

'Green Screen' at the VAF

How to make film making 'sustainable' ?

In these times of climate change and the widespread loss of biodiversity, **filmmakers have to take our planet Earth more and more into account**: how not to pollute her while making films?

On this question, the European **Green Screen Project** (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/greenscreen/>), together with the '**Flanders Audiovisual Fund**' VAF (<https://www.vaf.be/>) and the '**Public Waste Agency of Flanders**' OVAM, organised on **June 6**, a '**sustainability staff exchange**'. Film professionals and environmental experts met in the VAF-building in Brussels around the topic of a circular economy and material management in the film industry. The objective of the day was to give "*inspirational key notes and thematic presentations, to broaden our view on sustainability and circularity in the film industry.*"

Actors and actresses: don't encourage people to live too rich ...

Erwin Provoost, former film and television producer and now VAF-CEO, opened the day with a word of welcome and a speech on VAF's vision on sustainability as it was developed by **Tim Wagendorp**, who organised the day. **Juliane Schulze** (Peacefulfish; <http://www.peacefulfish.com/>) did the presentation.

A remarkably beautiful short film on the first days of the Benz-automobiles was to follow. But cars ... Aren't they the source of lots of ecological problems? The reason why we were shown the film was because the main **actress, Sofie Hoflack**, had something to say on how she looks at sustainability within the audio-visual sector and how she strives to introduce sustainable values in her work. She certainly had a point when she told that actors and actresses should live a normal life, not too 'exuberant'. Because ... the public imitates them.

Creating positive stories on sus ... sustainability ...



Yolan Gielen: "We have to focus on what we gain" (Foto Tim Wagendorp)

The first 'expert' was not the one who was announced - Brigitte Mouligneau, head of '**Circular Flanders**' (<https://vlaanderen-circulair.be/en>) – but a young representative of the same organisation: **Yolan Gielen**. His first remark was that "*we have to create **positive stories on***

sustainability". (A word on which many speakers, often Dutch or French speaking Belgians, stumbled ...) Gielen: "Until now it's almost always on what we're not allowed anymore to do. Instead we have to focus on what we gain: more healthy working conditions, for example."

With a lot of slides, Yolana Gielen explained how scarce a lot of materials we use, are to become and what his organisation – part of the already mentioned OVAM – is doing for **'the circular economy'**; an economy that does not produce waste anymore, but drives on permanent recycling. That's why OVAM founded 'Circular Flanders' in **2017**, a partnership between the public and private sector. A lot of industrial sectors got involved. In 2018, Circular Flanders enjoyed a real **hype**: "We're asked more and more and we have to deal with more and more topics", Gielen told us. "We're now working on **education** too, because you have to alert the youth if you want to expect them to behave more responsibly." Gielen also emphasized the need for **networking**: "There are already a lot of good initiatives, but they need to get to know each other, to get connected."



RReuse: all that old stuff can be very useful ...

After the break **Michael van den Eynde** took the floor. He not only created the cooperative company **'Everstory'** (<https://www.everstory.be/>) for film professionals; he also started a **rental service for props**. How to hire, borrow, recuperate decoration, costumes, props, ...? To serve the film and TV industry, Everstory has stocks in Zaventem (Brussels), Limburg and Wallonia.

'De Kringwinkel Antwerp' – a shop for second hand goods – is probably the kind of business you don't expect to see at an event about filmmaking. But **Kathleen Werkhoven** presented us **'Kringverhuur'** (photo; <https://kringverhuur.be/>), a rental service which started 3 years ago of second hand things that focus on events. Could this service be extended towards the film industry? Surely. Clothes, furniture ... **You don't have to buy them when you want to use them for just one occasion**. Werkhoven was especially proud – just like Van den Eynde – of the great number of historical and unique objects she has in stock. "All items are shown on our website and can be rented online." After the production, you can bring the props back yourself or let them be recollected by 'Kringverhuur'.

The Belgian second hands 'Kringwinkels' are part of **'RREUSE', a European network** of second hand circuits. (<https://www.rreuse.org/>) Some 160.000 Europeans are working in these circuits for about 40 million customers! **Jana Žůrková** gave an overview of inspiring activities re-useable for the film sector. But also for schools, artists of any kind ... The fact alone that these second-hand circuits have

so many objects in store, is something that inspires the **imagination** of decoration builders and set dressers.

Sophie Cornet and Al Fajersztajn came to present '**In Limbo**', an exchange platform in Brussels that groups several cultural organisations (Zinneken, La Monnaie/DeMunt ...) and facilitates the exchange of products and materials. On the (experimental) website of 'In Limbo' (<http://www.inlimbobxl.org/>) the Brussels cultural sector can exchange all kind of materials. And just like Flanders, the Brussels region started its platform for circular economy: <http://www.circulareconomy.brussels/>



The four founding ladies of Shak'Eat. Aurélie is on the left.

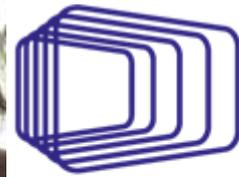
Eating well on shooting days

Since filmmaking, or even talking about making films without eating, is impossible, the lunch break was the ideal moment to introduce '**Shak'Eat**'. (<https://shakeatbe.jimdo.com/>) First we were invited to enjoy the catering of this young Brussels initiative. Then **Aurélie Beya** told us everything about this Belgian organisation founded in 2016 by four dynamic women sharing a passion for sustainable practices in the food and drink sector.

The 'catering' makes about 8 % of the average **CO2** impact of a film. So, what we eat and where the food comes from, has an important influence on our sustainability and environmental impact.

'Shak'Eat – The Savvy Food Service' uses '**food waste**' to prepare the most wonderful food. 'Food waste' ... Sounds 'shaky' ... Isn't it? But hello, it's not food from the garbage. On the contrary. Aurélie started by explaining how they work with **organic farmers**. There they recuperate all the food that doesn't meet the commercial standards: too big, too little, too red, too ...

'Shak'Eat organises also workshops on food conservation and they have a '**Share Kitchen**' where cooks meet each other, to experiment with vegetarian food. Its **customers** are mainly offices and public services. When asked about it, Aurélie told us there are already several initiatives like 'Shak'Eat' in Brussels.



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Pierette Baillot and Sophie Cornet

Since healthy food is necessary for good health, on to the next explanation on the “importance of eating well on shooting days”, given by **Pierette Baillot** from ‘Screen Brussels’.

(<https://screen.brussels/nl/>) In the company of Sophie Cornet she spoke about ‘Sustainable canteen projects’ using **cargo bikes to deliver healthy food** in the Brussels area. ‘Healthy food ...’ “Well, in the first week, some complain there is no Nutella on the set ... No Coca Cola ... But they learn”, Pierette laughed. “Important for success, is to have someone on the inside of the production, who is with you.”

Tap Water out of a tap



Since filmmaking — and even talking about making films — is surely impossible without drinking, **Jeroen Vereecke** came to save us from dehydration. His company ‘**Robinetto**’ (<https://www.robinetto.be/nl/>) provides sustainable water supplies at events and festivals. It also rents and sells water dispensers and water taps.

‘Sustainable water supplies’? Supplies for drinking ‘**tap water**’. In a country like Belgium it’s as good as bottled water and much cheaper. And more: **no plastic garbage, no transporting** by cars or trucks.

Jeroen Vereecke showed us some slides about the consumption in Europe of bottled water. Belgians are amongst the biggest consumers of bottled water, in contrast with f.i. the Dutch. And our consumption of bottled water is still growing.

Because mobility is important at events, Robinetto developed a ‘**Boombar**’: a mobile bar system in which all kinds of sustainable techniques got involved. At the Boombar you can drink tap water but also locally mixed soft drinks.

Problem for Robinetto: a lot of festivals are heavily sponsored by companies like Coca Cola. Nevertheless Robinetto managed to get involved in festivals like Manifesta, Tomorrowland, Sfinks ..

During the afternoon break, I talked with Jeroen on the **psychological aspect** ... How to convince people that tap water can be as good as bottled water? What about the bad **flavour**? Flavour filters do help. To make it look better, the tap water Robinetto offers from its Boombars comes just like beer, out of a tap.

Sustainable set building



The fourth and last part of our day at the VAF was on **set construction**. The way we construct film sets has a big impact. How do we use materials/resources? What is the importance of planning with recuperation and a circular economy in mind?

Another young enthusiast, **Quentin Mercier** (on the photo on the right), represented **MODS: a modular wood construction system**. It allows for the building of stands, sets, and furniture with almost no waste. The stands can be dismantled and reused again and again. The system can be compared with the **Lego**-block-system: out of little wooden elements you can create whole constructions. To manufacture the elements (out of recuperated wood), Mercier & Co developed a new kind of machine. (<https://www.mvovlaanderen.be/inspiratie/van-het-conservatorium-naar-mods>)

The MODS-system was created in the theatre sector in 2014. It came out of the bad feelings that went along with throwing away a lot of things after every production. Together with a new partner, Mercier started his company in 2018. Anno 2019, four people are employed. They work also f.i. for the Brussels STIB/MIVB-transporting company.

Benoit Ruiz was probably the most entertaining speaker of the day. He started his presentation – on how innovation can help us build better film sets – by telling about the dystopian thriller ‘Soylent Green’, a film in which people are recycled to feed other people ... This film stimulated his ecological consciousness. Ruiz surprised us with an inventory of sustainable solutions.

As the only not English, but French speaking person of the day, **Julie Jacob**, who works as a set dresser, made a short appearance in which she told about **her dream** of starting **a company that recuperates props and sets**. One of her problems is to find a location big enough to gather all the props she can collect.



(Foto Tim Wagendorp)

The day at the VAF ended with Sabine Barthelemy and **William Abello**, from the 'Association des décorateurs de cinéma'. Abello told us about the **number of films made in France: more than 200 each year**. Unfortunately, they have not enough space for all these productions. Fortunately, the film sector in France is very well organised. Therefore, they have an organisation (CST) for all the technical professions in cinema. In 2018, this organisation **decided that everything on the film sets has to become sustainably produced**. This kind of effort is now developing on a European scale, thanks to **Artscenico**, the European federation for costume and production design.

(<http://artscenico.com/>)

Conclusions? Three women, 3 'Green Screen partners' - Joanna Gallardo (Ecoprod, France), Beata Hulinka (Poland) and Eva Pospisilova (Slovakia) - were invited to the stage to explain what they had learned or what they wanted to see highlighted more. The first speaker put the emphasis on the **social aspect** of sustainability, the **marketing of ideas** and the fact that we're in a **business**. Money. The second emphasised that sustainable film making can be **advantageous for everyone**. And the third one resumed it all in 2 words: **passion and responsibility** ... to avoid pollution.

Jan-Pieter Everaerts

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