretical angle. With her wide knowledge in film theory, history, production and film direction, she was the person I could learn much from, great tutor and
guide for my professional start.

I was lucky that the director of the firm was also my supervisor. Therefore, I was involved in all actualities. We were in everyday communication, she was the one who provided me with tasks, who evaluated the results of my research and with whom I was discussing my aims and progress. Since the company is small hierarchy is not very strict, internal communication is not strictly formal, and employees communicate with each other, however, treating each other with respect.

**Personal goals**
My main goal was to acquire important professional experience. I expected to develop my organizational skills and to experience how events can be successfully planned and executed. Besides this, I was excited to do a research on projects, learning to do the research on a professional level.

**Description of my tasks and week-to-week activities**
My tasks were predominantly writing and researching. However, instead of very strict schedule and day-to-day activities, every week I had different tasks I was dealing with. The fact I went
through various different phases of different projects enabled my experience to be very diverse and intense. During the first week I became familiar with the dynamics of the organization and my colleagues. My supervisor found it very important that I get acquainted with their previous and future projects. Therefore, I have been watching films they have produced and shoot; I have been reading the material for the research, the written projects and applications for different funds. The aim was to see what is their field of work, while my supervisor was very open to help me and introduce me to the company, being very nice and interested in my opinion.

During the second week of the internship my supervisor suggested I should apply for Documentary Film Workshop in Belgrade. It was very exciting opportunity to meet both young people from the field, and experienced professionals who were giving lectures. The workshop took five days, and I had the opportunity to hear about the different phases of the film process. Each professor was talking from the different angle, explaining to us all the phases of the film process in details: research, fundraising, shooting and distribution. The workshop was a great start of the internship; while listening to passionate professionals I became very curious and interested in documentaries.

After that week I went back to the office in Novi Sad and as an intern I was dealing with different tasks:

- **Social media coordinating** – I was the one in charge of WAKE UP FILMS and *When Pigs Come* Facebook page. I was posting news and announcement about films, as well as trailers and photos. My supervisor was providing me with advice about the amount of posts we should have for a week, and also about appropriate discourse with public communication.

- **Archiving audio-visual material**: capturing DV cassettes to DVD – I was working with *Cargo Lost and Found* material that had to be transformed from DV to DVD format in order to be digitally edited. This task took several weeks, during which I get acquainted with the film material and gained certain confidence with technology, that I haven’t worked with previously.
- Translating – when I started my internship the film Cargo Lost and Found was in its final phase, in editing room. My task was to translate the material from Serbo-Croatian to English because of our foreign associates and editors.

- Writing texts for When Pigs Come promotional material and news for the website.

- Research for project Aunts

- Hands on experience: sound recording for documentary film When Pigs Come. I was included in a process of recording the additional sounds that were missing from the movie.

- Sarajevo Film Festival – the film When Pigs Come had its world premiere at Sarajevo Film Festival, and WAKE UP FILMS crew was invited to go to the festival with me, who was welcome to join them. For me, one of the biggest Eastern European festivals was a great place to meet film professionals, people from the industry and for the first time go to the Festival from a professional position, not as a visitor. During the festival I was helping with organization of different events and the promotion of the film on social media and at the festival. The whole festival experience was very exciting, and it was crowned with the EDN Talent Grant award that the film got.

Results of my work

My work was changing from week to week, I dealt with different tasks and with right amount of responsibility. I was working both individually and in the team, depending on tasks. While I was writing or doing the research, I was predominantly working individually. However, when it came to practical tasks, sound recording, or activities during Sarajevo Film Festival, I was involved in a team work.

Even though some of my tasks were finished individually, everything was later evaluated by my supervisor, and I always received a feedback. By the end of every week we were resuming my assignments, and she was very supportive while I was interpreting how I felt while working on different tasks. The internship gave me a space to explore which field I feel more
comfortable in. Therefore, I realized that I feel more comfortable when working individually and independently, in my own time schedule.

What I found especially important is the fact that I could rely on my co-workers that were my biggest support. When I had some issue they were the ones I was talking to. For me, the most challenging activity was archiving audio-visual material. Since I am not very experienced with technical equipment, I had to find a way to approach it. I had to install Adobe Final Cut, to learn how to capture the material, using DV old camera etc. However, in that instance, I received the help from external coworker who explained to me some of the basic techniques and ways of capturing material. After I finished the task successfully I felt encouraged to continue with all the endeavors ahead of me.

**Academic reflection on my internship**

Fist of all, all the writing I was doing was highly relatable to the Arts Criticism course I was taking. I often went back to the protocols and texts that we have been reading for the course, when I was writing short reviews. Furthermore, *The Spaces for Criticism*¹ book and discussions we had about new art criticism and Internet criticism, helped me when thinking about Internet communication and Facebook advertising.

Moreover, as I mentioned, one of my tasks was transcoding DV cassettes to a digital format and working with a film archive. For me, this kind of assignment, meant going back to discussions we had during our Media Curating course. Therefore, I was contemplating about differences, advantages and disadvantages of both analogue and digital equipment, having an opportunity to experience it myself. After various texts² we have been reading, theoretical preparation, and our visit to the EYE museum, for the first time I had an individual, hands-on experience with analogue technology for video recording in this digital era.

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¹ *Spaces for Criticism: Shifts in Contemporary Art Discourses*, Thijs Lijster, Suzana Milevska, Pascal Gielen, Ruth Sonderegger; *Antennae* (2015)

Evaluation of supervision and my personal experience

Overall, I can say I was very happy with the company I have chosen, and with my internship. During the time I felt as equal member of the collective, I was supported by my colleagues, who were always ready to provide me with a sincere and constructive feedback on my work. I felt as if I was supported and guided by others; yet, that I have the right amount of responsibility.

Because of high level dynamics in the team and a constant facing of new tasks, I learnt how to handle new situations, to multitask, to plan and organize a working time on my own. I was developing my cognitive skills, with a guidance of my supervisor. I usually had several tasks at the time that I had to finished within the deadline, but how I will organize them was my decision. Therefore, I was strengthening my organizational skills and ability to work independently.