

**Annual Report 2016-17**

During this year the network has been headed by an Executive Council of six members:

* Claus Tieber (Chairperson), University of Vienna, Austria
* Kerstin Stutterheim (Deputy Chairperson), Bournemouth University, UK
* Ian W. Macdonald (Secretary), University of Leeds, UK
* Virginia Pitts (Communications), Independent Scholar and Filmmaker, UK
* Carmen Sofia Brenes (Treasurer), Universidad de los Andes, Chile
* Ronald Geerts (Membership), Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

**Meetings**

The Executive Council (EC) held meetings on a monthly basis, with the exception of a meeting in person in Leeds in September 2016; all meetings were held via Skype.

In addition, the EC members (with the exception of Virginia Pitts and Carmen Brenes) met in Bournemouth in June 2017 for a EC workshop.

Additional meetings were held whenever necessary. Members of the EC were in constant communication with each other and the membership.

**First EC Work Shop**

The first ‘awayday’ workshop of the Executive Council was held on 6th and 7th June 2017 at the University of Bournemouth. Discussion centred around the future direction and management of the SRN, and practical steps that could be taken. Particular topics that were tackled were the activities of Working Groups, presentation of research in conferences other than SRN, representation on the Exec of Early Career Researchers, awards or other recognition, members information and their research activities and database, screenwriting resources including archives, a projects database, strategies for reaching researchers in under-represented parts of the world, conferences and their organisation, funding the SRN, the website and its maintenance, closer liaison with the *Journal of Screenwriting*, and the value and feasibility of a practice-based, peer-reviewed AV journal. Notes from these discussions have formed the basis for the 2017-18 Action Plan, presented alongside this Annual Report.

**Panel discussion**

Deputy chairperson Kerstin Stutterheim also organized a panel discussion about screenwriting research at the University of Bournemouth in June 2017. The panel consisted of four members of the EC, who presented to around 50 attendees. The discussion was useful, lively and positive, and the event resulted in three new members for the SRN.

**Conferences**

As with last year, our main activity this year was to overview and steer the programme of annual conferences. Our conferences are the lynchpin of our activities, providing access to new research, and are the basis for much of the sector’s publication record, both in the *Journal of Screenwriting*, and in edited collections such as that published in 2017 by Brenes, Cattrysse and McVeigh (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), based on work brought initially to the Chile conference in 2015.

The 2016 conference had to be switched from Stockholm to Leeds, for reasons outside our control, allowing only three months for the complete re-organisation. The EC has already recorded grateful thanks to Prof. Robert Shail and the organizing team in Leeds, who were willing and able to take over the conference at very short notice. Without their professional and highly motivated work, this conference could not have taken place. We should also add our thanks to the membership and delegates as a whole, who responded to this late change with good humour and patience. The resulting event went smoothly, and confirmed our view that the SRN can be relied on to respond well to challenges that face a network such as ours.

The 2017 conference is being held at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, and the Executive Council records its grateful thanks to Davinia Thornley and her colleagues for their hard work over more than two years, to welcome us here. A remarkable effort, in our view! The programme of annual conferences over the next few years has already been agreed, and will take place in Milano, Italy (2018), Oxford, UK (2019) and Porto, Portugal (2020). The EC is already in communication with the organizers of these conferences, and will be preparing more detailed, written advice during 2017-18, to benefit future conference organisation.

**Working Groups**

Following an initiative from the EC several working groups were founded. At present the following working groups are active within the network: Gaming, Collaborative Screenwriting, Screenwriting Histories, Women and Screenwriting, Teaching Screenwriting, and the Screenwriting Orthodoxy. Contact details can be found on our website: http://screenwritingresearch.com/working-groups/

The EC is encouraging working groups to make their activities visible at our conferences, and to encourage organisers to give them special time and place for panels and meetings. We also encourage members of the network to found additional working groups, and we hope that by the 2018 conference we will be able to see and consider a range of work being undertaken through these groups.

**AGM**

The fifth Annual General Meeting is due to take place on 30th August 2017 at the Otago conference. A formal notice of the Annual General Meeting was sent to members on June 4th 2017, together with the Call for nominations for three posts vacated by Claus Tieber, Kerstin Stutterheim and Virginia Pitts. The process of managing appointments to these vacant posts was entrusted to Prof. Kathryn Millard, Macquarie University (Australia). By the deadline of 12th July, three nominations had been received, and so no election will be held, and the AGM will be asked to agree these appointments.

**Membership**

As of 22nd July 2017, the network consists of 515 members and the trend is upwards. The Screenwriting Research Network is a true global community with members from 31 countries. The biggest group is formed by the English-speaking part of the world: US (268), UK (111) and Australia (35) members. The Nordic countries (Finland 11, Denmark 8, Sweden 7 and Norway 3 members) have an important representation. However, there are still some blind spots. We have only a few members from India, only one African member and no members representing China, Western Asia (Iran, Iraq, UAE, etc.) or South-East Asia. Diversity clearly is something which needs work!

**Members survey**

In order to get more information about the research and the interests of our members, this year we started a survey among our existing members and asked new members to complete a form. We are grateful to the membership for their comprehensive response, which gives us the chance to shape the network and its activities into a direction that is closer to the interests of its members.

108 members responded, more than one-fifth of the mailing list subscribers. 65%, the majority of respondents, are affiliated with English-speaking countries, but most of these were outside the USA (only 16% of those who filled out the form were from the US). Women respondents outnumbered men: 54% to 46%.

We also asked about academic affiliation: academic, professional, or both. The majority of respondents (63%) have a purely academic background. 32% told us they have an academic position and are also active as a screenwriter. Only 5% are pure practitioners. These figures seem to indicate that research is indeed what the SRN is about, meaning both academic AND practice-as-research.

So, what do our members research? The answers to that question were overwhelming in their range and diversity. We are still analysing the data, and will come back to it in more detail when we’ll have processed all the information. Hopefully this information will bring people together or even stimulate new (international) research projects and/or working groups.

Topics included: Narrative, storytelling, genre, intermediality, interactivity, documentary, cognitive studies, practice-led research and screenwriting practices, digital media, collaborative screenwriting, creative practices, transmedia, interactivity, documentary, Regional/transnational/transcultural screenwriting, Pedagogy, History, archives, Gender, Adaptation, Animation, TV, Theory/culture (also ethics, cultural memory, etc.) Production/industry...*etc.*

**Action Plan 2017-18**

Please refer to the Action Plan 2017-18.

We submit this Annual Report to the members of the SRN for their consideration.

The Executive Council of the Screenwriting Research Network.

*26th July 2017*