INTERNSHIP REPORT
EYE COLLECTION CENTER

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Introduction

As a part of a master’s studies in Arts, Culture and Media it is mandatory to do an internship for 7 weeks at least. After a long search I decided to do an internship in the EYE Collection Centre under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Annie van den Oever. My supervisors at the Collection Centre were Giovanna Fossati, the Chief Curator; Soeluh van den Berg, the Head of film related collections; and Hans van der Kraan, the Apparatus specialist. During the internship I collaborated with other Arts, Culture and Media master’s student - Alexandra Gheorghe. The whole internship took place in the EYE Collection Centre with occasional field trips. During the internship we were provided with a computer and all the equipment we needed to do our job. We could also enjoy the benefits of the EYE employees - from the possibility to visit the exhibitions to the possibility to visit various cinemas in Amsterdam for free.
About EYE

EYE Film Institute

The EYE Film Institute was established in 2009. It was created by the merging of four Dutch film institutions. The Institute was previously located in Vondelpark in Amsterdam, but after the merging a new building was built on the IJ river bank. The building was opened by the queen in April of 2012. Thanks to its new and easily accessible location EYE immediately became more popular amongst both tourists and Amsterdammers.

In 2016, the new building of the institute was opened - The Collection Centre. The main building on the river bank now serves as a filmmuseum, cinema and restaurant. The Collection Centre houses the collections as well as restoration facilities.

The Filmmuseum offers multiple activities - from temporary exhibitions to interactive permanent exhibition of the history of cinema. Across the building there are also interactive pieces of film apparatus to entertain the visitors. The Filmmuseum also has four film cinemas. Those screen movies from across the history of cinema as well as just released art movies.

EYE Collection Centre

From 2016, the EYE Collection Centre building is situated on the Asterweg in Amsterdam Noord. The building houses all the collections that were previously spread across multiple locations not only in Amsterdam but also in another cities. Thanks to the relocation all the specialists and archivist are located under a single roof and therefore can cooperate on developing their skills even in multidisciplinary projects.

Except from having the facilities for conservation, restoration and research, the new centre has also a small cinema where new restorations can be viewed and discussed and where presentations for press as well as other professionals are held.
The Collection Centre is a home for 40,000 films (contained in more than 200,000 film cans) and more than 500 meters of paper archives (Collection Centre, 2017). It also houses an extensive apparatus collection. Each of these has to be stored in different conditions which have to be constant. That is why the depots are equipped with advanced climate systems.
Before My Internship

At first I had a really hard time finding an internship. For personal reasons I wanted to do an internship in Groningen or surrounding cities. I did a research about cultural institutions where I would like to do the internship. These places included the Groninger Museum, USVA, Groningen Theater, and others. But all these institutions work only in Dutch language and therefore they could not offer me a placement. I come from Czech Republic and I only know the basics of Dutch. Later I applied for an internship in the PR department of the EYE Film Institute but this was also turned down.

I shared my trouble with my thesis supervisor and he advised me to ask the Head of the department of Film and Audiovisual media, Prof. Dr. van den Oever if she could recommend me institutions where previous international students did their internships. I was advised to do an internship in my home country, but for obvious reasons I politely declined. Prof. Dr. van den Oever then suggested to do my internship at the EYE Collection Centre. When I agreed she was so kind to make it possible.

There were two problems I had to deal with when agreeing with doing an internship in Amsterdam. Amsterdam is very expensive city, so it was necessary for me to find a job in Amsterdam. Luckily the city is very international and therefore there is no problem finding a job for a few hours per week and in English language. Second problem was the accommodation. It is, in general, very hard to find accommodation in Amsterdam and if you have a small budget it is even harder. But because I did the internship during summer months when most of the international students go home for the holidays, me and Gheorghe were able to rent a studio for two months for a reasonable price.
My Tasks

During the internship I had to fulfill a number of tasks. Some of them were agreed upon before the internship started, some only arose during the internship. As I collaborated with Gheorghe we had to do team tasks as well as individual tasks. At the end we decided to help each other in fulfilling the individual tasks so we could learn as much as possible during the internship. For me the individual tasks were to unpack an apparatus and translate some texts from my native language. The team work included designing of a website, making a documentary, helping to photograph the apparatus collection, etc.

Unpacking Apparatus

The first and most important of my tasks was to unpack an apparatus. That means that I had to choose an apparatus, photograph it, catalogue it, do a research about it and based on all of that write an article about it. After a thorough research of the apparatus collection and discussion with my supervisors I chose to unpack an apparatus called Kinora. It is a pre-cinema device invented by Lumière brothers at the end of 19th century. Kinora itself is a viewing device for reels of photographs and it works on a principle of a flip book. It is also called ‘the mutoscope for home use’ (Barry, 1996). During the internship my supervisor also borrowed a very precious Kinora camera from an important Amsterdam collector IJsbrand Rogge for me to study.

I started with the research of the Kinora device. I discovered that there has been some research done by Barry Anthony and Stephen Herbert. They published a small booklet called The Kinora: motion picture for home 1896 -1914 and a catalogue of Kinora reels called The Kinora Library: A descriptive list of Moving Pictures that you may see in your own home. There are also multiple books and encyclopedias that mention the device, but none is very extensive in its description. I also found several period books and news articles on various online archives.

The next part of the research was photographing and digitizing the reels. The EYE Collection Centre has its own photography equipment including light, photography background and Nikon D750 camera, therefore I thought it would be an easy task as I am an experienced photographer. As expected, making and retouching the photographs was not a problem, but digitizing the reels proved to be difficult. The Collection Centre has 18 reels in different
conditions, but we were only able to digitize four of them. When we were thinking what would be the best way to digitize them, we found two possible options. One using the Kinora apparatus and the other digitizing each of the reels picture by picture and then putting them together in a short video digitally. Finally we decided for the first option, mainly for three reasons: using the device itself seemed to be the most authentic way, as the speed of the movie would change with the speed of cranking the handle; it was more friendly towards the reels itself; and it was less time consuming, as each reel can have up to 750 pictures. After digitizing first three reels we discovered that the mechanism of the Kinora device is too broken for it to work properly and in order to not break it even further we decided not to digitize the rest of the reels. During the second half of the internship, me, Gheorghe and our supervisors visited a historical metal restorer but due to a time restrictions he was not able to fix the device before the end of August when my internship ended. This task remained undone.

During the beginning of our internship we visited an apparatus collector and filmmaker IJsbrand Rogge. He showed us his whole collection which included also the Kinora camera - a device that was used to film the movies for the Kinora. He was so kind that he borrowed the device to the EYE Collection Centre for me to study it. I photographed the device and carefully studied the mechanism, as it works with sensitized paper roll that has no perforations. I have never seen or studied such camera, so I was fascinated by it. I also did a research about the camera, but since it was used just for a couple of years in the time when cinema was already becoming popular there are no extensive sources talking about it.

Finally I wrote the paper, which focuses on the home use of both devices. Not many people are familiar with the Kinora device, as it stayed in the shadows of the invention of cinema, and even less are familiar with the camera, because it was on the market only for short period of time and available to narrow group of people. My paper is therefore mostly based on media archeology in order to provide a detailed insight of the life of the devices in the time they were used. I also compare it with making home videos nowadays, as media archeologists, such as Thomas Elsaesser, Erkki Huhtamo and others, suggest that new media only revive what has once been already done. According to my research, such a detailed research on these two devices, but especially the camera, has not yet been done.
Creating Blog

Second of my tasks was to create a ‘living handbook’ of the apparatus, which was supposed to be the collaboration between the RUG Film Archive and the EYE Collection Centre. We had to decide what platform to use to create it as well as what form it would have. As a platform, we considered a novel format of link-shared TiddlyWiki and standard Wordpress page. Finally we decided for Wordpress as it was possible to make the website accessible to public.

I designed the page, because I had previous experience with a web making, and then we filled it with Gheorghe with content. We used our own photographs as well as photographs and information from the EYE Database. We prepared the blog to be taken over by other students that will be doing an internship at the EYE, so they can expand it and over time the blog should expand into a ‘living handbook’ and online resource for students and film enthusiasts.

We also planned to write applications for a funding of the blog but due to a time restrictions and our inability to continue the application process after our internship we made arrangements with two other students who will take over the blog after we finish the internship.

Other Tasks

During the internship we had to also do minor task, such as helping to upkeep the apparatus collection, make a film documentary, etc. We were also able to suggest other tasks we would like to do, and we were always given the space to do them.
Evaluation of the Placement

The whole internship was a continuation of the course Media Curating which I took during the first semester of my master’s study. During that course we visited The Collection Centre as well as met with the supervisors, so I was not in a completely unfamiliar environment from the start of the internship.

Also our tasks were mainly academic and connected to the course. Therefore I cannot say I learned something completely new other than specifics about the apparatuses. I think the internship could be less research focused and more practical. It would be nice to work also with other people in the Collection Centre or even other departments of the EYE Film Institute in order to learn how the apparatus collection can function in the context of the museum. We learned about the curating process from theoretical point of view, but reality is always different. It would be therefore useful to learn more about maintaining and expanding the collection. I think that could be something for future students to further develop.

Our supervisors were very skilled and very nice to us. They supervised if we did our job right, but from my personal point of view I hoped they would be more critical towards my work in order to grow professionally.

During the internship I learned a lot about myself rather than work related skills. As I have been working for five years already, I mostly learned the dynamics of a working place as well as the actual tasks I did during the internship such as photography, web design, etc., so it was nothing new to me.

Unfortunately this internship did not lead to a job offer, but I am very grateful for the contacts I made in the field. I think these contacts could be useful in my career.

Another aspect that I appreciate was the fact that I had to move to Amsterdam for the summer. I think it is important for life, especially for an expat or a student who wants to get a job in the country after the studies, to experience living in different conditions.

As for negatives of the internship I have only one major complaint. The timing of the internship during the summer and in overlap with editing of the thesis seemed to be rather
unfortunate. We were exhausted from doing research and writing the thesis and we had to do it again. Also our supervisors were on holidays, so it was not perfect for them either. Lastly, the second month we were distracted by the necessity to start thinking about our future after we finish university.
Conclusion

All in all, I think it was very relaxed internship, but I still learned a lot. I learned to work with the EYE Collection Database, I learned how to preserve the apparatus, I learned a lot about restoration of the apparatus, etc. It was connected nicely with MA course Media Curating, which I took during my first semester as a master’s student.

I would recommend the internship to students who are focused more on the theory than practice, because most of the internship we did research and wrote about apparatuses in an academic form. Also the staff of the Collection Centre are highly skilled in their fields and therefore can help with the research a lot.
Bibliography


Appendix

About

In the early days of cinema, one of the most prevalent issues that artists and theorists addressed was the strong impact that technology had. Having the ability to perceptually and cognitively alter the habituated experience of the audience, it is no wonder why cinema’s powers elicited “sensation”, “wonder”, “amazement” from its audience. These three words have been used by Tom Gunning in his essay that reflects on the “technological in the form of magic”.

Discover the Apparatus is a project that strives to investigate the time when old technologies were new by making the film apparatus collection of the EYE Collection Centre more accessible to both professionals and enthusiasts. Many of us can be truly nostalgic researchers or moviemakers, sometimes for times we haven’t even lived. In an attempt to make sense of such feelings and to give audiences the opportunity to excavate the past’s mysteries, EYE has initiated a close collaboration with the University of Groningen. The main goal of this

Fig. 1 Homepage of the Discover The Apparatus blog

Fig. 2 Kinora viewer with reels
Fig. 3 Kinora camera

Fig 4. Example of apparatus photography - electrical box with hands