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**Mette Hjort (Ed.):
The Education of the Filmmaker in Europe, Australia, and Asia.
New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2013.**

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In the introduction to this volume, Mette Hjort asserts that scholarly works relating to the “institutional turn” in film and media studies have so far neglected what seems like crucial aspects of film studies research: practice-based film education and the personal and institutional values that inform what Mette Hjort calls “practitioner’s agency”. She writes:

It is, I believe, uncontroversial to assert that in-depth, sustained analysis of practice-oriented educational initiatives that are upstream of actual film production and constitutive of film’s institutional dimensions has much to contribute to what might be called the “institutional turn” being encouraged by developments in film studies. On the one hand, there is growing interest in practitioner’s agency, understood not in terms of abstract philosophical reflections on the nature of authorship but in terms of *actual* agents’ reasoning about their practices in relation to preferred self-understandings, artistic norms, and the constraints and opportunities that specific institutions and policies bring to the world in which these practitioners live their personal and professional lives as filmmakers. (pp. 16-17)

Even where the institutional underpinnings of film education has been explored, such attempts adopted a popular style of writing aimed at readers looking to forge a career as a professional filmmaker and were largely focused on the more established Western film milieux such as those of the United States and the United Kingdom. These, and other limitations listed by Hjort, represent the state of research on the topic of practice-based

film education (pp. 14-15), an urgent lacuna that the book's various contributors seek to address.

As the first of a two-book project initiated by Hjort and published under the aegis of Palgrave Macmillan's *Global Cinema* series—its companion is *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* (2013)—the present volume attempts to fill this intellectual gap by not just intervening pro-actively in the lack of scholarship on the cinemas of smaller nations – a rich field that Hjort has been advocating for nearly two decades, but also by featuring a variety of essays of a commendable geographical spread. Originating from a team-based research project called the Education of the Filmmaker Project (EFOP) and an international conference held in Hong Kong in 2012, the book's timely publication arrives at a time when there is increasing scholarly attention on not just "minor cinemas" and their respective agents, but also the transnational and regional affinities between these nations in film co-production, training, distribution, and exhibition. Therefore, this book is particularly important in identifying and analysing the constellation of agents that drive various models of film education across different national contexts of differing scales.

Hjort's introductory chapter sets the stage with a highly cogent and emphatic call to arms for researchers, practitioner-scholars, and filmmakers to build on this nascent field of study and to continue the "conversation" on the initiatives—both mainstream and alternative—and agents that drive practice-based film education in diverse contexts (p. 20). The rest of the eleven chapters in this volume are divided into two parts: Part One traces the respective European examples of Lithuania, Malta, Scotland, Sweden, Germany, as well as the trend of skills training at film festivals across Europe; Part Two features contributions from scholars writing about the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Australia, Japan, India, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Hong Kong.

Renata Šukaitytė's chapter provides an account of the main actors in Lithuanian film education and focuses on sites of struggle and power, after Bourdieu. Film education in the Baltic nation is currently one of "tactical existence"—a term Šukaitytė borrows from Foucault—where initiatives take place on an ad hoc basis in response to prevailing conditions at any given time. This is followed by Charlie Cauchi's study of the skills training and pedagogical practices in the Maltese state, where filmmaking has transformed from the amateur filmmaking of the 1950s to a professional endeavour supported by post-secondary pedagogical frameworks via national and EU cultural funds. The Scottish National Film School is the focus of the third chapter by Duncan Petrie, who locates the struggles of the film school within a wider context, including film policy, tensions between the industrial and the cultural, as well as the nationalist political and economic agenda of Scotland vis-à-vis devolution. The regional focus continues in the fourth chapter by Anna Westerståhl Stenport. Her empirical case studies of personalities emerging from the decentralisation and regionalisation of Swedish film policy illuminate the complexities of change and adaptation in film training programmes in the Gothenburg region. The fifth chapter traces

the histories of film schools and initiatives in pre-*Wende* East and West Germany respectively. Barton Byg and Evan Torner dissect the centralised (GDR) and decentralised (West Germany) models of film education while suggesting that in the post-*Wende* period, film education in Germany has entered a kind of stasis and ideological crisis upon facing the competing pressures from national, regional, European, and international realities. Marijke de Valck's chapter on film training programmes at film festivals closes the European section with an overview of the various opportunities offered to emerging and established filmmakers at film festivals across the European continent.

The first chapter of Part Two looks at the film training landscape in Australia and explores the different tensions that have governed the industry over the past fifteen years. The authors, Ben Goldsmith and Tom O'Regan, also illustrate the idea that location matters with respect to how and by whom specific schools are funded as well as the more recent attempts of Australian film schools at forming transnational and cross-cultural connections, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Globalisation is also the key theme of the eighth chapter by Yoshiharu Tezuka in which Tezuka begins the story of Japanese film training with an account of the grassroots training initiatives founded by Japanese filmmakers in the 1970s—films produced in this no/low-budget context are called *jishu-eiga*—then moves on to outline the mainstream institutions and their visions to establish a hub to attract international talent. This includes attempts to build cooperative links with French, Korean, Chinese, and American film schools. Adapting film training to the digital age is the subject of the next chapter by Moinak Biswas, who draws on his experience of working with the Media Lab at Jadavpur University in Kolkata. His account outlines the key challenges, both practical and ideological, facing film school instructors and administrators with respect to this technological shift. Chapter Ten by Yomi Braester examines two examples of film education in the PRC. The state-approved Beijing Film Academy boasts a highly professionalised curriculum driven by quantifiable technical skills, yet it is currently facing the struggle of fostering innovation and artistic vision under intense political control. On the other end of spectrum is Li Xianting's Film School, an unaccredited institution that serves as a guerilla alternative to the state-run system and is currently under threat for supporting films that are highly critical of the PRC government. The final chapter is Stephen Chan's account of the new challenges and opportunities for film education in Hong Kong, a context in which the company Television Broadcasts Limited, for thirty years, has been the prime training ground for the city-state's most successful practitioners. Chan examines the work of Jockey Club Cine Academy, a new and privately funded initiative that focuses on providing film-related educational experiences for secondary school students under the umbrella of the Hong Kong International Film Festival.

The eleven chapters are supplemented not only by discussions of film policies at national, sub-national, and regional levels, but also by valuable insights from the researchers' interviews with film practitioners, whose personal experiences as students or instructors in specific contexts provide an empirical dimension to the analyses. It is also clear that

the contributors are driven by their respective commitments to bring to light the historical and contemporary developments of lesser-known film education initiatives that work in concert with or in opposition to mainstream programmes. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of this scholarly enterprise is its commitment to team-based research and to building a community of scholars that can better negotiate and further legitimise practice-based film education as a critical area of research.

This excellent volume does not suffer from its ambition to provide a thoroughly researched snapshot of film education in territories across the globe. If you had to find any flaws, it would have to be the book's focus on the more prominent of cinemas outside of the US/UK hegemony. For instance, Part Two seems to focus on the larger and more established Asian film industries. A reader more committed to "smaller" cinemas may, therefore, be disappointed not to find chapters of film training in Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, or the Philippines, to name but a few. Nonetheless, herein lies the impact of the volume and the EFOP. As Hjort indicates, the volumes serve as an invitation to extend the conversation beyond the books and their case studies, a provocation that researchers of the thus far "neglected" countries will no doubt be addressing with vigour.

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