

Good morning ladies and gentleman, welcome to the conference Theory for praxis held at the Academy of performing arts at its film and television faculty.

It is not so long since I started my first year as the dean of FAMU. What is specific about FAMU when I compare it for example to the Danish film school in Copenhagen is that we are an academy. We have an academic level of study. We are giving our students bachelor and master diplomas. Our study has to have academic measure.

On the other hand we teach our students a lot of practical skills which we can call a craft. So what should the academic level of study at FAMU be?

There is one answer at hand but careful It can be misleading. This answer is film studies. But as I both graduated from film studies and at the same time am a creative producer who let others realize his ideas I have to say there is a broad divide between film studies and film craft. And it is very hard to overlap it.

As a student of film studies I read – for example - a lot about continuity in the film formal system, about narrative continuity, stylistic continuity. But when you read textbooks about screenwriting the emphasis is somewhere else. It is on turning points, it is on surprise, it is in the shift of perspective. I do not think that those two things exclude each other, but I am not sure how much from films studies is useful at a film schools such as FAMU.

I think the division between film studies and practical lectures started after the second world war. At first filmlogy came to Sorbona at the end of the fourties in France. With the dawning of semiotics more and more thinking about the film ceased to have its practical side. It happened mostly in the sixties. Here at FAMU it happened at the turn of 60 and 70 when the department of film theory moved to the philosophical faculty.

So the question remains: What is the academic level at film schools. I don't think it is useful for us to adopt films studies. I think we have to do what was normal for centuries: To think about art from its practical side. Thinking and theorizing about art was inseparable from creating art generally until the 18th century when Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten established Aesthetics as an independent field of study. Although he established independent field of study paradoxically he thought about how it could help artists.

We often feel ashamed we produce brochures, recipes, textbooks. They are indeed too practical and too primitive. But it really depends on how we take it, from which perspective and how thoroughly and philosophically we do it. We have to realize that Aristotle's Poetics was perceived for centuries as textbook. So I am convinced we need more philosophy in our practical thinking. It is always a pleasure to read Sergei Eisenstein, Jean Epstein even sketches from Robert Bresson. What is interesting about that is if you read the writings of those authors you just don't learn, you don't just study. You are inspired and that is beside education our second main aspiration at art schools.

I hope I will find some interesting answers to my questions today.